

POLICY DEVELOPMENT



REVIEW

CONSULTATION 2021

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Foreword

The Labour Party has an incredibly proud policy history, from the creation of the NHS and the modern welfare state, to the introduction of Sure Start and the minimum wage. Labour governments have achieved so much by delivering bold, transformative policies for the people of Britain.

For Labour to do that again, we need a policy development process that can utilise the strength of our movement and develop a policy platform that can help inspire people, win elections and rebuild the country.

It's clear from the feedback we received from the first phase of the review that the way we make policy in the Party – through the National Policy Forum (NPF) and Annual Conference – needs to change. There has been a loss of faith in aspects of how the NPF works, how members and affiliates influence it, and how it interacts with Conference.

The Labour Party is unique in that every member and our affiliates have a voice in policy making – this is a system of which we should be proud. We need to protect this principle by developing a more transparent, accountable and effective policy making process – and one which develops a policy platform that can command the confidence and support of the public.

We must also reflect on the scale of change needed for us to again be a party of government, so that we can deliver the policies that the country so desperately needs. We have lost four General Elections in a row. We have a mountain to climb to get back into power so that we can deliver the transformative policies the country needs. Our policy making process must help us do that.

Introduction

Labour Party policy is made through the National Policy Forum (NPF) and Annual Conference. The process brings together members, local parties, trade unions, socialist societies, elected representatives as well as the wider community to develop policy over the course of a parliament for our General Election manifesto.

After a decade in opposition and four General Election defeats in a row, Labour has a mountain to climb to get into power at the next General Election. To do that we need a policy making process that helps us develop a policy platform that is true to our values, ensures the voices of our members and affiliated trade unions are heard, and that wins the support of the public.

Labour is therefore reviewing the way it makes policy to ensure it is more transparent, accountable, democratic, inclusive and effective.

Last year, we launched an open call for evidence inviting contributions to help shape the review. We received thousands of contributions from across the Labour movement, which has shaped this more detailed consultation.

This consultation will be open until **24th June** and final proposals will be taken to Annual Conference 2021.

The questions in this consultation are a guide to help shape your thinking, you do not need to answer all of them to respond.

You can send your response directly to pdreview@labour.org.uk.

Although individual submissions will be accepted, we strongly welcome submissions that come from our CLPs and affiliates.

Principles of our democratic policy making process

First and foremost our policy development process must be designed to produce a policy platform that is true to Labour's values, which can help inspire people, win elections and transform the country. Nothing else will do.

Following our open call for evidence and the submissions we received from our members and our affiliates, we are proposing that our new policy making system should meet the following principles:

- Build a broad, credible and coherent policy platform to form the basis of a manifesto.
- Be deliberative and allow for nuance, complexity and a diversity of views.
- Be inclusive, accessible and build on the diverse expertise of our movement.
- Command the confidence of members and affiliates through transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the process.
- Take account of the concerns, aspirations and priorities of voters, while always staying true to our values.
- Work effectively with other Labour Party structures to ensure effective support of our campaigning and political education work.
- Reflect the modern world of politics and recognise the need to respond to fast moving events, while also staying accountable to the Party's democratic structures.
- Ensure a stronger relationship with the devolved policy making institutions of Welsh and Scottish Labour.

- **Do these look like the right principles?**
- **Are there any you think should be added or amended?**

The Party's policy making structures

Policy in the Labour Party is made via the National Policy Forum (NPF) and agreed by Annual Conference, the sovereign decision making body of the Party. Over a Parliament we run a rolling programme of policy development to the next manifesto, designed to give members, supporters and stakeholders a voice.

Feedback to our call for evidence made clear that the current policy making process is not as transparent, inclusive or effective as it should be.

There is clearly a strong desire for a meaningful, deliberative and democratic policy making process but submissions stressed that the current structures and processes for policy development are opaque and difficult to engage with, both at an individual and CLP and affiliate level. This means that many have become disillusioned with Labour's democratic policy making process.

