

OPENLABOUR

Position Paper 2018-19

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July 2018 (with changes made January 2019)

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Position Paper 2018/19

It is crucial that the Labour Party offers a credible and popular alternative to austerity cuts and neoliberalism. These trends have represented the biggest transfer of wealth and power from poor and middle-income households to the rich elite in living memory. The private sector's own dynamism is failing. Productivity is falling internationally, but especially in Britain where the course Theresa May has laid out will further concentrate wealth and opportunity in the South while neglecting every other part of our country. Wealthy and powerful interests are now building a kind of 'tollbooth politics' built on rents, private debt, financial complexity and at times corrupt practices – we end up paying for nothing. The spoils of this tollbooth go to the gatekeepers of the new stagnant economy, not to those creating value.

Social mobility and equal chances, values with huge support across the country, are being set back to the Victorian age. These are problems which a Tory Brexit will lock in, especially if the economy is not reshaped and rebalanced. Social mobility and equal chances, values with huge support across the country, are being set back to the Victorian age. These are problems which a Tory Brexit will lock in, especially if the economy is not reshaped and rebalanced.

This stagnation process has predictably become cemented as a 'new normal' in public debate. Labour must take on the challenge of forging a compelling and credible alternative, capable of shifting mainstream opinion.

Economic liberalism: a broken bargain

Increasingly citizens feel like the bargain they have been offered by politicians for decades is being broken. Increasing wealth. Dignified jobs. Stability. The chance to get on in life. These things are no longer delivered by Britain's political consensus. Changing this depends on gaining trust to govern, but unlike when the process of globalisation was in an earlier stage, Labour cannot avoid challenging the terms of debate. A new consensus is therefore required from the left around key shared values and principles. These include:

- Equality and human dignity
- Solidarity and community
- Autonomy and liberation
- Respect for the environment

Each of these ideas can form the basis of greater consensus on the left – but they can also win people over who are not yet supporters of the left or Labour. Our policies and campaigns must be framed in a way which is trusted and persuasive.

A social alliance for Labour

The party must retain the trust of core voters whilst regaining previously Labour support. In short, it must become trusted by workers from a range of social backgrounds to be the centre of a new social alliance, spanning traditional supporters in areas of industry and ex industry, upwardly mobile workers in the South East and progressive voters in large cities and university towns.

Getting the basics right

Building an alliance of support is no mean feat, but it is the only way forward and Labour must get in shape to deliver it. We therefore call on the Labour Party to adopt some broad operating principles of its own. We believe that without these, no left leadership can be successful.

- Work out which voters are the people we want to add to our existing support, and which areas of public opinion we need to respond to. Have a political strategy. No tactic can be successful without being part of one. ·
Give greater voice to those ‘left behind’ in modern Britain, whether white British coastal workers, coalfield communities, those trapped in the “gig” economy or EU immigrants paying tax here.
- Ruthlessly professionalise Labour’s parliamentary and press operations, from the leadership down. Train and develop our membership
- Organise at community level with far greater involvement from trade unions and cooperatives. ·
- Speak in a language that people understand using arguments which are well tested and have broad support or persuasive appeal. Make sure our ideas are clear and honest in how they seek to bring change. ·
- Identify and avoid marginal positions in favour of what we can win and also need to win.
- Concentrate on changing consensus on the most important areas of economic and social debate.

1. For working people, against hard Brexit

The Labour Party is instinctively open and internationalist, and so is Open Labour. The public narrowly voted to leave the European Union following a campaign in which many 'out' proponents states that strong trade and economic ties with the EU would remain in place. In both ways, this is obviously not a mandate for hard Brexit – Labour must make this a political question. If Brexit is to take place, we believe that Labour should use all means available firstly to guarantee all workers living in the UK the same rights and entitlements as those remaining in the EU. Secondly, Labour must argue for partnerships with our neighbouring countries to tackle cross border challenges such as climate change and the refugee crisis.

Nevertheless, it is important that we as the Labour Party face up to the many reasons why people chose to do this. These are material, emotional, and policy based. They include living in areas with poor opportunities to get on and make a decent living, but also frustration at the impact of immigration. They include insecurity about identity in Britain. They include a feeling of a lack of control over life and politics, and neglect by the political establishment. Keeping our values firm does not mean we ignore these voices. To the contrary, it must embolden us to have a meaningful dialogue and offer solutions that challenge establishment narratives and which can move post-industrial areas in particular towards a more hopeful future.

