

Labour South East Regional Conference 2018

3-4 November, Southampton

Motions

Arundel & South Downs CLP – Transport

Rural Bus Services

Conference notes that:

- More than 80% of the South East is classified as 'rural' with more than 170 small towns and 1,400 villages.
- Private bus operators 'cherry pick' the most profitable routes, leaving councils in rural areas to operate more expensive and socially necessary routes.
- Labour has pledged to introduce regulations to designate and protect routes of critical community value, including those that serve local schools, hospitals, and isolated settlements.

Conference calls on a future Labour government to legislate for local authorities to set up publically owned bus services that protect routes of community value and connect rural areas together.

GMB Southern Region – Employment

Access to Employment Advice

Conference recognises the vital importance of access to publicly funded, free, impartial advice and representation on benefits and employment matters across the region, at a time when the rights of welfare benefit claimants and those subjected to the worst employment practices of the "gig economy" are subject to sustained attack.

Conference calls upon all Labour councils, councillors and parties to provide the necessary financial support and solidarity to sustain and promote the work of organisations like the Southampton Advice and Representation Centre (SARC), whose values are consistent with the principles which are at the heart of the Labour movement.

Guildford CLP – Health

By 8/8/18 > 100000 people backed a petition calling on Branson's Virgin Care to stop "dragging the NHS through the courts". This year it was revealed VC were handed £1.5m out of court by Surrey's CCGs, NHS England and Surrey County Council, after not being recommissioned to run Guildford & Waverley's adult community services.

Guildford CLP resolves to support independent inquiry into out of court settlements made by CCGs since 2012 Health and Social Care Act, establishing:

- value for money from this system;
- are settlements due to CCG mismanagement or financial inability to fight cases they could have won.

Horsham CLP – Education

Under the Tories, schools are in an appalling state due to crippling underfunding. Conference calls on SE Labour to campaign for:

- Fair funding: supporting the WorthLess campaign for a fairer funding formula for our region's schools without reducing schools' funding elsewhere.
- Halting grammar school expansion: the £50m expansion budget must be redirected to existing under-funded schools.
- Removing private schools' charitable status: between 2017-22, private schools' tax rebates will total £522m due to charitable status.
- Adding VAT to private school fees: as per the 2017 manifesto, the money raised should fund free school meals for primary school children.

Unison, Maidstone & the Weald CLP, and Mid Sussex CLP - Housing

Conference notes:

The Conservative Social Housing Green Paper offers no funds to build council housing, despite the housing crisis and severely declining levels of affordability in the private rented sector.

Private renters spend on average 41% of income on rent; and many are unable to meet housing costs in the South East. Low paid public sector workers are amongst the groups worst affected by the rising costs of housing across the South East.

Conference, therefore, calls upon the Labour Party to:

- Work with trade unions, local authority Labour Groups, regional Members of Parliament, and the Shadow Housing team, to develop policy and campaigns to tackle the affordable housing crisis in the South East.

Conference is concerned at the lack of effective control of major developments in town centres which often includes the loss of public assets. In Burgess Hill developers argued that provision of social housing and infrastructure payments allegedly made their scheme unviable, and the District Council agreed.

Conference believes that disposal of public assets must be in the interests of communities. We, therefore, call upon the future Labour Government to commit to:

- ring fencing all surplus public land for building council homes to meet housing need;
- rebalancing the government's housing budget in favour of social housing by setting a national housing grant of at least £50 billion, in order to increase the provision of social housing, specifically including directly provided council housing;
- putting this at the forefront of a Labour Government housing strategy.

We also call upon a future Labour government to introduce mandatory controls to ensure that private developers:

- deliver the percentage of affordable homes required to meet local need;
- contribute 5% of site value for infrastructure;
- pay full market value for any public assets purchased.