

FOREWORD

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AT STAKE

The people of Lambeth will be faced with a simple choice in the forthcoming council elections: to vote to hand over control of local services to unelected judges or to vote Labour to keep democracy local.

The Labour Parties in Lambeth have been drawing up this Manifesto at the same time as our councillors have been locked in dispute with the Tory government. With the support of the Labour Party, nationally and locally, our councillors have refused to turn their backs on local people, they have refused to make cuts in the vital services our Council provides. They are now faced with the possibility of being thrown out of office by the courts.

In drawing up our Manifesto and in defending local services, Labour has been guided by the same basic belief - that the people of Lambeth have a right to expect their councillors to serve their interests, to look after the weaker members of our society while ensuring that all members of the community have a decent environment in which to live and work.

For Labour, local councillors' primary responsibility must be to meet the needs of local people, providing decent services by carrying out the policies on which they are elected. According to the government itself, Lambeth is the fourth most deprived area in the country. But the needs of local people mean nothing to a central government busy abolishing local democracy, destroying our health service and education system and presiding over ever-growing dole queues.

Labour believes that local people have a right to choose their own future. Throughout the dispute with central government, our councillors have fully involved the community in their campaign. Likewise, in drawing up our Manifesto, Labour has sought to involve the maximum number of people in our discussions. Not only have hundreds of Labour Party members contributed over the last few months to the development of our policies. The discussion has also been taken out to the community - tenants groups, trade unions, community organisations and other representatives of local people have all had a say.

In September 1985, 31 Lambeth Labour councillors were surcharged by the District Auditor because they challenged central government policies. As we enter the election period the High Court has heard their appeal against this decision. In a nakedly political decision, the judges ruled that our councillors had acted illegally. They now face personal bankruptcy.

In their ruling, the judges said that no councillor has any obligation to follow the Manifesto on which they are elected. We were told that councillors have a duty to ignore the wishes of the electorate if they are told to do so by central government. Labour rejects this argument totally. Local councillors must serve local people, not central government.

Labour has worked hard to try to implement our 1982 Manifesto in the face of government obstruction and now the surcharge of our councillors. We are equally serious about our 1985 Manifesto. It represents the best expression of the needs and aspirations of our community. Unlike other political parties we will not be throwing it away after the elections - over the next four years we will be fighting to see that it is implemented, whatever the obstacles placed in our way by a government that does not care.

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**SERVING OUR COMMUNITY!
FOR SERVICES AND JOBS! AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL!**

**LABOUR'S MANIFESTO
FOR LAMBETH 1986**

Under Labour's control, Lambeth Council has successfully provided many essential services to the residents of the borough. Labour believes much still needs to be done to improve local services and this manifesto outlines our programme for the next four years.

The Council has many responsibilities. Nearly half the homes in Lambeth are owned and managed by the Council. It is responsible for refuse collection and street cleaning, public health, street lighting and paving, parks and libraries. It controls the development and use of our land and buildings. It provides social services such as meals on wheels, home helps, day nurseries, supporting and caring for those in our community who are less able to care for themselves.

Increased poverty

During the last four years unemployment has trebled; the number of supplementary benefit claimants has doubled, and two out of every three Lambeth households now claim some form of social or welfare benefit; more people in Lambeth have no home than any other borough in London. The ever increasing poverty of so many people in Lambeth makes the council's services all the more essential to our community.

Labour in office has tried to promote policies to alleviate Lambeth's impoverishment. But we cannot overcome the fact that the increase in poverty and deprivation in our borough is a direct consequence of the policies of this Tory government. Since 1979 the government has withheld £113 million of grant from Lambeth. This is money we have paid in taxes. And it is only part of the story. £183 million needed for Housing Investment has been withdrawn, with only Labour's determination allowing any new house building at all. Government policy has thrown thousands of our community on the dole and meant cuts in real terms for pensioners and those already relying on social benefits. Government demands for health cuts threaten to close at least one local hospital and seriously affect our main hospital, St Thomas'. They have changed the laws to take away our democratic rights by abolishing the Labour GLC and are introducing greater central government control over what

local councils can do. They want to add to the financial burdens of the poorest in our society by introducing a "poll tax". They weep crocodile tears over the plight of the inner cities, but refuse to provide the resources we desperately need to tackle unemployment, bad housing and poverty.

Kept Promises

Labour's local councillors have refused to go back on their promises and turn their backs on the people who elected them. They have refused to cut the services we so desperately need. It was because of the impossible restrictions demanded by central government that Labour deferred setting a rate in 1985 until a budget could be made that did not lead to cuts in services and jobs.

Surcharge

In September 1985, Lambeth Labour councillors were surcharged by the District Auditor. Because they have failed to force Labour to give in to their demands, the Tories are trying to throw our councillors out of office, making them personally bankrupt in the process. Labour is challenging the District Auditor's case in the Courts.

Council services will be under threat so long as the present government remains in office. Every year sees a new attack. In 1986, in addition to yet further reductions in government grant, causing untold damage to those who rely on council services and threatening thousands of jobs, we have to face the effect on local services of the abolition of the GLC. More responsibilities are being heaped on the Council - without adequate funds to do the work. At the same time, the government is forcing local councils to hand over essential services to private firms whose only aim is to make a quick profit at our expense. "Privatisation" will mean no say in the kind of services we want and need. Labour is pledged to oppose the privatisation of council

services and we will not co-operate with a policy aimed at destroying our services.

The Labour Council has been consulting local residents and firms on its budget strategy for next year. The government has limited Lambeth's expenditure to £124.5 million, but we need to spend £144.9 million if Lambeth's services are not to be cut. Added to that amount will be the cost of the GLC services which now become the Council's responsibility. The gap we need to bridge just to stand still in the coming year is estimated to be £32 million! - a gap which will be doubled as the Government penalises "overspending" by withdrawing rate support grant.

Our 1986/87 budget will preserve all services and jobs, freeze rents and hold down heating and other charges for council tenants. The budget will be balanced by the use of all balances and the realisation of all available and realisable assets of the Council.

This is the context in which we approach the 1986 Council elections.

Over the next four years, Labour will:

- take whatever steps are necessary to defend and extend Council services to meet the growing needs of our community, suffering the ravages of Government policies;
- combat the discrimination, both open and institutional, experienced by many members of our community and take positive action to redress disadvantages of class, race, sex, sexuality, age or disability;
- make Council services open and accountable, giving local people a real say in how the Council operates;
- above all, work with the people of Lambeth to stand up and demand our rights - to take control of our lives. For an end to the deprivation, waste, frustration, hardship and suffering we are forced to endure.

The incoming Labour Council will carry on the fight against Government threats and campaign for the financial help we need. The stark reality is that we need more not less resources:

- to build more houses, to rehabilitate old estates, to invest more in an efficient repairs service;

- to have better sporting facilities and community facilities, more nurseries and One O'Clock clubs;
- better training schemes and apprenticeships to help the borough's young people, thrown on the scrapheap straight from school;
- more support for the increasing number of elderly people, left forgotten after a lifetime's service.

Illegal?

Labour realises that our policies may be deemed illegal by some. So be it! Since 1979 the Tory Government has had many of its actions declared illegal by the courts. Locally they tried to shut down the Health Authority. When that was declared illegal, they changed the law. Their social security rules for bed and breakfast were declared illegal, so they changed the law. They expect us to break laws which demand decent housing and social services in order to fit their spending cuts laws. If we are faced with a choice between Tory demands to cut our services for local people and sack workers, or stand with local people demanding better provision, we will stand with the people.

Homes and Jobs

Our main priorities must be homes and jobs. There is much that a local council can do, when it is allowed to. However, Tory policies have severely limited our room for action. We will fight to maintain our housing programme and take up the successful example of the GLC's Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB), but we can only make a real impact on unemployment when government policy changes. We will campaign alongside the people of Lambeth for that change.

Labour believes that the Council has a valuable role to play in helping local people express their grievances. Throughout history working people have had to fight to improve their living conditions and standards. A council which represents the people must stand with them in that fight: for decent homes for all, for a living income for all and an end to unemployment, for a decent education and health service, an end to racism, and the right to dignity in old age.

Equal Rights

Labour recognises that many sections of our community are disadvantaged not just through poverty but also because of

discrimination and prejudice. Labour is pledged to ensure that all its policies and practices, both as an employer and provider of services, are based on a commitment to equality of opportunity for all.

In particular, this means giving equal rights in every aspect of the work of the Council to those who have experienced unequal treatment in the past - to black and other ethnic minority people, to women, to working class people, to those with disabilities, to the elderly, to young people and to lesbians and gay men. Taking positive steps to redress the historic and continuing discrimination experienced by these sections of our community is the least we can do to try to change the institutionalised discrimination which permeates our society. Labour is no longer prepared to stand idly by and allow the majority of our community suffer discrimination at the hands of a privileged minority.

Accountability

Labour will put forward policies to make the Council and its services more open, accessible and accountable. We are committed to the further decentralisation of our services to bring them closer to the local community, to developing a freedom of information policy, to introducing new procedures for handling complaints, and to responsive and responsible use of new technology.

Labour takes the pledges it makes at election time seriously. Government restraints mean that some of our policies may be unachievable at the present time and that we can promise no more than that we will campaign with the community until a change of government allows us to implement them. But unlike other political parties we do not throw away our manifesto when we are in power. By voting Labour in 1986, the people of Lambeth will be voting for more local democracy, more local services, equality of opportunity for all, and a continued resistance to central government attacks.

In particular, you will be voting for:

Keeping the necessary staff to ensure no cuts in services
No redundancies, the continuation of recruitment and no privatisation of council services

Freezing council rents and keeping service charge increases below the level of inflation

A better repair service as a major priority

Making safety on estates a priority

Our policy of allocating 35% of all available property to black people to redress historic disadvantage

Urban renewal through the use of Housing Action Areas and General Improvement Areas to help home owners, reintroducing the use of individual improvement grants
More help and advice for private tenants and long leaseholders

The largest programme of house building of any borough in London

Campaigning for more investment in housing

Providing land and resources for local industry

Backing the Greater London Enterprise Board

Supporting local community organisations and local worker co-operatives

Developing a contract compliance unit to ensure that all contractors, suppliers and grant recipients comply with anti-discrimination legislation and other Council policies

Giving guaranteed jobs for all YTS trainees working directly for the council

Continued support for the Trade Union Resource Centre, an expanded welfare rights programme and continued funding for the Unemployed Centre

Expanding the home help service

Day care for all children of those who want it with support for childminders

No increase in the price of Meals on Wheels

Proper resources to allow care in the community to be a reality

Continuing to provide help and support for all those in need

Planning for jobs and houses with gardens
Resisting hotels and luxury housing on riverside sites at the detriment of the existing community

Defending the rights of local people against property developers and speculators and ensuring democratic control of planning

Protecting and enhancing shopping provision

Extending controlled parking zones and enforcing the law on parking on pavements

Providing more cycle routes

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Fighting for resources to improve our parks and recreation centres
Expanding library facilities
Providing a black cultural archive

Controlling charges to the public with free access to the unwaged and those on low incomes

Continued support for voluntary and community groups in the borough

Supporting our network of advice and law centres with a new advice centre in West Norwood and an advice centre for young people

Action on major sources of pollution, expanding the noise patrol and limiting the amount of dog nuisance

Ensuring safe storage of hazardous chemicals and dealing with dangerously overloaded vehicles passing through the borough

More consumer and money advice

Keeping Lambeth a Nuclear Free Zone

Instituting a municipal funeral service

Improving highway maintenance and pedestrian facilities, including more zebra crossings and more ramps for wheelchairs and prams

Opposition to road trunking, widening and motorway proposals

Removal of racist and sexist graffiti

Better recycling of waste materials, including bottle banks

More public conveniences

Promoting crime prevention

Making our streets and estates safer through better lighting, entryphones, kick-proof doors, more residential caretakers, etc

Setting up victim support schemes

Investigating police activity and pushing for democratic control of the police force

Monitoring racial harassment

Labour's detailed policies for all aspects of the work of the council, department by department, are given in the rest of our manifesto.

