

Labour London Regional Conference Report – July 2021

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To summarize a two-day conference is not an easy one as there are many things to understand and a lot to take in. Yet this essay can give you the reader, the main highlights of the conference through a delegate's eyes and see a unique perspective. Any biases or perspective on events are my own opinion and do not represent the local CLP or Labour party.

Working within the bounds of a conference can be the determination of what can be seen by the people around them. This conference has been special from two different perspectives as the first it is an online conference due to the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020-21. Additionally, this is the first conference where I have attended as the delegate to represent Old Bexley & Sidcup.

One of the speakers of the conference...(name?)... talked about their personal history and the Labour party, coming from a 100-year-old member. The primary points made were about inclusion of different viewpoints and backgrounds and retrospectively looking back to the founding days of the party and looking in comparison to the current day.

Included within the conference was a one-minute silence that was marked with a poignant reminder of those that were lost over the last year. With a personal reflection from myself about family and friends that passed away.

In Angela Raynor's speech to the conference, she first talked about her personal past, and her work in care, and how that pushed her towards becoming a Labour member. She also focused on the London mayor and how he has been championing climate change by declaring a climate emergency, with the focus on policy in dealing with reduction of pollution within the capital.

A further part of the speech focused on the words she used in Parliament to describe the Conservative party and the explanation about how she saw first-hand how the conservative party treated lower income families in relation to food and health policies. The other part linking back to the mayor was how she saw the Conservatives treating the government as a joke and if they had power in London, how they would do deals only with the rich and withhold from the working classes.

As for debate sessions and talking groups, the ones that stood out for me was around racial injustice in London and the links around a lack of BAME in the upper echelons within the party. Additionally, topics around education, reparations to former colonies and community policing. The main points that came out of the talk were:

- London suffers with racism for BAME people.
- Islamophobia has been on the rise due to global events
- Parts of British history are built on cultural exploitation
- The Labour party is improving in BAME inclusion
- Racial profiling in London with policing is dropping
- Far right extremism being tackled with the PREVENT strategy
- Understanding cultures from the wrong perspective can negatively affect debates and policy

Going onto the motions and how I voted as your representative, the main motions that I will bring to the fore are the Silvertown Tunnel, Outer London Tax and lastly the Violence and against women and girls. On those I will explain how I voted and my thought process on those.

Firstly, let us look at the Outer London Tax. the motion I fought for came directly from our CLP and in summary it opposed the mayor's plan to push through changes to the Outer London Boundary Change. In my speech I explained that if this went through, it was be used by our opponents to spin lies that the mayor is targeting self-employed business and commuters just for pocket change and this could damage Labour's hold in the Outer London boroughs. In retrospect this was never going to come through and we were smashed to the wind, yet the message was sent and looking now perhaps the mayor will change his mind.

The Silvertown motion to oppose the creation of the tunnel was something I was divided on like so many delegates. On the one hand the tunnel would add to the air pollution that would worsen the health of the Greenwich residents and additionally bring greater traffic to the area. Yet on the other the tunnel would allow more wealth to enter the area and put less pressure on the road systems around London. My choice landed on opposing the motion due to looking at the long-term infrastructure of the area, combined with Greenwich actively building a port nearby to ferry more visitors to the area and understanding that Greenwich is still developing more housing for upper- and lower-income families who live and work in London.

The motion for Violence against Women and girls was one that I put my backing behind, as during the multiple lockdowns of 2020-2021 ,there was an increase in domestic abuse with also major media events where women's right was trampled on. Understanding that a good city is one that supports women's rights in theory and in practise I chose to wholeheartedly agree to the motion and back it. In addition, our CLP is lead mostly be women, which in itself is progress towards equality.

Finally looking at the team that organised the London Regional Conference, including the organisation, voting and support for all the delegates and audience. There was a lot of hurdles that they had to overcome but there were able to make those potential challenges into little bumps. Also, taking into the fact that the entire conference was done online for the first time, which is a celebration in itself. Most if not all the audience thanked the team for their effort in putting it all together.

A personal retrospective of the conference, so much was experienced and to see that the party still functioned despite having an online event was endearing. Additionally, being IT literate, myself being able to speak from my own place of residence lessened the fear for speaking. As for a final note, I want to give a thank you to all the Executive and the members of Old Bexley and Sidcup in supporting me for being able to understand and function at conference. This is the least I can do as a thank you.

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