



Labour manifesto consultation: Lewisham Momentum ideas

A progressive, campaigning Labour council, telling the truth

This was put together by Lewisham Momentum's committee and amended following circulation among local Momentum supporters. It's the start of a process: please get in touch with suggestions, thoughts and feedback at lewishamforcorbyn@gmail.com

Rather than presenting everything locally as rosy, our Labour council needs to tell the truth about the situation we're in, clearly explain the Tory-driven cuts and build campaigning to stop and reverse them, while also doing everything it can to avoid making cuts.

Housing and development

Existing, developer-led policies will not deliver the decent, affordable homes people in Lewisham need. Lewisham Homes should be our developer of choice. The council has met only a fraction of its own target for building council housing (under 100 out of 500). Meanwhile its targets for council, social and affordable housing in new developments are inadequate. We need serious targets, a real push to meet them, meaningful consultation and a tough instead of a subservient attitude to developers. We should publish developer plans and viability assessments. We need a plan to ensure Millwall stays in Bermondsey while also redeveloping in a way that meets housing and other needs.

Education

Labour must do more to campaign against the Tories' school budget cuts. At the same time we must take responsibility locally. No more academisations – which are privatisation under another name. The council must use its weight and voice to stop and reverse, not encourage academisation. The LEA must improve inspection and audit systems to ensure no more Forest Hill School-style surprises in school budgets. If crises like FHS arise, the council must discuss and work with staff, parents, students and the community to find solutions, instead of stonewalling. There should be stronger qualifications for governors, including residency and minimum activity requirements. The council should adopt a Workload Charter for teachers along the lines of Nottingham and Coventry. It should do everything it can to eliminate and minimise unnecessary high-stakes testing in schools.

Stop and reverse privatisation

We do not need a review of outsourcing. We need to stop it and push to 'insource' services. In the era of Grenfell and Carillion, anything less is an abdication of our

political responsibility as socialists. We should work with the Mayor of London to reduce the amount of PFI loans and ensure no more.

Workers' rights and economic justice

The council must push to improve the situation of its workers, the workers of companies it deals with, and all workers in Lewisham. Welcome the decision to prevent Picturehouse from redeveloping Ladywell Playtower due to its strikebreaking. We need more use of licensing and procurement to promote a Living Wage, decent terms and conditions and union recognition/rights. The council must put its own house in order, consistently implementing basic standards. As the unions demand, anyone who works at the council for three months should be given a permanent, directly-employed job. The council must mend its relationship with its unions.

Migrants' rights and solidarity

Lewisham Labour members are proudly pro-migrant and internationalist. The council should be more vocal about defending migrants, including freedom of movement. It must withdraw co-operation with "immigration services" as part of making Lewisham a "Sanctuary Borough". Meanwhile, as the Tories place more migrants at risk of poverty and homelessness, it should avoid any measure which persecutes homeless people and oppose limitations on migrants' access to services locally. It should work with third sector organisations to ensure that anti-homelessness programmes reach migrants.

A democratic council – abolish the Mayor

If we are serious about democracy, we must commit to a referendum in which we will campaign to abolish the executive Mayor and cabinet system and return to democratic, collective council committees.

Leading a fightback

The council needs to tell the truth about what is happening, and encourage, promote and lead instead of seeking to squash anti-cuts campaigning. It needs to sit down with local campaigns, at the moment most obviously the campaign around Children and Adolescents' Mental Health Services, to work out how to fight together. It must vocally take the fight to the government and push other councils to join in. It must call for a clear commitment from a Corbyn government to reverse all cuts since 2010. Meanwhile, it must also make a serious effort to do everything it can to avoid making cuts. We need a serious review of wasteful expenditure and eg of reserves – which are supposed to be for an emergency. What is this if not an emergency?