

# The coalition's programme for government: highlights for cities

**May 2010**

## Public finances

- Accelerate the reduction of the structural deficit, with an emphasis on cutting spending
- Make cuts of £6bn in 2010/11, with details to be announced on Monday 24 May. Some of these cuts not used to reduce the deficit but to 'support jobs'

## Devolution & governance

- Support the creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships to replace RDAs, keeping RDAs in some places
- Create directly elected mayors in 12 of the largest English cities – with referendums
- Abolish the Government Office for London and consider abolishing the other GOs
- Devolution of power and greater financial autonomy, including a review of local government finance
- Phase out the ring-fencing of grants and review the Housing Revenue Account.
- Give councils a general power of competence
- Freeze Council Tax for one year, and consider freezing it the year after
- Allow residents to veto Council Tax rises
- Require a business vote on a supplementary business rate
- Councils required to publish all items of spending above £500 and to publish contracts and tender documents in full

## The built environment

- Reform the planning system along the lines of the Conservative Open Source Planning proposals
- Give more power to neighbourhoods to shape the places in which their inhabitants live
- Provide incentives for local authorities to deliver sustainable development, including for new homes and businesses
- 'Rapidly' abolish Regional Spatial Strategies
- Give new powers to councils to stop 'garden grabbing'
- Return the powers of the Infrastructure Planning Commission to the Secretary of State
- Publish a consolidated national planning framework that sets out national economic, environmental and social priorities
- Maintain the Green Belt and create a new designation to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities
- Explore a range of measures to bring empty homes into use
- Create new local housing trusts that will make it simpler for communities to provide homes for local people
- Require continuous improvements to the energy efficiency of new housing

## Transport

- Mandate a national recharging network for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles
- Extend the length of rail franchises and support further electrification of the rail network
- Establish a high-speed-rail network in phases and support Crossrail.
- Introduce a new system of HGV road user charging
- Support greener travel initiatives, for example by changing the way light rail projects are appraised

## Employment

- End all existing welfare to work programmes, creating a single welfare to work programme, and aim to simplify the benefit system
- Give benefits provisional on willingness to work and reassess Incapacity Benefit claimants for their readiness to work
- Implement the Work for Yourself programme to encourage entrepreneurship among the unemployed
- Offer pre-employment training and work placements for unemployed people through a range of Service Academies
- Create work clubs for unemployed people to exchange skills

## Skills

- Support the creation of apprenticeships, internships, work pairings, and college and workplace training places
- Reduce central control of skills system by and abolish many of the further education quangos
- Ensure that public funding is fair and follows the choices of students

## Business & enterprise

- Allow social tenants to start businesses in their own homes
- Set an aspiration that 25% of government contracts should be awarded to SMEs
- Introduce a competition test in planning decisions to protect smaller retailers
- Look at the recommendations of the Dyson review to boost hi-tech exports and focus R&D on hi-tech companies, small firms and start-ups
- Support green job creation (eg through the creation of a green investment bank)



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