There is clearly work to do to restore faith in the process and to meet its purpose. But as was also made clear in submissions, if the Labour Party did not already have a policy making process we would have to invent one - we need a space in which the Party can do the hard work required to get our policy offer right.

- **Should the NPF be reformed? What might a reformed NPF look like?**
- **How can we ensure that the Party's policy making process oversees genuine and meaningful policy development work with strengthened engagement with members, trade unions, affiliates and stakeholders?**

However the policy making process is reformed, it will only succeed if the process is respected by everyone. Submissions noted that policy has often been developed outside of formal structures, including policy that makes it into the manifesto. While there was recognition that the Labour frontbench must be able to respond to fast moving events by making policy interventions, there were calls for greater consultation and ultimate accountability to the Party's democratic structures.

- **How can we ensure that the policy making process is sufficiently flexible to respond to fast moving events?**
- **How should the policy development work of the leadership and Shadow Cabinet interact with the democratic process?**

The National Policy Forum (NPF) and Joint Policy Committee (JPC)

Policy in the Labour Party is formally developed through the National Policy Forum (NPF). This is a body of over 200 representatives from all the major groups of the Labour Party, from constituency parties and regions to affiliated trade unions, socialist societies, MPs and councillors.

NPF representatives are placed onto one of eight policy commissions that examine specific policy areas; each commission is co-convened by a Shadow Secretary of State and an NEC member. The current commissions are:

- Early Years, Education and Skills
- Economy, Business and Trade
- Environment, Energy and Culture
- Health and Social Care
- Housing, Local Government and Transport
- International
- Justice and Home Affairs
- Work, Pensions and Equality

The NPF meets periodically to discuss in detail documents produced by the policy commissions. It submits various types of documents to Conference: consultative, final policy documents, and annual reports on the work of the policy commissions.

The NPF is overseen by the Joint Policy Committee (JPC). It is jointly co-convened by the Leader of the Labour Party and the National Executive Committee (NEC) Co-convenor and is made up of members of the Shadow Cabinet, the NEC and the NPF. It provides a link with all sections of the party, steering the NPF's work and setting out priorities and debates.

Membership of the NPF

Currently, the NPF is made up of over 200 representatives from the following divisions:

- CLPs - 55
- Trade Unions - 30
- Regions - 22
- Local Government - 10
- Socialist Societies - 3
- BAME Labour - 4
- The Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) - 9
- The House of Lords - 2
- Labour Northern Ireland - 1
- Labour International - 1
- LGBT Labour - 1
- Disability Labour - 1

- Scottish Policy Forum - 4
- Welsh Policy Forum - 4
- Co-operative Party - 3
- Shadow Cabinet - 8
- National Executive Committee (NEC) - 39

Representatives are elected on a regular basis with regular terms, usually two years, with minimum quotas to ensure a gender balance in the larger divisions.

Feedback to the open call for evidence argued that for the NPF to be truly representative it needs to properly reflect the makeup of our movement. Many argued that it also needs to be big enough to be properly democratic but small enough to be effective and efficient.

Some submissions raised concerns that the current balance of NPF representatives was no longer representative of the party as a whole and a wide range of suggestions were made to address this, including enlarging the membership of the NPF, splitting it into a greater number of subdivisions, including a greater number of elected members and affiliates, and increasing the number of policy commissions.

However, there was wide agreement that this structure gives a voice to groups such as BAME Labour, LGBT Labour and Disability Labour and argued that any future policy development process must ensure these marginalised groups have a clear and active role.

- **Is the membership of the NPF right?**
- **What should the balance be between elected officials/members/affiliates?**
- **Are these divisions effective in giving voices to marginalised and oppressed groups? If not, how could they be improved?**
- **What should the roles and responsibilities be of the membership of the NPF?**
- **How should divisions be elected onto the NPF?**

Policy Commissions

NPF representatives are placed onto one of eight policy commissions that examine specific policy areas; each commission is co-convened by a Shadow Secretary of State and an NEC member.

