



# Organising for the general election Campaign Pack

## Contents

1. Introduction – preparing for the general election
2. Establishing a local TUSC steering committee to organise the work
3. A model letter to local trade union branches
4. A model letter to Labour Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs)
5. A model letter to student organisations
6. The 2024 local elections and the general election

### Additional resources

The TUSC directory of the elections taking place in May 2024, when over 2,000 council seats will be contested in England, along with the Greater London Mayor and Assembly, and six 'Metro-Mayors'. Available at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/TUSC-Directory-of-Elections-2024.pdf>

A how-to manual to contesting local elections, the *TUSC Guide for Candidates and Agents*. Check out the TUSC website resources page for the 2024 edition, to be published in autumn 2023. Meanwhile, the 2023 guide can be found at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/486.pdf>

An *Organising for a People's Budget* Campaign Pack, with model material, letters of invitation and campaign tips. Available both as a PDF at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/451.pdf> and in Word format (at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/452.doc>) to allow adaptations to be made to fit the requirements of local campaigns.

This edition of the Campaign Pack was published in July 2023. Updates to the contents and further additions will be made during the year – so keep checking the website – with inserts already planned on organising debates on Labour's policy forum outcome, election fund-raising, People's Budget campaigning in a pre-election year, Labour and the Minimum Service Levels Act, social media campaigning, and suggestions on how to approach the Greens. Any other ideas, let us know.

BLANK PAGE



# Organising for the general election

## 1. Campaign Pack Introduction

This Campaign Pack produced by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) all-Britain steering committee is aimed at all trade unionists, working class community and social movement campaigners, students fighting for free education, and socialists from any organisation or none, who want to see an alternative to establishment politicians available on the ballot paper at the next general election.

Preparing this first edition of the pack in summer 2023, we don't know the date of the general election, except that it must be called no later than the end of 2024. But even if it is not held before then, planning for the election has to begin now – nationally and, most importantly, locally too.

### **Fight for the best – but have a Plan B**

TUSC believes that what will be on offer at the next election from a Labour Party under Sir Keir Starmer will be a significant retreat from the radical policies that were presented in the 2017 and 2019 manifestoes under Jeremy Corbyn. The current leadership have been quite open about this, as they seek to reassure the ruling capitalist establishment that they will be a safe pair of hands by reviving Tony Blair-style 'New Labour' politics. There is no prospect that a Starmer-led Labour government would even begin to fight for the fundamental system change needed to end the cost of living and other crises that working class people face.

To meet this situation TUSC strongly hopes that, before the election, a new vehicle for working class political representation will have been established by more authoritative forces than those currently involved in our coalition or any other currently existing party or alliance – which means, above all, the trade unions who have been organising the workers' fightback, along with Jeremy Corbyn himself standing independently of Labour.

To be clear, we do not see our coalition as that new, mass alternative and are fighting for the left-led trade unions especially to organise at the very least a list of workers' candidates in the general election as a step towards the new party that we need. It was TUSC supporters, for example, who promoted the resolution agreed at the 2023 RMT transport workers' union conference for the union to give full support to Jeremy Corbyn if he decides to run again at the next election (see <https://www.tusc.org.uk/19429/05-07-2023/rmt-conference-defies-starmer-and-backs-jeremy-corbyn-to-stand-in-the-next-election/>).

But the TUSC steering committee is also clear that, for as long as the vacuum of working class political representation remains unfilled, we will get on with organising a 'Plan B' – to attempt to get 100 candidates on the ballot paper under a common banner which, by reaching the media authorities' threshold for what they call 'fair media coverage', could make the biggest possible impact for trade union and socialist principles in those circumstances.

It would have far less chance of a breakthrough compared to a trade union-organised list, but at the very least it would force those Labour candidates who faced a challenge to 'look over their left shoulder', and hasten developments towards a new party in the aftermath of the election.

## **What the Campaign Pack offers**

This means getting on with organising for the general election now – nationally, yes, but above all on the ground. That's the point of the Campaign Pack, which we will be updating and adding to as the months before the election go by.

The pack starts with a brief guide – for both those new to TUSC and those not – to establishing a local TUSC general election planning steering committee to organise the work that needs to be done.

