

**Labour:
your voice
in tough
times**

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Foreword from Ed Miliband

Over the next four weeks I'll be visiting every region of Britain and fighting this campaign as hard as I can. That's because I believe this is a really important election for families, communities and the future of our country.

It is also an unusual election because we now know that even though there may still be three main parties contesting it, there are only two directions for Britain.

The Tories and their Liberal Democrat allies have gone too far and too fast with their cutbacks, putting our recovery at risk. Our economy - which was growing strongly - has now ground to a halt. Labour would put jobs and families first. We would make some tough decisions on cuts while also getting the economy moving again with a proper plan for growth. That's the best way to reduce the deficit.

Families on low and middle incomes are being unfairly squeezed.

Young people are finding the ladders up which they hoped to climb to a better future being kicked away.

Labour will act to restore the promise of Britain by which the next generation should do better than the last. Instead of cutting taxes for the banks, as the Government is doing this year, we would use a tax on bankers' bonuses to help the young unemployed back to work.

Labour cares about the communities we live in and where our children grow up. And we care about the institutions that really matter like the local children's centre, the library and the National Health Service. We would not be cutting

police officers from the beat nor wasting money on electing police commissioners.

Up and down this country, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats are hitting the services which vulnerable people rely on the most. Cuts designed in Downing Street have been targeted on the most vulnerable areas. These are big choices; and these choices show where their values lie.

I grew up in the 1980s. My great fear is that the Government is repeating the mistakes of the past by dividing our country again.

David Cameron said that "we are all in this together". But it just doesn't feel like that. Too often it feels like what he is doing is practising the politics of division.

Most of the country that never caused the financial crisis is paying the price of it, while bankers get tax cuts and more bonuses.

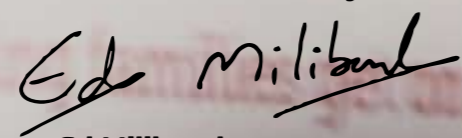
People in jobs are being told to resent people on benefits who need help.

Private sector workers are being told to resent those in the public sector.

Young people are being told that they won't get the same life chances as their parents.

These policies will divide our country and our communities.

If you want to rebuild and unify Britain, vote Labour on May 5.



Ed Miliband

Leader of the Labour Party



Labour: your voice in tough times

Everyone knows times are tough at the moment. Jobs are hard to come by. Prices are going up. Family budgets are being squeezed. The economic recovery has stalled. But the Tory-led Government is pressing ahead with reckless cuts which will put more pressure on families and hit the services run by local councils on which people rely.

Our area needs councillors who will stand up against these plans - not councillors from the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats whose leaders are taking these decisions. The Tory-led Government's choice to make the deepest cuts in the first two years means that some of the toughest decisions have to be taken this year and next - and we need to make sure that the most important frontline services

in our area are put first, by people who really understand local needs. That is why every Labour councillor you elect will be your community's first line of defence against the damage being done by a Conservative-led Government and their Liberal Democrat allies.

This is a Government who have broken promises on VAT, on tuition fees, on the NHS and on protecting frontline services. And they are taking a reckless gamble with the economy - with no plan B.

Labour would put jobs and growth first. Britain cannot pay off the deficit if more and more people are being thrown out of work. Getting the economy moving and people into work, paying their taxes, is the best way to get the deficit down. And leaving young people out of work threatens to create a lost

generation. The Tory-led Government's plans will cost nearly a million jobs. For families up and down the country, it's hurting but it isn't working.

We do need to get the deficit down but the reckless programme designed in Downing Street - and now coming to your street - goes too far, too fast. We would have halved the deficit in four years and we would have made cuts too. But the Tories and Lib Dems have chosen to go further than any other major country by cutting another £40 billion out of the economy.

When 250 Sure Start centres are expected to close, when libraries and local bus services are under threat, and when families' tax credits and child benefit are being cut back, it's clear that it's things people really value that are in danger of being lost.

The Tory-led Government should abandon their plans to slash police numbers and they must scrap their plan to waste another £100 million on introducing elected police commissioners. At a time when 12,000 frontline police officers are set to lose their jobs, along with thousands more vital support staff and community support officers, the priority should be making sure our communities are secure and safe from crime.