These commissions consider the policy submissions which come in from across the Labour Party, and develop detailed positions which are then discussed at Annual Conference.

The commissions meet several times a year and are responsible for considering policy submissions from all sections of the party and have a responsibility to ensure engagement on topical issues as well as building and maintaining year-round dialogue between the Party and the Shadow Cabinet.

The current commissions are:

- Early Years, Education and Skills
- Economy, Business and Trade
- Environment, Energy and Culture
- Health and Social Care
- Housing, Local Government and Transport
- International
- Justice and Home Affairs
- Work, Pensions and Equality

Policy making runs from general election to general election. Members, supporters and affiliate groups make submissions to the process detailing their views, which form the basis of the policy documents that go to Annual Conference for formal approval.

- **Are these still the right policy commissions? Are they focused on the right issues?**
- **Do the policy commissions have the right responsibilities?**
- **How do we ensure that members, CLPs and affiliates understand how they can contribute to the work of the policy commissions?**
- **How do we ensure the work is transparent and accountable?**
- **How can cross-departmental themes and issues be addressed within this structure?**
- **How should the work of the policy commissions be decided?**

Full meetings of the NPF

In the past, a full meeting of the NPF has been held before Annual Conference to agree policy documents and reports on its work in the NPF Annual Report to Conference. However, a full NPF has not been held since 2018 and feedback suggests that the meetings can be 'talking shops' which lack clarity of purpose.

In contrast, submissions were more positive about the final stage of the process – the full meeting of the NPF prior to a General Election, which has a clear focus on agreeing the policy platform to be put to Conference from which the Manifesto is drawn.

- **Should the NPF or its replacement continue to meet in full? If so, how do we ensure discussion and debate is meaningful?**
- **With two snap elections and with the government likely to repeal the Fixed Term Parliament Act, how can we ensure the process works when there is uncertainty about when the next General Election will be held?**

Manifesto development

In the final year of the policy development cycle the Clause V meeting is held to draw upon the work of the previous four years. This helps to inform the composition of the General Election Manifesto. The meeting is attended by members of the Shadow Cabinet, Scottish and Welsh Labour representatives, affiliated trade unions and others. They debate what should be included in the Manifesto, drawing upon the findings of the NPF. If agreed, this will form the Party's policy platform for the upcoming General Election.

In 2017 and 2019, the two snap general elections meant that a truncated manifesto development process had to be undertaken. In 2019 this took the form of an open call from members for policy ideas, as well as consulting each division of the NPF in turn on their policy priorities too.

- **How can and should we make the relationship between the NPF, Conference and Clause V clearer to ensure genuine, joined-up policy development?**

Engagement with the National Policy Forum

Anybody can contribute their policy ideas to the National Policy Forum, either through a policy submission made on the Labour Policy Forum website or at a NPF policy event.

While submissions are received throughout the year and considered by the policy commissions, the majority are made throughout the annual consultation period.

Every year, each policy commission publishes a consultation document on a salient topic, signed off by the JPC, with a series of questions for discussion. Events are held to encourage CLPs, members and stakeholders to get involved and have their say. The findings of this consultation are then written up, forming that year's NPF Annual Report. This is then taken to Annual Conference to be debated on conference floor and, if passed, forms the Party's policy platform.

Additionally, CLPs are able to send policy motions to the National Policy Forum throughout the year. These policy motions are then made available to the relevant policy commission.

Individual engagement

All individuals are able to contribute to the National Policy Forum, including members and individual non-members.

During the open call for evidence, there were concerns that the ability for individuals to submit policy submissions an unlimited number of times, on an unlimited number of topics, meant there was a lack of meaningful engagement and discussion with members' ideas.

There were also concerns that individual members had little understanding of what happened to their policy submissions once they had been submitted. However, some submissions stressed we must balance these legitimate concerns with the right of our members to engage with and contribute to our policy platform.