We accept the verdict of the referendum and it is important that Labour is not seen to ignore democracy. But this does not mean that Labour can ignore the real risks presented by Theresa May's Brexit – democracy needs public opinion to be led as well as followed. Nor does it mean that the narrow majority for Brexit will always reflect the electorate. Therefore we agree with Labour Party Conference's decision in 2016 to remain open to a return to the EU, should majority public support for this start to become clear over time, and the terms favourable for British residents. We believe that with such a policy, Labour could lead a process of national healing. The lesson of Brexit and the election of Trump is that globalisation and its institutions are less stable and set in stone than some supposed. We recognise the need to research and develop policy for what may be more variable and flexible institutional arrangements the UK might fit into over the coming years.

There are immediate priorities to address; in particular, the current threat to our trading will hit jobs, pay and conditions in manufacturing and logistics. Labour must maintain favourable market and customs arrangements with the EU, an

economic bloc on our doorstep with more power than the United States, as its first priority. We must agitate for a strategy which returns to manufacturing and trade, rather than the 'tollbooth' option of becoming a tax haven for global elites. An open approach to trade supported by an interventionist industrial strategy is essential if the country is to return to production and productivity.

The threat to the human rights of workers in Britain is also of particular concern. Britain should remain a member of the ECHR, and the Human Rights Act must be defended as part of UK law. We also give our unconditional support and solidarity to people working here in accordance with the law. Labour must call for the immediate guarantee of permanent residency or citizenship status for these nationals, and press the government hard for guarantees.

2. Call for a full debate on Brexit

Open Labour notes that there are multiple differing interpretations of Labour's member-led policy on Brexit.

We acknowledge the difficult situation not just of Labour's front bench, but also of its MPs, as the PLP attempts to reconcile wildly different results in Labour supporting parts of the country. We believe that a degree of freedom and toleration needs to operate between people in the party with different views on Brexit, not least our MPs. We note that there are also differing views between trade unions, although the larger unions tend towards EEA and CU membership, which is also supported by the TUC.

We believe that policy for the party as a whole should be set democratically by Labour Party conference, following extensive debate in CLPs and among affiliates.

Although it is unlikely that Labour will be in government when Brexit takes effect, unless there is an early General Election, it is essential that it does not take place on Tory terms, and that a resulting deal puts the social and economic health of the country and all of those who live and work here first.

Open Labour resolves to call for a full debate on Labour's Brexit policy at Labour Party conference with the aim of setting a settled party policy, and will work alongside any other organisations committed to making this happen.

Open Labour resolves to carry out a roadshow type campaign across the country to get the debate started in a geographically spread range of CLPs.

3. Fight for workers, ensure full access to the European Single Market

Open Labour noted in our 2017 position paper that Labour should use all means available firstly to guarantee all workers living in the UK the same rights and entitlements as those remaining in the EU and Labour must argue for partnerships with our neighbouring countries to tackle cross border challenges such as climate change and the refugee crisis.

Open Labour notes socialism is internationalist.

Open Labour believes that we need to take down borders between workers not put them up and labour need at least the same rights and freedoms as capital striving for labour to be the master of capital not its servant. Open Labour believes if we isolate ourselves and advocate an isolationist socialism then when production leaves the UK the Neo-liberals answer will be to cut – cut our wages, cut our rights, cut our safety protections and cut environmental regulations.

Open Labour believes the political aim of the left is to improve labour, social and environmental conditions. Open Labour believes the goal of the UK left should be to stay ahead of the standards set by the EU meaning we view EU regulations as a base not as a ceiling, only the right will view them as restrictive.

Open Labour notes the left in Europe is failing and across Europe the parties of the PES are in retreat with very few in Government and membership falling. Open Labour notes only one member of the PES has a significant revival in membership and in the last election a significant growth in members of their Lower House. Open Labour notes that party is the British Labour Party and the energy and anti-austerity politics of the new Corbyn Led Labour Party has much to offer our sister parties in Europe and now is not the time to retreat into the UK but lead a fightback of the European Left. Open Labour believes when the Left is strong in National Parliaments across Europe is when the EU enacts the social legislation that has seen stronger labour, social and environmental standards.

Open Labour believes Labour shouldn't allow dogma to allow us to leave the EU without an agreement with full access to the European Single Market.

Open Labour's calls for the Labour Party to oppose the Conservative Government at every stage when it tries to dilute any of the rights or protections Europe had given us and ensures that those rights and protections are kept after the transition.