In these tough times, you need Labour councillors who will protect communities and help young people get a fair chance in life. Labour will stand up for vital local services, support jobs and keep our promises.

Labour: your first line of defence

Our area needs Labour councillors who will stand up against the Tory-led Government's plans.

Labour will be your community's first line of defence against the damage being done by a Conservative-led Government and their Liberal Democrat allies.

Ed Miliband and Labour would:

- **Support jobs with money raised from repeating the bank bonus tax** - not hold back recovery with the VAT rise and cuts that will put almost one million workers out of their jobs.
- **Protect police numbers** - not cutting them while wasting £100 million on a new tier of politicians with elected police commissioners.
- **Get the deficit down through strong growth and sensible cuts** - not slash too far, too fast and putting your local economy at risk.
- **Protect your frontline local services** - not make unfair cuts which will hit the least well off the most.
- **Stand up for young people** - not kick away the ladder for our next generation by tripling tuition fees; scrapping EMAs; cancelling Building Schools for the Future; and slashing school sport.

Cuts designed by David Cameron and Nick Clegg are now coming direct from Downing Street to your street. They will hurt families in every part of our country. Funding for local government

Case study

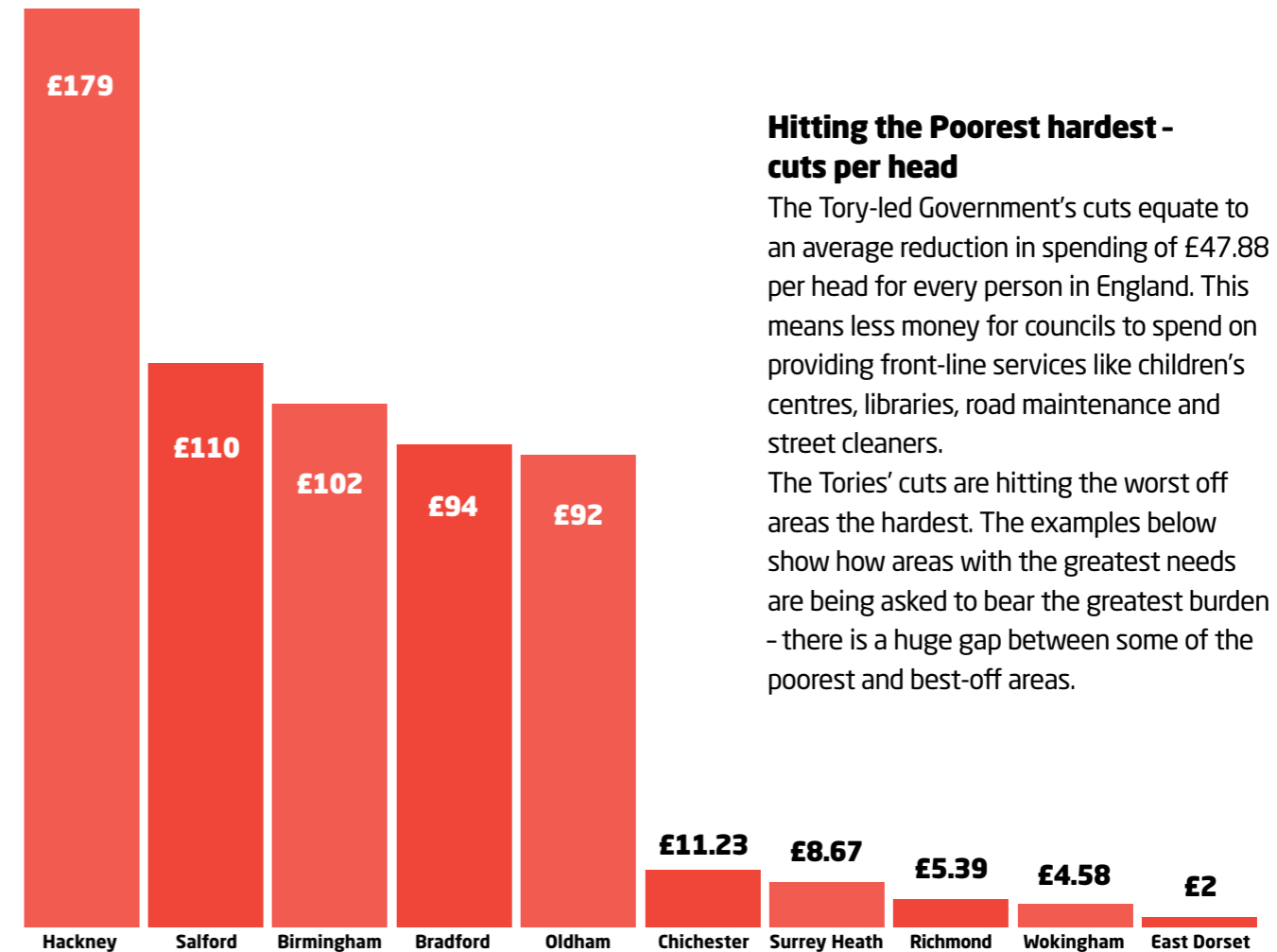
Sandwell: dealing with the cuts

Labour-run Sandwell Council is working to protect frontline services from the cuts - equivalent to £81 per head of population - which are being forced on it by the Tory-led Government.

Sandwell's Labour leadership took decisive action to reduce the number of senior managers on high salaries by nearly 50 per cent, producing a saving of £1 million a year, which would otherwise have come from front line services. Meanwhile, they are working to save another £1.3 million on their building costs by reducing the both the number of buildings, and amount of space, that it is occupied.

The Council is saving money by being greener too. Expensive landfill tax charges are being saved by increasing the amount of waste which goes for recycling instead, while old street lighting is being replaced with light emitting diodes, which significantly reduce energy consumption, and therefore costs, by about 50%, whilst also improving the quality of lighting for residents.

Total cuts in revenue spending per head of population



Hitting the Poorest hardest - cuts per head

