

Standing Orders Committee Report No 1 – 2020 National Conference

Motions

The Standing Orders Committee (SOC) has received 8 Manifesto amendments, 7 policy motions and one report (Wales – not for voting) submitted for National Conference. All of them were received in time (although 2 were initially sent to the wrong address) and are considered to be in order. We recommend these are admitted to the agenda for conference.

The motions are reproduced below. They are numbered for ease of referring to them when submitting amendments. The SOC has attempted to group motions on the same Manifesto section or with a similar theme. Manifesto amendments were prioritised for this conference by the National Council (NC). However, other than that, the numbering and order of the motions does not imply that they will be taken in this order on the agenda of conference. The timing of debates and order of business for conference will be considered in a later report once all the items of business for the conference are known.

Amendments

Any amendments to these motions should be submitted by 24 October 2020 direct to the SOC at standingorders@leftunity.org

Composites

Branches with similar motions or motions on the same topic that do not appear to be counterposed are encouraged to composite. Composites should be agreed by the relevant submitters and sent by 24 October 2020 to the SOC at standingorders@leftunity.org

Motions for Left Unity Conference 2020

The motions received by the SOC are:

A. Manifesto Amendments

1. Pandemic – North London Branch

Proposed new section to the Manifesto

We live in an age of pandemics. We live in an age of environmental destruction and climate change. None of these are natural disasters – they all result from the way society and production is currently organised. The pandemic is one of many diseases emerging as a result of, late capitalism, including HIV, Avian Flu, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Ebola.

These new illnesses have all developed in a similar way and are linked to the processes of capitalist agriculture and environmental destruction which are also major contributors to climate change. The wanton destruction of nature by capital creates the perfect conditions for the emergence and spread of pandemics. The destruction of the tropical rain forests and the depletion of the oceans destroys the livelihoods of millions of poor people pushing them to desperation. The Amazon, the lungs of the world, is being cut down to make way for corporate livestock production. Capitalism drives the engine of environmental destruction and climate change. The COVID-19 virus and other viruses that emerge in this period are a product of a decaying economic system in its barbaric phase.

The pandemic is not just a global health crisis but it drives economic and social crises which express the structural crisis of the entire system of social reproduction. The pandemic exposes the deep wells of inequality which exist between peoples and classes throughout the world. In the metropolitan capitalist countries it is the working class, the poor and the vulnerable who bear the biggest burden of the virus. In the global south and the oppressed and colonised countries of the world the pandemic threatens the lives of millions. In those countries medical systems have been hollowed out and destroyed by the neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 90s. The privatisation programmes demanded by Western governments have been a catastrophe for public health. More than 1 billion people have no access to proper sanitation or running water. We need to ensure that our politics recognises the impact of the virus in respect of imperialism, of class, race and gender. Neo-liberal economic policies were then imposed wholesale across Europe and beyond, destroying the post-war welfare states, depriving public services of adequate funding and leaving health systems unfit to confront the pandemic.

Covid-19 shows us we need a complete transformation of the economy: sustainable, just and in the hands of the people. The problems humanity faces require systemic societal change. This economic system is broken and destroys the lives of millions. It cannot be made to work in their interests. It must be ended.

The priority is to do whatever is necessary to save life and stop the virus spreading. **We need to call for a shift of human labour, effort and production into areas such as healthcare, health equipment and food that will aid the effort for our collective survival.**

We believe that the response to the COVID-19 pandemic must adhere to these core principles:

(1) **Protect lives.** Protect lives through urgent, large-scale and informed investment in COVID-19 tests and tracing and life-saving medical supplies.

(2) **Protect workers.** Protect workers in essential occupations, including medical staff, with equipment, priority testing and distancing safeguards; ensure no one is forced to go out to do non-essential work; protect employment rights, jobs and income.

(3) **Protect living needs.** Protect access to food, shelter, a safe space to self-isolate, a liveable income and essential utilities for all.

(4) **Protect all the people.** Protect the most vulnerable and deprived to safeguard their own and everyone's lives; protect the ability of impoverished countries to feed

and care for their people; protect global access to cheap vaccines and life-saving medicine when developed.

(5) **Protect civil liberties.** Protect society from the misuse or unnecessary prolongation of emergency powers introduced to address COVID-19.

(6) **Protect from a recurrence.** Protect from inequalities and precariousness; from underinvestment in healthcare and welfare; and from the regime of corporate patenting of vital medicines. Those exacerbate pandemics and risk devastating effects for the global poor and marginalised in the COVID-19 crisis.

(7) **Protect Women.** Women are the ones who sustained the most efforts to keep us all safe and the society running: their essential role must be recognised. No solidarity or mutual aid could exist without the crucial role of women. Despite that, they are mostly affected by precarious working conditions, in particular nurses, cashiers or cleaners. The situation of women migrants in the camps or also in the host countries is especially hard. Women should not pay the highest price for this crisis: we need a concrete plan focusing on the protection of all women (workers, unemployed, migrants), especially when victims of any form of violence (particularly domestic violence).

2. Economics – Economics Commission

Amend the 'Economics' section of the manifesto as follows:

Delete first paragraph and insert:

"Pandemics, climate breakdown and financial crisis are a direct result of capitalist production for profit and not the needs of people and the planet. Workers internationally have paid the cost in deaths, chronic illness and austerity: we will not pay the cost again and demand a fundamental change to an eco/socialist economy to repair the damage and save the future."

Purple jobs paragraph 4 second sentence.

Delete after all in sentence after "support" and insert "for all who require it."

Child care paragraph 4 third sentence.

Delete sentence beginning "We would..."

And insert "We would introduce free lifelong learning for all from the earliest pre-school age".

Tax

Paragraph 9 first sentence At the end of the first sentence delete 'much more' and insert 'radically' instead, making the last part of the sentence read "while making the tax system as a whole radically progressive".

Paragraph 10, delete in the first sentence all from 'tax cuts'... and insert: "bringing in a graduated taxation on all companies starting at 10% for smallest and rising to 50% for the largest".

Paragraph 10 second sentence delete all and insert "We would introduce a radically progressive income tax. No tax earnings under £20,000 and thereafter steeply rising to 70%, for those earning over £75,000 a year. NI payments to be merged into the same progressive scheme as well as ending tax relief on pensions."

Living wage for all

Paragraph 14 first sentence delete £20 and insert '£15.00'; after 'strictly enforced' and before 'and adjusted regularly...' add "through workplace trade union representatives who will be legally recognized along with their union".

Add a new paragraph 15 "The state will guarantee a minimum income for all based upon the minimum income calculator: <https://www.minimumincome.org.uk/>

Trade unions paragraph 18

First sentence delete "We support calls for a..." and insert "We support a legally enforceable..."

3. Housing – North London Branch

Manifesto (as amended – changes in **Bold & Underlined**)

The housing crisis in Britain is getting worse. In London **and many other areas of the country** house **prices have soared** making it impossible for most workers to buy their own home. In the private sector rents are exorbitant and tenants forced to accept short-term lets with no security. Yet in other areas houses lie empty and people cannot sell their homes.

Across the country there is a chronic shortage of social housing and a rise in homelessness while landlords and property developers profit from the crisis.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has put many more people at risk of eviction through rent arrears and exposed the level of overcrowding in housing that make quarantine difficult.

Public Housing

Left Unity calls for a massive expansion of the publicly owned and democratically controlled housing sector, and for social housing to be allocated according to need. **This strategic and sustained programme of building social housing must be to the standards of universal design and accessibility.**

New council or social housing building **and refurbishment** programmes can be funded by government at very low interest rates. We will end the 'right to buy'. Renovation of the existing housing stock to make it energy-efficient and **environmentally sustainable** lies at the heart of our programme of green investment. **Council debts should be written off.**

A new publicly owned building corporation should be set up employing workers on permanent contracts to implement this.

Rent controls and better standards

Private Renters

Left Unity would reintroduce rent controls and security of tenure as used to exist in Britain and still exist in parts of the European Union such as Germany, and support the creation of tenants' cooperatives to run estates.

Local authorities should be given new powers of inspection and regulation of private rentals to ensure they are up to standard.

No evictions, no homelessness

We campaign for accommodation in genuinely affordable housing for all and would take measures to assist and protect from eviction those households trapped by debts or with mortgages they are unable to repay.

We support **renters' unions and** the campaigns to abolish the bedroom tax and in support of tenants fighting the threat of mass eviction and social cleansing, driving people out of inner-city areas.

We would reverse cuts in emergency accommodation for homeless people and maintain housing rights and benefits for the under-25s that are under threat from the government.

Left Unity would also use compulsory **acquisition** powers to take over vacant **properties** and legalise the squatting of empty property.

Planning and Land

The planning system must be reformed, with nationalisation of development rights, the introduction of mandatory housing standards, and a new National Spatial Plan. No more public land to be transferred to the private sector.