Open Labour calls on Labour when it enters Government to make EU Level rights and protections a floor not a ceiling. Open Labour affirms its position is that if a bespoke agreement which gives EU Level rights and protections and a customs

union with FULL access to the European Single Market then the UK should seek to be a signatory to the EEA and gain European Single Market access through this existing agreement. Open Labour calls on a future Labour Government to aim to return the UK to the status of rulemaker not rule-taker in Europe and take full part in the debate about how we transform Europe as one of the leading Left parties in Europe and a vote in parliament on both key negotiating principles, and on a final deal.

Labour should take all possible measures to prevent a disastrous Tory Brexit before the crucial exit date of 30 March 2019. If the Brexit deal presented to Parliament fails Labour's six tests, we should seek to defeat the Government and vote against their flawed deal in the "meaningful vote". We should then work to secure a mandate for a better plan through whichever of the following routes is practicable: an immediate general election, taking over leadership of the negotiations with Europe, or a people's vote in which the electorate has the final say.

Open Labour believes that with the Prime Ministers deal on the future relationship with Europe rejected by Parliament and the circumstances having changed significantly with just a few weeks until the exit date stipulated under Article 50, the forthcoming European Elections and with the experience of 2 years of negotiations positions decided in 2018 must be renewed with what we now know.

Open Labour believes that if Labour does indeed bring about a General Election then it must have a robust policy on our relationship with Europe and members need to have been able to agree a robust position for our manifesto. If a General Election cannot be achieved, then Labour must narrow its options and have a clear policy on which options it will whip its MPs to vote on in Parliament until a General Election can be secured.

Open Labour therefore resolves to:

Encourage CLPs to pass motions to call on the NEC to meet as soon as possible to immediately organise a recall of the 2018 Labour Party Conference [Special Conference], to take place as early as possible in February.

Work with other likeminded organisations and Individuals on the Left who have Pro-European policy or views whether formally part of the Labour Party like the Co-op Party and SERA or outside like Labour for a People's Vote and Another Europe is Possible. Formally affiliate to Another Europe is Possible and gain a seat on their Committee and engage with Labour for a People's Vote as well as seek opportunities to raise our voice with other individuals and organisations.

Support calls for a Citizens Assembly to sit alongside Parliamentary processes to give a representative group of people a say on Brexit through a deliberative process. This could inform the public and Parliament in any decisions they had to make.

Urge our frontbench to move to support a Peoples Vote with a commitment to Remain, Reform & Invest to tackle leave voters grievances. That Labour commits to investing the tax revenue Brexit would write off into regional economies which have been left behind, and reform employment and union laws to stop undercutting of wages & conditions while promoting our unions community functions to promote social integration.

Enter an agreement which gives EU Level rights and protections and a customs union with FULL access to the European Single Market as a signatory to the EFTA agreement and gain European Single Market access through this existing agreement with a Permanent Customs Union to retain the same economic union we currently have. Open Labour calls on a future Labour Government to aim to return the UK to be a rulemaker not a rule taker in Europe through a future public vote and take full part in the debate about how we transform Europe as one of the leading Left parties in Europe.

4. The British state and constitutional reform

Open Labour notes the lack of debate in the Labour Party about the British state, in whose interests it rules, and on how it can be reformed.

Open Labour believes a socialist government must be serious about reforming the state in the interests of the people, by creating as healthy and active a democracy as possible.

As such we reaffirm our commitment to English devolution, and further resolve to campaign for Labour to adopt a constitutional reform and civil society policy before the next general election. This should involve debate on the reform or abolition of the Lords along democratic lines, a renewal of the devolution settlement UK wide, re-opening the conversation about models of electoral reform for the commons, and making Parliamentary recall a more realistic prospect for citizens.

On issues relating to civil society, we resolve to call for the repeal of the Tory 'gagging law' against charities, a review of the charity commission, and the implementation of a 'Leveson 2' platform of press regulation to ensure free speech is met by high standards of journalistic ethics and diverse press ownership.

5. Progressive alliance

Open Labour takes a mature approach to working with people who disagree with us, and notes that Labour have delivered several very successful governments with parties in Scotland and Wales. Labour has also worked well in coalition in Councils across the country, and had a close relationship with colleagues from other parties in the London Assembly. Labour should remain open-minded towards coalitions and alliances where these are the best option, and should constantly draw in the best ideas wherever we find them.

However, we are more than just “not Tories”. The Labour Party has always itself been a progressive coalition, in which diverse groups come together around a common platform, becoming stronger and more compelling for it. If we are to offer a clear, radical and credible vision to the electorate, we cannot dilute our message by tying ourselves to parties who do not share our answers to the biggest economic and social challenges we face. It is clear that any proposed electoral alliance between a ‘left bloc’ of parties would still be far too small to defeat its counterparts on the right, but would be beholden to parties of a marginality which has meant that they have never challenged for government on their own (and in some cases would not value the prospect). The Tories and UKIP have together polled over 48% since 2013, secured 50% in the 2015 General Election and since Brexit have polled 54%. This is a significant hegemonic bloc on the right that has so far not gone away and even expanded recently.

