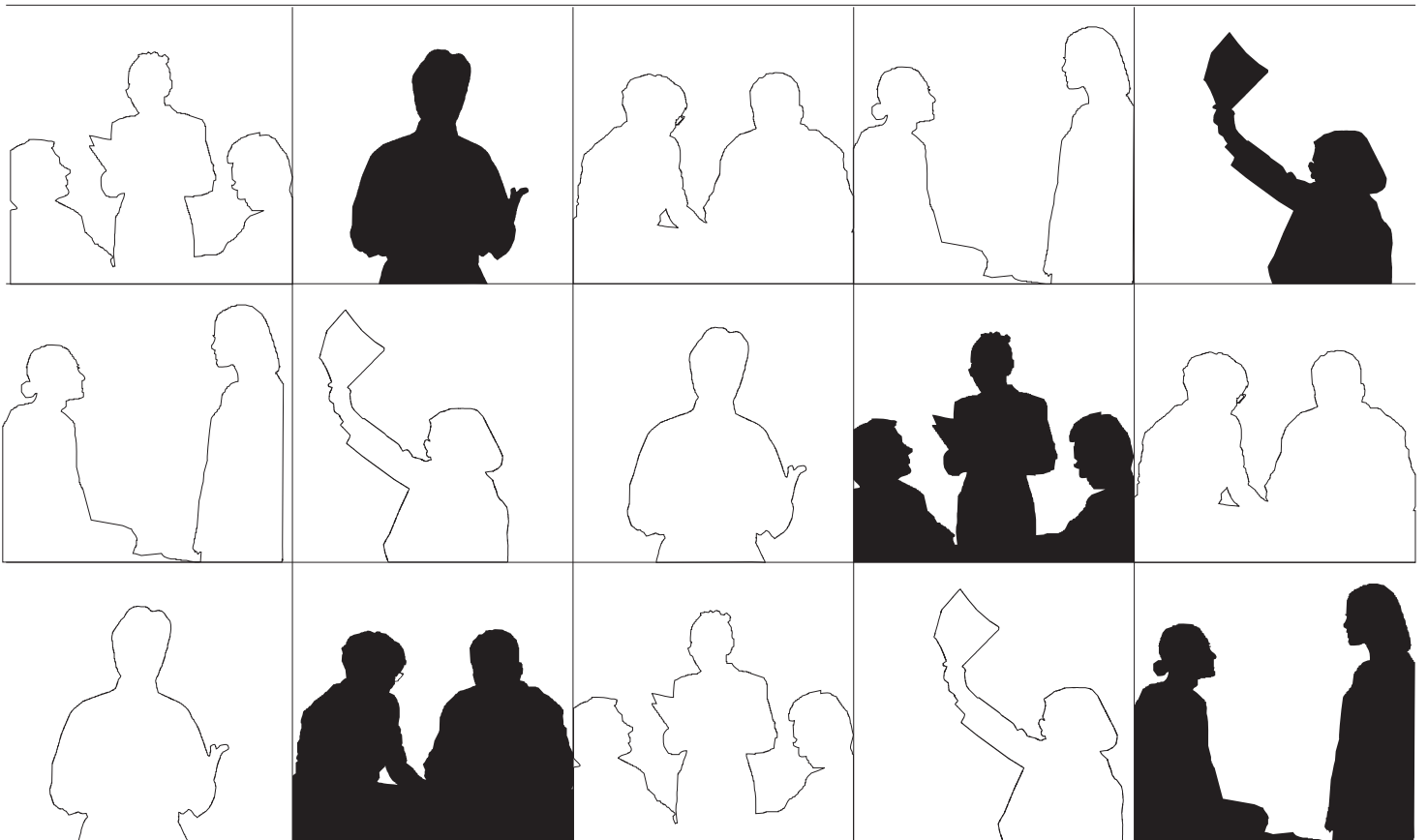


# Partnership in Power

A strong voice for members

new Labour  
new Britain

## Making policy



## Making policy

Policy in the Labour Party is made through a process called Partnership in Power (PiP) which is designed to involve all party stakeholders (including members, local parties, trade unions, socialist societies and Labour representatives) as well as the wider community in shaping party policy and support the relationship between the party in the country and the party in government.

PiP does this through:

- a rolling programme of policy development for the next manifesto
- a year-round dialogue between the party and government.

This briefing explains how policy is made in the party through Partnership in Power, highlights the improvements to PiP agreed at Annual Conference 2005, describes the institutions that drive the process and shows how all party stakeholders can best engage on the party's policy development work.

## Improving Partnership in Power

It is now eight years since Partnership in Power was established at conference in 1997. Over this time, it has proved to be a huge success. It led to the production of two general election winning manifestos. It provided a model to facilitate policy development at all levels of governance. It provided a framework for the partnership between government and party.