- **How can we ensure policy contributions are focused and useful?**
- **What guidance should be provided to support people to contribute to the policy discussions?**
- **Are written submissions still the best way to engage in policy discussions? Are there other ways to engage in policy debates?**
- **How do we best involve our membership, both in policy debates at a local level and also in the formation of policy documents at a national level?**

CLPs and affiliates

CLPs and affiliates are crucial in driving forward our policy agenda, however many submissions stressed that our affiliates, BLPs and CLPs are an underutilised vehicle for greater member engagement in policy development.

It is right that our CLPs and affiliates should play an active role in our policy making process. However as submissions stressed, there also needs to be an understanding that CLPs have differing levels of resource and some, particularly smaller CLPs and affiliates, may need more support to engage with the process.

- **How should CLPs and affiliates engage with a national policy making process?**
- **How do we improve the link between CLPs and affiliates and a national policy making process?**
- **What role should the CLP Policy Officer play? What should their roles and responsibilities be?**
- **What support do CLPs need to engage in policy development discussions?**

Scottish and Welsh Labour Policy Forums

As the majority of policy is now devolved, the work of the National Policy Forum primarily focuses on the responsibilities of the UK government, while our Scottish and Welsh parties have their own policy forums each with their own structures and timescales.

Submissions stressed that the relationships between these three structures aren't working as effectively as they should. It is clear there's more work for us to do to ensure the devolved nations have a clear voice in our national policy making process.

- **How do we join up the work of the Scottish and Welsh Policy Forums with that of the National Policy Forum?**
- **Are there lessons to learn from the Scottish and Welsh experiences of policy making?**

Local and regional links

Policy debates increasingly take place at a local level and submissions argued that we need to ensure that our policy making system takes greater account of regional voices and considers regional issues.

- **How do we better use our local and regional links to develop a policy platform that can deliver electoral success?**
- **How does policy making work at a regional level and how can we better integrate this into the national process?**

Annual Conference

Conference resolutions

In addition to the NPF process, the Party has the Conference Resolutions process, which allows CLPs and affiliates to put forward policy motions for debate to be determined in a priorities ballot at the start of Conference. Policy issues that are prioritised go through a process of 'compositing' and are then debated and voted on by Conference.

Each constituency and affiliated organisation may submit a policy motion ahead of Conference. Motions are grouped by subject area and submitted to a priorities ballot at the start of Conference.

Compositing meetings are then held once the result of the ballot has been declared. Delegates from the CLPs and affiliated organisations whose motions have been successful in the priorities ballot are invited to attend a 'compositing' meeting, one per topic, where a composite motion for each topic is agreed. Agreed motions are then taken to conference floor to be voted upon by delegates.

Issues not selected for debate will be referred to the appropriate policy commission after Conference so they can be considered as part of the Party's policy making process.

In 2018, the scope and number of policy motions debated at Annual Conference was increased from eight (the four priorities selected by CLPs, and the four priorities selected by trade unions and other affiliates) to 20 (the ten priorities selected by CLPs, and the ten priorities selected by trade unions and other affiliates).

The intention of this proposal was to compensate for perceived problems with the NPF by giving Conference more opportunities to vote on specific policy proposals to become part of the Party's policy platform.

However, the increase in the number of Conference Policy Motions has not necessarily increased democratic accountability. With so many motions and so little time on Conference floor, the ability to discuss nuanced policy positions is limited and policy positions can often be agreed with limited genuine engagement by the majority.

Many submissions in the open call for evidence expressed confusion as to how Conference debates on resolutions interact with the NPF. It was suggested that this relationship needs to be reformed and made clearer to members in order to facilitate genuine, joined-up policy development.