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OPEN AND ACCOUNTABLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Labour is committed to the principle of open and accountable government.

To further this objective the incoming Labour Council will:

- extend the decentralisation of services
- introduce an internal ombudsman
- develop a freedom of information policy
- put more resources into voter registration
- invest in the responsive and responsible use of new technology.

Decentralisation of services

The decentralisation of services to a local level, though a major part of Labour's 1982 manifesto, has proved difficult to implement in the face of Tory onslaughts on local democracy. However, we are now beginning to see the first results of this policy with the neighbourhood housing offices. Labour intends to take this much further during the life of the next Council. We want to give local people a real say, not just every four years, but on a continuing basis. To do this we believe that council services must be locally based, open so that people know what is going on, and fully accountable. Full decentralisation will enable the Council to be more responsive to the needs of the local community. Although

full decentralisation will take time, priority will be given to decentralising those services to which the public requires direct access on a regular basis, for example housing, social services, environmental health and planning. This process will take place in full consultation with the trade unions, tenants and community groups.

In order for decentralisation to work, clear and concise information about the council's services must be available. Access to council services must become easier, not more difficult as a result of decentralisation. We will develop a coherent system of boundaries for the decentralised offices and ensure their location and the services available are fully publicised.

As part of the implementation and practice of decentralisation, regular consultation will take place with local community-based organisations and residents, giving full regard to considerations of equal opportunities.

Freedom of Information

We will reverse the presumption that information should be secret unless it has to be made public. We believe the machinery of government - whether local or central - must be open to public scrutiny and our elected representatives, and those they employ, accountable to those they represent. Only matters of individual privacy need to be protected. Much has already been achieved in Lambeth in opening up the council bureaucracy to the public but red tape still remains. All committees will start from the assumption that they are open to the public with only genuinely confidential business taken in the (private) Part II of the agenda. We will give access to a much wider range of reports and background papers. Where documents must remain secret, an explanation will be given and this assessment will be open to challenge. In principle, individuals will have access to any files concerning them. There may be exceptions to this, particularly where information given in confidence is concerned, but there will be clear rights of appeal to ensure any specific exception has been correctly made.

Complaints

Individuals must have the right to complain and appeal against decisions which affect them. We will ensure that there are simple, clear and open procedures for dealing with appeals and complaints. The present system, with final recourse to the Local Ombudsman, is slow and unwieldy. We will introduce an independent Internal Ombudsman responsible for overseeing complaints procedures and with the power to make sure that complaints are properly dealt with and any necessary changes made to policy and procedures to prevent recurrence.

These formal rights will be backed up by support for independent advice centres and researchers able to help individuals prepare complaints and guide them through the procedures. In particular, we will fight to protect the local law centres threatened by government withdrawal of funds and will be prepared to take on the funding of these vital services if necessary.

New technology

Access to information is vital if local government is to be accountable. Advances in computer technology have made it possible for large quantities of

information to be made easily and quickly available. But information technology will only benefit ordinary people if it is made to work for the community, not against it.

The incoming Labour Council will commission studies, in consultation with local community organisations and neighbouring Labour boroughs, to develop a community information technology plan. This plan will emphasise equal opportunities policies, health and safety issues and better access to information technology in the local community.

Community access to computers will be available in our libraries and at the Trade Union Resource Centre. A centre to provide computing advice for voluntary and community groups will be established and, jointly with the ILCA, a computer bus provided for youth clubs, youth projects and local schools.

Nowadays, most of our services are dependent on effective computer systems. We will resist all attempts to privatise or sell off any council computer service, and will ensure that improvements in productivity arising from the effective use of computers are used to provide more and better services, not less jobs.

Members Support

Local councillors are both decision-makers and the channel for individual grievances and problems for their constituents. Unlike MPs, local councillors are unpaid and usually have to fit their council duties around full-time jobs, family commitments, etc. All Labour councillors hold regular advice surgeries and each year take up many thousands of problems. In order that all councillors, from whatever political party, may serve those they represent more effectively, we will ensure adequate support by setting up a Members Support Unit so that problems can be dealt with speedily and effectively.

Getting policy implemented

In the past four years, the Labour Council has been guided by the programme we put to the people of Lambeth. Nevertheless, we recognise the need to monitor progress to ensure our policies are implemented and kept up-to-date, and we will set up a Policy Audit Unit to oversee the work of the Council, its committees and officers, so that this progress can be monitored and the public kept informed.

The right to vote

Our experience, at advice surgeries and on the doorstep, has shown that many of those we represent are excluded from the democratic process by not being on the

electoral register - 15% of our residents are disenfranchised. We will put the necessary resources into ensuring that every eligible resident is able to vote in future elections.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Labour in Lambeth is proud of the equal opportunities and related anti-racist policies we have adopted. From 1979 to 1984 the proportion of black staff employed by the Council increased from 6 per cent to 24 per cent. This is the highest percentage in any local authority.

But it has to be put against the fact that about 30 per cent of Lambeth's population is black and that those employed in positions of power and authority are still predominantly white. We have taken a few steps along what is a long road. Unemployment is three times as high among black youth as among white youth. Half of all homeless families are black, the largest group being black women.

Labour recognises that women, although making up a majority of the population, are a minority in the decision-making processes of our society, that their views are not sought nor their needs recognised and that we still live in a man's world. Women are more likely to be among the worst housed because if they are working they are likely to be in less well-paid and lower status jobs. The added responsibility for many women of caring for children or elderly relatives puts them at a disadvantage in all spheres of economic and political life.

Black people and/or women are the largest groups who suffer discrimination in our society. Black women suffer the double disadvantage of discrimination on grounds of sex and race. But they are not the only ones. Labour recognises that all those who are on the receiving end of discriminatory practices and attitudes - whether because of their race, sex, sexuality, disability, religion or whatever - do so for different reasons and that different steps need to be taken to eradicate that discrimination. However, we also recognise that there are common prejudices and practices which need to be changed.

We are working to redress inequality and put an end to discrimination of all kinds. Our equal opportunities policies apply equally in the Council's role as an

employer, a landlord and in the provision of services to the community.

We will act to challenge and eradicate any hidden discrimination which may arise as a result of bureaucratic methods, deep rooted customs or attitudes which sustain inequality and deal firmly with any open discrimination.

As a provider of local services and as a landlord we will ensure that our services take into account the needs of all members of our community. Detailed policies are given for different areas of council services in each of the following sections. All future policy will continue to take equal opportunities fully into account in consultation with the Race Relations Unit and Advisers, the Women's Rights Unit, and the Gay and Lesbian Working Party.

Contracts Compliance

As an economic power and political body, the Council will make sure that contractors, suppliers and grant recipients act in accordance with equal opportunities laws and council policies, and do not discriminate. In order to assist contractors, suppliers, etc, in complying with these laws and to monitor progress locally, the Contracts Compliance Unit will be adequately resourced and will work closely with other London Labour boroughs, in line with the initiative taken by the GLC and continued by the ILEA, to establish common standards and a coordinated approach.

Race Relations

The Race Relations Unit and our Race Relations Advisers will continue to have a strategic function in the coordination and development of race equality and anti-racist policies, to highlight areas of potential and actual discrimination, to

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advise on the race dimensions of all council policies and programmes, assist with the development of positive action programmes and develop links with Lambeth's black community. The Race Relations Unit will monitor every individual council service.

Women's Rights

The Women's Rights Committee and Women's Unit were set up to give women a voice. Labour is committed to ensure that women receive fair and equal treatment in the services we provide.

We are particularly concerned to ensure that women have a major say in the kind of housing and social services they wish to see provided. We say this not because we believe that women's role in society is solely that of homemaker and mother, but because we recognise that women spend a large part of their lives in the home and that as carers, whether of children, the disabled or the elderly, women constitute the largest group assisted by social services. For example, there are 47,000 children under 15 living in Lambeth. The Council provides over 700 places in its day nurseries, but over 800 children are on the waiting list. How many parents do not even bother to apply? We recognise that, for many women, adequate childcare provision is the single most important service a local council can provide to assist them in achieving their full potential in society. We will provide the necessary resources to improve and expand this service.

The Women's Rights Committee and Unit will continue to provide support to

women's groups of all kinds within our community, ensure that women are informed of their rights and campaign with women for the changes they wish to see.

People with Disabilities

Our society is constructed by and for the able-bodied. Much has been done over the past few years by Labour in Lambeth to adapt many of our public buildings to provide access for those in wheelchairs, and the incoming Labour Council will ensure that this work is continued, with ramps being provided where necessary, housing adapted, aids provided and schemes maintained to provide free or cheap transport for those with disabilities, such as dial-a-ride.

Lesbian and Gay Rights

The Gay and Lesbian Working Party has begun to examine the role of the Council in promoting policies to combat the oppression of lesbians and gay men. The current media-inspired AIDS scares have highlighted the need for this working party to support the local gay community. We condemn the "agent provocateur" tactics adopted by the police and will support campaigns against this form of harassment towards the gay community.

We realise that to date our response has been insufficient. As an employer, as a provider of services and as a major political force in the Borough there is much that the Council should be doing. We will make more resources available to help the Working Party fulfil its task, including providing funding for community projects, such as lesbian and gay phone lines and youth groups.

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THE COUNCIL AS AN EMPLOYER

To provide the services the local community needs the Council has to have sufficient staff. We believe that staff should be concentrated in the areas where services are delivered and that support staff should be kept to a minimum. However, government policies are aimed at reducing the level of staffing required for efficient provision of good services. Our policy has been and will continue to be the maintenance of the necessary staffing levels to ensure no cuts in service, no redundancies and the continuation of recruitment in response to expressed need.