Nearly 4,000 submissions from local parties (including two thirds of all constituency parties), affiliates and community groups were made in the last round of policy making with many thousands of party members taking part. We also took our debate out to the wider community both through the consultation documents and through the development of the 'Big Conversation' style events.

PiP supported the campaigning work of local parties and Labour representatives providing an avenue to discuss policy issues and broaden local networks. And because PiP develops policy over a three year cycle and has discussion and debate at its heart, it proved to be a good vehicle for developing party members' political knowledge.

However, to ensure Partnership in Power continues to be successful, a wide-ranging review was set up in 2003 with three working groups involving all sections of the party, to consider how the party can best develop policy in the third term. The working groups took evidence from across the party and our affiliates on their experience of PiP and suggested improvements.



Annual Conference 2005 agreed new proposals to improve PiP to give members, local parties, affiliates and other party stakeholders a stronger voice in shaping party policy.

These improvements provide a new and better platform for discussing and developing party policy. They build on the success of PiP but also take on board members' concerns. The new PiP will enable better engagement on topical issues as well as provide party stakeholders with better opportunities for continued dialogue with policy commissions.

The new PiP will also build on the lessons from the Big Conversation, including using the model of consulting the wider community. The new PiP will produce fewer policy consultation documents which are more engaging and designed in a format that makes it easier for local parties and other stakeholders to consult members and the wider community.

## Key changes

### 1. Discussing topical issues

Policy commissions will be responsible for engaging with the party and affiliates on topical issues. They will do this by producing a work programme which will highlight the policy issues and challenges facing the Government in the year ahead.

This work programme will be made available to party stakeholders and will provide a focus for local parties to engage on the topical policy issues. The policy commissions will also be alert to breaking topical issues not covered in their annual work programme and use the new policy commission web pages on the party's website for engagement on this.

### 2. Building a dialogue

Policy commissions will also be responsible for building a dialogue with party stakeholders who have made policy submissions ensuring that members can better see the link between their contribution and the work of government.

This will be done, for example, by holding phone conferences with members of the policy commissions and those party units making policy submissions, sending regular email updates, and hosting web chats.

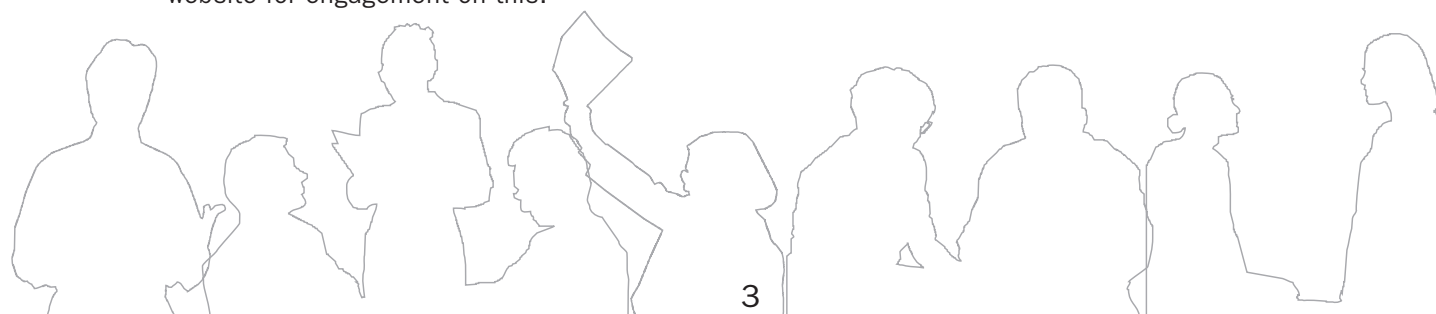
### 3. Lessons from the Big Conversation

The Big Conversation was hugely successful in enabling local parties, affiliates and Labour representatives to engage the wider community on the policy choices and priorities facing the party in government.

The party has learned significant lessons from this initiative including:

- the courage to open our consultations widely
- the value of asking big questions and focussing discussion on policy choices and priorities
- the format of policy consultation meetings which involved small group round-table discussion
- how to develop new ways of communicating including using text messaging and being more interactive on the web pages.

Local parties particularly welcomed the format of the Big Conversation policy consultation document which was felt to be more accessible and easier to use at consultation meetings.



This format will be adopted with the new PiP policy consultation documents. It will enable party stakeholders to use Partnership in Power to better engage members, local residents and community groups on policy issues, as well as campaign on these issues.

This is an important change as it provides party stakeholders with an opportunity to link up our policy development work with the party's campaigning priorities.

## Partnership in Power institutions

### Annual Conference

Annual Conference is the sovereign policy-making body of the Labour Party and the work of the National Policy Forum (NPF) is submitted to conference for agreement. The debates at conference are based around policy commission reports and documents.