- **Are the right number of motions being debated at Annual Conference?**
- **Should motions from other democratic policy making structures e.g. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members' organisation, Disabled members organisation and Labour Women's Network continue to be ratified by Annual Conference?**
- **Can we address contradictory policy motions being passed at Annual Conference? How?**
- **Should the way Conference debates policy be reformed? Is there space for more deliberative debate?**

Annual reports

Annual Conference approves the work of the National Policy Forum through the passing of Annual Reports. These Annual Reports are written by the individual policy commissions and outline the work of the commission that year. They also detail the outcome of the consultation held with members.

However, submissions to our call for evidence suggest that the policy documents produced by the existing process can at times lack meaningful policy direction and purpose. The policy documents are often passed at Conference without serious debate, resulting in a lack of meaningful engagement in the process.

- **How should the work of the NPF or its replacement be presented to Annual Conference?**

The Reference Back process

The 'Reference Back' process allows CLPs to highlight areas of the NPF Annual Report that they would like the policy commission to consider again following concerns about the 'take it or leave it' nature of the NPF report.

Submissions suggested that reducing the number of reference backs and increasing the quality of debate is essential. However, they were clear that this cannot be a case of simply limiting its use. It must go hand in hand with increasing confidence in the policy development process and with much better communication to members and CLPs about how best to take part in the process much earlier.

- **How should Conference engage with the work of the NPF or its replacement?**

The relationship between the National Policy Forum and Annual Conference

One of the most significant issues raised with the current process is a lack of transparency and clarity around the relationship between Conference and the NPF.

Many submissions argued that the current structures and processes for agreeing positions and policy documents that go to Conference are opaque to members, CLPs and affiliates. They stressed it is not always clear how submissions to the NPF and Conference resolutions are carried forward and considered as part of the development of the Party's policy platform.

In submissions, it was widely considered that the current system is opaque and difficult to navigate in part because it adds another layer of complexity to an already-arcaic structure comprising BLPs and CLPs, Local Government Committees, regional conferences and committees, women, youth and minority committees and conferences, and national conference and the National Executive Committee.

A large number of submissions advocated joining up these structures to a greater degree.

- **What changes need to be made to the structure of policy development to ensure a clearer relationship between Annual Conference and the reformed or replaced National Policy Forum?**
- **What changes need to be made to the process to ensure that members, CLPs and trade unions can clearly see their influence on policy development, and that their expertise is utilised?**
- **What steps need to be taken to improve the transparency of the process?**

A forward looking policy making process

The Party's formal structures for policy making are important to ensure clear accountability, representation and transparency. But equally important is how we use these tools to collectively develop a policy platform that is true to our values, and can help to inspire, win elections and transform the country. This section focuses on how we do that.

Credible and evidenced based

Labour's vision for the country must be underpinned by credible and coherent policy development, building on the policy expertise of members, trade unions, affiliates, MPs, councillors and practitioners.

This means policies should be clear and consistent with an overall strategy and fit within an economic and social framework that can command the support of a broad coalition of voters.

Several submissions suggested that policies should be prioritised within the policy making process according to their salience with voters, as opposed to seeking an even spread across Whitehall departmental areas.

- **How do we effectively harness the expertise of our members and affiliates, while also bringing in external expertise?**
- **How do we balance short term and long term policy development? Is it realistic to expect a system to do both?**
- **Our policies need to be costed and credible and fit within a coherent economic framework – how do we bring this into the process?**
- **How do we ensure we are engaging with a sufficiently broad range of stakeholders and service users?**

Considers the views of the public

Labour aspires to be the party of government and to change people's lives we must win elections. Though we must never fall short on our values, in shaping our policy platform and making our arguments in favour of a Labour government, we must also understand the needs, aspirations and priorities of the people we seek to represent.

And of course we have in-built advantages to that effect. Trade unions are the voice of working people, our diverse membership has a broad range of experiences and expertise to draw on and our elected representatives speak to voters across the country every day.

But we can and should go further in ensuring the views of the public are appropriately considered as part of the policy making process.

Submissions saw local activists as a key asset for gathering local information about the values and priorities in their communities, and suggested that local campaigning ought to be joined up better with policy development to this end. Submissions also suggested a variety of ways to engage with the public, including the use of structures such as citizen's assemblies and juries and a more targeted approach on social media.

