

Labour supporters accusing local Conservatives of ‘running the City down’ may like to consider the impact of three recent scandals on the reputation of the North East.

The fiasco of data loss at Washington; the botched handling of the Northern Rock crisis and the party’s forgetfulness in declaring loans from North East donors have all attracted unwanted attention. Those who are quick to condemn the Conservatives (but slower to declare their own party allegiance) forget the effect on the image of the region. With national newspapers descending on the scene of the scandals to fill their pages with stereotypes, attempts by councils and government agencies to promote the area through taxpayer-funded publicity have been damaged. This triple whammy of incompetence would have done less damage to the North East had it not followed hot-on-the-heels of several independent reports revealing the poor performance of Labour’s policies in regenerating the area.

Both the IPPR, (once known as ‘Labour’s favourite think tank’), and Policy Exchange have produced reports this year revealing the failure of Labour’s policies to add value to the economic stability it inherited from the Conservatives in its attempts to regenerate deprived urban areas.

These reports, rather than pats on the back from government agencies, give a truer picture of Labour’s missed opportunity and touch a raw nerve among those who prefer to blame others for the region’s plight rather than accept that they have had the opportunity to make a bigger difference themselves. It’s not the Conservatives who are running the City down; it’s the Labour Party who are running the City who are running the City down.

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