In addition, topical issues are debated through contemporary resolutions and cover policy issues not covered by the work of the NPF.

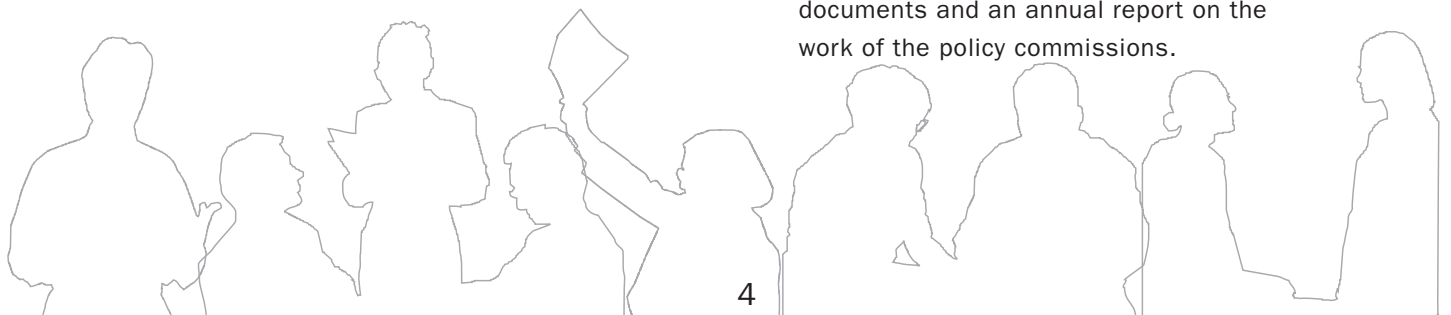
### Joint Policy Committee

Strategic oversight of policy development is undertaken by the Joint Policy Committee (JPC). Chaired by the Prime Minister, the JPC is made up of members of government, the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the NPF. It provides a link with all sections of the party, steering the NPF's work and setting priorities and debates.

### National Policy Forum

The NPF is one of the key institutions of the Partnership in Power process. It is made up of 183 representatives from all the major stakeholder groups in the party and is responsible for overseeing the policy development work in the party – drawing together the policy consultation documents and overseeing the consultation process to ensure maximum participation by all stakeholders.

The NPF meets two or three weekends a year to discuss in detail documents produced by the policy commissions. It submits three types of documents to conference: consultative, final policy documents and an annual report on the work of the policy commissions.



**NPF representatives**

Constituency Labour parties	55
Regions	22
Trade unions	30
MPs	9
MEPs	6
Peer	2
Government	8
Socialist societies	3
Labour Students	1
Cooperative Party	2
Black Socialist Societies	4
Local government	9
National Executive Committee	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>183</b>

**Elections to the NPF**

Each of the sections of the NPF has its own method of electing NPF representatives. Nominations for the CLP section are invited from CLPs and are elected at Annual Conference.

**Policy commissions**

Following proposals from the PiP review report to conference, there are now six policy commissions which draw up policy reports for discussion by the JPC and the NPF.

Policy commissions have also been given new responsibilities to ensure engagement on topical issues as well as building and maintaining year-round dialogue with local parties.

The six policy commissions made up of 16-20 members representing the Government, the NEC and the NPF are:

- Britain in the World
- Creating Sustainable Communities
- Crime, Justice, Citizenship and Equalities
- Education and Skills
- Health
- Prosperity and Work

Further information about the work of the policy commissions and current policy consultation issues is available on the party's website [labour.org.uk](http://labour.org.uk).



## Policy development cycle

The policy development cycle will now start with policy commissions bringing forward annual work programmes, which will consider issues arising from the implementation of the manifesto, as well as identifying specific topical issues for wider consultation. These work programmes will be made available to all party stakeholders and will provide a focus to engage on these policy issues.

Medium-term policy development is done through the production of policy consultation documents:

First stage (2006) – ‘Big Conversation’ style single document which considers the big challenges that faces the party as it develops policy.

Second stage (2007) – These documents will outline the policy choices emerging from the initial discussion. They will consider either specific policy areas, or where appropriate, cross-cutting themes. The total number of documents and the topics they cover will be decided closer to the time.

Third stage (2008) – The policy documents will be considered for amendment at a ‘Warwick type’ NPF. To enable party stakeholders (including CLPs) to have a say in the final drafting stage of these documents, the ‘final’ draft documents in 2008 will be circulated more widely. Working through their NPF representatives, each party unit will be entitled to submit amendments and have them considered at this ‘Warwick stage’ of the NPF.