Policy Motion to Underpin Housing Manifesto (as amended with changes in **Bold & Underlined**)

Housing crisis

There are many aspects to the housing crisis in Britain:

- the bedroom tax,
- relentless attacks on and removal from democratic control of social/council housing,
- the virtual end to the concept of housing based on social need,
- the cost and insecurity of private rental,
- the prevalence of short term, insecure lets which damage the construction of viable communities and impact on children's schooling,
- the enforced movement of people from their local areas to wherever available housing is cheapest, thus breaking the links with the community and support,

- the consequent human misery and disruption to Social Services and Educational requirements arising from forced movements of vulnerable people, the shortage of mortgages and the lack of affordable housing,
- the unequal demands for income between Buy to Let and home ownership mortgages,
- the scandal of viable housing standing empty,
- the movement of right-to-buy houses into the private rental sector
- the use of housing as speculative capital once again,
- the rise in homelessness
- and the slowdown in the house building industry.

These all make housing a key policy issue for Left Unity.

House building

A publicly owned building corporation should be established, to ensure that planned targets for house-building are reached and to provide permanent trade union recognised employment and ongoing training for building workers. The capacity of local planning authorities must be supported and increased, including investment in training and education programmes for the planning sector.

Campaign issues

Conference resolves that Left Unity should campaign for:

- Dignity in housing for all.
- The right to accommodation for all.
- The immediate end to the bedroom tax and support for campaigns (including direct action and organisation in the communities) to see the bedroom tax abolished.
- A publicly owned and democratically controlled council house building **and refurbishment** programme funded by central government **grants, and borrowing at minimal interest rates.** **Council debts to the government should be written off.**

Conference therefore resolves to campaign on, and instructs future elected representatives to implement, the following:

- To increase the building and renovation of council, and truly affordable, housing to at least 250,000 units a year (**with at least 60% of this being Council Housing**). **Define 'affordable housing' as linked to the 'living wage'.**
- **End the Right to Buy public housing.**
- Planning for housing to be within an overall town or city plan to ensure full access to social and recreational facilities for residents.
- Planning of housing to be linked to plans for schools and health care, **local employment, public transport**, and to integrated provision for elders and to provision of outside play areas for children close to family housing.
- **No segregation between market and affordable housing including play areas. No to 'poor doors'.**

- Vacant accommodation should be brought into use, by compulsory **acquisition** if necessary. **Second homes to be subject to increased taxation.**
- Accommodation to be allocated on the basis of need, with right to life-long tenure and rents set at an affordable level within the living wage.
- The rights of short-term tenants in both public and private sector housing be protected with respect to length of rental contract and termination of tenancy, an end to 'no-fault' evictions. No eviction for arrears due to income reduction during a pandemic.
- Housing design to be aesthetically pleasing and to take account of existing designs of properties in the local area, with most social housing built to Parker Morris standards, with back and front gardens.
- Housing design to be eco-friendly and sustainably built, sourced and run, reducing the carbon footprint of all housing stock and improving energy efficiency. **Existing properties to be retro-fitted to reduce carbon emissions and energy use.** Heating for all houses to be included within a neighbourhood plan to aim for the most efficient use of fuel, including utilisation of solar, wind and ground source energy wherever possible, and to promote use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.
- **Planning to recognise the need to build accessible homes. High-quality accommodation, adapted to disabled and older people is needed more than ever** and provision to remodel older homes where needed to meet access issues. **Good quality housing for multi-generational households and a variety of household compositions must also be addressed**
- **Tenants (including private tenants) must have real democratic input into the design, management, refurbishment, and control of their homes.**
- To pilot the return of local authority building and renovation teams. **The wastage and profiteering created through deregulation and contracting out of public housing management, needs to be reversed and brought under democratic public control. The building workforce must be unionised, and proper apprenticeship systems developed.**
- To work to develop effective housing plans for flood prone areas.
- Every home to be equipped with fire alarms and sprinklers, **all flammable cladding materials to be removed immediately. Blocks above 3 stories to have two sets of exit stairs.**
- Rent control to be introduced on private landlords with rent increases only where necessary, in the context of repairing and refitting the rented property, can be demonstrated.
- Housing rights and benefits for under-25-year-olds to be respected and previous caps reversed, **ending the freeze on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) until a full review and reform of the benefit system can be undertaken.**
- The legal right to rent strikes to be reintroduced and tenants' organisations to be facilitated, **support for private renters' unions including Acorn and squatters' organisations**
- To work with co-ops **and self-build projects** within an overall local housing strategy.
- To provide housing for workers in the area in which they work.
- To protect the communities and allow people to live near family or friends.
- **The increase in domestic violence during the COVID-19 lockdown shows that women must be able to evict violent partners, have adequate shelters, and good alternative accommodation if needed.**
- Local Authorities to be given the responsibility to safeguard standards in the private sector and to intervene where required.

- Local Authorities to be responsible for regular inspection and approval of all rented properties with a grading given in relation to provided facilities, state of repairs and heat insulation.
- To provide legal aid for housing cases.
- To legalise squatting for emergency housing need or to bring vacant property back into use.
- To reverse cuts in emergency accommodation with the creation of a diversity of units that meet all needs **including self-isolation during a pandemic. To provide immediate and suitable emergency accommodation to all street homeless people regardless of immigration status.**
- **Housing first should mean access to housing for all with support for other issues so as to enable people to remain in their accommodation rather than circling back into the streets.**
- To at least equalise income requirements between buy to let and homeowner mortgages and to reverse all discrimination in favour of buy to let mortgages. **The Help to Buy scheme, and other policies which subsidise demand, inflating house prices and assisting only the well off, must be cancelled.**
- To use idle industrial capital to build sustainable and high-quality prefabricated housing as part of an integrated plan to address housing shortage.
- Any private housing development to be obliged to provide some **genuinely** affordable housing in the development. **An end to the ‘viability’ loophole that lets developers dodge their contribution to more affordable homes.**
- **Housing Associations must be social housing providers not commercial property developers. Developments by Housing Associations should contain at least 75% genuinely affordable social homes. Housing Associations’ area of operations should be restricted to certain well-defined geographical regions and their size restricted to reflect the communities they purport to serve. At least 70% of the board of a registered provider above a certain size must be elected by their residents and junior members of staff.**
- **Secure sites must be provided in every area for Travellers. Navigation authorities and riparian local authority landowners must stop the social cleansing of boat dwellers and instead set up a network of free moorings where boat dwellers can stay with decent facilities for 14 to 28 days without fear of enforcement, punitive charges or eviction**

Left Unity calls for a radical reform of the planning system, nationalisation of development rights, the introduction of mandatory housing standards, a new National Spatial Plan to provide a coherent and holistic strategic approach to planning for major housing and infrastructure investment and a large scale state construction programme, in partnership with local authorities and local communities, focusing on the regeneration of urban areas. All surplus public sector land put to use in order to support the programme. **Permitted Development Rights will be reviewed removing the right to convert offices to housing without a planning application. No public land to be sold or transferred to the private sector. The state should play a much greater role in the land market, capturing the unearned uplift in land value when planning permission is granted.**

Left Unity’s housing policies will respect the needs and struggles of LGBTQ people, many of whom are estranged from their families, and have been hit by cuts and will be forced on to the street if the Conservatives scrap housing benefit for the under

25s. Left Unity notes increasing homelessness and 'sofa surfing' by LGBTQ youth because of cuts in emergency accommodation and refuges. No one should ever have to sleep on the streets or sofa surf. To ensure that the needs of LGBTQ, the elderly from all communities, and other minority groups are respected in housing and to build at least one LGBTQ shelter-extra care units in every major conurbation.

In the short run we want a crash course in environmentally **sustainable home building with a preference for houses, refurbishment of existing homes**, and appropriation and renovation of empty properties, which will revive communities.

In the longer term, a determined program of building good houses for cheap rents will bring us up against the heart of the property relations of capital, mainly the private ownership of land and the commodification of property

Left Unity recognises that there is much more than housebuilding needed to humanise and truly civilise our cities and wishes to work with international political campaign 'The Right to the City'.

4. Migration – North London Branch

Amend the Migration section of the manifesto as follows:

At the end of para 2 add:

Many such professionals refuse to act as proxy immigration officers and some have set up organisations like Docs Not Cops and Patients Not Passports. We support 100% such initiatives and campaign to make the trade unions defend their members who refuse and encourage such refusal. Defiance Not Compliance!

Move the last sentence in para 8 to paragraph 10 adding the word so and make it the second sentence and add the word so. And add another sentence about the points system. So para 10 reads:

We are opposed to all laws which make people illegal because of who they are, where they or their parents were born, the colour of their skin or what language they speak. So there can be no 'fair' or 'non-racist' immigration controls. The Government pretends that their proposed Points System is meritocratic but what it does is put an extra test of suitability to the needs of capital on top of a structure which is inherently racist and discriminatory. Existing 'illegal' immigrants should be given amnesty to stay, work and pay taxes so they can contribute to the economy. We oppose deportations and welcome people fleeing war and poverty.

5. Equalities – North London Branch

Insert a Paragraph at the end of the sub-Section on Anti-Racism (in the section on Equalities), on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are the most persecuted of European Citizens in Europe, suffering huge discrimination in education, health, employment and violence from the far right.

In this country there is an offensive against Irish and Romani Travellers spear headed by the Government who are intent on making it a criminal and arrestable offence for unauthorised stopping on land. This would destroy their way of life.