The all-Britain steering committee is suggesting, for example, that local delegations be organised to Labour's prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) to put pressure on them to say where they stand politically, in particular on policies that were part of Labour's manifesto under Jeremy Corbyn in 2019. A model letter to PPCs is included in the Campaign Pack. But to systematically approach local trade union branches – or local student organisations who might want to fight for the abolition of tuition fees and the introduction of student grants – takes organisation.

There are model letters to local trade union branches and student organisations in the pack, but to co-ordinate the efforts of different organisations or individuals needs a local TUSC committee or group, even if it only convenes as regularly as it needs to in order to get the work done.

The same point applies to the suggestions for campaigning for local Peoples' Budgets – in what will be the last council budgets set before the general election – and for organising candidates for the local elections in May 2024, using them as a 'dry run' for the general election if it isn't, in fact, held on the same day (which wouldn't be known for sure until March 2024). Once again, discussing the issues out and organising in a local TUSC committee will be necessary.

## **Candidates and campaigning**

One thing deliberately missing from the Campaign Pack at this point is an application form for TUSC parliamentary candidates. Deliberately, because the all-Britain steering committee is not calling for the already existing participants in TUSC to select general election candidates straightaway – from amongst themselves – but instead to organise local constituency or council area-based campaigns to make the case for a workers' candidate to local trade union branches and other organisations and individuals not currently involved in TUSC.

That doesn't stop groups appointing a local 'TUSC spokesperson' to provide media quotes etc, as a TUSC PPC would. But the main task at this point is still to strive to bring together the widest possible range of trade unionists, campaigners and socialists for a general election challenge, with everyone feeling that they have a stake in the project. ■



# Organising for the general election

## 2. Establishing a local committee

The TUSC all-Britain Steering Committee is comprised of representatives of any trade union, anti-cuts councillors' group, or socialist organisation which chooses to formally participate in the coalition, alongside individual executive members of other unions not affiliated who sit in a personal capacity. There are also elected representatives of individual members of TUSC who are not otherwise members of a constituent organisation.

The steering committee only takes decisions by consensus, as outlined in the current *How TUSC Functions* rules (available at <http://www.tusc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/How-TUSC-Functions-September-2022.pdf>). This does not mean that there have not been disagreements on the steering committee during TUSC's history. When the RMT was officially represented on the committee, for example, it used the consensus rule to stop candidates standing against members of the RMT's parliamentary group of MPs. But the rule does create a dynamic towards looking for agreement, not towards winning a contested majority vote against minority views. And it means that no committee member can be 'bounced' into lending their name to an action taking place under the TUSC banner if they feel strongly about a particular matter.

So how could this inclusive approach be replicated at a local level, in establishing a constituency, or district or county council area-based steering committee, to organise for the general election?

### Get started!

Nobody needs permission to get a local TUSC group or committee up and running, if there isn't one already established in their area. But any local representative of the TUSC participating organisations or individual TUSC member who does so must make every effort to involve as equal partners the different components of our coalition – and others not currently involved. As the *How TUSC Functions* rules say, "local groups should also operate by consensus" too.

The obvious first step is to contact the local representatives of the participating organisations and local TUSC individual members and agree a date for a meeting – as soon as possible!

Contact details of the organisations currently participating in TUSC as full committee members or observers are available below, and details of any individual members in your area should be available from the current TUSC Individual Members' representatives on the all-Britain steering committee, Pete McLaren ([pete.mclaren15@gmail.com](mailto:pete.mclaren15@gmail.com)) and Tom Allen ([tomallentusc@gmail.com](mailto:tomallentusc@gmail.com))

## **Involving trade unionists**

Included in the Campaign Pack is a model letter to trade union branches inviting them to join a local TUSC general election planning steering committee, with the concrete proposal that they join in delegations to the local Labour prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) in their area. The Word version of the pack allows for local adaptations to be made.

Exactly how local trade unionists can participate as equal partners will vary, not least because of the different rules each union has on political activity. *How TUSC Functions* says that provisions should be made for “the representative involvement of trade unionists” including the suggestion of “locally-organised TUSC supporters’ groups in unions where formal affiliation is not possible”. Additionally, like the NEC members on the all-Britain steering committee with their own constituency that they are accountable to as elected union leaders, branch officers or local reps could participate in a personal capacity. But the main point is that TUSC is their coalition to shape as much as the organisations formally involved.