## Having your say in shaping party policy

All members, local parties, affiliates as well as other party stakeholders have the right to a direct say in the party’s policy development. You can do this in a number of ways:

### 1. Organise/attend a local policy forum

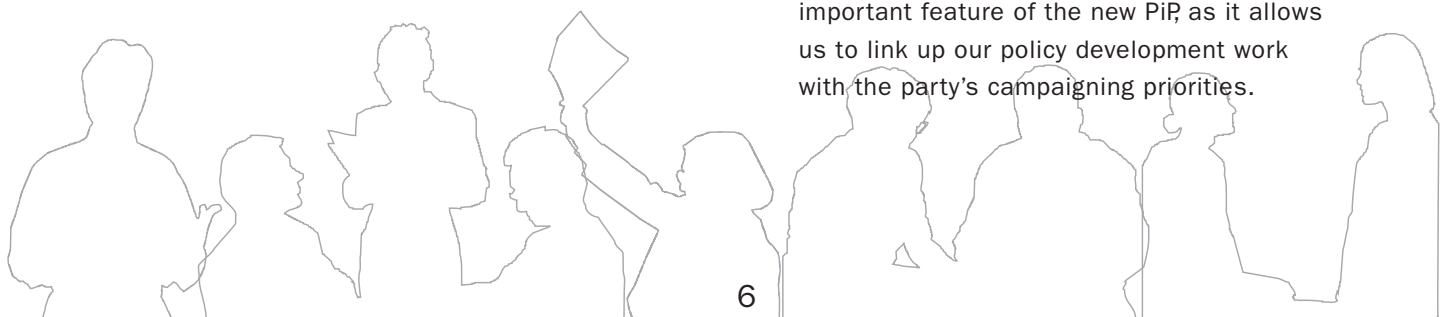
Local policy forums are policy consultation meetings open to all members (and in some cases the wider community). In small discussion groups, the forums analyse a particular policy issue, understanding the nature and scale of the problem and looking at the possible solutions, dealing with conflicting priorities, and at the end, reaching a view to submit to the party’s policy-making process.

Local policy forums can be organised in a number of ways. In the past, some have been organised at branch level, others at constituency meetings which are open to all members, and some at special meetings of cluster constituencies.

### 2. Use PiP to develop local manifestos

The development of the Big Conversation in 2003 showed that there is a significant appetite for an open and wide-ranging consultation, that seeks the views of local residents, voluntary groups and others who have expertise and/or experience of implementing local/national government policies.

The new Partnership in Power encourages local parties working with Local Government Committees to consult residents and community groups as they work to develop the manifesto for local elections. This is an important feature of the new PiP, as it allows us to link up our policy development work with the party’s campaigning priorities.



### 3. Set up a local policy networks

Successful policy development and implementation requires sharing information and learning from each other. Our party is rich with practitioners, experts and people who are passionate about a policy area. But we do not always grasp this wealth of knowledge nor use it to help implement Labour's programme.

The new Partnership in Power proposals have outlined plans to set up and support local policy networks, which will encourage members with a shared interest in a policy area to join together to trade knowledge, discuss solutions to problems and engage directly with policy commissions, ministers and other opinion formers.

Nationally, there are already four policy networks: Labour school governors and those interested in education issues; members interested in health; those with an interest in issues around safer communities; and those involved in sports. These networks are in the early stages of development but already provide forums for members to engage on key policy issues facing the party and Government.

If you are interested in any of these networks further details are available from:

- [labour.org.uk/schoolgovernorsnetwork](http://labour.org.uk/schoolgovernorsnetwork)
- [labour.org.uk/healthnetwork](http://labour.org.uk/healthnetwork)
- [labour.org.uk/safercommunitiesnetwork](http://labour.org.uk/safercommunitiesnetwork)
- [labour.org.uk/sportsnetwork](http://labour.org.uk/sportsnetwork)

### 4. Join the new Partnership in Power Coordinators Network

To support local parties and affiliates with the work they do organising policy discussions at party meetings and setting up consultation events with the wider community, a new Partnership in Power Coordinators Network has been established.

Members of the network will get support and advice from the regional and national party to help run local policy forums, be invited to special briefing and training events and provide a platform to feedback to the party some of the political and organisational issues that arise through local policy development work.

The network is open to all members interested in the party's policy development work, but our aim is to ensure that there is at least one PIP Coordinators Network member in every constituency across the country.

To join this new network, please email Kamlesh Karia, Head of Political Engagement at [kamlesh\\_karia@new.labour.org.uk](mailto:kamlesh_karia@new.labour.org.uk) giving your:

- full name and postal address including post code
- local party unit (CLP/branch/trade union) and your position
- email address
- contact telephone numbers (mobile/home/office).



## More information and support

Each region has a designated member of staff leading on Partnership in Power. If you would like more information on the new Partnership in Power, need help and advice organising local policy forums, or to talk through how PiP can help with your campaigning activity, please contact your regional office or email Kamlesh Karia, Head of Political Engagement at [kamlesh\\_karia@new.labour.org.uk](mailto:kamlesh_karia@new.labour.org.uk).

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