The Tory-led Government's cuts equate to an average reduction in spending of £47.88 per head for every person in England. This means less money for councils to spend on providing front-line services like children's centres, libraries, road maintenance and street cleaners.

The Tories' cuts are hitting the worst off areas the hardest. The examples below show how areas with the greatest needs are being asked to bear the greatest burden - there is a huge gap between some of the poorest and best-off areas.

has been slashed by 27 per cent - leaving councils without enough money to spend on providing the front line services we all rely on like children's centres, libraries, road maintenance and street cleaning.

Areas with the greatest needs are being asked to bear the greatest burden because David Cameron and Nick Clegg have chosen to abolish the money given to councils to support these areas.

To make matters worse the Tories have chosen to frontload the cuts rather than spread them sensibly over four years, so councils are hit first and in the first year. Even better-off areas are feeling a tight squeeze this year.

The Tory Threat

- ✗ Cuts affecting jobs and families in your area are coming direct from Downing Street to your street.
- ✗ The Tories tell us that 'we're all in it together'. But because they are going too far and too fast it's families who will be hit the hardest, and jobs that are at risk.

Labour: Your voice in tough times

- ✓ Labour is rooted in real people's lives, we will be the first line of defence against the unfair Tory cuts.
- ✓ Labour does not oppose every cut. We have to get the deficit down. But we would not go too far and too fast.
- ✓ We will be open and honest with people about the tough times ahead. We will not make promises we can't keep.

Your voice on growth and jobs

Ed Miliband has made this a priority because he believes getting the economy moving again with strong growth is not only good for local communities and the young unemployed but also the best way to reduce the deficit.

The Tory-led Government's decision to cut too far and too fast has threatened the already fragile economic recovery. And even though George Osborne's plan is hurting but not working, last week's Budget has shown that he is going to plough on regardless of the cost. George Osborne isn't solving the problem - he's in danger of making it worse.

When we left office last year the economy was starting to grow strongly again, inflation was lower and unemployment was falling.

But since the Tories and Lib Dems ripped up our plan to halve the deficit steadily over four years - and took a political decision to cut further and faster than any other major economy in the world - things have taken a serious turn for the worse.