An electoral deal involving the SNP whilst it embraces a hard nationalism (as opposed to a federal solution) for Scotland could only last until their goal would be achieved. It is also completely unclear that the Lib Dems possess the political credentials to be considered a progressive party in any sense. The Tory Government they placed in office and propped up oversaw a massive transfer of wealth to the rich and powerful. Their new leadership is on record as saying they would happily repeat such a deal, even given the cost to the country which the last one made clear. We do not believe that this indicates progressive politics – the record of the austerity coalition should not be forgotten quickly.

Finally, our electoral system does not allow for transferable voting, so any coalition would mean party elites restricting choice both for voters and for local activists, who surely deserve some level of democracy and respect from their political parties. Alliances between progressive parties should be based on open principles and common agendas - not dictating voting choices to the public, or foisting national deals on local activists without their consent.

For these reasons we believe that Labour should be open to offers of joint policy work, demonstrations or campaigns alongside other parties, and publicly ready to discuss coalitions with non-right wing parties after elections have passed. In particular, Labour should take the initiative in convening cross-party talks with a view to identifying common ground on electoral and constitutional reform.

Further, we note that calling for support of other parties against Labour candidates remains a disciplinary offence in the party rule book, as democratically agreed. Our candidates are democratically selected by our members and deserve their support. If we are to concentrate on building alliances and blocs, it should be first and foremost between the ever more mutually distant sections of low and mid-earning voters, with Labour itself as the host venue.

6. Mass, democratic and plural – the party we need

Open Labour resents the hollowing of the Labour Party and disenfranchisement of its membership during the New Labour years and welcome the huge influx of new members the party has seen since 2010 and especially 2015, especially where joiners are new to political participation. We are committed to integrating and supporting these new members.

We call for the return of policy making powers to member and affiliate-based structures, with conference as the final arbiter of both standing policy and election platforms. We believe that there is far greater space for unions and socialist societies to be given power as a stabilising influence in the centre of the party, and would favour their reinclusion as part of an electoral college, as well as an enhanced role for affiliated members in local CLPs.

In addition to this however, there is also a role for professional policy staff in a support capacity to this process, and a re-imagining is viable. Labour must take this path back towards being a democratic and participative party.

Everyone entitled to Labour membership must have the right and the ability to participate, or our democracy cannot sustain itself. Open Labour unreservedly condemns the recent trend among a minority of activists of calling for members on opposing wings of the party to leave. We also feel that new members are getting a raw deal - new members should receive induction and support from fellow members and expect those who are already part of Labour to make efforts to properly integrate them. We expect Labour's staff to facilitate this process. Members nowadays join for what are a mix of instrumental and expressive reasons with the balance varying depending whether they see the party as more

of an offline 'gateway' to be inducted into party culture or more of an online 'platform' to express their views. Labour is currently not well designed to meet these differing needs and we need our Party to evolve to better meet different balances of expectations.

The party as a whole is suffering from a deteriorating culture – in addition to greater support for new members it needs to investigate ideas such as a code of conduct for members and new formats of running meetings or making policy.

We feel that it is important that members are comfortable with the party as a whole, particularly with the idea of it being a wide formation which represents the whole of the working class and its political allies. The left's efforts to win debates on policy and political strategy should not come at the cost of other traditions freely participating in the party's affairs. We stand for a pluralist left and for internal tolerance of our traditions. Without these, open debate is impossible - they are essential elements of and genuinely democratic left.

7. A plural party

Open Labour believes that prejudiced beliefs in the Labour Party are increasingly gaining press attention, but that their victims have often been ignored for years. Anti-Semitism, misogyny, transphobia and Islamophobia have all been significant problems in recent years. We utterly reject the notion that these problems only exist because of factional political agendas within the party, as in all cases we can point to a number of clear examples which do not fit within this description. We regret that the heightened state of factionalism in the party has led to a culture of bad faith and mistrust – we believe that these are culturally endemic issues which can only be fought back if they are themselves treated as a political issue.

Open Labour resolves to work with any organisations aimed at fighting these forms of oppression within the party as long as those organisations themselves behave in a way which is respectful to the rights and wellbeing of other members.