- **How do we integrate public opinion into the policy making process and what might this look like in practice?**

Political education and campaigning

The Labour Party is a campaigning organisation, a mass movement seeking to win elections and work for change in our communities. Through the policy making process the Party hears directly from members across the country through policy discussions, such as our member e-roundtables. Local activists and campaigns play a similar role, gathering information about the issues which local communities care about most.

We believe this work could be better joined up, bringing the voices of local people into the policy making process itself.

- **Can we use policy making and discussion to support our campaigning work? What could this look like?**
- **What mechanisms could we use to feed the issues being discussed on the doorstep into the policy making process?**

Diversity, inclusivity and accessibility

Labour is the Party of equality. We believe our policy making process should be inclusive and listen to the views of people from diverse communities and backgrounds. This means policy should be made by and with the very people whose day-to-day lives it will impact.

The current structure of the NPF includes quotas for women in a number of elected divisions, youth representatives, and representatives from Socialist Societies including BAME Labour, LGBT Labour and Disability Labour. By virtue of the CLP and Regional sections, there is also a wide geographical spread of representatives across the country, including the devolved nations. However, we could go further to embed diversity into our policy making structures.

Some work has been undertaken to better integrate the views of minority groups through Conference with motions from both Women's and Youth Conferences being taken forward to Annual Conference since 2018. The re-introduction of a stand-alone Women's Conference from 2019 has also given space for women to debate and pass motions on the issues which affect them in a meaningful way.

The Labour Party is an inclusive member-based organisation that prides itself on being accessible to all who share its values. As part of this, we aim to make our policy documents and events as accessible as possible. Manifestoes are available in a variety of accessible formats, and being able to hold events on Zoom during the coronavirus pandemic has meant that a wider range of members can attend our events than ever. Some submissions, however, noted that the process could be made more accessible, particularly to neurodiverse people.

- **How can we continue to embed diversity into the structures of the policy making process?**
- **Are there groups or voices which are currently un- or under-represented?**
- **Is the language we use in current policy documents accessible for all Labour members and voters? Are there other ways in which we can make documents more accessible?**
- **What other barriers exist which may prevent people being able to engage with the policy making process?**

Online engagement

More and more of us are using online tools to connect with each other. The use of digital campaigning and online activism has been steadily increasing in recent years, and have been vital tools during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Labour Policy Forum, the Party's online home of policy development, provides an online forum for members, supporters and affiliates to share and discuss their policy ideas. It is currently the primary way through which we receive policy submissions, and also provides a platform to host consultation documents, advertise training and events, and provide information on how members can get involved in the policy making process.

Social distancing measures have meant that even more activity has moved online since 2020, namely policy commission meetings, CLP and BLP meetings, as well as policy roundtable discussions with members. Submissions praised these online meetings, noting that they improved accessibility and in some cases the quality of discussion. They stressed that innovative methods of online engagement should continue to be integrated into the policy making process.

- **Is a forum-based website the best way to facilitate online policy discussion?**
- **How can we use social media to engage more with members and voters and hear their policy priorities?**
- **What practical issues might arise in the use of online engagement and how could we overcome these?**
- **Digital engagement is a valuable tool for reaching a greater number of members from communities across the country. How can we further use digital tools such as Zoom to diversify the voices we listen to? Are there disadvantages to this approach?**

ALL QUESTIONS

Principles of our democratic policy making process

- Do these look like the right principles?
- Are there any you think should be added or amended?