## **Other organisations**

A number of existing TUSC groups involve locally-based organisations who are not part of the all-Britain steering committee or individual members of national organisations who are not yet engaged with TUSC. The 2023 local elections saw candidates participating under the TUSC umbrella who were individual members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Anti-Capitalist Resistance, and the Northern Independence Party even though these organisations – although invited to be so – are not part of TUSC.

TUSC has written to twenty radical campaign groups and socialist organisations to discuss their plans with us for the next general election, with the most recent appeal letter sent available at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/19275/24-05-2023/tusc-makes-new-appeal-to-left-wing-groups-to-discuss-general-election-plans/>. Approaching the local representatives of these and other groups might not produce any results – but it might, and can only add to the pressure on them to take a serious attitude to planning for the general election.

## **Relationship to the all-Britain committee**

Nobody needs permission from the all-Britain steering committee to start a local TUSC group – and TUSC supporters in Scotland and Wales have their own autonomous Scottish TUSC and TUSC Wales steering committees – but contact needs to be established. Not least because the TUSC National Election Agent registered with the Electoral Commission – who legally has to issue *Certificates of Authorisation* to allow a candidate to use the TUSC name and logo on a ballot paper – acts only with the approval of the all-Britain committee. But this ‘final say’ is also a safeguard of the rights of the different components of our coalition – locally and nationally – for example, if the ‘consensus rule’ was ignored by a local group. ■

### **Contact details:**

**For organisations currently participating in TUSC as full committee members or observers:**

Socialist Party: [info@socialistparty.org.uk](mailto:info@socialistparty.org.uk) System Change (formerly Resist): [peterforrest53@hotmail.com](mailto:peterforrest53@hotmail.com)

Social Justice Party: <https://socialjusticeparty.uk/contact/> Workers Party of Britain:

[info@workerspartybritain.org](mailto:info@workerspartybritain.org)

**The TUSC Individual Members all-Britain steering committee representatives:**

Pete McLaren: [pete.mclaren15@gmail.com](mailto:pete.mclaren15@gmail.com) Tom Allen: [tomallentusc@gmail.com](mailto:tomallentusc@gmail.com)



## Organising for the general election

### 3. Model letter to local trade union branches



## An invitation to join a delegation to Labour's PPC, and discuss other possible election plans

Dear comrades,

Supporters of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in this area are writing to invite your trade union branch members to participate in drawing up plans to maximise the voice of workers in the next general election. This includes a concrete proposal to organise delegations of local trade unionists and others to meet the Labour Party prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs) in our area to see where they stand on the policies needed to meet the cost-of-living and other crises that we face.

TUSC was co-founded in 2010 by the then general secretary of the RMT, the late Bob Crow. It is composed of members of trade unions, both those affiliated and not affiliated to the Labour Party, and different socialist organisations.

We recognise that each union has its own rules relating to the use of union political funds and the endorsement of election candidates. But we also believe that there is nothing that prevents branches discussing, in general, matters which affect their members' vital interests, including elections. Or taking part as a branch, or as individual branch members in a personal capacity, in a meeting with our local Labour PPCs.

Or, indeed, individual branch members standing as candidates for any party which truly supports trade union and socialist principles.



## **Reviving ‘New Labour’: where do our local PPCs stand?**

We are writing to you with our invitation because TUSC believes that what will be on offer at the next election from a Labour Party under Sir Keir Starmer will be a significant retreat from the radical policies that were presented in the 2017 and 2019 manifestoes under Jeremy Corbyn. The current Labour leadership have been open about this, as they seek to reassure the ruling establishment that they will be a safe pair of hands by reviving Tony Blair-style ‘New Labour’ politics.

There is no prospect that a Starmer-led Labour government would take on the vested interests defending the ‘rigged system’, to fight for the fundamental change needed. Starmer and Co would only think to ‘look over their left shoulder’ – to reflect our interests not the bosses – if they felt under pressure from there, including potentially at election time.

That general point also applies to every individual Labour candidate who, whatever the centrally-agreed manifesto says, retain the ability to take their own personal stance. To find out where our local PPCs do stand is precisely why we are proposing to organise a delegation to meet with them and are inviting you to join us.

