

From the Leader of the Council

Our Ref: **Leader/2019-07/017**

Rt.Hon. Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister,
10 Downing St,
Westminster,
London SW1A 2AA



Thursday, 25 July 2019

CONGRATULATIONS

Dear Prime Minister,

Congratulations on your success in the leadership election and your appointment as Prime Minister.

As the recently-elected leader of Lambeth Council, I wanted to share with you what the reality of public services is like in our borough after almost a decade of Conservatives in government, and to urge you to take real action to properly fund the services our residents rely on.

Lambeth is a dynamic and inspiring borough, with incredibly diverse and engaged communities. Yet our residents have come under sustained and unfair pressure since 2010 as the impact of austerity is felt on every public service in Lambeth.

Since 2010, Lambeth council's core government funding has been reduced by more than half, pushing our services to breaking point. While we have changed the way we deliver services and tried to work with our communities to keep many services open where they have closed in other parts of the country, no organisation can face such a sustained loss of funding without a severe impact.

At our Cabinet meeting this week, we faced the real impact of pressures that are felt across every local authority in the country: a chronically underfunded social care system failing under the pressure of rising demand, increasing numbers of children requiring support for special educational needs and disabilities without the requisite funding from central government and falling budgets to intervene in our communities at a time when many residents are facing poverty caused by spiralling housing costs and flat lining wages.

The absence of national government action and funding on key issues like social care, children's services, tackling youth violence, climate change and mental health are also tying the hands of councils at a time when interventions are desperately needed, not least because of the impact of austerity on the police, schools and our NHS.

These are problems that you can see across our country – but they are particularly felt in poorer, urban areas like ours which have faced the biggest cuts. This is profoundly unfair to Lambeth's residents and those who need our services the most.

In your campaign to become our new Prime Minister you claimed that you would bring our country together. There is no better way for you to prove that this was more than empty rhetoric than by truly

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

ending austerity in local government. I urge you to recognise the scale of the problem and I support the calls from the Local Government Association Labour Group for you to:

- Immediately invest £2bn in children's services and £2bn in adult social care to stop these vital emergency services from collapsing
- Reverse the changes to the council funding formula that have forced the biggest cuts on to councils in the most deprived areas
- Pledge to use the Spending Review to restore council funding to 2010 levels over the next four years

Reversing austerity would allow us as a council to reverse the underinvestment in public services that we have faced for almost a decade and give us the resources to make even more of a difference to our resident's lives. That includes tackling violence that affects young people, giving every child the best start in life, ensuring older, disabled and vulnerable people are able to live healthy and independent lives and taking the real action that is needed to reduce carbon emissions and tackle the climate emergency.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jack Hopkins', is centered on a light grey rectangular background.

Councillor Jack Hopkins
Leader of Lambeth Council
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