Left Unity supports the campaign against this proposed legislation and against all persecution of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

You can find our full policy adopted at the Left Unity Conference in June 2018 ([link?](#))

6. Environment – Bob Whitehead & Allan Todd

Amend the Environment section of the manifesto as follows:

Add -

"Local transport systems should be free at the point of use." at the end of the 2nd paragraph under "Environment/Reduce Energy Use" <http://leftunity.org/manifesto-2015-environment/>

7. Education – North London

The section titled 'No to Academies and Free Schools' in the Education section of the manifesto will be amended as follows (**Changes in Bold & Underlined**):

No to Academies, **Free Schools and Fee Paying Schools**

All academy and free school funding agreements will be rescinded. **Fee paying for schools will be abolished.** Academies, **free schools and fee paying schools will be removed from the control and/or ownership of private organisations, they and all their property and resources** will be fully integrated within a single, statutory model of school governance, and funded by local authorities according to a national formula.

Left Unity would ~~end the charitable status of fee-paying schools, and also~~ withdraw state funding from schools or colleges which exclusively promote any one religious belief system, including Christianity, unless such establishments have an open, secular enrolment policy.

8. International – North London Branch

The 'Peace Not War Spending' part of the International section of the manifesto will be amended as follows (Changes to the existing manifesto in **Bold & Underlined**)

Peace Not War Spending

We stand for peace and equality between peoples. **We oppose the exploitation of other countries for economic gain and we oppose imperialist intervention, whether, military, political or economic, and we stand against war.**

We support nuclear disarmament – in Britain and worldwide – and a drastic reduction of military expenditure for the benefit of social spending, green jobs and sustainable development. **We want a high profile programme of defence job diversification. In the light of the recent rapid and effective switch from military production to ventilators and PPE by arms manufacturers to help with the Covid crisis, we have seen that with political will this can be achieved.**

We want Britain to be independent, no longer tied to the 'special relationship' with the United States. To help make this possible, we call for Britain to leave the nuclear-armed military alliance NATO, to cancel the US/UK Mutual Defence Agreement and withdraw from the US/NATO Missile Defence system. **Trident and its replacement must be scrapped and Britain must sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.**

To this end we actively campaign against nuclear weapons and war and oppose foreign intervention in other people's countries. We want to see Britain's military and emergency forces reconfigured around a new definition of security needs, peacekeeping and international humanitarian aid work. We also support fundamental reform of the UN and its institutions to help bring an end to the domination of the world by a small number of powerful states.

B. Policy Motions

9. Disability Policy - Sandra Daniels & Bob Williams-Findlay

Left Unity Disability Policy positions are developed through its Disabled Members Caucus which exists to support and help educate disabled members whilst working with the wider organisation to understand the nature of disabled people's social oppression.

Disabled people, internationally and nationally, have redefined disability as the social restrictions imposed on top of impairments by the *nature* of given societies. This is the social approach – which is also intersectional by nature – is supported by the Left Unity Disabled Members Caucus and informs our practice.

The key policy positions Left Unity Disabled Members Caucus will continue to develop and enhance:-

Access, Social Inclusion and Full Participation for Disabled People

- We believe past and existing legislation on anti-discrimination and equality has failed to address the denial of access, social inclusion and full participation of disabled people into mainstream activities. This failure is the result of a culmination of various ideological and practical factors including the individualistic legal approach to redress, the existing definition of disability and the absence of enforcement for protecting disabled people from discrimination and systemic social exclusion.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People offers a framework for the betterment of the lives of disabled people and should be used to replace the oppressive elements of the Equality Act 2010.
- Social inclusion and the full participation of disabled people into mainstream structures and activities will always be problematic in an exploitative market economy. As socialists we should sow no illusions, but nevertheless fight for inclusive policies and practice that challenge social restrictions, forced segregation and inequalities. We need to ensure that our own policies and practice do not exclude or marginalise disabled people. Measures need to be taken to increase the representation and participation of disabled people in all avenues of life. The slogan, “Nothing about us, without us” must inform our praxis.

Improving Welfare Support:

- There must be an end to the neoliberal assault on the welfare system which includes halting paying private firms massive amounts of public money to carry out degrading assessments which are not fit-for-purpose. It is inadequate to hold the position that an overhaul the Work Capability Assessment and ensuring sick and disabled people are involved in reviewing its effectiveness will end the discriminatory way the Benefit System operates. We support disabled people’s demand that the Work Capability Assessment be scrapped and replaced by an assessment process that has both health and social contexts in relation to ill health and impairment. This should include policy recognition that there will always be disabled people who are unable or too ill to work.

- We would expect an immediate end to punitive benefit sanctions which have led to deaths and increasing poverty. Ensure that the detrimental changes to how people within the Work-Related Activity Group are stopped and ensure there is no conditionality of JSA or ESA WRAG on seeking treatments and no linkage with treatment and receipt of benefits.
- We reject completely the continuation of the Personal Independence Payment which was always ideologically driven and inherently oppressive. The methodology of PIP promotes body fascism and is at complete odds with UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People. The basic principles behind the Disabled Living Allowance remain valid and should inform the basis of assessing the extra cost incurred while living with significant ill health and/or impairment. The DLA daily living component was not intended to pay for Local Authorities' "care charges".
- We call into question the failed policies of countless governments who have wasted public money on scheme after scheme to support disabled people into work. The major benefactors of these schemes are not disabled people, but the voluntary sector, local authorities and charity organisations that run them. Without a fresh appraisal of what constitutes work, the nature of workplace environments and identifying the means of supporting disabled people into, and maintaining their place, at work; any new scheme will simply repeat the pattern of past practice which sets disabled people up to fail.
- Left Unity notes the interest shown by the Labour Party and sections of the disabled communities in discussions around Basic Income and some form of a disabled persons citizens' income. We would urge extreme caution in going down either of these routes.
- We fully support a publicly funded benefit system and oppose any introduction of insurance schemes.

Independent Living and Self-Determination:

Left Unity supported the campaign by disabled people to stop the closure of the Independent Living Fund; however we recognise that this was only accessed by a minority of disabled people who want support to live in their own communities and have control over their lives. The neoliberal agenda under three governments has changed the meaning of independent living and has locked it into the capitalist market economy.

- We support the Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance’s position paper on the creation of a National Independent Living Support Scheme. Any campaign to address the crisis within Social Care must work with disabled people’s organisations to address the issue of disabled people having the legal right and means to live independent lives. More attention has to be paid to the UNCRDP method of ensuring human rights and the 12 pillars of independent living need to be central goals underpinning new policies on independent living. Left Unity will champion the need to clarify the relationship between independent living and current social care provision and policies.
- There should be a root and branch review of all aspects of social support given the acute crisis within social care and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- We call for end to zero hour contracts for home care staff.
- Left Unity supports the demands which seek to:
 - Take services back into public ownership; ending privatization
 - Increase resources through taxation and free delivery
 - Improve services, pay and conditions
- A future scheme must provide better support to family carers both financially and practically.

Access to Health and Support Services:

National Health Service funding must be protected and all forms of privatisation of our NHS should end with immediate effect.

- Funding for mental health services including crisis teams should be protected and where necessary increased to former and safer levels. There should be an end of rationing of primary Mental Health care services and treatment tailored to needs.
- More funding and investment is needed for children’s adolescent mental health services.
- GP and nurse training should include compulsory training on mental health conditions and treatment.

Housing

The national policy of Left Unity is to demand that the country wide chronic shortage of social housing, the rise in homelessness, and the practice of landlords and property developers profiting from the housing crisis are tackled.

- We call for a massive expansion of the publicly owned and democratically controlled housing sector and for social housing in the first instance to be allocated according to need. This strategic and sustained programme of building social housing must be to the standards of universal design and accessibility.
- New council or social housing building programmes must be funded by government at low interest rates.

Education:

- The Disabled Members Caucus is not currently able to express a position regarding the educational needs of disabled children and adults beyond a rejection of an education system which unnecessarily excludes and marginalises them. We do however demand a reversing of the harmful policies of both the Coalition and Conservatives governments which have increased segregation and basic rights to educational choice.
- The Disabled Students' Allowance needs to be restored to a level where it fulfils its original aim and supports *all* disabled students who encounter extra cost within learning.

Employment and Socially Meaningful Activities:

Left Unity supports the demands of disabled people's organisations for:

- A comprehensive plan of action is developed with disabled people and their organisations to tackle the discrimination and exclusion disabled people face in employment and the labour market.
- Access to Work (AtW) to be extended to include unpaid voluntary positions and the changes that limit and reduce the support provided through AtW should be reversed.
- The Supreme Court held in 2017 that the legislation which previously required employees to pay for submitting an employment claim, was unlawful. Since that time claimants do not have to pay any fees to lodge a case at an employment tribunal or to attend a final hearing, but there are other costs

involved. The law used to be straightforward enough that employees would often represent themselves. But it has become increasingly complex and most people will choose legal representation to guide them expertly through the process, and to represent their interests in the tribunal. If a member of a trade union or have legal expenses insurance (which is often an option add-on to a home insurance policy), this may cover legal costs.

- There is an urgent need to acknowledge that employment is not an option for all disabled people. Disabled and nondisabled socialists should consider what constitutes 'work' beyond the confines imposed by the capitalist system. To look at ways of increasing disabled people's social worth and seek acknowledgement of their existing contributions to society. This requires a better understanding of what is meant by 'socially meaningful activities'.