We recognise that good industrial relations are essential if we are to guarantee the effective delivery of services. We are committed to consulting and negotiating with the council trade unions over all matters relating to their conditions of service, recognising that

collective bargaining is of benefit both to the Council and to its employees. We acknowledge and record our thanks for the support given by the trade unions in Labour's fight to ensure the maintenance of jobs and services in Lambeth.

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As a major local employer, the Council has a responsibility to ensure that its employment practices both comply with anti-discrimination legislation, challenge the inequality of opportunity which exists and ensure that its staff reflect the composition of the local community. Labour has done much to develop the Council's equal opportunities policies but much still needs to be done to break away from the pattern of black people and/or women being concentrated in low-paid and low-status jobs and excluded from high salaries and power.

About 30% of Lambeth's population is black. Our aim is to ensure that the Council reflects this in its employment practices, both to ensure that the discrimination black people suffer in the employment market is not perpetuated by the Council and to ensure that the services provided meet the needs of the community. We will ensure that no one is discriminated against because of their sexuality. Lesbians and gay men in our employ will have the same rights and job security as all other employees.

People with Disabilities

Labour is acutely conscious that people with disabilities constitute a disproportionate number of the unemployed and that the Council has to date failed to comply with the statutory requirements to employ 3% registered disabled people. However, steps have been taken to improve the situation with the appointment of a disablement officer and the setting up of a "disablement bank" to help people with disabilities to gain work experience. We will continue to ensure that council buildings are made accessible to those in wheelchairs, and to work with recognised agencies to ensure that positive steps are taken to recruit people with disabilities. We will provide the facilities to enable them to work to their full potential, for example by providing specialised equipment and training.

Childcare

We recognise that women are often prevented from participating in paid employment because of the lack of childcare facilities. Lambeth's staff day nursery will open in 1986 providing places for 36 children. We will seek to increase the number of places available and we will campaign for the elimination of tax on workplace nurseries, which penalises working parents and which will make the new nursery unnecessarily

expensive. A parent or nominated carer will not lose wages or holiday for time taken off to look after a sick child where a medical certificate is produced. Through negotiation we will ensure that maternity, paternity and compassionate leave is extended for parents and nominated partners and carers, including those adopting children. Men will be encouraged to take their fair share of responsibility for caring for children, particularly where both parents work for the Council. Job sharing and part-time work, with conditions of service as for full timers, will be available where requested by the employee. We will campaign for legislative changes so that women have the same pension rights as men, and part-timers the same as full-timers.

Equal Opportunities Unit

Labour has recently set up an Equal Opportunities Unit to take on a central coordinating role to ensure the implementation of our equal opportunities policies in all areas of the Council's work, in particular with respect to recruitment, training, promotion and monitoring. The Equal Opportunities Unit will have sufficient staff and resources to enable it to fulfil its job effectively. The Unit will have a general overview of the work of all Council departments and will bring to the Council's attention any actions being taken which it believes to be contrary to the equal opportunities policy. It will liaise closely with the Race Relations Unit, Women's Rights Unit, the Gay and Lesbian Working Party and the Community Affairs Committee to ensure that all sections of our community have equal access to employment by the Council and equality of opportunity as employees.

Recruitment

The EOU will ensure that existing policies are implemented throughout the Council's directorates. This includes:

- all jobs being advertised externally and in a wide range of media to reach all sections of the community;
- criteria for selecting applicants being strictly relevant to the requirements of the job;
- recognising that the absence of certain skills is not as important as the capacity to learn them once in post;
- recognising that familiarity with the local community can be a criterion for appointment.

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Procedures for employing ex-offenders will be reviewed within the context of our equal opportunities policies. All those involved in interviewing and shortlisting will be trained in equal opportunities and members of disadvantaged groups will be represented on all interviewing panels. Where requested, reasons for rejection will be given to all unsuccessful applicants. All new staff will continue to be expected to sign as part of their contract a clear undertaking of understanding and agreement with the Council's equal opportunities policies.

Training

By providing new educational and training opportunities and encouraging their use, the Council can accelerate the breaking down of barriers that have kept jobs segregated for certain groups. We will ensure that on-the-job and qualification training is made a priority for members of disadvantaged groups, particularly to facilitate promotion. Lambeth has a target of 35% black employees across all grades. There will be an equal opportunities element in all training courses, and a on-going awareness campaign involving all

staff which will include racism, sexism, heterosexism and disabilities awareness training.

Monitoring

We will continue confidential monitoring of the implementation of equal opportunities policies in the areas of training, recruitment, transfers, promotion, grievances and disciplinaries, and advise on the necessary steps to be taken to improve their implementation.

Harassment

As a matter of the highest priority, the Council will seek to ensure that no employee experiences discrimination or harassment in the workplace. The Council considers racial or sexual harassment to be a serious disciplinary offence. Disciplinary rules and codes of practice have been developed in consultation with the trade unions and these will be firmly enforced.

The effect of the Council's employment practices on the Lambeth economy is expanded under the Employment section of this manifesto.

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HOUSING

Labour is committed to ensuring that every person in Lambeth has a decent home.

Over the last four years Labour has fought to provide resources to improve services. However, housing has borne the brunt of government attacks and we recognise the severity of the housing crisis we face with a shortage of council homes and deteriorating estates.

Nevertheless, we have succeeded in carrying out the most successful programme in London :

- we have kept rents and other charges down (in the face of government pressure and attempts by all other political parties on the Council to make tenants pay more);
- we have built more new homes than any other London borough;
- we have established a network of 32 neighbourhood offices to provide direct and easy access for tenants;
- we have pursued a policy of equal access for tenants to ensure fair treatment for all;
- we have worked with tenants associations to ensure we are responsive to tenants' needs.

Over the next four years we aim to make

further progress towards achieving decent housing for all, by continuing to pursue positive policies and by introducing a number of new initiatives.

For Council Tenants

Over 50% of Lambeth residents live in council property. As a landlord we will :

- Freeze rents and keep service charge increases below the level of inflation, and investigate changes to the assessment of rents and rateable values so that residents are not penalised for living in commercially advantageous areas and so that environmental and other factors are taken into account.
- Initiate a pilot programme of planned maintenance to interiors and common

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areas, continue external painting programmes and create a better repair service as a major priority by:

- * using the neighbourhood offices to make repair reporting simpler and more convenient with more telephone lines, longer opening hours and Saturday opening if possible;
 - * making individual officers responsible for liaison for each repair until the work is completed;
 - * continuing the creation of locally based multi-skilled teams to develop closer links between tenants and the workforce;
 - * creating a system of appointments that works with proper checks on the work carried out;
 - * having a complaints procedure with cash compensation for unkept appointments;
 - * providing training schemes for staff in customer relations;
 - * trying out a system of pre-paid report cards for tenants to comment on work done so that an independent check, in conjunction with the tenants' representatives, can be made that the repair system is working. The centralised Priority One Teams will be continued with better publicity.
- Continue to allocate resources to the proper rehabilitation of Lambeth's older estates and take all measures, including legal action through the courts if necessary, to ensure the funding pledged for the rehabilitation of the ex-GLC estates is provided by the government following the abolition of the GLC.
 - Continue to make safety on estates a priority, recognising that women, children and elderly people are particularly at risk. We will continue to improve lighting and visibility, install reliable entryphones and sleeping policemen and use traffic management schemes to stop motorists using our estates as short cuts and car parks.
 - Investigate structural improvements to high density estates such as Stockwell Park and Angell Town and consult with tenants on long term solutions, including demolition, for which we will campaign for resources; investigate housing association or cooperative management as a solution to the particular problems of the Barrier Block.

- Introduce an adequate lettings target to remove all households with small children from above the fourth floors of tower blocks and allocate resources to lift maintenance and security doors. A full-time caretaker/receptionist system will be introduced in a pilot project.
- Give priority to improving or replacing District Heating Systems, with specialist officers to advise on all aspects of energy conservation in consultation with tenants and local energy projects, and develop a long-term borough-wide energy policy.
- Continue the "noise patrol", extending its use with greater publicity. We will not insist on the name of the complainant. Where possible, we will set up liaison with any organisation or group responsible for causing noise nuisance and try to find alternative venues for their activities.
- Ensure that a welfare rights check is undertaken in all rent arrears cases and give more resources to money advisers based in the neighbourhood offices to advise tenants when they first encounter financial difficulties, thereby helping tenants to avoid running up large rent arrears.

Neighbourhood Offices

Now that we have established a network of neighbourhood housing offices, we aim to use them to give tenants access to a more accountable, efficient and open service. The housing offices will be the base from which an improved repairs service will operate. They will also provide information on all aspects of housing, including rent and rate levels, our allocations policy, publicise mutual exchange schemes, be the place to register on the waiting list and check progress, through computer terminals located in each office.

We will take steps to ensure fast and accurate levels of service and recognise the problems many tenants have experienced through the inadequacies of the existing computer service. Estate-based lettings will be encouraged within the framework of our equal opportunities policies and the continuation of borough-wide access to the waiting list. More phone lines will be provided and tenants will have a "named" officer dealing with them throughout.

Housing Benefit

The administration of housing benefits - a scheme imposed on the Council by the government in haste and without sufficient resources - for both council and private tenants will be unified and based in the neighbourhood offices. We are committed to making the system work as effectively as possible for all claimants with well-trained staff, adequate computer facilities and publicity to advise everyone of their rights to claim this and other benefits, in conjunction with the Welfare Rights Unit. We will aim to maximise the income available to Lambeth residents and campaign to resist any further reductions in benefit levels and for increased resources.

Tenant Democracy

We will continue to support and work with tenants associations, while insisting that they are fully representative, democratic and free from all discrimination. We will investigate holding District Housing Committee meetings locally, seek greater involvement of all the trade unions in them, and will introduce creche facilities/dependants' allowances for tenants' representatives to ensure that the Committees can be truly democratic and accountable. Estate meetings for tenants, officers, councillors, caretakers, etc. will be extended to all estates. In addition, to ensure that tenants are fully informed of our plans and policies, we will seek to provide a regular newsletter and fund lockable noticeboards for tenants associations.

Equal Access

Labour is firmly committed to combatting discrimination and ensuring equal access to a decent home for all. We will continue to base our housing policies on this principle, monitoring all aspects to ensure it is adhered to. Where discrimination is found, we will seek to reverse it. Any instances of discrimination, whether by housing staff, tenants associations or tenants will be treated with the utmost seriousness. Action will be taken against tenants guilty of all forms of harassment, but particularly racial or sexual harassment. This action will include eviction where necessary.

We will continue our policy of allocating 35% of all available property, including new homes, to black people to redress the disadvantage experienced in the past. Consideration will be given to adjusting

this percentage where obvious inequality continues.