The committee notes that its members have worked this year to counter anti-Semitism. We called for Ken Livingstone's suspension from the party, supported JLMs submission to 2017 Labour Party Conference, and entered dialogue with both Hope not Hate and Momentum around how to counter the issue. In addition, our treasurer Alex Sobel has joined the APPG on anti-Semitism and spoken out about his own experiences of anti-Semitic hatred in Parliament.

We call for a disciplinary approach on issues of inclusion which starts with education and allows for contrition, and which has clear transparent due process.

In return for this, we resolve to continue to campaign for a tough line against offenders who refuse to acknowledge the existence of these problems or their political role in it (insofar as the facts have been established or agreed).

As well as bullying and abuse based on personal background and heritage, it is also true that there is political bullying within the Party, and that this can often be distinguished from acceptable political behaviour.

We believe that there is a place in the party for everyone with basic Labour values, that very few of our members do not share in them, and that those who make it difficult for others to get involved because of background or affiliation should be politically opposed.

8. A new industrial settlement

Social Democracy, in the ascendancy after the Second World War in the UK and Western Europe is in decline and inequality is growing. This is the backdrop to the convulsions of the Left in Western Europe in general and the UK Labour Party in particular. This was the case in 1997 but was masked by adopting the politics of globalization and using redistributive policies to mask its effects - such as Tax Credits and Sure Start - which undoubtedly helped those in work but struggling, especially with children. However, it did not change the political climate, and the Labour party since then has looked at different ways to achieve relevance in this changing world. Despite this it is continually failing to bring forward solutions to the crisis that is epitomized by continually falling pay and workers terms and conditions set against rising living costs.

The post-industrial society is based on a service sector which generates more wealth than the manufacturing sector of the economy. There has been a gradual loss of skilled jobs, loss of organised workplaces, balance of payments imbalances and the gradual erosion of credit worthiness. This is coupled with the future challenges of Brexit and automation. The need for an active Industrial Strategy is paramount - a strategy that isn't just about coordinating economic policies to achieve particular objectives around industrial growth, but one that puts rebalancing targets on employment, education, R&D, carbon emissions and quality of work at its centre.

There is a clear threat from the right with the creation of Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy which could create a masking of what a proper industrial strategy is by just utilising slogans which only promote more low paid jobs but this time in manufacturing as well as the service sector. Labour should

counter not by mere opposition but by creating its own full scale industrial Strategy. This strategy should see manufacturing as a key engine of growth but keep sustainability as a central goal with a decarbonising of all industry as a core plank of the strategy. The strategy should also see the ascendancy of organised labour as the driver of a new industrial settlement.

Trade Unions should be a key part of the industrial strategy policy formulation. We should aim for a tripartite (industry, government, trade union) settlement on lifelong learning and upskilling of the workforce and a tripartite agreement on active labour market policies addressing the issue of re-employment of redundant workers to ensure we can reassert a full employment goal. Collective bargaining agreements to ensure that productivity improvements benefit those that contribute to them, thus raising wages and in turn contributing to industrial and social stability and reducing inequality. Alongside this we need an energy revolution consisting of opening up the energy market through reform of ownership of the grid – common, state and new forms of open ownership of energy companies; supporting renewables through use of guaranteed energy prices and fossil fuel penalties. This would be a catalyst for the UK to be a world leader on green tech, bringing forward the conditions to create a 4th industrial revolution.

9. English renewal

Open Labour notes the damage done to Labour at the 2015 election by the party's indecisive approach to the prospect of a coalition with the SNP, and the fear of swing voters in England that a deal must be done. Open Labour notes the introduction of 'English Votes for English Laws' passed by the Tories, who used the insecurity the proposal generated among English voters by the Independence Referendum to pass the law, which denies a UK level mandate to MPs elected to the UK Parliament, if they happen to be elected by non-English constituencies.

We also note that a key deciding factor in the referendum on EU membership was a growing feeling of economic and political decline in English towns, where there is a growing feeling of divide from cities, and in particular London. In both cases, it is clear within England that power must be democratised and dispersed. Non-metropolitan voters in the Midlands, North of England and the South West face the same political conditions and trends of those faced by Labour voters who 'went nationalist' in Scotland from 2007 to 2015. With new forms of nationalism ascendant, we must renew our commitment to empowering those voters and show that we are on their side. We also believe that it is incumbent on Labour to

show the same patriotic commitment for democracy, civic life and economic wellbeing in England (and its politically diverse regions) as it has previously shown for Scotland and Wales.