We now know that the economy shrank at the end of 2010. Unemployment is at a 17 year high and youth unemployment is also at a record

After ten wasted months in office, this Conservative-led Government and their Liberal Democrat allies still have no plan for growth or jobs.

level - with almost a million young people out of work. That's the cost of their reckless gamble with our economic recovery.

And after ten wasted months in office, this Conservative-led Government and their Liberal Democrat allies still have no plan for growth or jobs. Businesses up and down the country that are feeling the strain and those people worried about their job or already looking for work need much

more from this Government.

Labour believes that getting more people into work and the economy growing strongly again is the best way to get the deficit down. We want a balanced plan to support jobs and get our economy moving again, while making sensible savings.

That's why we think it unfair that the Government is giving the banks a tax cut this year while raising VAT for everyone else. We're calling on the Government to repeat Labour's bank bonus tax this year and use the billions of pounds raised to create over 100,000 jobs, build 25,000 affordable homes, rescue construction apprenticeships and boost investment in businesses across the regions.

The last Government didn't get everything right. We should have ignored calls for deregulation - including those from the Tories - and had tougher controls on the banks which caused the crash and the deficit. Of course we don't oppose every spending cut. But we know the best way to get rid of Britain's deficit is to get people into work so they contribute to the economy, not add to the benefits bill.

Labour believes people up and down the country should use the local elections to send the Government a message - that they need to listen to Labour and rethink their reckless plans to cut too deep and too fast.

The Tory-Government needs a plan B that puts jobs and growth first before it's too late.

The Tory Threat

- ✗ The Conservatives need to rethink their plan to cut too far and too fast. They need to get a policy for jobs and growth, and do it fast.
- ✗ They've abandoned our plan to take sensible measures for cutting the deficit. Instead they have gone for deep spending cuts and a big hike in VAT. The consequence is that consumer confidence has plummeted, while unemployment and inflation are rising.
- ✗ They are giving the banks a tax cut this year while raising VAT for everyone else.

Labour: Your voice in tough times

- ✓ We have set out our plan to repeat last year's bank bonus tax this year to boost jobs and growth.
- ✓ With the £2bn that could be raised this year from repeating the tax, Labour believes the Government should provide £1.2bn to fund the construction of more than 25,000 homes across the country.
- ✓ £600m of the money raised should be used to establish a fund for youth jobs - helping more than 90,000 young people into work.
- ✓ We would also boost the Regional Growth Fund by £200m, supporting much needed investment up and down the country.

Your voice for police and stronger communities

Ed Miliband has made this a priority because he is proud of Labour's record of reducing crime by 43 per cent. He fears that cuts in front line policing and youth services, as well as to the local institutions which bind us all together, will put communities at risk.

Labour believes in keeping police on the beat - because that is the best way of keeping our communities safe.

The Tory-led Government is taking big risks with the safety of our communities by cutting police funding by over 20 per cent over the next four years. To make matters worse, the Government has chosen to frontload these cuts so that the biggest fall in funding is in the first two years. This is putting police Chief Constables in an impossible position.

Across the country police forces have already said that they are being forced to cut the jobs of around 10,000 officers, blowing apart the Tory and Lib Dem claim that they would protect frontline services. Thousands of police staff - who help to free up police officers from administrative tasks to be on the frontline and involved in crime

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prevention and investigations - will also be lost. This could result in fewer police on the street to deal with crime and anti-social behaviour and it could also have a serious impact on other vital services such as the specialist officers used to deal with domestic violence and prevent child abuse.

Cuts to other key local services for youth and neighbourhoods could



mean many young people will be left hanging around on street corners. The cuts ordered in Downing Street coming to your street will further damage the fabric of our local communities.

At the same time as cutting police numbers, the Tory-led Government is subjecting the police to an unwanted and unnecessary reorganisation, wasting £100 million on creating another tier of politicians through directly elected police commissioners. This spending is the equivalent of employing 600 full time police officers.

Labour does not oppose every cut. We agree we have to get the deficit down. Labour would make efficiency savings in the police, but we would not put front line services at risk by cutting too far, too fast.