We recognise that a high proportion of households are headed by women and we will ensure that priority is given to women in respect of access, design and housing policy. We will encourage joint tenancies and ensure that both tenants are treated equally and jointly in all dealings with the Council. We will continue to build mobility homes for tenants with disabilities and sheltered accommodation for the elderly. We will take care that elderly tenants are housed close to relatives and friends, including giving special consideration to transfers, and continue the programme of free interior decoration. We will ensure that lesbian and gay couples enjoy the same tenancy rights as heterosexual couples. We will seek to build greater numbers of large homes for big households and extended families.

We will give priority to rehousing safely all women who are the victim of domestic abuse or violence, working closely with Women's Aid.

Transfers and Allocations

Our policies for transfers and allocations will be well publicised, the points system will be explained and, until all our estates can be fully rehabilitated, we will create and publicise a definite and understandable guide for access to "hard to let" property. Tenants in under-occupied housing will be encouraged to transfer to more suitable accommodation, with financial compensation. Those on the waiting list will have a "named" officer dealing with them throughout; the allocations policy will be clearly explained and more time will be given for people to consider their offers. We will monitor the quality of offers and the treatment received by individuals. Steps have already been taken to reduce the number and length of time that homes are left empty and this will continue so that allocations can be speeded up. We will institute faster and more secure boarding-up of vacant homes, speed up repairs through monitoring and the use of special teams.

Homelessness

Despite the Council's efforts, the number of homeless people continues to rise. This has now been worsened by the government's treatment of young people in bed and breakfast accommodation. We recognise

that the service provided by the Homeless Persons Unit has been grossly inadequate and pledge to take all necessary steps to improve it as a matter of highest priority. Bed and breakfast accommodation which does not meet health and safety and fire regulations will not be used and we will work towards not using this form of accommodation at all except as a last resort for single people. Instead we will use "hard to let" and short-life properties as temporary accommodation. We will continue to refuse to use the "intentionality" clause of the Homeless Persons Act and will treat homeless 16-18 year olds as a priority group. We will prioritise the rehousing of young gay men and other groups specifically considered to be at risk.

We recognise that many homeless people are forced to squat in council and other property. Where there are no other immediate plans for the property, temporary licences will be granted but we will not condone anti-social behaviour from squatters any more than we will from tenants.

Housing Associations

We support the work of housing associations and housing cooperatives in the provision of homes for fair rent. We will seek to maximise our quota of nominations to housing associations and co-ops and ensure that nominations are used for those in the greatest housing need. We will continue to consider the rehousing of housing association tenants into council accommodation in return for reciprocal nominations to the housing association concerned. We will encourage the formation of new housing associations by groups of private tenants.

Private Tenants and Owner Occupiers

The Council also has a role to play in relation to private tenants and owner occupiers.

In particular we recognise that women, elderly people and the black community suffer as private tenants through neglect by their landlords and as low income owner occupiers.

Plans are already underway to establish three local Housing Advice Centres with advice workers more closely identified with specific geographical areas and better integration with other council services.

Using planning measures, we will continue our commitment to urban renewal and improvement through the use of Housing Action Areas and General Improvement Areas. We will aim for more flexibility by creating Housing Renewal Areas that can identify more scattered areas of need.

We are committed to reintroducing the use of individual improvement grants. We seek to minimise delays in grant processing, targetting those in real need and not speculators. We will provide better information and support to areas with low take-up despite high need. We will campaign for more government Housing Investment Programme money for the private sector.

A large number of private sector properties are lying empty. We will use the Council's legal powers to press owners to bring empty properties back into use, with a commitment to the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders where other means have failed.

In our service to the private rented sector we will expand the Tenancy Relations Officers team as part of the Housing Directorate with a greater emphasis on taking legal action in cases of harassment or illegal eviction. We will provide fuller advice and assistance to tenants and long leaseholders of mansion blocks. We recognise that elderly people constitute a large proportion of private tenants and will tailor our advice services more to their needs. We will rehouse, as a priority, anyone made homeless as a result of pursuing their legal rights when an action is taken on the advice of the Council.

Many large properties have been converted into flats and sold on long leaseholds. Many problems exist for these leaseholders, including absentee freeholders, high service charges and repairs to common parts. Lambeth will use its housing powers to protect the interests of these leaseholders, as it has already done in Streatham.

Single People

We will campaign for more resources to be given to the needs of single people. We will continue to develop a full range of accommodation to suit the needs of single people in order to combat homelessness, including hostels, group homes and self-contained units. Such accommodation will

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be designed taking into account our equal opportunity policies.

Improved advice and assistance will be given so that single people gain access to council, housing association or cooperative housing, on the basis of housing need.

We are committed to complete the phased closure of Vauxhall Hostel by November 1988 and to the rehousing of all residents there in accommodation suitable to their requirements.

New Homes

With the cuts in housing expenditure imposed on Lambeth by the present government, the building of new homes and the rehabilitation of existing ones is in danger of grinding to a halt. We will fight to maintain our position as the borough with the largest building programme in London. We will launch a campaign to highlight the disastrous effects of government policy on local housing and put forward the need for investment.

We wish to involve tenants and prospective tenants in a continuous plan of consultation over designs for new homes and rehabilitation of existing property. We know that investment in homes for Lambeth, coordinated with policies on transport, education and social services, can help rebuild our communities. The Coin Street development is one example we are pledged to defend.

We reject the policy, put forward in some quarters, of selling council housing estates to private property developers and no such sales will be considered. The Council will, however, cooperate with other socially-responsible bodies such as housing associations or cooperatives to develop homes. As we have done in respect of the Coin Street development, we will demand that our equal opportunities policies apply in respect of all housing allocations.

As part of our campaign for investment in housing we will identify and plan now:

- a major programme of building on vacant land with an emphasis on homes with gardens;
- an accelerated programme of rehabilitation of older estates;
- how extra finance could be used to increase repairs and maintenance;
- how high density estates could be improved through thinning by demolition;
- an acquisition strategy which will identify areas where houses in the private sector, including property in trust, could be brought into public ownership and allocated according to housing need.

With this information we will aim to organise tenants and prospective tenants, the homeless and the poorly housed to join with us to raise the demand "for a decent home for all" to force this government to give proper resources to rebuild our borough.

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EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment Scandal

More people are unemployed in Lambeth than in any other London borough. Over 30,000 people are unemployed locally - that means one person in four is without a job. A growing number of people have been without work for so long they are becoming unemployable. Many young people are facing a future without work and without hope. The number of jobs available is decreasing every year. Between October 1984 and October 1985 the vacancy level dropped by over 30%. There are a staggering 82 people chasing every job available. The abolition of the GLC, the closure of local hospitals and any cuts in local council services, all major local employers, will add to the ever mounting dole queues.

The Tories blame the unemployed for not looking hard enough for work. Yet it is their economic policies which have created Britain's unemployment scandal. Instead of creating jobs, they are cutting benefit to the unemployed and other claimants, pushing down the wages of those already

in low-paid jobs, and attacking those trade unions and local authorities who fight to save jobs and industries.

Labour is committed to overturning this disastrous state of affairs. Labour's Jobs and Industry Campaign nationally and our

campaigns locally are dedicated to showing that there is an alternative to the Tories' destruction of our industrial base.

The Council has a valuable role to play in challenging the Tories' lack of any policies to deal with unemployment and in laying the groundwork for a socially responsible society where everyone has the chance of a decent job with a decent income. We will campaign for local authorities to be given more power and resources to intervene in the local economy so that jobs can be created.

Increased Resources

The incoming Labour Council will increase resources to the Employment and Economic Activities Committee and set up an Employment and Training Directorate in order to build such a campaign for change and to use our resources, of capital and of political and economic power, to implement policies which directly aid local people now.

We recognise that this aid will be limited because of government policies, but it will show what could be done if we had a government that really wanted to tackle the problems we face. We cannot be a substitute for a government which does not care - we can be part of the campaign to get a government that does care.

Policy development and research will be carried out to ensure informed decisions are made and resources maximised. Drawing on the London Industrial Strategy developed by the GLC, the incoming Labour Council will draw up an Employment and Training Strategy based on a detailed analysis of priority industrial sectors to guide investment and industrial development and an investigation of unmet local product and service needs.

Equal Opportunities

We recognise that we must address the specific problems faced by sections of our community. A third of all Lambeth's unemployment is in the Brixton area and unemployment is disproportionately high amongst black youth. Discrimination - whether blatant or more subtle and pervasive - against any section of our society must be attacked. We will aim to ensure that everyone has equal access to suitable jobs and training.

Unemployment amongst women in Lambeth is rising at a fast rate. For many women

childcare provision is a pre-requisite for employment and training. Therefore, training and employment places aided by the Council will be required to have adequate childcare provision.

Job Creation

Direct aid from Council funds does not produce many new jobs. But it can make a significant difference. Many thousands of jobs across London have been saved through schemes funded by the Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB). We will ensure, in conjunction with the other London Labour boroughs, that GLEB continues to play this role by providing our share of the necessary resources.

We will provide assistance to local employers, giving priority to those who have good prospects of creating jobs for the future. We will channel our grant aid to help support community organisations and local cooperatives where the maximum numbers of jobs can be created, particularly looking to groups and firms who suffer discrimination from other agencies, such as those run by women, black people and people with disabilities. We will involve local people in deciding on the development and implementation of our policies by establishing an Enterprise Development Forum.

Workers Co-ops

An expansion of the cooperative sector is important both to create new jobs and to demonstrate the feasibility of enterprises controlled by those who work in them. To further this goal the Council will:

- review procedures for processing grants to co-ops to minimise delay in making payments;
- ensure the provision of adequate premises for local co-ops with suitable terms, and establish a second co-op centre in the borough, subject to the results of the current London Cooperative Development Association feasibility study;
- increase financial assistance to worker co-ops through the establishment of a council loan guarantee scheme and a local loan fund to be managed by the London Cooperative Enterprise Board;
- provide adequate training on worker co-ops to relevant council staff to increase awareness of their difficulties and needs.

Land Use

Aside from direct funding, the incoming Labour Council will ensure that planning

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policy, grants and available land are directed to stimulate the development of new jobs. This policy will be closely monitored to ensure its full implementation.

All sites in the borough not needed for public housing will be made available for job-creating industries and enterprises. We will use Urban Development Grants and other funds to develop industrial and commercial premises in line with local economic needs. We will ensure premises are available at affordable terms for starting enterprises and will provide overheads support and training facilities. We will develop programmes for using sites as sector-based industrial communities, incorporating communal services, training and childcare facilities.

Council Employment

The Council is the largest employer in the borough. Therefore, our first priority must be to maintain the job security of the Council's own employees. We are pledged to make no redundancies and maintain full staffing levels at all times. We will fight all attempts to force the Council to privatise any section of the workforce. We know that if we were to allow services like the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) to be replaced by private firms only interested in making a profit, not only would our services deteriorate, but it would lead to major loss of jobs and the conditions of service and pay of those still working would be destroyed.

