

The neoliberal attack on the power of government to tra...

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As [the Guardian reports](#) this morning

Once vanishingly rare, the prospect English local authorities might go bust now offers no surprise: four councils have in effect gone bankrupt in the past year; others have declared a state of “financial emergency”; a further one in five believe it is “fairly or very likely” they will become insolvent in the next 18 months.

Those that are not going bankrupt know that they face the prospect of closing almost all their services bar social care, emergency housing and (maybe) refuse collection.

This is a desperately sorry situation, created entirely by Cameron and Osborne and their utterly unnecessary policy of austerity, for which Cameron has now been rewarded with a peerage and high office, whilst Osborne produces a podcast with his best friend, Ed Balls, who happens to be married to the person who aspires to be Labour Home Secretary.

A century ago, local councils were at the heart of transformational change in the UK. They were the primary providers of:

- * Schools
- * Electricity
- * Local transport
- * Social housing
- * Gas, in some places
- * Clean water and sewers
- * Public health

In other words, they were at the forefront of the transformation of society, often using locally subscribed capital to fund local development via bond issues that turned the

savings of local people into the future that they desired for themselves and others.

And now? They have been reduced to rumps of service that live under perpetual threat of further cuts, utterly dependent for funding on central government that is intent on denying it to them.

The neoliberal attack on the power of government to transform lives can be seen in the collapse of local government in the UK.

Do we need more evidence of how dangerous it is?