Access to Justice:

- All legal aid changes must be repealed and disabled people's rights to access justice must be restored.
- Left Unity believes the issue of Disability Hate Crime remains a major concern and calls for a review the legal definitions associated with Disability Hate Crime as we believe they are too narrow and ignore key aspects of why disabled people become targets of hate.
- Key aspects of the UNCRDP need to be brought into UK laws.
- Ensure restoration of funding for advice and advocacy services such as Citizens Advice.

10.COVID-19 Pandemic - Felicity Dowling & Jim Hollinshead

Left Unity recognises

1. that intensive animal farming in previously uncultivated areas is a major source of novel pathogens, and a likely origin of Covid 19, and similar viruses are likely to follow it.
2. That the pandemic response in this country was damaged by years of attacks on the NHS, and by Government negligence in failing to respond in a timely manner.
3. That a proper publicly owned and publicly administered system to Find Test Track Isolate and effectively support is essential.
4. That the situation in schools and universities is dangerous and requires the above testing system to be in place, and for significantly more funding

allowing the use of other public spaces for education to allow spacing, and to set up effective distance learning.

5. That university teaching should be online with proper investment for staff and students to make this work and that student rent should be waived.
6. That the mutual aid groups that have been set up should continue and be expanded with help from the trade union movement.
7. That trade unions in the workplace, both formal and informal, must be strengthened by campaigning and coordinated activist involvement.
8. That cooperation on an EU level is important to defeat the virus.
9. That sick pay should be at a level that allows families to feed themselves.
10. That rent be waived and evictions for rent arrears halted in the pandemic.
11. That the homeless be housed in the pandemic, using unoccupied flats and hotels.
12. That an emergency housing plan be immediately implemented.
13. That NHS major reorganisation must be halted.
14. That the contribution of women to fighting this pandemic and to keeping families and communities together must be recognised.
15. That family allowances be re-introduced at a level to ensure no child goes hungry.
16. That women's refuges should be expanded, and serious challenges be made to male violence.
17. That a historically large sustainable job creation scheme should be produced urgently
18. That a food programme that does not use intensive farming, nor the use of virgin land be implemented.
19. That our elders and vulnerable people with disabilities be properly protected, and that Independent Living Services, run in cooperation with disabled people, be fully funded.
20. That Left Unity rejects the idea that herd immunity is any solution to this or any other pandemic, and equally rejects as unworkable the idea that those people with existing illnesses should be forced to "shelter" whilst everyone else gets on with their life.
21. That this country appeals to Cuba for emergency aid from their doctors.
22. That socialist expert groups should organise on each of these topics
23. That Left Unity continues to campaign for the ideas of socialism and for a scientific bases for the pandemic response.

11. Maternity Care in the NHS - Felicity Dowling & Jim Hollinshead

- This conference recognises the scale and importance of maternity care in the NHS. It recognises that underfunding and staff shortages mean that this country is not even in the top ten countries for safety in maternity
- We recognise the work last year of the Defend NHS Maternity Services National Meeting and support the call for a further such meeting.
- We salute the unremitting under paid work of the staff in midwifery.

- We oppose cuts and closures and offer support to all who are campaigning to protect maternity
- We oppose privatisation of maternity care in any shape or form.
- We equally oppose the rhetoric that on the one hand blames midwives for mistakes but refuses to recognise the over work of these staff. We demand full public consultation on the future of maternity care and oppose the situation were repeated public enquiries do not produce real improvement.
- We also demand that free maternity care must be available to every woman in this country, without charge and mourn the loss of life caused by charges for maternity care.
- We demand action to make childbirth far safer for BAME women
- We demand full funding and bursaries at a living wage level for all who train to be midwives. We need to train sufficient midwives and obstetricians to make attending to women in childbirth more relaxed and far safer
- We demand better mental health support for women, and note the crucial point of need during and after pregnancy
- We demand that fertility treatments are expanded rather than be cut
- We demand that a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy be protected
- We demand more research into less harmful forms of contraception.
- We mourn the death of babies born in prison without adequate maternity care and support the call for the release of all pregnant prisoners. We call for better health care in prisons.

12. Labour Party - Oliver Charleston

1. This Conference notes with great concern:

a) Keir Starmer's July 22 2020 apology and payment of 'damages' in six figures to the former Labour Party employees who participated in the dreadful and one-sided BBC Panorama programme on alleged antisemitism in the Labour Party.

b) That the legal advice received by the Labour Party reportedly stated that the party had a very good chance to win the libel case pursued by the 'whistleblowers' featured in the programme.

c) That in the wake of this settlement, there are reports of "at least 42 further civil claims" against the party (Daily Telegraph July 24 2020), among them from BBC journalist John Ware and former general secretary Iain McNicol.

d) That the settlement has been used to demand that Starmer withdraws the whip from Jeremy Corbyn.

e) That the 'leaked report' quite clearly shows that there was an organised and concerted campaign by right-wingers in the party to undermine and sabotage Jeremy Corbyn and the left.

2) This Conference believes that:

a) This is a clear misuse of Labour Party funds and an insult to all Labour members. We are outraged that Labour member's dues have been used to pay 'damages' to people on the right of the party, some of whom have used their privileged position in the party to mobilise not just against Corbyn, but the whole party and its members. They have brought the Labour party into disrepute.

b) This settlement gives us even less confidence that the result of the Forde Enquiry into the leaked Report will be anything other than a politically motivated whitewash.

c) Keir Starmer has proven that he is not acting on behalf of Labour Party members and therefore Left Unity wishes to state that we have no confidence in him as leader of the Labour Party and completely condemn the direction he is taking the Labour Party.

3) Our Conference therefore call on the Labour Party's National Executive Committee (NEC) and Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs to fight hard for the following course of action:

a) The immediate publication of the full legal advice received over the BBC Panorama "whistleblower" libel case.

b) The immediate publication of the 'leaked Report' and all emails, Whatsapp messages and other relevant data on which it is based.

c) An urgent review of why Labour Party members' money could be spent on such a questionable and clearly political settlement.

d) A rejection to settle any further claims and a commitment to fight those suing the party politically.

e) The repudiation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) misdefinition of anti-Semitism, along with its so-called examples, which deliberately conflates anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism;

f) The repudiation of the Board of Deputies' 'Ten Pledges', to which Keir Starmer has signed up to. They are an attack on free speech, and, if fully implemented, would lead to massive (self-)censorship and the suspensions and expulsions of the thousands of Labour Party members who dare to stand in solidarity with those wrongly accused of antisemitism such as Chris Williamson.

13. People's Republic of China - Oliver Charleston

1. This Conference notes with great concern:

a) The human rights situation in China has continued to sharply deteriorate; several civil society activists and human rights defenders are being detained, prosecuted and sentenced on the basis of vague charges such as 'subverting state power' and 'picking quarrels and provoking trouble'. In China freedom of speech and information is by far only formally guaranteed and follows a Chinese state definition and has explicitly to be carried out in full accordance to the constitutional and legal rules adopted by the NPC and governmental as well as juridical system bodies. a high number of journalists, bloggers and independent voices have been imprisoned or silenced.

b) The Chinese government passed a set of new laws that cast public activism and peaceful criticism of the government as state security threats, strengthen censorship, surveillance and control of individuals and social groups and deter individuals from campaigning for human rights with regard, in particular, to the State Security Law, the Counterterrorism Law, the Cybersecurity Law, and the Foreign NGO Management Law.

c) In 2014, the State Council of China announced detailed plans to create a Social Credit System with the aim of rewarding behaviour that the Communist Party considers financially, economically and socio-politically responsible, while sanctioning non-compliance with its policies which is now implemented. Control and the compulsory mass collection of citizens' data also targets and affects Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other ethnic minorities.

d) Continued reports suggest that human rights situation in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous, Tibet Region and Hong Kong is deteriorating, with allegations coming from multiple sources, including activist groups such as Human Rights Watch, Chinese Human Rights Defenders, Amnesty International and UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

e) After repeatedly denying the arbitrary detention of Uyghurs and Kazakhs in internment camps the Chinese government admitted running "vocational education centres", where individuals receive "professional training".

f) The Chinese government has refused numerous requests from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID), the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN Special Procedures mandates to send independent investigators to Xinjiang; whereas UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet recently again requested UN access to China to check on reports of disappearances and arbitrary detentions, particularly in the Xinjiang Uighur autonomous region.

2) This Conference believes that:

a) That the PRC must not ignore its international obligations as a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Charter and as an active participant in UN fora.

b) With the growing importance of UK-China relations in a changing world, including in the area of human rights and democratic freedoms, it is incumbent that the issue of human rights is included in all areas of trade, commerce and diplomacy.

c) China's responsibilities as an emerging global power and calls on the Beijing authorities to ensure in all circumstances respect for international law, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the UN Charter and Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other international instruments signed or ratified by China.