We are not prepared to allow that to happen.

The incoming Labour Council will launch a campaign against the low pay of council employees by ensuring equal pay for work of equal value and campaigning for the introduction of a statutory minimum wage of two-thirds average male earnings. It will negotiate with the trade unions on the introduction of a maximum 35 hour week for all its employees.

The abolition of the GLC is threatening many locally-based community schemes and Labour is committed to providing the necessary funding to ensure that they continue to provide a valuable local service. Also threatened by government attacks on council spending are the valuable programmes put forward which have done much to make Lambeth Council,

not perfect, but certainly the best, local employer in terms of tackling discrimination. We will fight not just to maintain but also improve on that position.

Training

Training should be a springboard out of unemployment, not a substitute for it. The existing government schemes are no more than exercises in keeping the figures down so that the unemployment statistics do not look so bad.

We want to make training meaningful - with adequate facilities and decent wages, geared to providing skills for people which will actually reflect the needs and desires of the community.

Enterprises aided by the Council will be expected to contribute to our training strategy by providing apprenticeships and placement training.

We will campaign for more money from central government. Schemes, whether locally or nationally funded, must be under local control and offer more than paper commitments to provision for women, black people or those with disabilities. While recognising that the Manpower Services Commission needs to be radically altered if it is to meet the needs of local people, we will campaign for the MSC's equal opportunities policy to be adequately funded and for increased borough representation on the Area Manpower Boards. Safeguards against job substitution are vital and training allowances should be linked to agreed union rates. We will campaign for guaranteed jobs for YTS trainees.

In schemes directly attached to the Council all YTS trainees will be guaranteed jobs and will receive trade union rates of pay. We will increase the number of training schemes and apprenticeships across the Council.

Local employers will be encouraged to take more responsibility for training as part of Good Employer Codes. Nursery provision for children in the care of trainees will be provided.

Good Employer Code

We aim to harness the Council's economic power to create socially responsible employment in the borough.

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The present Good Employer Code will be updated and used in all council contracts, including leasing arrangements, grant aid agreements and contracts with firms providing goods and services. We will insist that such contractors abide by the law - particularly in respect of the Equal Pay, Sex Discrimination and Race Relations laws.

We will look for positive action to be taken to ensure decent training provision and workplace nursery places.

The Council's Contract Compliance Unit will work with other local authorities to establish common standards and a coordinated approach. Contractors will be monitored to ensure they comply with council standards. Whether it is in providing goods for the council, accepting grants from the council, or using council facilities, renting sites, etc, we will insist that our standards are adhered to.

The Council's Superannuation Fund will be used in a way which is consistent with the interests of Fund members and the local community. Our trustees will ensure that Fund policy does not conflict with wider council policies, and that suitable criteria for investment are drawn up, including not investing in firms with South African connections.

Information Technology

A new technology network of all relevant organisations will be set up to help develop and exploit new technology. The variety of vocational computer training schemes that exist in the borough will be coordinated and we will ensure that they provide the skills required by local employers. The Council will develop the New Technology Committee and agreements made between the Council and that committee will be used as a model for monitoring and developing the use of new technology locally.

The effective use of computers will increase the success rate of small businesses and co-ops that are assisted by the Council through the Enterprise Programme. We will therefore encourage the establishment of specialist computer services as an integral part of the

Lambeth Employment and Enterprise Programme.

We will resist the trend towards homeworking within information technology employment as this undermines the rights of workers in the industry. In residential areas where homeworking exists we will set up experimental "homeworkers centres", with childcare facilities. These centres will be open to all homeworkers, not just those involved in information technology.

Trade Union Support

In all our activity, building close links with the trade union movement is essential. We will continue to work in partnership with trade unions locally to defend and advance the working conditions of local people. We are pledged to continue support for an independent Trade Union Support Unit.

For the Council workforce we repeat our pledge to make no redundancies and to work with the council unions to protect jobs from enforced privatisation. For workers employed by council contractors and grant recipients, we will insist on full trade union recognition and adherence to trade union agreements and anti-discrimination laws as a condition of contract. For all other workers, we will be campaigning for a decent job at a decent rate of pay. We will work with the trade unions to monitor the local economy and analyse changes in company policies to provide an "early warning system" to deal with threatened redundancies and closures.

An expanded Welfare Rights programme will be provided to give aid and advice to workers and claimants. Particular emphasis will be placed on looking to the needs of young people pushed between school, YTS and the dole with no experience of trade union collective organisation and strength.

We will maintain our commitment to the Unemployed Centre, for which we will provide better facilities and larger premises. We will initiate a borough-wide campaign to publicise it and will aim to set up another centre to serve the south end of the borough with easy access for people with disabilities.

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SOCIAL SERVICES

Labour in Lambeth is committed to the principle of collective care, as of right, for the most vulnerable in our society. We will expand and develop services and oppose any erosion through cuts or privatisation.

Like other inner city areas, many parts of Lambeth have experienced an exodus of young, able-bodied and economically successful people, leaving behind an increasing proportion of those who are elderly, physically or mentally handicapped or otherwise in need of support. The vast majority of Lambeth residents will, at some stage in their lives, rely on one or other of the Council's social services. We have the highest number of families headed by lone parents in London. We have welcomed and accommodated many refugee families from various parts of the world, whose special needs are recognised by the Council. The closure of hospitals will also mean new demands.

More Say

Recognising all these needs, Labour rejects the paternalistic and patronising approach to social services which mars provision elsewhere. We are committed to defend rights and dignity. We reject the view that social service users are incapable of making their own decisions. We wish to see greater involvement by the various "user groups" in the planning and development of services. We will be consulting all interested groups to discuss how best to give more say in council provision.

While ensuring that statutory obligations are sensitively fulfilled, all social services must develop more flexibility and become more accessible and responsive through the process of decentralisation. This is not the Tory view of "care in the community", which is a cheap alternative to statutory provision, throwing the burden of care onto already overworked and unpaid carers - women in the home. Labour's care in the community, with the proper resources, will seek to involve community groups and local people in developing patterns of care which do not isolate people from the wider community.

Labour will improve public access at local offices - the first point of contact. Linked to the decentralisation of other services, especially housing, we aim to improve internal communication between departments and between manual and non-manual staff, eg. home helps and social

workers. To this end we will upgrade the pay and training of those providing community care, eg. home helps, in line with their increased responsibilities. We will develop closer links with community groups to share information and identify common concerns and improve publicity about services which can be provided. The Area Community Workers will play a key role in these links and their role will be more integrated within the Area Office.

The provision of social services and preventative social work is not simply the duty of the Social Services Department but involves all departments, eg. Housing, Finance, Amenities.

Children

We urgently need more day care provision for under-fives. The development of pre-school age children is enriched by a wide social and cultural mix. This cannot be achieved when the places available are only sufficient for those desperately in need. We reaffirm our commitment to full day care for all children of those who want it.

We recognise that childminders provide a valuable service. We will provide the necessary support to encourage all childminders in the borough to register with the Council. We will monitor the facilities provided, ensure that all childminders comply with our equal opportunities policies and provide training and equipment.

Both childminders and those depending on their service are low paid. We will provide grants to raise the income of childminders to the level of equivalent council employees.

Closer communication will be developed between the Council and other agencies, eg. health services, ILEA, voluntary groups, and people receiving or needing the Children's Services. The services need to respond more flexibly to the need of adults and children, eg. extended hours, parental health advice, welfare support.

Labour will continue to provide support for children in need; where possible in their own homes, and where necessary

through fostering, adoption or residential homes in the borough.

Much has been achieved in finding and supporting new foster parents, particularly from the black community. This progress will be maintained and resources made available to ensure that foster children and parents are supported more effectively, attempting to link the finding and placement of children to their own locality. We support a policy of placing black children in households where at least one of the nominated carers is black. We believe lesbian and gay foster parents have just as important a role as heterosexual foster parents in providing care for children and young people in need. We particularly welcome them meeting the demand created by the number of lesbian and gay adolescents who find themselves homeless after being rejected by their families. We are aware of the traumas that can be caused to children when fostering breaks down and we resolve to provide continued social work support and alternatives to fostering.

Reception into care is a time of personal crisis. Priority will be given to ensuring that placements are decided at area level so that local links are less disrupted. This is crucial as the need for residential care becomes more intermittent than long term. At present it often involves children or adults being displaced far from family/community networks, and those who require repeated admissions over a long period frequently find themselves in different and unfamiliar places.

Increasingly the majority of children in residential care are teenagers. Institutionalised regulations that prevent staff responding to the need for self-esteem and the development of social skills will be reviewed to encourage independent choice and personal decisions by youngsters, care and domestic staff in cooperative responsibility.

Our provision will continue to address the particular needs of young people who are facing trouble, through the further development of day facilities, such as Intermediate Treatment, and by explaining other alternatives to custodial or residential provision in liaison with the youth services.

Encouraging Independence

The proportion of elderly people in Lambeth has been increasing. We believe that elderly people should be supported so that they can remain in their own homes but that residential care should be available for those who need it. Similar considerations apply for those with physical or mental disabilities. Adaptions, aids, telephones and better transport provision are essential. Resources will be made available to develop such provision. Mobility schemes, including travel permits and dial-a-ride, will be further developed. A borough-wide interpreting service for the deaf and other aids for people with disabilities, including those using new technology, will be explored to improve independence and the quality of life.

Adult Day Care

Lambeth will continue to support a network of day centres for elderly people, people with mental health difficulties and people with disabilities. We will ensure that centres are based firmly within their locality and that users are fully involved in their development and management. These centres will be all the more desperately needed as the government closes down local NHS provision. Care in the community is necessary - but only if properly resourced.

The Home Care Service enables many to continue living at home. Labour is committed to widening the Home Help service to increase support. For instance, help could be offered to people caring for an elderly relative, or those with severe disabilities. We recognise that black and Asian people often do not use the Home Care service and we will investigate ways of ensuring that the service is appropriate to their needs and that people know what is available.

The present scale of charges for Meals on Wheels will be protected and the service expanded, particularly in providing Afro-Caribbean and Asian meals, and other special diet requirements will be considered. The possibility of a flexible system, with frozen meals for the more able for weekend and holiday periods, and the cooperation of local large supermarkets in providing a dial-a-shop service for pensioners as a condition of planning consent, will be explored.

Residential Care

For those who need residential care, recent advances in Lambeth include:

- the development of group living, whereby homes are arranged into smaller neighbourhood units and a more close-knit, caring community results;
- the introduction of a residents' charter, safeguarding the right to live with independence and dignity;
- the building of links with community groups in several of our homes and the development of new forms of care.

We pledge to build on these improvements by developing a full-scale strategy for adult residential care in Lambeth. Central to this strategy will be the evolution of our adult homes into community-based resource centres. We see the residents of our homes as tenants with all the rights and independence of such a status. We will move away from the concept of adult homes as institutions which put a premium on the surrender of independence and hope.