The Party's policy making structures

- Should the NPF be reformed? What might a reformed NPF look like?
- How can we ensure that the Party's policy making process oversees genuine and meaningful policy development work with strengthened engagement with members, trade unions, affiliates and stakeholders?
- How can we ensure that the policy making process is sufficiently flexible to respond to fast moving events?
- How should the policy development work of the leadership and Shadow Cabinet interact with the democratic process?
- Is the membership of the NPF right?
- What should the balance be between elected officials/members/affiliates?
- Are these divisions effective in giving voices to marginalised and oppressed groups? If not, how could they be improved?
- What should the roles and responsibilities be of the membership of the NPF?
- How should divisions be elected onto the NPF?
- Are these still the right policy commissions? Are they focused on the right issues?
- Do the policy commissions have the right responsibilities?
- How do we ensure that members, CLPs and affiliates understand how they can contribute to the work of the policy commissions?
- How do we ensure the work is transparent and accountable?
- How can cross-departmental themes and issues be addressed within their structure?
- How should the work of the policy commissions be decided?
- Should the NPF or its replacement continue to meet in full? If so, how do we ensure discussion and debate is meaningful?
- With two snap elections and with the government likely to repeal the Fixed

Term Parliament Act, how can we ensure the process works when there is uncertainty about when the next General Election will be held?

- How can and should we make the relationship between the NPF, Conference and Clause V clearer to ensure genuine, joined-up policy development?
- How can we ensure policy contributions are focused and useful?
- What guidance should be provided to support people to contribute to the policy discussions?
- Are written submissions still the best way to engage in policy discussions? Are there other ways to engage in policy debates?
- How do we best involve our membership, both in policy debates at a local level and also in the formation of policy documents at a national level?
- How should CLPs and affiliates engage with a national policy making process?
- How do we improve the link between CLPs and affiliates and a national policy making process?
- What role should the CLP Policy Officer play? What should their roles and responsibilities be?
- What support do CLPs need to engage in policy development discussions?
- How do we join up the work of the Scottish and Welsh Policy Forums with that of the National Policy Forum?
- Are there lessons to learn from the Scottish and Welsh experiences of policy making?

Annual Conference

- Are the right number of motions being debated at Annual Conference?
- Should motions from other democratic policy making structures e.g. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members' organisation, Disabled members organisation and Labour Women's Network continue to be ratified by Annual Conference?
- Can we address contradictory policy motions being passed at Annual Conference? How?
- Should the way Conference debates policy be reformed? Is there space for more deliberative debate?

- How should the work of the NPF or its replacement be presented to Annual Conference?
- How should Conference engage with the work of the NPF or its replacement?

The relationship between the National Policy Forum and Annual Conference

- What changes need to be made to the structure of policy development to ensure a clearer relationship between Annual Conference and the reformed or replaced National Policy Forum?
- What changes need to be made to the process to ensure that members, CLPs and trade unions can clearly see their influence on policy development, and that their expertise is utilised?
- What steps need to be taken to improve the transparency of the process?

A forward looking policy making process

- How do we effectively harness the expertise of our members and affiliates, while also bringing in external expertise?
- How do we balance short term and long term policy development? Is it realistic to expect a system to do both?
- Our policies need to be costed and credible and fit within a coherent economic framework – how do we bring this into the process?
- How do we ensure we are engaging with a sufficiently broad range of stakeholders and service users?
- How do we integrate public opinion into the policy making process and what might this look like in practice?
- Can we use policy making and discussion to support our campaigning work? What could this look like?
- What mechanisms could we use to feed the issues being discussed on the doorstep into the policy making process?
- How can we continue to embed diversity into the structures of the policy making process?
- Are there groups or voices which are currently un- or under-represented?
- Is the language we use in current policy documents accessible for all Labour members and voters? Are there other ways in which we can make documents more accessible?

- What other barriers exist which may prevent people being able to engage with the policy making process?
- Is a forum-based website the best way to facilitate online policy discussion?
- How can we use social media to engage more with members and voters and hear their policy priorities?
- What practical issues might arise in the use of online engagement and how could we overcome these?
- Digital engagement is a valuable tool for reaching a greater number of members from communities across the country. How can we further use digital tools such as Zoom to diversify the voices we listen to? Are there disadvantages to this approach?