3) Our Conference therefore call for the following course of action:

a)Calls on the Chinese Government to respect its constitutional and legal human rights and democratic freedoms rules and standards in particular with regard to Article 4, which protects national minorities; Article 35, which protects the freedoms of speech, the press, assembly, association, procession and demonstration; Article 36, which recognizes the right to freedom of religious belief; and Article 41, which guarantees the right to criticize and make suggestions regarding any state organ or functionary.

b) Calls on China to grant access to all parts of the country, in particular Uyghur, other Turkic Muslim and Tibetan areas, by independent international human rights experts, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and relevant UN Special Rapporteurs.

c) Urges China to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to ensure its full implementation, including adapting its legislation as necessary; calls on China to end the abuse of national security legislation as a means of criminalizing the work of human rights defenders, freedoms of expression, association, religion or belief and to clearly differentiate between peaceful dissent and violent extremism;

d) Criticises growing practices by a number of states, with various different political order, to organize compulsory mass collection of citizens' data resulting in state control over social and political life of their societies; notes that Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other ethnic minorities in China are also concerned.

14. Republican Democracy for England - Steve Freeman and Joseph Healy

This conference recognises the different political conditions facing the working class in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We recognises that Left Unity (Wales) has developed a manifesto for Wales and that something similar would be required to revive Left Unity (Scotland). However in recognition of the democratic

deficit in England, the crisis of democracy facing the UK, and the rise of English nationalism, Left Unity must develop a policy for England to fill the vacuum which can or will be exploited by the nationalist right in England. We propose the following;

- i) Left Unity supports republican values of liberty, equality, solidarity and the principles of democracy, popular sovereignty and self-determination. Our immediate aim is to establish the commonwealth of England organised as a self-governing democratic, secular and social republic with a written constitution agreed by the people. Citizenship should be voluntary and based on residence not ethnicity and acquired from birth or freely after six months residence.
- ii). Left Unity supports a parliament or national assembly for England based on the sovereignty of the people elected annually by proportional representation with MPs accountable and subject to recall and paid the average national income or wage. This new parliament should be located in the centre of the country.
- iii) Left Unity therefore stands for the end of the United Kingdom and opposes the present constitution based on the sovereignty of the Crown-in-Parliament and the Union of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We are for the abolition of the monarchy, Privy Council, Houses of Lords and Commons and for the disestablishment of the Church of England.

15. Republican democracy for Europe - Steve Freeman and Matthew Hurry

Left Unity recognises that a majority of the people of England voted to leave the EU for a variety of reasons including the case made by English nationalism for ‘taking back control’ and ‘restoring national sovereignty’. English republicanism is not narrow nationalism or chauvinism but is part of a European democratic movement, which will lead to a federal republic of Europe. This republican United States of Europe will recognise every European nation (for example Catalonia, Scotland and Wales) with the guarantee of the rights of nations to self-determination.

C. Reports – Not for voting

Left Unity Wales – report to conference 2020.

Background

Left Unity Wales has policy responsibility over powers devolved to Wales and the importance of considering the political position of Wales as a country. We will be submitting a new Left Unity Wales manifesto to the UK conference as a report of what we have agreed for Wales.

In 2014 we agreed this Welsh manifesto:

<https://chwithunedigcymru.blogspot.com/2014/12/left-unity-wales-policy-statement.html> whilst it is distinctive in these devolved aspects, it is an addition to the UK policies of Left Unity and is complementary to them.

Since that time much has happened and we also started a process of open workshops last year (2019) around the theme 'Let's build a socialist programme' which involved ourselves and other socialists in Wales in developing policies for our country. The outcome of this work can be seen on this website:

<https://buildsocialistprogramme.blogspot.com/>.

The following proposal draws upon this existing work as well as taking account of more recent events and discussions.

Left Unity Wales 2020 - draft political policy. [Draft no 2]

This Left Unity Wales manifesto applies the key aims of Left Unity to the devolved powers of Wales. Here are the aims of Left Unity: <https://leftunity.org/about/>

A key statement is:

“Left Unity stands for equality and justice. It is socialist, feminist, environmentalist, anti-racist and against all forms of discrimination.

We are socialist because our aim is to end capitalism. We will pursue a society where the meeting of human needs is paramount, not one which is driven by the quest for private profit and the enrichment of a few. We are in favour of a radical system where democratic control extends across the economy. The natural wealth, and the means of production, distribution and exchange should be owned in common and democratically run by and for the people as a whole, rather than being owned and controlled by a small minority to enrich themselves.”

As this statement implies we are international socialists and have since the last manifesto become full members of the Party of the European Left:

<https://www.european-left.org/>. Within this context we support national self-determination as being a key foundation of successful internationalism and consequently support a referendum on Welsh independence and would argue the case for a sovereign democratic socialist republic.

The current context of the crises of capitalism

Capitalism is in a deep global structural crisis which some refer to as 'catastrophe capitalism'. At the core capitalism as a system of reproduction is experiencing a crisis of profitability which in the absence of the ability to plan an international answer leaves capital trying to extract and protect value through increased exploitation of people, the planet, extremes of competition, speculation and corruption. Consequent crises come in waves and increasingly international, such as the 2007/08 financial

collapse, the Covid pandemic and at the same time ongoing increased exploitation produces continuing overlapping barbaric experiences for people and destruction of the planet's climate.

Time is not on our side - we cannot wait for another left leader to arise in the Labour Party.

Fictitious capital which was at the heart of the 2007/08 crisis is still ever expanding, runaway global warming could be our experience within eight years, Covid is just one of a series of created by the 'metabolic rift', states are revealed as lacking effective policies to cope, imperial wars are moving from the contained wars of proxy and could engulf all nations, the extreme right is gaining ground in the context of these national conflicts.

As people, as the working class, we have the ability to say no more. Acting politically and collectively we have the ability to take control of the process of production and related financial processes to stop the destructive competition and instead plan production for need and not profit on an international scale.

A project to transform society on a democratic eco/socialist basis requires a programme with policies about what such a radical change would mean. A programme is an essential part of building and winning people to politically oppose capitalism as a system. Developing resistance and fightbacks must be more than just saying 'no' a key ingredient to inspire people to action is to propose clear alternative policies. A programme is centrally about developing international working class unity. Capital seeks to divide us in every possible way, to destroy the idea of the working class: a programme provides the basis of overcoming those divisions and helps to create the essential unity. In short, a programme can provide hope for the future.

It is also essential that a programme relates to and is an essential part of workers' concerns and experiences and this requires a social process of open involvement in decision making and an ongoing review by socialists and members of the class. It was never acceptable that the 'party' was all knowing and far seeing it is essential that policies are developed with as wide as possible active involvement of workers who wish to resist. Even though the final decision about a programme is taken by the democratic processes of a party, that programme still needs to be tested in ongoing debate and action.

Making a programme into an economic and social reality requires taking power. Every avenue and possibility need to be used. Electorally, direct action, building out from existing collective organisations such as trade unions, cooperatives, campaigns, community organisations, social networking, and other forms of alternative communication. Demanding that the market and the private power, ownership and associated markets of capitalism are systematically rolled back through ending privatisation and extending public control of banks, finance, and the means of production. Workers power can only be exercised from below through an open, ongoing system of accountability and democracy. We have to constantly demand and fight to put that into practice. We support complete openness and accountability

in every form of organisation and governance - no state or commercial secrets; full proportional representation, distribution of state power down and between institutions such as national right of self-determination and independence for Wales, international institutions based on free and sovereign socialist states agreeing to work jointly, accountable and democratically together. We are republicans and support the end of any role of the monarchy or inheritance in a democratic political system.

The Economy

See also: <https://buildsocialistprogramme.blogspot.com/2019/05/an-alternative-economy-and-climate.html>

A successful challenge to capitalist injustice, inequality and power must involve international action at least across Europe. It is however possible to start that challenge within the UK and as part of that, in Wales.

Austerity, Brexit and the pandemic are crises created by capitalism and we do not accept that the working class should pay for problems we did not create. A direct action challenge must be consistently mounted and argued for to oppose all aspects of these policies. This means mobilising and linking all the forms of collective resistance by trade unions, communities and anti cuts and privatisation campaigns like the People's Assembly. Direct action would be even more effective if elected political leaders were prepared to vote no to cuts and directly challenge the government: this has not happened in Wales allowing the Tory government to make real terms cuts of around £5 billion to the public sector and welfare spending in Wales – over £6,600 per average household. This is in addition to the poor deal that Wales has under the Barnett formula. Left Unity stands for fighting every cut and the need to mobilise people throughout Wales to put this demand into effect.

The ability to challenge is blunted by anti trade union laws and employer hostility. All Welsh public institutions should be good employers aiming to prevent the operation of these laws by: recognising trade unions; encouraging 100% membership; supporting collective bargaining; abolish zero hour contracts; pay a living wage; achieve equal pay; and insist that the Welsh Government through new laws, grant and loan awarding and procurement any private organisations also operate with these rights.

Democratic collective ownership and control is the key to an alternative economic policy to move production toward need and not profit and to save our ecosystem.

In Wales this would mean

Defending and supporting public sector provision in every way: opposing cuts and privatisation and extending the provision of services to fulfil basic needs and care. Democracy should be extended to include the direct involvement of workers and service users alongside councillors. We do not support 'Trojan' horse privatisation

through social enterprises or cooperatives where these are used as a cover to undertake privatisation of public services through a process of contracting out.