We will give priority to making our adult homes realise their full potential to meet the needs of their residents and of the wider community by:

- greatly expanding the amount of rotational and respite care provided to allow relations and carers to have a break, so they can cope with their difficult task. Our aim is to provide the essential support which such carers have not previously received. Rotational care can also serve to ease the transition into full-time residential care for those who need it;
- making fuller and more imaginative use of the buildings themselves, for example as new, high quality luncheon clubs, as day-time drop-ins and as meeting places. The developments would have to be carefully structured to best meet differing needs;
- ensuring that full time residents have a single room or are able to share where they prefer companionship;
- providing the necessary investment and staffing levels to support these changes.

Wider Strategy

Our strategy for social services needs to be viewed and assessed as part of a wider strategy which the incoming Labour Council will draw up in consultation with local health authorities, community groups and voluntary organisations to meet the growing needs of elderly people, people

with disabilities and people with mental health difficulties in Lambeth.

Provision for those with physical and mental disabilities, adults and children, will be better integrated within the multi-service provision at a local level. Counselling services will be extended. Self-help, voluntary and community schemes will be encouraged. Increased resources will be provided for those with mental health difficulties and the needs of women and black people will be particularly addressed.

Support for vulnerable homeless people will be increased with priority rehousing to include ex-psychiatric patients and young single parents. Additional support will be provided for women and children in temporary accommodation.

Staff Involvement

We recognise the importance of staff training for the development of services. Secondment to professional training courses will be reinstated to at least 40 a year for the next five years, primarily for staff working in direct client contact, and in accordance with equal opportunity targets. In-service training will continue, establishment-based where possible, aimed at service delivery improvement. With the increased need for community care, many workers will rightly be asked to take on more responsibility. We will train and develop the skills of these workers to ensure that they are adequately equipped to deal with their new duties.

Social Services is the largest Council department. Many social workers are in the front line and deal with a very wide range of people with problems and difficulties. The work done by staff is often unrecognised and undervalued. The incoming Labour Council will take immediate steps to raise staff morale through an attack on low pay in the service, through increased democratic participation in decision-making by staff at all levels, and by a campaign of public awareness of the wide range of demanding and sometimes dangerous work carried out.

Periodic joint meetings and workshops of management, staff and Social Services Committee members will take place to discuss our shared aim of ensuring that provision is responsive to the needs of local people.

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PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

The borough's land and buildings, its roads and pavements will be developed and controlled by Labour so that people who live in Lambeth can enjoy an environment in which to live, work, shop and get around safely in. All new developments and redevelopment will be undertaken only after the fullest consultation with the community. High priority will be given to developing new policies and identifying trends affecting the borough.

Planning for Jobs

Our priorities will be to provide housing and to create and retain jobs. When opportunities arise for development and redevelopment, the highest priorities will be given to land uses which generate employment or provide housing for rent. Land suitable for industry will be strictly zoned and no other uses allowed on this land, thus preventing the harmful effects of land price speculation.

Labour will make it easier for people to get to work by improving public transport to the borough's workplaces and by making sure that new workplaces are not isolated from the public transport network.

Although Labour is opposed to large scale office developments because of their effects on land values and because they create an inhuman environment, we recognise that office work is an important source of paid employment, for women in particular. We will encourage small office buildings in town centre locations in the south of the borough.

Labour will control the environmental impact of industries in the residential parts of the borough. Design standards will be strictly applied to industrial and warehousing developments and the Council's own schemes will set an example in good design.

Planning and Housing

Labour is committed to using any suitable sites in the borough to provide housing at low rents. New developments will consist of houses with gardens wherever possible. Labour recognises that many of the large scale housing estates of the past are now regarded as unsatisfactory.

In all residential areas, Labour will make improvements to promote an increase in personal safety, particularly for women, children and elderly people. New housing developments will include space for a wide range of community facilities, including childcare, social and training facilities.

Labour will strongly resist luxury housing developments on all our riverside sites. Such housing cannot provide homes for local people and most are used as company lets or second homes for the wealthy. In relation to private housing, priority will be given to low and middle income groups. Labour will devise development control policies to achieve this. Property speculation needs to be prevented around Waterloo in particular. The Waterloo District Plan has stood the test of time - it will provide the basis for all planning in the area. We will continue to work closely with community groups in the area on the development of the Coin Street sites to provide homes and jobs for the local community, and we will make resources available to implement this scheme.

Community Areas

We will work with other boroughs to implement the GLC's Community Areas Policy. We will designate the north of the borough, namely Waterloo, Lambeth Walk, Vauxhall and North Kennington, as Community Areas, based on the need to defend and strengthen working class communities in central and inner London against commercial housing and office development pressures, and ban all further commercial speculation in these areas.

Shops

Labour recognises the need to protect and enhance a full range of shopping provision from Brixton Town Centre down to the corner shop. All residents of the borough should have access to all types of shopping.

It is important that local shops, particularly food shops, are protected throughout the borough. Labour will conduct a review of neighbourhood shopping centres and where appropriate identify shopping parades which will be protected by strengthened planning policies from the intrusion of such non-essential users as estate agents. Provision will be made in shopping parades for non-retail uses, such as women's meeting places and childcare

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centres. We will initiate a programme actively to promote neighbourhood and local shopping centres to maintain community support for their facilities. We will review all council-owned shops and ensure all lettings are for the benefit of local communities. As far as we can, we shall encourage cooperative retail facilities, which have been allowed to decline.

Labour will continue to resist the siting of hypermarkets in Lambeth. Medium-sized supermarkets will be accepted if sited close to public transport routes. It will be a condition of planning approval that major retailers provide play, changing and feeding facilities for young children and public toilets in conjunction with the supermarkets.

Planning and the environment

Labour will continue to improve the environment for local residents, workers and shoppers. The procedures for dealing with planning applications will take account of environmental factors to ensure hygienic and safe developments with a minimum of pollution. Potential users, neighbours and applicants will be involved in this process.

We will aim for the greatest possible access and mobility for people with disabilities and those with prams and pushchairs.

Traffic

Car parking is a major problem, particularly where commuters park their cars on housing estates near tube and railway stations, often blocking emergency access. We will make sure that estate parking is for residents, towing away other vehicles if necessary. We will extend controlled parking zones and strictly enforce the law on parking on pavements. We will increase staff resources in these areas.

We will provide traffic-free areas in shopping centres for pedestrians and cyclists, whilst maintaining access for public transport and essential delivery traffic.

Residential streets ought to be safe, quiet and pleasant. Our aim will be to keep out through-traffic and to slow down residential traffic. Too many noisy and dangerously overloaded lorries pass through Lambeth. We will enforce and seek to continue the night and weekend lorry

ban initiated by the GLC, increase the number of physical checks on suspect vehicles and operate a weighbridge and lorry pound. We will properly maintain pavements and highways, keeping them safely lit. We will provide more pedestrian crossings.

Vacant sites and buildings will be brought back into beneficial use through a 'facelift' programme of community-led environmental improvements. Firm action will be taken to eliminate flytipping. In areas which lack open space and children's play areas, Labour will give high priority to creating these facilities.

The design and style of new building, particularly in Brixton, should reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the borough and this will be encouraged. Exclusively western architectural styles are inappropriate in a multi-cultural area such as Lambeth.

No racist or sexist advertisements will be allowed on council-owned sites.

Transport

The government is destroying our public transport system. Taxpayers' money spent on London Transport and British Rail would be a good investment, with a huge benefit to the community in terms of less traffic congestion, less pollution and fewer accidents, as well as more jobs. The government could easily fund such investment by cutting the enormous tax subsidy on company cars. Instead, the threat of privatisation hangs over public transport; "cowboy" operators will be allowed to compete with scant regard for safety and service. Less popular routes will be axed and fares increased.

Much of the transport provision in Lambeth is inadequate. The southern part is not served by tubes, and bus and rail services are often infrequent and unreliable. We will press for a better integrated network of buses, tubes and trains.

We need a public transport system which is comfortable, safe, clean, frequent, punctual and reliable. Many of our buses are none of these. Traffic congestion caused by commuters driving through Lambeth holds them up. One-person operated buses are unsafe, spend more time at stops, and are difficult for elderly or disabled people or those with children and shopping. Fewer women bus

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conductors have been retrained as drivers. We will campaign for the phasing out of one-person operated buses. Wherever possible we will establish bus priority schemes (bus lanes, bus-operated traffic lights and bus priorities at junctions).

Some groups of people require individual forms of transport. People with disabilities do not get a good deal from public transport. We will continue to assist community dial-a-ride schemes and urge LRT to take them on and expand them. We will lobby LRT and BR for improved facilities so that people with disabilities can use public transport. We will retain and seek to expand safe door-to-door late night lift services for women, run by women, such as the existing provision in Stockwell.

We will create a Lambeth Passenger Transport Committee to press for improved bus, tube and train services in the borough. This Committee will be supported by a programme of research and consultation to identify local needs. We will oppose all forms of privatisation of public transport.

Cycling

Labour's aim is to increase cycling and make it safer. We will provide at least another five miles of cycle route each year. We will maintain highways to make them well-lit and safer for cyclists. We will consider the needs of cyclists in all traffic management schemes and measures, and create "cycle friendly areas", particularly around schools.

Blight

The road lobby is once again trying to ram motorways into Lambeth. The government is taking direct control of the South Circular and Streatham High Road, and an inner ring road through Vauxhall to the Elephant and Castle is being mooted. We will campaign to resist all these proposals. We will oppose road widening and motorway plans, and any other measures which would push more traffic through Lambeth.

We are opposed to the siting of a single Channel Tunnel terminal at Waterloo,

recognising that such a development will have a devastating effect on the local environment and community. We will use our planning powers to prevent the development of hotels and tourist outlets around Waterloo and will allow hotels only in designated non-residential areas which cannot be used for industrial or commercial development.

Community Control

Labour will continue to put the needs of local residents and workers above the demands and pressures of property developers and speculative landowners. Labour will defend the right of democratically elected local authorities to plan and control development and transport facilities for local need in full consultation with local people, without interference from central or regional government, and will press for strengthened planning legislation and increased traffic management powers to achieve these ends and for the community ownership of land and development rights.

Labour reasserts the right of democratically elected Lambeth Council to implement its own planning and transport policies without hindrance from quangos or joint boards set up in place of the GLC.

Labour will consult fully with local residents and community organisations on all modifications to existing plans, new plans, major planning applications, area-based council initiatives and new traffic management proposals. We will extend the current experiment being carried out in Waterloo, of making plans and planning applications available locally, to all areas of the borough.

Implementation

The existing Council structure is inadequate for putting this programme into practice. Responsibilities for Transport are split between the Planning and Public Services committees and departments. Labour will create a Planning and Transport Committee and will combine the Planning Department with the Traffic Division of the Public Services Department.