We therefore:

- Call upon Labour to bring together a taskforce from across the party and the wider community to investigate ways of putting English Devolution to the people; for example as traditional counties or 'government office' type regions;
- Call upon Labour to pledge to repeal EVEL and replace it with a federal and democratic settlement for England with massive devolution of spending power and decision making, as previously proposed by Jon Trickett;
- Call upon Labour to pledge a measured return of funding and powers to local government, beginning with social care, and continuing with enhanced rights to build homes, generate income, and encourage local business in line with a wider industrial strategy;
- Call upon the Shadow Chancellor to announce a commission aimed at renewing private sector employment, green infrastructure and vocational & STEM education in 'left behind areas' as part of a wider strategy for returning the country to an export footing – a policy for returning dignity. In this case we believe that industrial capital shares some of the interests of local people in a way that finance does not. Exporters must become Labour's allies.
- Propose that Labour launches these measures as a St George's Day Bill, making it clear that the national wellbeing of England and the dignity of its people depend not on racism or nostalgia, but instead on social justice and traditions of generosity, tolerance and hard work.
- Call for the creation of an English Labour Party. 'Labour in England' should become a voice for a forward looking spirit of civic democracy, industrial renewal, and social cooperation.

10. Solidarity with people with disabilities

Open Labour notes the ever increasing pressure on disabled people as the main victims of austerity, and the increased urgency this gives to their proper representation in the Labour Party and its structures.

Open Labour resolves to support Disability Equality ACT Labour and help to spread its examples of good practice to CLPs. We also resolve to work closely with Project 125 to make the party as accessible as possible to people with disabilities.

11. No socialism without sustainability

Open Labour notes that the international and local struggles for social and environmental justice go hand in hand, and that the economy cannot be divorced from the global environment. The Arab Spring, along with the wars and forced migrations which resulted, began because of protest in North Africa based on food prices. Increasingly, we will not be able to divorce our social challenges from environmental concerns.

Labour notes the work of SERA within the party and resolves to promote their work within our own organisation and CLP branches. We call on Labour to adopt a path towards a zero-carbon economy and action against polluting waste such as single use plastics as part of its next manifesto.

12. A democratic youth movement

Open Labour notes the cheapness and simplicity of online OMOV elections for the Open Labour National Committee.

Given years of commitments from successive leaderships, Open Labour will support candidates for Labour Students bodies who our NC believe are serious about enacting both OMOV and a safeguarding policy for Labour Students.

Open Labour also notes the nature of the policy process in Young Labour. We support this process coming in line with the norms of the wider Labour movement, for example allowing speakers to move amendments. This avoids the embarrassment which often results from yes/no questions on resolutions, and helps to make sure everyone is heard.

As with Labour Students, we are prepared to support candidates in Young Labour who stand for open democratic debate according to established norms in the rest of the movement.

13. Organise!

Open Labour notes the relative weakness of the organised component of the 'soft left' compared to its potential support in the Party.

We mandate this conference and the National Committee to ensure the implementation of an organising strategy based on CLPs, the Trade Union movement, and Labour's Youth movement. We also mandate this conference and the NC to produce a member recruitment and involvement plan.

Open Labour approves the rules for local groups attached as an accompanying paper and mandates the NC to begin work to set them up via local events and contact sharing.

14. International relationships

Open Labour resolves to support Labour's continued membership of the PES, S&D, and Socialist International. However, we note a significant number of parties in the SI which do not adhere to electoral democracy and civil rights, socialism, social democracy, or in some cases any mix of these. We call on Labour to push for a fundamental reform of the SI's membership.

15. Education for the many

Open Labour notes that the Party front bench are not currently committed to bringing free schools and academies back under public control. Open Labour resolves to press for financial incentives to be reversed, incentivising schools to come back under LEA control, or to operate as cooperative schools.

Open Labour calls for the full re-socialisation of our schools system.

Open Labour resolves to press for Labour to abolish the academy system by reversing the financial incentives system in place to benefit locally controlled or cooperative schools, and by only approving new schools which are fully comprehensive and either locally or cooperatively controlled.

16. Fair taxation now

Open Labour calls for Labour to pledge an increase in the top rate of tax as part of fixing the national debt, returning to the levels proposed by Ed Miliband and Gordon Brown at 50%.

17. Housing for the many

Open Labour notes the lack of finance suffered by local government and the subsequent inability to fund anywhere near as many social and affordable homes as are needed, particularly in large cities.

Open Labour calls for the red tape which bans councils from re-investing rent in new builds to be cut away. Open Labour calls for an end to right-to-buy discount for as long as the buying of social homes by private owners or landlords is faster than the build rate for social homes.