In these tough times, you need Labour councillors who will protect communities and help young people get a fair chance in life. Labour will stand

up for vital local services such as our neighbourhood policing teams, support sensible savings and keep our promises.

The Tory Threat

- ✗ At the same time as cutting police numbers, the Tory-led Government is subjecting the police to an unwanted and unnecessary reorganisation, wasting £100 million on creating another tier of politicians through directly elected police commissioners. This spending is the equivalent of employing 600 full time police officers.

Labour: Your voice in tough times

- ✓ Labour would protect the police so they can protect you.
- ✓ In our manifesto we committed to giving the police the resources they need to protect police numbers. We were making tough choices elsewhere and our efficiency savings would have ensured that frontline policing was protected.
- ✓ We would not waste £100 million - the equivalent of 600 police officers - on elected police commissioners.

Your voice on the cost of living crisis facing families

Ed Miliband has made this a priority because he worries that the squeeze on people's living standards and the cuts in services shows this Tory-led Government does not understand the struggle that families face today.

2011 is going to be a tough year for families. Inflation is up, living standards are down and people are worried about their jobs. George Osborne's Budget has completely failed to meet Labour's test of helping people who are struggling with the rising cost of living.

The Tory-led Government's decision to break promises and raise VAT this year was the wrong tax rise at the wrong time. Cuts to tax credits and the freeze on child benefit which begin in April will hit families who are already struggling to make ends meet. For some families the cuts this year are the equivalent of a 5p rise in income tax. All while the banks are getting a tax cut this year.

Meanwhile, the cuts David Cameron is planning in Downing Street are set to land in your street soon. Local communities are being forced to bear the brunt: across the country Sure Start centres and libraries are closing;

local bus services, road maintenance and street cleaning are being cut back. Everything from nurseries to meals on wheels is under threat.

While every part of the country is being hit with cuts which are too deep

Case study

Durham: protecting the services families rely on most

Labour-run Durham Council is seeing its funding cut by way above average - £70 per head of population this year alone. Rather than take an axe to jobs and services like Tory and Lib Dem run Birmingham Council has, Durham held a major consultation with residents, through a survey, area partnership meetings, newspaper adverts and an online survey, on how best to use what money they had. In total more than 8,000 people took part across County Durham. The consultation set out how the Council's budget was currently spent, and asked which areas should be protected and which should be cut.

and too fast, the Tory-led Government has chosen to target the deepest cuts at areas where most people have low to middle incomes.

That's why areas like Greater Manchester, Merseyside, inner London, the West Midlands, Tyneside, Teeside and West Yorkshire are seeing funding for local services cut by the highest levels - while areas like Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Hampshire, and David Cameron's home county of Oxfordshire see the lowest cuts. But even in these areas which have been hit least hard, councils are having to withdraw funding from key services due to the speed of the cuts.

Labour can't promise that we can protect every service from the cuts that the Government is forcing on your local council. But in your area, Labour is doing everything we can to protect local jobs and the vital frontline services on which you rely.

Labour is working in communities around the country, with the public, council staff, community groups, and trade unions to find ways to keep services going in the face of the cuts which are being imposed on local authorities.

In many parts of the country - for Labour councils as well as others, there are difficult decisions to be made, thanks to the choices of the Tory-led Government. But unlike the Tories and Lib Dems, Labour values mean that, locally and nationally, we will always put the needs of the many before the privileged few.



The Tory Threat

- ✗ Cuts direct from Downing Street to your street will hit hard-pressed families in these tough times.
- ✗ Local families are being forced to pay the price for cuts that go too far, too fast, with the loss of 250 Sure Start centres expected and road maintenance, libraries and local bus services hit. Everything from nurseries to meals on wheels is under threat.
- ✗ The Tory led Government's cuts to councils are unfair - low and middle income neighbourhoods are hit harder than better off areas.
- ✗ The cuts in families' tax credits and child benefit which begin in April will affect those who are already struggling to make ends meet.