We attach a copy of the model letter we plan to send (which can also be viewed on the TUSC website at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/479.pdf>) and ask if, collectively as a branch or as individual members, you would be prepared to sign it and hopefully attend the meetings if the PPCs agree to one.

### **If we need to go further...**

As the letter to the PPCs says, TUSC has accepted from its inception that there will be Labour candidates who share our socialist aspirations, who will be prepared to support measures which challenge the austerity consensus of mainstream politics, and who we would not stand against. Not only, for example, did TUSC not contest the general elections of 2017 and 2019 when Jeremy Corbyn was the Labour leader, we had not stood against him and other left-wing Labour candidates in the elections before.

But TUSC is committed to standing candidates or supporting others if that is the only way a working class anti-austerity socialist alternative can appear on the ballot paper at election time. And to have that option available, we need to organise.

That is why we are also asking you, either as a branch or individual branch members in a personal capacity, to join a local TUSC general election planning steering committee to discuss further what needs to be done to ensure there is a workers’ voice in the election – on the ballot paper if necessary – that defends the basic policies and principles of trade unionism and socialism.

We look forward to your response.

In solidarity,





## Organising for the general election

### 4. Model letter to Labour PPCs



To:

Constituency:

## Request for a meeting with local trade unionists and anti-austerity campaigners

Dear

We are writing to you as the Labour Party's prospective parliamentary candidate for this constituency to try and arrange a time convenient for you to meet a delegation of local trade unionists and anti-austerity activists to discuss the next general election.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), co-founded by the late general secretary of the RMT Bob Crow, is determined that working-class people should not pay for a crisis we did not cause, and we support parliamentary representatives who take the same stance.

For that reason we campaigned in support of Jeremy Corbyn and his anti-austerity manifestoes in the 2017 and 2019 general elections. However, Sir Keir Starmer has repeatedly confirmed that under his leadership "the slate is wiped clean". He has confirmed support for very few of the commitments in the 2019 manifesto, and some have been explicitly abandoned.

That is why we would like an in-person meeting with you to ascertain what position you hold personally on the following points from Labour's 2019 manifesto which we believe are critical minimums needed to reverse the austerity agenda.

#### \* **Public ownership of rail, mail, water, telecoms and power**

The manifesto pledged to bring "our energy and water systems into democratic public ownership". This was to include a publicly-owned "UK National Energy Agency" to "own and

maintain the national grid infrastructure and oversee the development of our decarbonisation targets”, and for “the supply arms of the Big Six energy companies” to “be brought into public ownership”. In addition the railways, Royal Mail and British Telecom were to be renationalised.

#### **\* Reverse privatisation and restore public services and benefits**

The manifesto committed to “end and reverse privatisation in the NHS” and to “ensure services are delivered in-house”. In addition it pledged to “offer free prescriptions for all and free basic dentistry”, and to “fund free personal care for older people and extra care packages”. It also promised to “restore council spending powers to 2010 levels over the lifetime of the parliament” and to “bring services – from bin collections to management of local leisure centres – back in-house”. Universal Credit was to be “scrapped” and replaced with “an alternative system which treats people with dignity and respect”.

#### **\* Council house building and rent control**

The manifesto pledged that “by the end of the parliament Labour would be building at an annual rate of at least 150,000 council and social homes, with 100,000 of these built by councils for social rent in the biggest council house building programme in more than a generation”. In addition, it would “scrap the Conservatives’ bogus definition of ‘affordable’, set as high as 80% of market rents, and replace it with a definition linked to local incomes”. It also promised to “take urgent action to protect private renters through rent controls, open-ended tenancies, and new, binding minimum standards”.

#### **\* Free education from nursery to university**

Under this policy heading the manifesto pledged that “all two, three and four-year olds will be entitled to 30 hours of free preschool education per week”. It also promised to “abolish tuition fees and bring back maintenance grants” for all higher education students.

#### **\* Tax the rich not workers**

Labour’s pledge in 2019 was for taxes to rise only for the wealthy, with commitments to a new additional income tax rate payable from £80,000 and a new super-rich rate for those earning over £125,000. Corporation tax would rise to 26% (with a 21% small profits rate), dividends and capital gains would be taxed at income tax rates, and a financial transaction tax would be introduced.