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RECREATION AND LEISURE

A wide variety of recreational and leisure facilities are provided by the Council, many of which have suffered because of spending restrictions during the last few years.

The incoming Labour Council will take steps to find the necessary resources to deal with any shortcomings in the services we provide and to expand facilities to meet the needs of the community. We recognise that decent recreation and leisure opportunities are an essential part of building a balanced environment in which to live.

Sports

The Brixton Recreation Centre has opened, Clapham Pool has been refurbished and now has arts, photography and pottery workshops (with a potter in residence). Work has started on Clapham Paddling Pool, a synthetic pitch has been provided at Kennington Park, and extensions or improvements made to the Ferndale and Flaxman Sports Centres. Repairs to Brockwell Lido have started, but have proved much costlier than expected - a perfect illustration of what happens when the Council is forced to delay making much needed repairs and maintenance because of lack of funds.

Lambeth is almost alone in London in having no borough athletic track and we believe that providing one should be a major priority, for the benefit of all, irrespective of race, sex, age or degree of physical disability. Possible sites (other than Brockwell Park) will be investigated. We are committed to providing a cricket pitch and club house for local groups.

The government's refusal to approve funding for the programme of Neighbourhood Recreation Centres at Spring Gardens and Norwood Park has made it impossible to meet the clear and urgent need for these facilities and we reiterate our promise to fight for the resources to develop these centres, with a swimming pool or indoor sports hall at each site. We recognise that Kennington Lido and Streatham Pool need further work done on them, and this will be carried out when funds are available.

Libraries

In the last few years we have upgraded Brixton and Clapham Libraries, expanded the domiciliary library service used by very old people and those with disabilities, introduced an additional

mobile library, placed more photocopiers and other equipment in branch libraries, as well as more multi-cultural materials, and improved access and other facilities for people with disabilities. An experiment in Sunday opening at Brixton and Kennington Libraries has proved successful and will be maintained and expanded to other locations and services.

All our library facilities need expanding. Lambeth spends less per head of population on buying books, records, cassettes, etc, than all but one other inner London borough. We are committed to increasing stock purchases. Other priorities are the computerisation of our stock records to speed up our service to users, the provision of black cultural archives, improved library ancillary facilities such as toilets and - in Brixton - refreshments. We will conduct a feasibility study into abandoning fines for the late return of books. A museum working party has been set up with the aim of providing a museum and improved archives.

Libraries are one of the oldest and one of the most valuable local authority services and it would be a tragedy if government cuts were allowed to force them into a decline. Labour is committed to ensuring this valuable public service is maintained and expanded.

Parks

Labour has provided more open space at Angell Park, Mostyn Gardens, Elam Street and Lambeth Walk. An "open door" policy for non-racist events has been maintained, in spite of opposition. More open spaces are still needed.

Lack of maintenance over the years means many of our facilities need refurbishment. We recognise the need for major improvements at Kennington Park and Spring Gardens. Brockwell Park Mansion House will be made more usable to the public.

Dogs are a recurrent source of nuisance. We propose to set up dog-free areas in parks. We will take measures, by employing more dog wardens, to control stray dogs and stop the fouling of parks, streets and housing estates.

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More provision will be made for cyclists in our parks.

Arts

Labour's support for the Lambeth Arts Council and the successful Brixton Carnival and Festival has been maintained in the face of government attacks on spending on the arts, and will be continued. We are committed to establishing more community arts facilities, in particular a community arts centre and an "artsmobile", and we will fight for the funds to make these developments possible. Three major music festivals (gospel, jazz and reggae) are already being planned and this policy will be continued by the incoming Labour Council.

Children

Labour has improved several Adventure Playgrounds and provided one for children with disabilities, but a permanent one at Willington Road is needed. The playgrounds in parks now need wholesale upgrading.

Whilst we have been able to continue to meet our commitment to develop new One O'Clock Clubs, new facilities are still required throughout the borough. We are committed to continuing our fight to find the resources to meet this demand.

In conjunction with the ILEA and other relevant services, we will aim to provide more and better after-school facilities. We will encourage and seek funding for computer facilities in local youth clubs.

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COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Labour in Lambeth has a solid record of support for independent local community organisations. We welcome and support an involved local community where people spend time organising activities, groups and services in their own areas, and participating in the life of the borough.

We will continue to make resources available to the wide range of community organisations which are currently funded by the Council. We will review the support which the Council gives to community groups, in the form of funds, facilities and other support, to ensure that groups continue to thrive and grow.

Our multi-racial community

We will encourage all grant-aided organisations to develop their services and activities to meet the needs of Lambeth's multi-racial community, ensure

Voluntary organisations

Amenity Services provides grants to many voluntary organisations. We will continue to support local organisations active in providing community arts, eg. dance and theatre, children's play schemes in the school holidays, sports and horticultural projects.

The GLC

The Labour GLC has played an important role in all areas of recreation and leisure in the borough and its abolition throws into question the continued existence of a number of schemes and facilities, either because they are being transferred to Lambeth's control without adequate resources, or because they are passing out of the control of local government altogether. We will use whatever influence we are allowed to ensure that an open, accessible and multi-cultural policy is maintained at the major facilities on the South Bank. We are committed to ensuring that local people are allowed a say in how resources are administered and will resist all attempts to use the abolition of the GLC to downgrade or sell-off the services and facilities provided to local people.

Charges

In all the services provided we are committed to holding down charges to the public and to give free access for all unwaged and low income residents, including students and YTS trainees.

that they follow equal opportunities policies, and that their management committees reflect the communities they serve. We will continue and develop our policy of giving special help to groups in the black community and among other ethnic minorities, including emerging and usually unrecognised groups such as the Chinese, Vietnamese and Latin American communities, of which there are significant numbers in Lambeth.

We will review our support for the borough's many neighbourhood centres,

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recognising their important role in providing a wide variety of community activities. We will meet the basic costs of the centres, ensure that they have adequate community work support, and establish a small grants fund to provide money for new projects, training courses and other activities.

Labour is committed to ensuring that workers in community and voluntary organisations enjoy the same conditions of service and protection as other members of the Council's staff. We will continue to support tripartite discussions between the Council, management committees and workers, and will examine ways of protecting maternity, sickness and pension rights.

Advice and Law Centres

We will continue our support for Lambeth's network of advice and law centres. We recognise that these centres are seriously overstretched with increased poverty bringing an increased demand. We will expand the number and size of advice centres and in particular will establish:

- a major advice centre in West Norwood, where there is presently very little provision;
- an advice centre for young people, which will include advice on civil rights, contraception and abortion and

a specialist and confidential drug counselling service.

We will continue to develop welfare rights services in Lambeth, both by supporting advice centres and by developing our Welfare Rights Unit. We will review the adequacy of the advice facilities available to people whose first language is not English, and the availability of representation at Social Security Appeal Tribunals.

The GLC

The abolition of the GLC is not only a direct attack on local democracy, it is also an indirect attack, because it will bring an end to the GLC's support for those many local community organisations which have provided a voice and facilities for local people. The incoming Labour Council will provide support for all local organisations now funded by the GLC, and will contribute to the costs of London-wide community organisations which would otherwise close. We will preserve GLC-funded services, without cuts, while withholding cooperation from undemocratic structures set up to replace the GLC.

We will continue to press the government for adequate funding for community organisations through the Inner City Programme and similar schemes.

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HEALTH AND CONSUMER SERVICES

Labour has worked hard to improve the environment in our Borough by making it a healthier, cleaner, safer and fairer place in which to live. However, Lambeth remains a deprived area with increasing environmental problems caused by pollution and nuisance of all kinds. The public has a right to expect the Council to maintain services which protect the health and well being of its residents. The incoming Labour Council will ensure that these services are not cut back.

Environmental Health

Close liaison between the Council's departments will be maintained to ensure that environmental and health factors are taken into account at all times. We will identify and act on major sources of noise, air and water pollution.

In particular we will:

- introduce an environmental audit into all planning procedures;
- seek to maintain the GLC's lorry ban and greatly increase the number of physical checks on suspect vehicles;
- act to limit the amount of dog nuisance - more wardens will be

appointed;

- expand the existing noise patrol.

We will ensure that hazardous chemicals are stored safely. Pest control methods used by this Council will be developed to improve public safety.

Safety Centre

Labour will open a Safety Centre to provide a base for education in first aid for the public and council employees, elementary self defence, road safety and improved instruction for cyclists and motor cyclists.

Consumer Rights

Labour aims to expand the Consumer and Money Advice services within the expanded advice centres, especially in Norwood, and through Money Advice sessions on estates throughout the borough as part of the decentralisation of services.

We will ensure that the needs and rights of both users and residents are supported in the Council's control and licencing of activities such as gaming, markets and night cafes. We wish to discourage the use of gaming machines in the borough's shops. Instead we would like to see funding for local youth clubs to have real computer facilities.

The Council will use its licencing powers to curtail severely the sale of pornographic and offensive material.

NHS Monitoring and Health Education

The government is currently forcing major cuts in the local health service. At the same time, under the guise of "community care", the government is forcing NHS patients to rely on the Council, which itself is being restricted. These changes are so drastic they put into question the survival of public health care. Labour has fought hard to protect our health services and will continue to do so. We will establish a Health Promotion Unit both to monitor and coordinate the Council's response to cuts in the NHS, encouraging public campaigns against these cuts.

The Unit will also promote local health education to prevent ill health eg. by

encouraging the availability and consumption of healthier foods and setting up giving up smoking groups.

We will press the government to make extra funds available for the investigation and treatment of AIDS as well as making publicity available to combat prejudice that arises from ignorance.

Animal Welfare

The Council has approved an Animal Charter based on that proposed by the RSPCA. We will continue to examine ways in which the welfare of animals can be promoted by the Council in harmony with the rights of racial and religious minorities.

Peace and Nuclear Affairs

Labour will campaign within the nuclear free zone movement totally to reject the implementation of civil defence, which would be futile in the event of nuclear war.

We will propose job creating alternatives to the dangerous and expensive nuclear power programme, such as insulation projects and combined heat and power, and expose the hidden links between the civil nuclear power programme and the world's nuclear weapons. Our work will proceed in partnership with the local Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, peace, community and professional groups. We will develop this in line with resource conservation, taking a wide view of energy, recycling and insulation policies.

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PUBLIC SERVICES

The aim of the Public Services Committee will continue to be the maintenance of a clean and safe physical environment.

The threat of privatisation makes that aim harder to achieve. Apart from the threat of "cowboy" contractors defaulting on services, as has been the experience in nearby Wandsworth, compulsory tendering causes more bureaucracy. Lambeth's own Civil Engineering Direct Labour Organisation has, for the last two years, won the contracts in open competition to undertake street lighting works. Had it not been necessary to embark on this time-consuming and bureaucratically expensive exercise required by the government, substantial savings could have

been achieved for the ratepayers.