Labour: Your voice in tough times

- ✓ We are rooted in real people's lives.
- ✓ Labour knows there are difficult decisions to be made, but we will make them in a way that's fair and open, involving the communities we serve.
- ✓ Labour will work with the public, staff, community groups, and trade unions to come up with new ways to do things, so that as many services as possible are kept going.
- ✓ Our values mean we will always put the needs of the many before the privileged few.

Your voice for children and young people

Ed Miliband has made this a priority because he passionately believes in the Promise of Britain by which the next generation should always do better than the last. He fears that the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats are kicking away the ladders which young people once hoped to climb to a better future.

Securing the best education and opportunities for our young people is key to the future success of the next generation, our society and economy.

Schools improved hugely under Labour, we have the best generation of teachers ever and investment in the early years means that many more children are able to fulfil their potential. But we know there is more to do and that with an ageing population and other challenges like climate change, there is now a real fear that the next generation will find it harder to get on than the last.

Labour worked to make sure young people got the support and opportunities needed for a successful future. That's what Labour's Sure Start is about - over 3,500 centres across

the country giving quality advice and support to families and their young children. But this Tory-led Government has cut Sure Start funding and now hundreds of children's centres are under threat of closure. Labour councils are fighting to keep their Sure Start centres open. In Liverpool they've committed to keeping their centres open for at least another year in the hope of finding a way to fund them long-term.

The Tory-led Government has scrapped Labour's Education Maintenance Allowance which helped over 600,000 young people pay their bus fare to college and buy books so they could stay on in education and get good qualifications. Labour's guarantee of an apprenticeship place for every 16-18 year old is also being abandoned.

Careers advice centres, relied upon by millions of young people to get them into jobs and courses, are closing across the country due to savage cuts in council budgets. All this comes as youth unemployment figures have hit a record high.

Our schools are also being hit hard by the cuts. Not only has this Government scrapped Labour's Building Schools for the Future programme which was rebuilding schools across the country in desperate need of repair, it has also cut by 80% the money schools get to fix their classrooms, keep school buildings in working order and pay for essential computers and ICT equipment. The Tories and Liberal Democrats are returning our schools to the bad old days of crumbling classrooms and an old-fashioned curriculum not fit for the modern job market.

The opportunity for young people from all backgrounds to access higher education is also under threat from the decision by the Tories and Liberal Democrats to triple university tuition fees. Charging fees of up to £9,000 a year will mean that many teenagers will be put off applying or will make their choice of university based on which is the cheapest, rather than which offers the best course for them. Labour opposes a system in which the university you go to is based more on your finances than it is on your talent and potential.

Labour is standing up for young people and fighting against the cuts in education and training that go too far and too fast. The next generation need our help, they need good schools, help to stay on in education and training, and quality job prospects. This Government is betraying the Promise of Britain.

The Tory Threat

- ✗ The threat to Sure Start, the scrapping of Educational Maintenance Allowances and the Future Jobs Fund, as well as the trebling of tuition fees means that the ladders up which millions have climbed to a better future are being kicked away.

Labour: Your voice in tough times

- ✓ We would not have scrapped the Child Trust Fund, EMAs, and the Future Jobs Fund.
- ✓ We oppose the trebling of tuition fees.
- ✓ We believe in a society where the promise of Britain, that the next generation will do the better than the last, is not a privilege for the few but a reality for the many services as possible are kept going.
- ✓ Our values mean we will always put the needs of the many before the privileged few.





Vote Labour

May 5 is an opportunity for you to have your say.

This is the time that across England people will have a vote and it is your chance to protest about the Tory-led Government's savage and deep cuts in public services. You can show your concern about unemployment and your support for your local public services.

Through your vote you can protest about the Tories' threats to the NHS, the job losses and the risk they are taking with the economy

Wherever you are in England, you can look to your Labour candidate to stand up for your concerns. The Conservatives and Lib Dems will not stand up for local services - for it is their

Government which is forcing through the cuts which are threatening them.

So I hope that you will look at what your Labour candidate is saying and will vote Labour.

And I would ask you to consider joining us and becoming a member of the Labour Party. When we all work together - for fairness for all, for opportunities for young people, for first rate public services - then we can change things for the better.

Harriet Harman

Harriet Harman

Deputy Leader of the Labour Party