#### **\* Fighting for workers interests and supporting trade unions**

The manifesto pledged to give “everyone full rights from day one on the job”, to end “bogus self-employment”, and “banning zero hour contracts and strengthening the law so that those who work regular hours for more than 12 weeks will have a right to a regular contract”. It also pledged to “repeal anti-trade union legislation including the Trade Union Act 2016 and create new rights and freedoms for trade unions to help them win a better deal for working people”.

As you will be aware the above policies are widely supported in the trade union movement. That is why we would like you to explain your views on these issues to a delegation of local trade unionists.

TUSC has accepted from its inception that there will be Labour candidates who share our socialist aspirations and will be prepared to support measures which challenge the austerity consensus of mainstream politics.

But it is also committed to standing candidates or supporting others if that is the only way a working class anti-austerity socialist alternative can be articulated at election time.

Yours sincerely,

**TUSC**  
**AGAINST**  
**CUTS**

## **Organising for the general election**

### **5. Model letter to local student groups**



**TUSC**  
**AGAINST**  
**CUTS**

## **An invitation to discuss campaigning for free education at the next general election**

To:

Supporters of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in this area are writing to invite your student society members to discuss how we can campaign for free education at the next general election – including the possibilities for organising trade unionists, socialists, and student and social movement candidates prepared to stand up to the establishment politicians at the ballot box.

The choice at the last two general elections, in 2017 and 2019, was clear. The Labour Party, with Jeremy Corbyn as the leader, was committed to the principle that education should be free. Labour's Manifestos pledged to bring back Education Maintenance Allowances for 16-18 year olds, to abolish university tuition fees, and to reintroduce maintenance grants for higher education students.

With the latest figures from the Student Loans Company showing that the average sum owed by graduating students now stands at just under £45,000, there can be no question how transformative the implementation of Labour's pledges would have been.

TUSC, co-founded in 2010 by the then general secretary of the RMT union, the late Bob Crow, did not contest the 2017 and 2019 elections and instead campaigned in support of a Jeremy Corbyn-led government with a socialist programme.

But the situation that we will be faced with at the next election is completely different. Sir Keir Starmer is purging both the personnel and policies from the period of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership. He seeks to reassure the ruling establishment that a government he led would not even begin to fight for the fundamental system change needed to meet the economic, social and environmental crises that we face. This includes confirming, in a Radio 4 Today programme interview on May 2nd, that, among other pledges he was abandoning, he was 'moving on' from the commitment to free education.

## **Reviving 'New Labour': where do the local candidates stand?**

We are writing to you with our invitation to discuss a general election campaign for free education because TUSC believes that Starmer and Co would only think to 'look over their left shoulder' – to reflect our interests not those of the establishment – if they felt under pressure from the left, including potentially at election time.

That general point also applies to every individual Labour prospective parliamentary candidate (PPC) who, whatever the centrally-agreed manifesto says, retain the ability to take their own personal stance. To find out where our local PPCs do stand on the previous free education pledges is precisely why we are proposing to organise a delegation to meet with them and are inviting you to join us.

As our record shows, TUSC has accepted from its inception that there will be Labour candidates who share our socialist aspirations, who will be prepared to support measures which challenge the austerity consensus of mainstream politics, and who we would not stand against. Not only, for example, did TUSC not contest the general elections of 2017 and 2019 when Jeremy Corbyn was the Labour leader, we had not stood against him and other left-wing Labour candidates in the elections before.

But TUSC is committed to standing candidates or supporting others if that is the only way a socialist alternative can appear on the ballot paper at election time. And to have that option available, we need to organise.

That is why we are also asking your society to consider joining a local TUSC general election planning steering committee to discuss further what needs to be done to ensure there is a campaigning voice for free education in the election, on the ballot paper if necessary.

We look forward to your response.

In solidarity,



# Organising for the general election

## 6. The 2024 local elections

The local elections that will take place on Thursday 2nd May 2024 will be the last set before the general election – if it is not, in fact, on the same day, as was the case for all the general elections from 1997 to 2015. The 2017 election, called for June 8th one month after that year's local polls, and the 2019 election held in December, were exceptional in this respect too.

But if the general election is to be held on May 2nd, Rishi Sunak does not have to 'inform the King' that he is announcing the dissolution of parliament until as late as March 25th, just over five weeks before polling day. That is also the date by when the formal Notices of Election for the local authorities with elections on May 2nd must be published and the first day it will be possible to hand in local council candidate nomination papers.