Sustaining an economy that serves needs and is not vulnerable to capital flight requires collective ownership and control to 'anchor capital' or value that has been created by workers. Direct nationalisation is possible such as at Cardiff Airport or real cooperatives where appropriate. Currently in Wales the Airport management has been handed over to an unelected board and Dwr Cymru often cited as a coop example is a top down controlled management buyout. Both should become democratic enterprises – a worker's coop in the case of the airport and a consumer / worker cooperative in the case of Dwr Cymru. Another route is through worker start-ups and buyouts. About one third of all small businesses change hands through 'succession' over a 10-year period – funding should be available for workers cooperative to take over at this time.

The Welsh Government should aim to 'pick winners' in terms of organisations that provide for need and the ecosystem - see doughnut economics: <https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/>. It is also possible to help the development of activities that can sustain a world leading niche through knowledge cooperatives as Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS).

Controlling value in terms of generation and raising finance would be critical in any collective Welsh economic initiative. A Welsh central bank and an investment fund controlled by the Welsh government, public sector bodies, the trade union movement and small savers would help to both raise funds and support initiatives. The Quebec Solidarity fund would help to provide some guidance as to how this might work: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fonds_de_solidarit%C3%A9_FTQ

Ultimately the guide for the Wales economy is not the 'economy' expressed simply as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or value added but also the extent to which wealth and income are evenly distributed; that poverty is abolished; people are healthier and live longer and have full access to high quality housing, education and care and have the democracy that enables them to direct their own future. The Welsh Government should immediately undertake a 'needs' based review of the whole public sector provision in Wales, to determine what is required to fulfil these aims over the shortest possible time. The review should be democratically based involving trade unions, communities and all the people of Wales, not just professionals.

The Welsh Government should use and extend its taxation powers to radically reduce income inequality and introduce as many measures as possible as are included in this list: <https://chwithunedigcymru.blogspot.com/2016/11/a-workers-budget-would-look-like-this.html>

The Welsh Government should seek control over social welfare and ensure that all of working age are covered by a guaranteed minimum income: <https://www.minimumincome.org.uk/>

The key question remains: no matter how just, rational and inspiring a programme is it cannot be enacted unless we take power; taking power within states, internationally and directly, at work and in the community.

Environment

Our party is both red and green. Our aims and objectives are quite different from the crude imperative to capital accumulation that is currently the sole driver of economic activity in our society. We recognise both the inherent instability and brutality of capitalism and the limits to our ecosystem; that our planet's resources are finite and that the ecological balance that makes all life possible on it is fragile and under threat.

Today, humanity faces the unprecedented threat of an ever worsening series of catastrophes, caused by the interlocked economic and environmental crises brought about by our current economic system. Capitalism has always contained an ecologically destructive 'metabolic rift', but in our lifetime these assaults on the planet have accelerated. Ecological devastation and the zoonotic like Covid-19 result from the insatiable need to increase profits, is not an accidental feature of capitalism: it is built into the system's DNA and cannot be reformed away. Capitalism is increasingly demonstrating its total incompatibility with the maintenance of our ecosystem through its ruthless exploitation of ever scarcer natural resources, its pollution of the environment, the growing loss of biological and agricultural diversity and increasing climate change. It is increasingly the case that this disproportionately impacts poorer communities. Flooding, poor housing, air pollution being clear examples.

Successive International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports have made it clear that climate change will get worse if we fail to act. The solutions are available and affordable, but time is short. Therefore, we must urgently implement policies which reduce greenhouse gas emission levels by at least 80% of 1990 levels by 2030 and by 90% by 2050. This will require dramatic changes in the ways in which we generate the energy we use, the ways we build, heat and cool our homes, the ways in which we travel and the ways in which we produce our food. It will require the restructuring of our energy generation, transport and manufacturing industries, the rebuilding or refurbishment of millions of our homes and workplaces and the re-ordering of our land use.

Demands

Energy

Because we reject current nuclear technology for electricity generation, we will have to undertake a programme of hugely expanding our generation capacity using other, genuinely zero carbon, technologies based on wind, sun and water

In order to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels we have to develop an integrated approach, one which the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) calls 'powering-

down' (reducing energy wastage) and 'powering-up' (deploying renewable energy technologies)

Fracking is not part of that sustainable mix

Address fuel poverty by a fair pricing system making the first units of energy used cheap or even free, with prices increasing as usage grows. Encouraging community energy projects as exemplified in Germany and several Welsh towns and villages. Giving control to local communities and reducing cost.

Transport

We need an integrated transport policy that manages demand, and which provides services that are efficient and necessary within the overarching need to dramatically reduce CO₂e emissions. That policy should be based on the following principles:

Public transport should be equally available and free to all, with local needs having priority.

Transport and transport infrastructure should have the minimum impact on the environment and local communities.

The use of unsustainable modes of transport (in particular private cars and planes) should progressively reduce.

Transport should, where possible, contribute to the health of individuals and communities rather than damage them.

Reducing unnecessary travel such as long commutes through home working and creating local jobs and opportunities

Construction

The design, construction, maintenance, refurbishment and management of our built environment is central to the achievement of a low carbon society

A nation-wide, street by street programme to retrofit all existing homes is needed, not just to minimise energy use by draught proofing and insulating, but also, wherever possible, to install renewable energy sources, such as solar water heating, ground source heat pumps and photovoltaic generators.

All new builds to meet environmental audits and to be affordable for all.

Agriculture

Agribusiness, concentrated into fewer and fewer hands, pollutes air, water, and soil, reduces biodiversity, and contributes to global climate change. This must change to encompass sustainable farming practices producing high quality food with the

smallest environmental impact and highest welfare standards. Food must also be affordable for all. Diversity in the use of land to serve communities and provide rural jobs must be part of this, including investing in council farms, rapidly being lost due to cutbacks.

It is estimated that almost 69% of UK land is owned by 0.6% of the population. The biggest 174 landowners in England take £120m in agricultural subsidies between them. We advocate a dual policy. Firstly, the imposition of a limit to the area of land any private individual or commercial company can own (which will vary from area to area based on soil type and other factors of production). Secondly, the defence and expansion of public and social land ownership which incorporates public values.

In Wales, having been well provided by coal for decades now like the rest of the world facing a future of energy uncertainty and the added responsibility of protecting our fragile environment.

The latest IPCC reports on climate change states “man must pump no more than an additional one trillion tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere if temperature change is to be kept below 2C . “

Jobs

Invest in a green new deal to create socially useful jobs to carry out housing refits, flood defences etc. Work with trade unions and workers in threatened and polluting industries to transition to green jobs.

The writing is on the wall.

The Welsh government must actively promote and fund alternative energy.

By - Looking to the models at the Centre for Alternative Technology at Aberystwyth, and bringing them into the government to discuss powering down. Reducing energy waste ,and powering up deploying renewables .

By - taking seriously the investment wave energy (tidal lagoons) barrage geothermal energy, and solar farms

By - implementing a massive energy conservation programme involving, proper effective home insulation on current and all new build, and con commercial build.

Recycling all grey water.

By - helping local councils and tenant /community groups to form energy cooperatives.

By - Totally opposing all damaging technologies such as shale oil gas and coal bed methane and fracking.

By - Investing in research into fusion power and thorium reactors.

Welsh governance and internationalism

As socialists we are committed to the principle of self-determination. We do not defend the current structure of the British state as being democratic or the only way to govern. As democrats we support the distribution of state power from the workplace and the locality through to the European Union and beyond. What is democratic and needed to achieve an effective socialist society should be the criteria and this will probably remain a contentious area.

Developing international unity and solidarity is our priority for challenging capitalism and the current basis for doing this is generalising and mobilising the fight against austerity across national boundaries. That is why we are members of the European Left (EL).

In relation to the current situation in Wales we believe our governance powers should be equal to that of Scotland and support a referendum on tax raising powers. We support the principle of a referendum on independence for Wales. LU Wales would not support an independence campaign based on reactionary ethnic nationalism. We do not believe that independence, of itself will bring about socialism. However we would argue for a Yes vote in a referendum on the basis that it would contribute to the break-up of the United Kingdom. And as such would be a significant blow to the Johnson regime's anti-democratic and reactionary British nationalism; as well as weakening global finance capital, militarism and imperialism. In turn this would open up spaces both within Wales, across the UK and Europe for socialists to argue for the kind of transformatory reforms outlined in our manifesto. It would provide a strong basis for working with other socialist EL governments that may have been elected.

We support local democracy through the unitary authorities and community councils. The wide range of services provided by councils are not only essential they also facilitate the quality of life in our communities. All are under threat from the Tory government. Much of what follows can only be undertaken by well funded local councils and as Left Unity we oppose these cuts and call upon councillors to refuse to set a cuts budget and directly challenge the Welsh and UK governments. Left Unity council candidates will stand on this basis.

We support increased democracy within the public sector with employees, service users and elected representatives forming 'internal cooperative' on the basis of 1/3 each to provide strategic and general oversight of the provision. Where boards are run by appointed members these should be open to election. We support re-organisation of local government – or public sector structures – where this leads to greater democracy and a stronger voice for ordinary people. Any reorganisation should be on the basis that it improves and extends services and should never be done as a cost-cutting exercise to meet government austerity policy demands. We believe the drift to ever higher salaries and other remuneration benefits of executives and managers in the public sector has to stop with an absolute maximum of 4x the

remuneration of their average employee. All councils in receipt of pay or allowances should receive no more than the average wage for the area they represent.