Open Labour notes the controversy over Haringey earlier in the year and reaffirms its support for local Labour Groups setting local policy. However, it is important that similar political mistakes are avoided, and that Councillors become more coherent by sharing principles more clearly between Labour controlled authorities.

Open Labour resolves to press for the LGA Labour Group to begin a conversation with Cllrs and left activists about what good and bad models of estate regeneration look like, and which models are practical and realistic. We call for Labour Councillors to avoid 'social cleansing' type development proposals, and instead to prioritise the wellbeing and right to stay of the existing community, the rate of housing build for social rent, the rate of build for affordable rent, and last of these the rate of building for affordable freehold buying. We call upon the party to reflect this nationally by pledging reform of the planning system along these lines.

We also pledge our support for Jeremy Corbyn's proposed policy of binding votes of residents for regeneration schemes, but we also urge the Labour leadership to consider how it can give a matching local voice to those on housing waiting lists or in temporary accommodation.

17. Political Strategy

Open Labour recognises the role in the open left played by many who are not yet members of our organisation. Open Labour was founded as a grassroots organisation with no MPs as members at its foundation and has not had a specific strategy to recruit members of Parliaments, Devolved Bodies, journalists, academics or trade unionists.

But building influence and cohesion around our ideas and Open Labour itself will be vital in future years.

Open Labour resolves to set up a permanent advisory board and invite people from these fields to take part in quarterly meetings with our co-chairs and other committee members as the OLNC seems appropriate.

Open Labour National Committee shall be empowered to setup and populate the Advisory Board subject to future constitutional provisions.

Appointments shall be publicised to our website as soon as practicable and a full list will be published in reports at Annual Conference and Policy Conference.

Open Labour understands the importance and impact of young activists in the Labour Party and its internal organisations, our own included.

Open Labour believes ensuring youth recruitment and promotion in the party and Open Labour is beneficial to both and will influence also the Brexit policy of the Party.

17. Young Members

Open Labour resolves to:

Increase youth and student recruitment to Open Labour.

Fight for an independent and democratic Labour youth structure, promoting One Member One Vote as the basis for achieving said democracy. The youth structure must be controlled by its own members in line with party policy.

Campaign for the tolerance and inclusion of all young members who are part of the Labour movement.

Campaign for stronger links and solidarity between Labour's youth movement and our comrades from international and European sister parties. Promote links with Young European Socialists and delegations to their events.

Explore greater coordination between our own young members.

Assisting major Trade Unions with the unionising of young people and supporting and endorsing union efforts on campuses led by students.

18. Reforming the British State

Open Labour understands that:

The Labour Party Constitution (specifically Clause IV, Pt. 2C) commits Labour, as a democratic socialist party, to supporting: ‘An Open Democracy, in which government is held to account by the people, decisions are taken as far as practicable by the communities they affect and where fundamental human rights are guaranteed’

The Labour Party played a leading role in introducing proportional electoral systems to the UK’s devolved parliaments and assemblies in Scotland, Wales and London

Polls show there is public support for proportional representation (PR).

The current first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system has given the Conservative Party a near majority.

The Labour Party must adopt a constitutional reform policy before the next general election, in order to show we are serious about reforming the state in the interests of the people and creating a healthy and active democracy (2018-19 position paper, point four).

Open Labour believes that:

The voting system the UK currently uses has undermined the legitimacy of UK politics by producing parliaments unrelated to popular support, producing low voter turnout and registration.

The important link between elected officials and constituencies can be preserved in many proportional systems in use throughout the world and in the UK.

First Past the Post encourages the Labour Party to ignore its core vote and forced the Labour party to concentrate resources on marginal seats, damaging our popular appeal.

Our First Past the Post voting system has too often gifted the power of the state to the Conservatives on a modest minority of the vote. In fourteen of the last fifteen general elections, most people have voted for parties to the left of the Conservatives, yet the Tories have been in power for most of this time.

As such, the voting system has been a hindrance, not an asset, to the creation of a society in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many, not the few.

The world's most equal and progressive societies - such as the Nordics - achieved what they have through systems of Proportional Representation which empower the progressive majority most of the time.

A voting system in which every vote counts equally is a means to addressing the worrying levels of alienation, division and mistrust in British politics.

Open Labour resolves that:

To campaign for the Labour Party to adopt a clear policy position stating its intentions regarding electoral reform before the next general election.

To campaign for the Labour Party to consult its membership at the earliest opportunity on the issue of electoral reform as a first step.

To campaign for the Labour Party to support the introduction of a form of Proportional Representation in which all votes count equally and seats match votes and support a future Labour government in adopting a more proportional system possibly through a Constitutional Convention.