This is one reason why the all-Britain TUSC steering committee sees the 2024 local elections at a minimum as a vital 'dry run' for the general election and is in favour of organising for the largest possible number of TUSC candidates to contest them.

### **The political significance of the 2024 local elections**

TUSC has always taken local elections seriously. We have never accepted the idea that there is nothing that councils can do in the face of the cuts to their funding made by central government. Local authorities, we have argued, in fact retain both significant powers and resources that can be used to make an immediate difference to peoples' lives, as well as the ability to lead a campaign for central-government funding. The TUSC briefings, the reports on councils' reserves, and the guidance material for setting no cuts People's Budgets and organising local campaigns, are unparalleled in the movement in explaining how local councillors could be part of the fightback.

But in the 2024 elections, and in the campaigning for councils to set no cuts People's Budgets next year, TUSC's arguments will be even more powerful than previously. With the almost certain prospect of at least a Starmer-led government coming into office during the course of the 2024-2025 financial year, what possible excuse is there for Labour councillors not to use councils' borrowing powers and reserves to spend what's needed now? And demand from Keir Starmer and the shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves that the incoming government will cover any shortfall there may be in meeting the bills? No excuse unless, of course, they do not believe that Reeves and Starmer will fund the local public services that we need. In which case, the argument is made for a challenge at the ballot box, for both the Town Hall and Westminster.

## **Wouldn't council candidates distract from the general election campaign?**

Plans should be made well in advance of March 2024 for the biggest possible number of TUSC candidates in the local elections. But if, on March 25th or before, the government announces a general election for the same day as the locals, wouldn't having a large number of council candidates divert resources and activity away from the TUSC general election campaign?

No, on the contrary. For a start it is a fact that many voters split their votes when a general election is held on the same day as the local elections, voting for a party that could realistically form a government in the Westminster ballot but making a different choice locally. TUSC experienced that in 2015, the last time we contested a general election, which was held on the same day as the locals. In Doncaster, for example, where the then Labour leader Ed Miliband is an MP, TUSC won 1,116 votes in the three parliamentary constituencies but 4,104 votes for the TUSC candidates who contested just over half of the council seats. While in Barnsley, TUSC won 937 votes in two of the three parliamentary constituencies but 2,434 for candidates contesting just under half of the borough's council seats. The more council candidates there are the more substantial is the overall vote for TUSC – which won a combined total of 118,125 votes in 2015.

The campaigns can also complement each other by maximising the participation of TUSC supporters who come forward as candidates. Some might not feel confident to be a parliamentary candidate – and there are anyway a more limited number of parliamentary seats that can be contested in an area – but they can contribute by standing as a council candidate.

And then, of course, the campaigns are politically complementary, even utilising the 'split voting' consciousness. 'We need to send the strongest message possible to Westminster by voting TUSC', the argument goes, 'but whichever establishment politician ends up in Number Ten, we will need TUSC councillors in our Town Hall to resist the coming cuts'.

## **The local elections and the 'fair media coverage' issue**

The broadcasting authorities' regulations for what they term 'fair media coverage' of political parties in election periods apply to local elections as they do to a general election. This means that if one-sixth of the council seats up for election in May 2024 are contested by candidates appearing on the ballot paper under the name of a political party or coalition registered with the Electoral Commission (or a registered variant of the party's name), they will qualify for 'fair media coverage'.

With around 2,040 councillors being elected in 2024, in 105 local authorities in England (see the TUSC *Directory of Elections* at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/TUSC-Directory-of-Elections-2024.pdf>), that means 340 or so TUSC candidates would have to stand.

One advantage of reaching the 'fair coverage' threshold for the local elections, if the general election is announced at just five weeks' notice in spring 2024, is financial. Local election candidates do not have to pay an election deposit, whereas the deposit required for each general election seat is £500. If the finances for a hundred-seat TUSC list to meet the general election fair coverage threshold are not in place by then – £50,000 in election deposits – we would still have a party election broadcast and the possibilities that the 'fair media' threshold opens for insisting on coverage in other outlets.

The conclusions are clear. The 2024 local elections are an integral part of preparing for the general election, politically and organisationally. ■