The Threat to Devolution

The “union” has become a central pillar of Johnson’s reactionary nationalism. In consequence the devolution settlement itself is now under attack. This can be seen in a number of recent developments. The announcement of infra-structure spending plans that will by-pass the devolved governments and be directly overseen by Westminster. Johnson’s self-appointment as “minister of the Union” is not just vapid rhetoric. In Scotland it has already been reinforced by the transfer of up to 3000 civil servants to be located at two Westminster “hubs” in Edinburgh and Glasgow. But much more significantly is the implications that the recent internal market bill will have for devolved democracy. The media has focused on the Bill’s breach of international law. But it has more serious implications in the devolved nations. It will remove key aspects of decision taking from democratic control by the devolved governments in such areas as public procurement, health, education and infra structure spending. As well as the right to set food and environmental standards. It has been rightly condemned by politicians in Holyrood and the Senedd.

Radical socialists, committed to deepening local democracy, must support resistance to this “power grab”. It is not just an arcane threat to devolved competencies. It is part and parcel of the current Tory attack on democracy. It aims to close off alternative spaces for resistance, and must be seen in the context of wider attacks on the democratic process since Johnson came to power: the proroguing of parliament, the politicisation of senior civil service posts, current attacks on BBC, the corruption of government tendering processes, restricting parliamentary and judicial oversight of ministerial actions under Brexit and Covid legislation etc.

Defending devolution is thus part of the defence of basic democratic institutions. Failure to do so will not just jeopardise the independence movements, they will undermine our ability to deepen democracy, resist austerity and oppose the continuing descent into authoritarian government and creeping fascism.

Health and social care

Left Unity Wales demands care and support for those who require it free at the point of need. It means giving voice to the call for a society based on the socialist principles of “to each according to their needs, from each according to their abilities”; a society based on social justice and equality.

Wales like the rest of the UK has been hit hard by austerity cuts since in the care and support services provided by the NHS and local councils since the financial crisis in 2007/08. The depth and history of these cuts are detailed in this research we undertook for the Peoples Assembly Wales:

<https://pawalescymru.blogspot.com/2018/10/tory-austerity-hitsyour-local-welsh-nhs.html>. The effect of these cuts continues and local communities fight back as in

RCT opposing the closure of four council owned residential care homes and the successful campaign to stop the downgrading of the A&E department at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital also in RCT. With the current Tory chancellor aiming for a balanced budget and the NHS in Wales uncertain as to whether the full costs of Covid and the needed catch up will be covered, it seems austerity will have to continue to be fought.

Wales has more than its fair share of needs – it has an ageing population, higher than average dependency on benefits, higher sickness/ill health difficulties, poverty and unemployment. The different types of communities within Wales from the old industrial Southern valleys, to the rural communities of Mid and North Wales all have their different areas of need that will require consideration, for example transport links affecting health care provision in rural areas, and the difficulty of recruitment and retention of health professionals in some of the poorer south Wales valley communities. As identified by Dr Julian Tudor Hart – the “inverse care law” has historically applied in Wales, in that the poorer the communities, the greater the need for high quality and easily available health and social care provision, but these are often the areas that are least well funded and provided with those services.

Devolved powers have enabled some beneficial policies in Wales such as provision of free prescription services, an early banning of smoking in public places, free car parking at hospitals, an end to PFI and less marketisation. Other benefits such as free transport for older people, thus reducing social isolation, also impact on people’s health and well-being.

However these policies mean little if adequate and needs based funding is not available in Wales for the NHS, together with social care and support. Welsh led Labour Governments and members of the Senedd failed each year to resist round after round of austerity cuts. NHS spending in Wales is beginning to recover but councils and primary care are still struggling. Evidence indicates that Covid costs and consequent 'catch up' costs are not not being fully covered.

Left Unity Wales supports these specific demands

A comprehensive needs based review of all public sector funding needs to be instituted immediately.

Health and Social care services to be fully funded to the highest possible international standards and free at the point of need

The Welsh Government and Senedd members to refuse to implement any cuts in budgets.

Prevention and support need to be the first priority.

Seamless delivery of health and social support ensuring the maximum possible personal independence of the person being supported based upon the principles of independent living for the future: <https://www.rofa.org.uk/independent-living-future/>

The rights of all carers and supporters need to be recognised and supported with training and agreed pay rates.

Care and support to be provided in or as near to a person's home as possible, appreciating that there will be circumstances where specialist services are only available at a distance.

Privatisation, competitive tendering and PFI to be totally abolished and all NHS, care and support provision to be returned to the public sector.

Welsh Government to oppose and refuse to support or recognise any trade agreements that cover services including the NHS and social care

All employees to be trained to the highest level and employed on trade union negotiated contracts – the longer term including all doctors and consultants.

Legal limits for professional staff – patient ratios to be set

Voluntary sector provision to be brought into direct public provision

Increase democracy in health and social care services – strengthen bodies like CHCs - not abolishing them as has happened in Wales - , establish local patients groups, and social care forums, and increase democratic control by local and community councils.

More investment in training of doctors, and greater investment in primary care provision through GP led community health centres to avoid hospital admissions wherever possible.

Investment in ensuring people have equal access to facilities that promote and support healthy lifestyles (leisure facilities, good housing, good social facilities, school provisions etc)

Housing and homelessness

Land and housing

In Wales the National Development Framework provides a long term view of land use and housing in Wales - it fails to even start to address the issues and our LU Wales proposals should be seen as an alternative strategy.

National Development Framework current situation 2015 law local plans comply with this: <https://senedresearch.blog/2020/09/25/the-national-development-framework-a-new-spatial-strategy-for-wales/>

Current state of draft: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-09/draft-national-development-framework.pdf>

Projected housing needs as identified in the strategy: “The central estimate suggests a need for an additional 114,000 homes across Wales up to 2038. During the initial five years (2018/19 to 2022/23) it is estimated that on average 8,300 additional homes will be required annually, with more than half (57%) of these homes needed in South East Wales, almost a quarter (24%) in Mid and South West Wales and 19% in North Wales.”

Housing as shelter is a basic human need and right. This, however, is far from being our current criteria of provision which is totally dependent on market provision and profitability. Whether social need or rights are [fulfilled is incidental](#). If you can pay, a penthouse suite or a many floored basement is yours. If you cannot, you'll have to sleep on the street or in a tent if you are lucky.

Huge profits are made at every stage of provision and are subsidized by the state if they are not sufficient. Land bought cheap as farmland can make owners millionaires overnight if planning permission is granted. A political decision, made by community representatives for local people who, in turn, won't see a penny of this increased value. Little wonder planning decisions are a constant source of [sleaze stories](#). Houses won't be built unless the profit is high enough as aided with the Tory's [Help to Buy scheme](#). Even 98% of those that are [built have defects](#). Four in ten council houses sold with huge discounts under the Tory's Right to Buy are now in [private renters hands](#). Landlords can [evict if it suits their profits](#).

Even though it is acknowledged that profit making and the market in housing was at the centre of the last financial crisis, even though people were murdered in the fire at Grenfell Tower, no fundamental challenge to profit and the market dominating housing provision has been proposed by even the [Corbyn led Labour Party](#).

There is a fundamental structural crisis in housing that can only be solved by a radical transformation of a socialist programme, completely removing the role of profit, the market and private ownership from housing provision thus ensuring provision is based on need and as a right.

But how do we get from here to there with actions now and demands.

Vision is a good start and Owen Hatherleigh starts to [spell out the possibilities](#) and a starting list of demands in this article.

Land ownership and planning

Land should be a collectively owned resource removed from market forces. The decision should be how can it best be used for people and the planet: not what is the value and how can that be creamed off or increased.

Demands. The key aim has to be land becoming collectively owned so the power over use can be exercised through political and democratic processes. Clearly such a demand would be a challenge to capitalism which is fundamentally defended by some very deep seated vested and personal interests over property ownership. How

such a transformation could take place and to what extent should be part of any socialist manifesto.

In Wales steps toward this have actually taken place in the past through the [Land Authority for Wales](#) which purchased considerable amounts of land cheaply for future development. Much of this land was transferred to the Welsh Development Agency and, in turn, was then merged, with the land ownership, into the Welsh Government after devolution. It appears considerable amounts have been sold to offset the effects of austerity. The legal powers may still exist and we should demand that they are used extensively to bring land back into public ownership.

Direct action. Between now and 2021 new Local Development Plans will be drawn up to criteria defined by the Welsh Government. These will influence land use over the 10 years up to 2031. The Welsh Government has started the process of considering the criteria and then all local councils in Wales will draw up their plans. At this stage expect all those who own farms or other land to submit for planning permission with the lure of potential fortunes sparkling in their eyes. At all these stages we need to mobilise for demands aimed at benefiting the planet and removing the market and profit from any development, arguing for land to be purchased freely or compulsory, before planning decisions are made. Action could be taken to identify [who owns the land locally](#) so we are clear about who will profit so they can be exposed to public scrutiny.

