

## **Forum Slams Con Dem Government**

Delegates to the UNISON Labour Link Forum held in Leeds launched a powerful attack on the Con Dem Government as they debated a series of motions from regions and self-organised groups and heard from leading local Labour Councillors. On behalf of the National Committee, Vice Chair Rachel Voller moved an emergency motion committing the Labour Link to campaign at the heart of UNISON's Million Voices campaign. Also on behalf of the National Committee, Andy Dowling attacked the Con Dem budget proposals, pointing out that there were many other ways in which the financial crisis could be tackled. Jan Lavender from the Eastern Region pointed out the revenue lost to tax havens, while Josie Bird from Northern region castigated the financial sector for the failings in the banking system – to cheers she denounced the so-called Lib Dems in the coalition as Tories.

An emergency motion from Neath Port Talbot County Borough reminded delegates that some Labour councils are also cutting savagely. Branch Secretary Mark Fisher outlined the recent actions of the Council, which were universally condemned. In further debates, Ann McCormack from the North West and other delegates criticised Government attacks on public sector pensions, pointing out the gap between media inflated rhetoric and the reality faced by most public sector workers. Angie Marriott spoke on behalf of the National Disabled members Committee, drawing attention to the problems faced by staff and users by the move to direct payments and personalisation, and in particular the poor standards achieved by some care companies.

Forum also heard from two leading local councillors. James Lewis welcomed the Forum to his home city and praised local UNISON members for their role in the lengthy industrial dispute against a coalition of Tories and Liberal Democrats earlier in the year. Stave Houghton, Leader of Barnsley Council launched a stinging attack on the cuts being imposed by the Government which he described as a right-wing ideological experiment, and called for an alternative coalition to put the counter-argument.

For a complete list of decisions reached by the Forum, please see Decisions booklet.