



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
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MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

4 March 1981

Dear Prime Minister,

I enclose some notes as you requested which I hope will be helpful for your visit to the Local Government Conference on Saturday March 7. I understand that you have agreed to say a few words during the lunch break and I know this will be very much appreciated.

I thought you might also be interested to see the N.E.C's statement that they sent as a Circular to Labour Councils, constituency parties and the PLP. I have marked the particular points that might be of interest to you.

Tom King

TOM KING

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP

NOTES FOR THE PRIME MINISTERS ADDRESS AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CONFERENCE LUNCHEON, CAXTON HALL, 7TH MARCH 1981

1. Local Government has an important role to play in backing up and carrying out the Government's economic strategy which is vital to the future of the country. Only by defeating inflation and by releasing a greater share of resources to the private sector can we hope to achieve a real improvement in our economy.
2. This means cutting public expenditure.
3. We recognise that this has posed many difficult problems for Conservative Councillors in balancing the statutory duties laid on local government by Parliament and in providing essential services to the public.
4. Nevertheless it is clear from the record of many Conservative Councils that cutting out waste and cutting down unnecessary expenditure is possible. Many of you have done really well. The Government is grateful for the lead you have shown and the support you have given.
5. This year the County Councils come up for election. On May 7th the electors will be making some vital decisions because it is the counties who are responsible for major budgets covering, for example, education, social services and transport.
6. The background against which you will fight this campaign is not easy. As a Government we have not flinched from taking some very difficult decisions which in the short-term are not popular and yet you know we have a number of real achievements to our credit of which we can be justifiably proud. The rapid fall of inflation is of enormous importance to everybody in this country, the progress on law and order with the improvement in the number of police and the morale of the police force is just what we promised to do, the improvement of performance in the Health Service with a reduction in the hospital waiting list of more than 90,000 last year is encouraging. The right to buy, though not a County Council matter, is the greatest opportunity ever given to council tenants in this country. It is a Conservative Government that has done it, and we should let no council tenant forget it.
7. Education, in particular, is a vital area of policy as childrens' whole future and therefore the future of this country depend on their local authorities.
8. So, we must fight hard to retain control of the County Councils for the next 4 years.

9. This is crucially important this year with the take-over of so many Labour parties by the extreme left. The intolerance of the hard line left is already visible in a number of Councils. The behaviour of Walsall Council saying they will only appoint officers of their own political persuasion, the intolerance of Sandwell towards Joanna Harris, the announcement by another Council that non Trade Unionists will be the first to be sacked in any redundancies - all these show the determination with which the left will pursue their aims. They bring shame on the whole reputation of local government. Only the Conservative Party can effectively stand and fight against their further advances.
10. Conservatives have always stood for prudent control of expenditure. Labour Councils are notorious for being much more carefree in the way they spend other people's money. The biggest share of the rates burden falls on commerce and industry. Those who really care about tackling unemployment must recognise the need to avoid additional burdens being placed on industry and commerce. The best hope therefore for protecting jobs is to ensure the election of a Conservative Council.

THE LABOUR PARTY

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To: Secretaries of Regional Councils,
Constituency Labour Parties,
Affiliated Organisations, Labour Groups,
District/County Parties,
Local Government Committees,
Parliamentary Labour Party

January 1961

Dear Colleague,

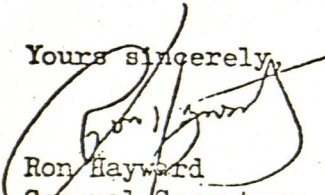
N.E.C. STATEMENT: COUNCILS AND THE CUTS

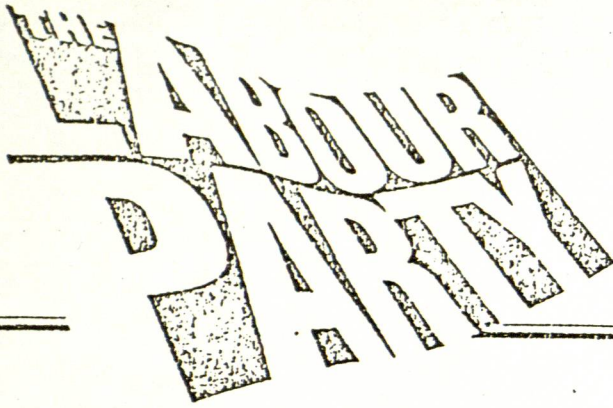
I enclose with this circular a statement by the National Executive Committee - one which is vitally important for all sections of the Party, and especially for Labour Groups and their respective local parties.

The statement presents the views of the National Executive Committee on the Party's response to the Tory Government's cuts in rate support grant. The statement recognises the acute financial pressures facing local authorities, the very limited range of options available to many of them, and the fact that circumstances vary in different parts of the country. It nonetheless calls for Labour controlled councils to do their utmost to resist Tory Government policy by maintaining standards in a number of high priority services supported by current expenditure - if necessary by applying substantial increases in rates.

