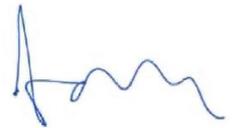


To the Mayor and Councillors of the London Borough of Lambeth

YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING of the COUNCIL to be held in the Lambeth Town Hall,
SW2 1RW on Wednesday 21 February 2018 at 7.00 pm

Third dispatch

Green Party – Amendments to Budget 2018/19



ANDREW TRAVERS
Interim CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Further Information

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AGENDA

Appendices to reports – bulky appendices are published on the website www.lambeth.gov.uk and can be obtained from Democratic Services. They are not circulated with the agenda.

4c. Green Party - Amendments to Budget

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Green Party Budget Proposals 2018-19

We recognise the difficulties the harsh austerity agenda driven by this tory government presents for the Lambeth Labour administration. The Green Party will fight these cuts and provide more council homes than is currently being proposed, protect libraries, let residents lead and reverse cuts that the Labour administration in Lambeth is proposing.

Lambeth has an amazingly diverse, intelligent, passionate and caring population. And they deserve to be listened to.

But with such a large majority, Lambeth Labour have adopted a top-down, cabinet knows best approach to its decision making and in dealing with reckless tory austerity [1]. The people of Lambeth have looked to help their fellow citizens at this time and taken a closer look at the finances. The People's Audit have identified where the council could be performing better and reversing cuts. Lambeth Labour would be better placed to protect Lambeth residents from the impact of Tory austerity if they fully and proactively engaged with the People's Audit - made up of a cross/non party group of people, including Labour Party members.

In a time of government austerity, Lambeth Labour concentrate on "Grand Projects", such as the demolition of estates, the new town hall, removing local traders from Brixton Arches and creating bookish gyms, instead of focusing resources on keeping the basics going, such as keeping the streets and air clean and looking after the vulnerable.

With elections in May, Lambeth has a chance to have a fresh start with a clean green broom taken to the town hall - creating a town hall that is open and transparent to the public it serves - to be a truly listening council.

This Green amendment to Labour's Budget is a people's Budget. To make Lambeth a great place to live and a great place to work - where the Council works with and for local residents and not against them.

Libraries

The head of libraries plan - rejected by this labour administration - would have stabilised the library budget at around £3m a year, while saving all 10 libraries, staffed and led by professional librarians.

Instead, Lambeth has spent millions - campaigners estimate up to £9m - on keeping libraries closed and turning them into bookish gyms.

Establishing a community and staff mutual would still provide the opportunity to divert capital money earmarked for the gyms nobody wants, through an endowment, to provide the libraries local people wants and need across the whole of the Borough.

Protecting the most vulnerable

We propose to reverse the decision to cut the Council Tax Support Scheme. The poorest residents should not be asked to shoulder the greatest burden.

We support the proposal to exempt care leavers from Council Tax until the age of 25. We also support the hardship fund.

Regenerating the council

We propose to reduce the number of politicians paid additional money to manage what they should be doing anyway. Lambeth has more cabinet members than council departments. It is unclear who is accountable for what and it is too costly.

We propose losing 1 cabinet member, 1 deputy chief whip, 2 vice-chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Whilst we support the roles of neighbourhood (and community relations) leads, these roles should be voluntary, not paid for with additional money.

Clean air

Clean air is a human right. Yet Lambeth Labour has only budgeted £31,000 to tackle improving local air quality. We agree with campaign groups like mums for lungs, who say this is woefully inadequate.

To seriously tackle air pollution a far more ambitious plan is required than Lambeth's current Air Quality Action Plan.

We would begin by a 2% rise in pay and display charges. This would generate £109,600.

The income generated from the Pay and Display charges would be used to:

Enable schools and communities to come up with their best plans for air quality improvements, for example school streets projects
Subsidise cycle parking spaces on residential roads - cycle hangers. Reducing the cost to x per year. We would also introduce fines for engine idling

Policy and Communications

Whilst we appreciate some of this spend is on items the council should comply with, such as FOI's and press enquiries, more than £1m is spent on communications, which simply try to justify unpopular policies and projects. It would be better spent on reversing the decision to cut the council tax support scheme.

Housing and Capital

Lambeth Labour proposes to continue to sell off assets, rather than build new council housing. We have seen a reduction in council housing under this administration - an additional net loss of another 75 council homes in 2016-2017 - despite the receipt of just under £90m in past 10 years from the sale of short life housing.

Residents should be given a ballot on their estates as proposed by the London Mayor and the leader of the Labour Party and alternative approaches developed with the full participation of residents. We note that the plans put forward by residents at Cressingham Gardens would result in more than double the amount of council rent homes proposed by Labour. We want people to be able to stay in their homes and give priority to building new council homes on existing council land.

Housing Management

Although the Housing Revenue Account is not part of this budget and is not dealt with at full council, we have serious concerns on the poor value for money secured through LHS contracts for both tenants and leaseholders.

[1] LGA Peer Review Oct 2016

“There is a strong appetite among Lambeth residents to be engaged, to be involved, and to be heard, and the Borough Plan offers an opportunity to channel this enthusiasm and for the council and residents to work together to deliver shared priorities. These local residents are a real asset: they are keen to help bring about a positive change in the borough, and provide challenge and scrutiny to the council.”

“However, some projects have not taken the community with them, resulting in significant challenge and dissatisfaction from some local people.”

Summary table of growth and savings

Proposal	£
• Growth	
Changes to CTS	953,000
Air Quality Measures and cycling	222,600
Total of growth proposals	1,175,600
• Saving	
Cabinet and Committees	52,000
Neighbourhood Leads	14,000
Increase in pay and display fees	109,600
Communications	1,000,000
Total of saving proposals	1,175,600
Total Additional growth and (savings)	Nil

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