To push for future manifestos to commit to subsequent elections being run using a proportional system.

19. Reforming the British State

Open Labour understand last year that figures released by the Local Government Association as part of its Bright Futures campaign, where it is estimated that between 70 and 75 per cent of young people experiencing a mental health problem are unable to access any treatment due to lack of funding, despite at least one in 10 children and young people being affected by mental health problems; acknowledges the preventative role that early interventions such as in-school counselling can play in reducing future problems.

Open Labour understands Labour's 2017 manifesto was the most progressive on children's mental health ever - promising £90 million for in-school counselling and a

greater proportion of mental health funding going towards Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Open Labour believes that by further concentration on young people's mental health services, not only will the health of our children be prioritised, but future savings will be made in our already over-stretched generic mental health services

Open Labour resolves to build on this by campaigning to get Labour to make a commitment in its manifesto to create a national Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, with ring-fenced funding which guarantees access to professional support for any child experiencing problems, including family support, and a developed framework for how that support should look. We call for Public Health bodies to be legally responsible for publishing data relating to children's mental health, including that from the education sector, and the link between levels of exclusion from schools and mental health.

19. Ending 'two-child' welfare policies

Open Labour calls for the full abolition of the 'two child policy' to be Labour manifesto policy, including the so called 'rape clause'. It is utterly repugnant and offensive that such a policy has ever come to be.

20. Inclusion, representation and the Open Left

Open Labour understands Article 29 of the Convention for the Human Rights for Persons with Disabilities relates to participation in political and public life and states that Parties [to the agreement] shall guarantee to persons with disabilities political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others, and shall undertake:

To ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others..., by:

(ii) Protecting the right of persons with disabilities...to stand for elections, to effectively hold office and perform all public functions at all levels of government...

Open Labour believes our Government, Party and associated membership organisations, have a lot more to do to empower and enable disabled people to stand for political office and engage in participative democracy at all levels.

Open Labour will undertake the following actions

- i. Open Labour will call upon the UK Government to extend and expand the recently reinstated grant and provision for disabled candidates, at all political levels to address and tackle barriers to participation.
- ii. Open Labour will encourage our Party to work at a local level with small businesses, cooperatives etc to set up forums to attain support in kind and develop funding streams to help disabled candidates and to make our structural, physical and other political and campaigning environments internally and externally inc meeting spaces accessible to all.
- iii. Open Labour will lobby the Party to set up subcommittees within our local and national structures, comprised of disabled members to advise and give further meaningful, practical and implemented recommendations to decision making bodies within local political parties to develop volunteer 'career' paths and the 'candidate journeys'.
- iv. Open Labour believes the Labour movement needs to develop national and local inclusive volunteer and inclusive campaign strategies and funds to break down and address the moveable non -structural barriers to volunteering and campaigning.
- v. Open Labour resolves to support the development and implementation of effective and meaningful Disability Equality Training for all within political parties at all levels.

21. Inclusion, representation and the Open Left

Open Labour believes that anti-Semitism is unfortunately prevalent enough to require a significant amount of education and will need a political struggle within the movement to rid our Party of this scourge. Open Labour believes that anti-semitism is equal to all other forms of racism and should not be viewed as a lesser form of racism.

Open Labour believes Anti-Semitism includes views such as proposing the destruction of the State of Israel without the consent of four generations of its people or negotiations with Palestinians, whose fundamental rights we also uphold, or 'conspiracy' type tropes against Jewish people. It is important that the left is honest about its failure at that time to tackle these views and the environment which meant these views were aired more widely on social media by party members.

Open Labour strongly believe that it is possible to stand against war in the Middle East and for Palestinian rights without resorting to anti-Semitism. Open Labour also supports our Jewish Brothers and Sisters who believe that the Government of Bibi Netanyahu not only acts against the rights of Palestinians and away from a Two State Solution but also against the interests of the Jewish Diaspora.

It is also possible to fight multiple forms of discrimination, and our opposition to anti-Semitism shall be without prejudice to our opposition to other forms of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and xenophobia.

Open Labour stand as allies with the Jewish Labour Movement as the only recognised representative body for Jewish people in the Labour Party, and their daily struggle against anti-Semitism.

Open Labour hold to the belief that we should be encouraging Jewish socialists and their allies to join the Labour Party and make it a safer space rather than leaving it. People will make their own choices, we deplore any organised effort to politically deepen a rift with the Jewish Community which we believe, however difficult, we must help to heal.

Open Labour resolves to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Jewish Brothers and Sisters and to assist in their fight against anti-semitism and affirms our commitment to support the Jewish Labour Movement organisationally.