Housing

Until the [first world war renting was the norm](#) with owner occupation [consisting of between 10-20%](#). However, by the 1960s both Labour and Conservatives saw renting and social housing for 'exceptional needs' with owner occupation being the norm. Consequently there were and are major problems experienced through the way local authorities provided housing which incorporated assumptions about the type of people who would be living in tenanted property, rooted not infrequently in the view that people who were unable to own property were in some profound sense losers, failures, inferior. These views were often patronising, viciously class based and were exacerbated by the paring down of resources for design which eliminated fundamentally important social public facilities turning modernist ideas about collective living into barracks, cells, in which design was used amongst other things to mark the estates and so the people in them as different, separate from and inferior to others

Since 2004 the start of the current housing crisis the balance has started to move back to renting so that by [2016 50% of 24 - 34 year olds were paying rent](#), and a political battle has now started over whether the state should again subsidise owner occupation or whether renting should start to become the norm again with the state supporting this shift through public provision of council housing, devoid of the 'exceptional needs' stigma.

<https://socialistreview.org.uk/453/should-we-build-more-houses>

Demands. The basic aim has to ensure housing is available for all, whatever income or none. Housing needs to be of the highest standards and quality in terms of space, design and the environment. It needs to be recognised that housing requirements vary over a lifetime, so the stock should reflect this, combined with 'constructivists' ideas about easy adjustment to an existing home, including a variety of options for people who wish to have access to a garden. Community provision in terms of services, local land use, site use has to be part of collective ownership and control.

Market value of housing needs to be controlled so that it does not become the prime source of savings, personal value or source of profit based renting. More than sufficient houses should be available. Collective ownership encouraged through council renting or forms of cooperative ownership and personal ownership facilitated only through mutual building societies. Housing associations should be brought back into council services. Second homes taxed. Architecture, planning and building services nationalised and merged with worker, political and community control. Help to Buy finances should be moved into house building.

Tenants need to have [assured tenure](#) for life if it is their prime home. All immigration controls to be removed. Fair rents only should be charged fixed according to a notional return on the property to provide maintenance. Rent tribunals with power to impose a fair rent re-introduced. The aim will be to encourage all large scale renting to be undertaken through councils in as short as possible time, unless it is renting of the prime house for personal reasons, such as working away. Rent subsidies to be provided according to assessed family need.

Action. Demand that a house is available for all, no one to be homeless for more than one night. All new houses to be built according to the highest unit and community standards and local campaigns to demand this. Collective campaigns to enforce a fair rent. Occupation of land and houses to back demands. Identify large local landlords and expose the extent of their exploitation.

As the highest possible quality housing is a basic human right all profit taking has to be removed from its provision.

The provision of the additional 114,000 additional homes estimated to be required by 2038 to be provided through publicly owned rent provision controlled and governed through local housing cooperatives.

These are our demands:

All land required for housing and other development in the Welsh NDF to be bought under public ownership. if necessary by compulsory purchase with current owners compensation limited to pre development value.

Housing associations to be brought back into council services.

A publicly owned Welsh building, architecture and planning cooperative to be established to provide all new housing for the Welsh Government and unitary authorities ending competitive tendering and private building.

New housing planned to provide as [high quality](#) and self-sufficient a community as possible with a variety of housing for life changes and to enable independent living, zero carbon, basic facilities - schools, primary health care, daily shopping - within walking distance, green spaces, access to local cultivation.

The provision of safe housing for victims of domestic violence to be provided across all counties.

All tenants to have assured tenure for life in their prime home.

Fair rents fixed based upon the required need to provide maintenance,

All rented property to be covered by a lay rent tribunal with the power to impose a fair rent.

Rent support to be based upon and included in a minimum income calculation.

The establishment of a mortgage to rent scheme to keep families in their homes.

Homelessness ended through a Finnish style 'housing first' strategy.

Immediate demands

Immediate assessment of all unoccupied properties, including office premises where majority of staff now work from home under post-Covid arrangements, re-proposing of same for possible housing or 'bumping' of shops where homes can be developed.

Immediate provision of high quality emergency housing for people who fall homeless or are in need such as refugees and asylum seekers. Re-purposing of hotels used for housing homeless people during pandemic as permanent/transitional housing.

An immediate start to street by street renovation Retro fitting of all homes requiring insulation and re-furbishment to the highest standard.

An immediate banning of 'buy to rent'.

An immediate start to buying back public housing.

An immediate end to all existing and proposed leasehold clauses.

An immediate end to the bedroom tax in Wales.

All second homes to pay full local rates and taxes.

An immediate end to section 21 evictions.

An immediate rent freeze while rent controls are being put in place.

A complete ban on all evictions during the Covid emergency not just a delay in court action

We support all direct community and tenant action campaigns to take these demands forward such as those organised by Acorn and the People's Assembly including the occupation of land, houses and publicly revealing all private landowners and their holdings in Wales.

Education

Education is a fundamental human right. It empowers and informs individuals and allows them to develop to their full potential. It is also a source of creativity, innovation, understanding, discovery and design that are of immeasurable value to society as a whole. It is therefore a prerequisite for any genuinely democratic society.

In order to bring this vision into practice we support the principle of lifelong learning: that learning, and the development of understanding is a process that takes place throughout life to the benefit of the individual and society at large. Such learning and the development of understanding should follow the interests, questioning and desires of individuals and groups. This takes place in everyday experience as well as in organised settings.

The role of the state is to facilitate this process by funding and otherwise enabling the provision of education pathways, systems of flexible accreditation and early years foundation skills that enable people to become confident, independent and able to make a contribution to the advancement of learning in their chosen areas of study. The state should ensure that the resource of electronically available knowledge and learning is free and open and available for the public good including all digital information and archives. Moreover, the state must ensure that electronic resources are a supplement and not a substitute for learning relations between students and tutors.

Lifelong learning covers all institutional support from home, early years, compulsory, further and higher education as well as other support as required.

This vision comes into conflict with current state expectations where education is under threat internationally from the values and practices of free market capitalism. This varies across the UK but is most severe in England's education system which pits school against school, parent against parent, the wealthy against the poor, and child against child, all under the myth of 'choice'. The choice only really applies to some families and is linked to the idea of league tables and "winners and losers".

These values are endemic in society and the education system is only one means of driving them forwards.

This driving force is a result of the competitive nature of capitalism itself i.e. the false notion that we must concentrate on the highest fliers in an academic sense or die a death in the struggle to survive in the global market.

The Welsh Government should provide lifelong education and learning:

Free at the point of delivery from nursery through to post retirement

Be a place where all pupils feel welcomed and valued.

Be an integral part of the local community, fostering shared cultural values and aspirations.

Provide a range of learning challenges through a variety of teaching styles and learning experiences designed to help students of all abilities to become autonomous learners, who can arrive at their own view of the world, take control of their own lives and be active global citizens.

Attend to the emotional development, wellbeing and health of all

Ensure open access to the highest quality inclusive local school for all children regardless of their special needs and circumstances, using a transparent admissions process without recourse to test or selection.

Employ governance and management systems based on principles of local democratic accountability and co-operatives being an equal partnership between parents, staff, students, and the elected representatives of the local community.

Continue its benefits into adult life through free and accessible Further and Higher Education.

State funding and support is required to facilitate this vision not just in terms of buildings, equipment, and staff but in training and other support.

The quality of provision requires to be sustained by legally enforceable maximum ratios between tutors and students and a supportive sharing of best practice as opposed to an imposed top down inspection regime.

Research aimed at making an original contribution to a discipline is rightly systematically undertaken at university level however, the aim should be to allow for unpredictable outcomes at all stages of learning, enabling such a contribution to be made by all either as an individual or part of a group. It is critical in building and sustaining education in Wales that is comparable to the best in the world that a full range of research disciplines are sustained at our universities. Knowledge and understanding is now global and to sustain a meaningful and leading role in research and innovation disciplines need to be able to make a contribution at that level as well as engage actively across their boundaries. Enabling this knowledge and expertise to contribute to the development of high value products and services through 'knowledge cooperatives' will be fundamental to a long term future for the Welsh economy.

In addition to Welsh medium provision a bi-lingual option should be made available.

Withdraw State Funding from schools or colleges which exclusively promote any one religious belief system, including Christianity, or require such establishments to have an open, secular enrolment. However, we believe that all schools must make it easy for people who work or study to practice their religion in such matters as food, clothing and prayer times. Schools should be part of the communities they serve and make their facilities available, outside school hours, to community groups, including religious ones.

End the charitable status of fee-charging schools.

Immediate demands

Needs based comprehensive spending review for all education in Wales.

All education in Wales to be free from fee payment and students from the age of 16 to receive support based upon a minimum income. Support to ensure students can take place in independent learning.

The introduction of cooperative and democratic governance in all educational institutions.

All staff without expectation to be employed by councils on collective agreed contracts of employment negotiated with trade fully recognised trade unions and to have access to life long learning for professional and personal study.

The establishment of knowledge cooperatives where products, services and expertise using creative commons licenses are jointly and equally governed by the creators and the Welsh Government.

Conclusion

We believe that the political principles and policies outlined in this statement amount to a significant transitional reform and challenge to austerity, neo-liberalism and how capitalism works to maximise profit and not serve need. If put into practice they would provide the leadership needed to collectively mobilise the people of Wales to support this challenge; they would, by being complementary to Left Unity UK policies and through our links with the European Left, reach out to people across the UK and Europe.

There is no need to accept what capitalism throws at us – say no and build the politics of a socialist alternative: join us.