We will continue to resist the government's privatisation plans.

Refuse

A clean and pollution free environment is part of our commitment to the well-being of the community. We will:

- explore new methods to provide the best possible refuse collection service, particularly from housing estates not designed to cope with modern packaging;

- introduce a continental type bulky refuse collection, whereby on nominated days on a street by street basis unwanted bulky items can be left out for collection;
- develop and expand the recycling of waste such as cans, paper and plastics in consultation with local groups as well as increase the number of bottle banks;
- give high priority to the removal of racist and sexist graffiti;
- increase the frequency and areas cleansed by street washing and maintain and expand the standard of street sweeping.

The abolition of the GLC will mean an expansion in the Public Services Department with a range of services such as waste disposal being thrown onto the Council. No adequate provision is being made by the government to finance this increase in responsibility. In fact less money is being provided when, because of divisions into smaller units, higher costs will have to be met. We will campaign for the provision of London-wide services under democratic control, or failing that proper provision of resources in order to meet the increased cost of meeting the needs of our community.

On the Streets

Through positive action we will favour residents, pedestrians and cyclists. In particular we will:

- reintroduce a rolling programme of highway maintenance whereby every borough road is resurfaced on a regular cycle of years basis;
- provide more high strength special paving in shopping areas and additional street amenities such as seats, signs and bollards;
- see that the need for ramps for pushchairs, prams and wheelchairs is catered for;
- review the provision of public conveniences and increase provision of facilities for people with disabilities.

This will be coordinated with the new Planning and Transport Committee which will take on the Traffic Division of the Public Services Department.

Council Run Funeral Service

A non-profit making Municipal Funeral Service will be introduced to reduce the over-high costs to the bereaved. Studies have shown that a council-run service would be considerably cheaper. We will investigate the potential value of directly selling to the public plants and flowers grown in the Cemetery greenhouses, to increase income for the maintenance of cemeteries.

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CRIME PREVENTION, THE POLICE AND THE COMMUNITY

Labour recognises that a major concern of local people is that they should live in safety and that fear of crime severely restricts the lives and activities of many people - particularly women and elderly people. Labour is committed to promoting crime prevention to enable all local people to live in safety.

Law and Order

The Tories have made much of their "law and order" policies. But their policies have meant more "law" and less "order".

As unemployment has soared and social deprivation increased, so the level of social unrest has risen. The prospect of a life on the dole has made many of our young people feel rejected by society. That anger and alienation has unsurprisingly found its expression on our streets.

The level of unemployment in Lambeth is a direct responsibility of central government. A local council has only

limited powers and resources to create and save jobs and make our environment a better place to live. We are pledged to use those powers and resources in the most effective way we can to improve the quality of local people's lives.

Prevention not "Cure"

Rather than dealing with criminals after the crime, Labour believes there is much to be gained by stopping crime happening. Tory restraints on council spending make this difficult, nevertheless we are committed to making the environment safer.

Labour does not underestimate the

problems of crime on the estates and streets of Lambeth. We recognise that many residents are afraid to go out alone after dusk and even feel under threat in their own homes. We will take steps to protect local residents by:

- supporting schemes which improve security on our estates, by providing kick-proof doors, window and door locks, anti-climb paint, reliable entryphones, etc;
- continuing our programme of modernising street and estate lighting;
- maintaining the night-time light spotting patrol to ensure speedy repairs and maintenance;
- retaining, and seeking to expand, safe door-to-door late night lift services for women, run by women;
- better design of council estates and public places to avoid dangerous walkways and dark corners.

We want people to feel confident to walk on our streets. The Council will provide and subsidise self-defence classes, independent of the police, for particular groups of residents at risk from violence, eg. women, elderly people, lesbians and gay men, with instructors acceptable to these groups. In conjunction with the ILEA, we will promote crime prevention through education in our schools and youth clubs.

Racial Harassment

The incoming Labour Council will systematically monitor racial harassment and racial attacks to ensure that appropriate action is taken by the police and all council services. The Police Committee will collate statistics gathered by all our directorates, and publicise the figures as part of Labour's campaign to make the police take this issue seriously.

Violence to Women

Domestic violence, rape and assault are a threat to women of all ages. Investigations by the Council's Police Committee have shown that the police frequently fail to take such attacks seriously. The Council will continue to support the work of Women's Aid in providing a safe refuge for women threatened by domestic violence and will join with other groups in the borough to campaign to ensure that all women, whether married or not, are treated equally under the law.

Victim Support

The incoming Labour Council will set up

victim support schemes, especially for victims of crimes not always reported to the police, and will give help to all those who suffer persecution on the grounds of their gender, race or sexual orientation.

The Police

The police have an important role to play in reducing crime and making communities safer for everyone. However, this role has been undermined by police methods which alienate the community. The record of the Metropolitan Police in Lambeth is not a proud one. During 1984 Lambeth ratepayers contributed £7.1 million towards the cost of the police, but only 13% of reported crimes were cleared up.

We are forced to pay for a police force, not a police service, with no say in how our money is spent. Labour wants the police to be a community service, rather than an oppressive force. This will not be possible without a major upheaval in the structures and methods of London's policing. Despite the adoption of a new "community style" public relations approach, day-to-day policy and operational methods remain unchanged, with no accountability to the community they purport to serve and little possibility of redress.

Deteriorating Relations

Events in 1985 have once again shown the deterioration in police/community relations - not just between the police and some "lawless elements", but with the mass of the community, young and old, black and white. This will continue to be the case whilst the role of the police is to act, at the behest of a uncaring government, as a lid on the alienation and social anger justly expressed in areas like our own. Instead of dealing with chronic unemployment, urban deprivation and pervasive discrimination and racism against the black community, the government's response has been to support further 'strong arm' tactics with the introduction of rubber bullets, water cannon and other instruments of authoritarian control onto the streets of London.

Complaints

The police's strategy appears to be to mix increasingly "heavy" policing methods with a "softly softly" public relations approach. The shooting of Cherry Groce and subsequent events ripped away the velvet glove to expose the iron fist. The

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police cannot police themselves. Even under the new Police Complaints Authority, the police still investigate complaints against themselves. To be trusted and respected by the community, complaints procedures must be fully independent and accountable.

Priorities

While busily engaged in fruitless "stop and search" and other surveillance operations, the police continue to fail to show any real concern about crimes such as burglary, assault and car theft.

The police have increasingly used highly selective statistics to generate an emotional over-reaction. They have created a climate of fear to manipulate the public into accepting their methods, and they have the support of the present government in doing this. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 legalises the searching of homes, irrespective of whether we are suspected of any crime, the using of force to search people on the streets, and the detention of people in custody for up to four days without charge.

The incoming Labour Council will continue to oppose the use of heavy-handed and intrusive tactics by the police. We will monitor the implementation of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act in the hope of protecting civil rights and minimising disruption to the daily lives of the people of Lambeth. We will take up individuals' complaints against the police, publicising excesses of the police as and when they occur in order to prevent their repetition. In serious cases, as with the shooting of Cherry Groce, this could take the form of setting up independent enquiries, open and public, so as to expose the true nature of the policing of our community. We will challenge the police to justify all special operations mounted in the borough.

Neighbourhood Policing

Over the past two years, the police have set up several "neighbourhood" schemes in Lambeth. They have also involved themselves in the work of statutory and voluntary agencies and in visits to schools. But this neighbourhood policing is based on a contract between the community and the police which operates solely on the police's terms: join in and you get reasonable policing - opt out and you get coercive policing. We will

investigate police activity in schools and their involvement with other agencies in the borough.

Labour fully endorses crime prevention, but with the police supporting the community rather than the other way round. Therefore, we have strong reservations about police-inspired neighbourhood schemes. They gloss over the inefficiency and high cost of policing the borough, by implying that we are responsible for the poor rate of detection; they exploit public fears and prejudices, dividing the community against itself, rather than uniting it; they divert public attention from the more sinister implications which many police operations hold for our basic civil rights and liberties.

Accountability

Until central government recognises the need for a democratically accountable police force, we will continue to campaign for greater police accountability through the Council's Police Committee, monitoring police activity and taking up complaints.

The Community/Police Consultative Group has no powers, no clear lines of accountability or control, and no clear relationship with the police. Its sole function is as a talking shop, on terms dictated by the police, to give the false impression that somehow the police are listening to local people.

Labour will have no part in such an exercise in delusion and will not provide any support for it. Only the Police Committee or the full Council will be empowered to make representations to the police and then only to lodge complaints and call for investigations.

Police activity in Lambeth, whether it is the shooting of Cherry Groce, the frequent reports of harassment of young black people, the low "clear up" rate, "swamp" operations, or simply their decisions about which crimes to treat as worthy of investigation and which to ignore, continually highlight the need for real democratic control of their resources, discipline, training and day-to-day operational policy. Without that measure of control we cannot begin to say that we have a service we can trust. Our Police Committee will continue to campaign for such democratic control.

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INTERNATIONAL LINKS

London is a cosmopolitan city. We believe that the mix of differing cultural and national backgrounds enhances the life of our community. The incoming Labour Council will aim to reflect this diversity in all its services and activities.

Labour believes it is important to build links across the world to foster international understanding, not just between national leaders but also between ordinary working people. The Council has a valuable role to play and we are proud of the links built with our twin towns in France, Jamaica, Nicaragua and the USSR.

These links have been made much of by the media who have had no scruples in resorting to complete fabrications of the truth in order to try to undermine these projects. We believe talking to ordinary Russian people helps in the process of world peace; that talking to ordinary Nicaraguan people helps them in their fight to create a socialist and democratic society after years of dictatorship and in the face of US-inspired terrorism, and helps us to understand how to defend our rights; that our links with Spanish Town

in Jamaica help build better race relations in Lambeth, particularly through the building of positive images for our young people.

Labour is against the use of council funds to pay for visits abroad by councillors and, where possible, delegations have paid their own way. In future this will always be the case and we will campaign to raise the funds so that representatives of all sections of our community, not just councillors and not just those who can afford it, can benefit from such experiences. We will encourage the building of links between ordinary people, through mutual exchange trips, school projects and the linking of similar community groups, such as nurseries, adult homes, etc, so that there can be a cross-fertilization of knowledge and understanding.

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EDUCATION

The schools and colleges in Lambeth are run by the Inner London Education Authority. Ever since it came to power, this government has attacked London's education service, even though it is the best in the country. Now, as a direct result of massive public opposition to the government's attempts to abolish the ILEA as well as the GLC, there will, for the first time, be direct elections to the new ILEA at the same time as the borough elections on 8 May. Labour in Lambeth is committed to supporting the ILEA and aims to work closely with the Labour ILEA in running those services which are jointly provided. A separate manifesto is available which details Labour's plans for the new ILEA.

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