The statement also expresses the need for consultation with local Parties, trade unions and other representative bodies about the financial strategy to be adopted by each council. It is therefore hoped that the statement will be discussed by each Labour Group and local party, and by each district and county party.

Yours sincerely,


Ron Hayward
General Secretary



1. The National Executive Committee condemns the Tory Government's massive cuts in spending on local government services and especially its vicious penalties against those 'high spending' councils who have striven to maintain the standards of services in the face of Tory attacks. The Government's policy represents an attack on the whole principle of local democracy.
2. We recognise the acute difficulties in which local authorities find themselves in the face of Government-imposed cuts in rate support grants and capital allocations. We recognise also that there are real differences in local circumstances and that councils must make their own judgements - acting in line with party policy and in full consultation with their local parties and with their employees' trade union representatives - about what is best for their local communities.
3. We call upon Labour-controlled local authorities to refuse to implement Government policy designed to cut the living standards and social services of working people; to resist redundancies; and to strive to maintain job opportunities in local government. While recognising that heavy rate increases are not welcome, we call on Labour councils to raise sufficient finance from the rates, with the imposition of supplementary rate increases where necessary, to ensure that our essential objectives can be sustained.
4. The Labour movement must be prepared to use its full strength, including industrial action, to defend the most needy in our society and the interests of every working-class family.
5. We strongly advise Labour-controlled councils especially:
 - (i) To ensure that there is no deterioration in pupil/teacher ratios;
 - (ii) To maintain the standard of school meals, avoiding any increase in charges above the inflation rate;
 - (iii) To make no cuts in the provision of residential homes, home helps, meals on wheels, aids and adaptations and other back-up services for the elderly, sick and disabled;
 - (iv) To make no cuts in nursery education, day nurseries, and other provision for the under-fives, or in services for children in care or at risk;
 - (v) To make no cuts in housing management and maintenance which affect the response to tenants' day to day problems, and to avoid excessive increases in rents;
 - (vi) To maintain local passenger transport services;
 - (vii) To safeguard the physical environment by maintaining standards of street lighting, street sweeping, refuse collection and environmental protection;
 - (viii) To maintain standards in parks, recreational services and other public amenities

6. We pledge the next Labour Government to reverse the Tory strategy of cuts in education, social services, housing and other local services, and to restore a general pattern of substantial growth in expenditure on these services every year.

7. We call for a continuing campaign, building on the present Labour Party cuts campaign, to win and to hold public support for practical resistance to the Tory cuts. This campaign must be used to build the closest co-ordination between the National Executive Committee, The Parliamentary Party, Labour groups in each locality, Labour representatives on the local authority associations, constituency parties, district and county parties and local government committees, the trade union movement at both national and local levels, and groups representing voluntary organisations in bad neighbourhoods. Only through such co-ordination can we build a united approach to the formulation of policy decisions by Labour controlled councils, and a continuing public campaign against the Tory cuts in local government and other services.

December 1980

ANNUAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE
CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER
SATURDAY MARCH 7TH
PRIME MINISTER'S PROGRAMME

1.00 p.m. Prime Minister arrives at Caxton Hall Main entrance.

Will be met by

Anthony Durant M.P. (Chairman, National Local
Government Advisory Committee)

Lord Marshall (Vice-Chairman of the Conservative
Party)

Miss J. Varley (Director of Local Government
Organisation)

Proceed upstairs to York Room where box luncheons
are being served to representatives.

Prime Minister to circulate, Mr. Durant and Lord
Marshall will be at hand.

A seat will be reserved for the Prime Minister at a
table occupied by Local Government representatives.
Mr David Smith will arrange this.

Approx. 1.30 p.m. Prime Minister will speak.

A microphone by a raised dais will be available.

Approx. 1.45 p.m. Prime Minister will leave York Room to go downstairs
to visit stalls and displays in the Norfolk Room.

The Royal Association for Disability & Rehabilitation
is expected to have a display. (International Year of
the Disabled)

2.00 p.m. Prime Minister leaves.

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PRIME MINISTER

c.c. Mr. Howe

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE

Attached are the relevant details in connection with the visit to the Local Government Conference:

1. A speaking note from Tom King (Flag A)
2. The programme (Flag B)
3. Statement by Lord Thorneycroft on the International Year of the Disabled. You will see that you are due to visit the stand in connection with this Year before departure (Flag C)
4. Lord Thorneycroft particularly asked me to stress to you that there was no need for you to go into the details of this year's campaign. What the people there wanted was "just a vote of thanks for all the work they have done and are doing at a difficult time". Five minutes would be enough.
5. Derek Howe will be in No. 10 from approximately noon should you require anything further.



6 March 1981