**Conference 2017 – Constitutional Amendments**

Below is a summary of the rule changes going to conference, with my comments in italics – these are personal opinions, the meeting is welcome to take a different view when advising delegates.

1. Proposed by the NEC

Amend the disciplinary clause to include the additional underlined words:

No member of the Party shall engage in conduct which in the opinion of the NEC is prejudicial, or in any act which in the opinion of the NEC is grossly detrimental to the Party. The NEC shall take account of any codes of conduct currently in force and shall regard any incident which in their view was motivated by hostility or prejudice based on age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation as conduct prejudicial to the Party. These shall include but not be limited to incidents motivated by racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia or otherwise racist language, sentiments, stereotypes or actions, sexual harassment, bullying or any form of intimidation towards another person on the basis of a protected characteristic as determined by the NEC in public, private, online or offline, as conduct prejudicial to the Party. Any dispute as to whether a member is in breach of the provisions of this sub-clause shall be determined by the NCC in accordance with Chapter 1 Clause IX above and the disciplinary rules and guidelines in Chapter 6 below. Where appropriate the NCC shall have regard to involvement in financial support for the organisation and/or the activities of any organisation declared ineligible for affiliation to the Party under Chapter 1.II.5 or 3.C above; or to the candidature of the members in opposition to an officially endorsed Labour Party candidate or the support for such candidature. The NCC shall not have regard to the mere holding or expression of beliefs and opinions.

***Note:*** *This was agreed unanimously by the NEC after consultation with all stakeholders. Recommend that delegates support.*

2. Proposed by (a) Hastings & Rye CLP (b) Bury South CLP, Jewish Labour Movement and others

Two different amendments to the same disciplinary clause as above. Movers will be asked to withdraw / remit in favour of the NEC rule change, otherwise the NEC will oppose.

***Note:*** *Recommend that delegates oppose, if not withdrawn.*

3. Proposed by (a) Kingswood CLP (b) Caerphilly CLP (c) Huddersfield CLP

The Kingswood amendment would remove registered supporters (the £3 / £25 people) from the rulebook and participation in leadership elections. Caerphilly and Huddersfield would remove affiliated supporters – those who get a vote through their trade union affiliation – as well.

***Note:*** *I would like to support Kingswood and oppose the other two. Both categories were introduced by the Collins review in 2014. Registered supporters are unpopular with fully paid-up members on all wings of the party. In contrast affiliated supporters have not caused difficulties, and they provide potentially useful links with the trade unions.*

*However at the July NEC meeting Unite representatives proposed that the NEC should review the Collins package as a whole, rather than make piecemeal changes. If this is agreed at the NEC on 19 September, the movers will be asked to remit their amendments to this review, otherwise the NEC will oppose them. So the meeting should decide whether to support them if they are put to a vote.*

4. Proposed by Birmingham & Hall Green CLP and others

 Reduce the percentage of MPs required to nominate a candidate for leader or deputy leader from 15% to 5% (the “McDonnell amendment”).

 ***Note:*** *I understand that Unite representatives would include this in the review of Collins, and do not want conference to vote on it. If this is agreed at the NEC on 19 September, the movers will be asked to remit this amendment, otherwise the NEC will recommend opposition and the unions will vote against it. So our meeting should decide whether to support the amendment if it goes to a vote.*

5. Proposed by York Outer CLP

 Give CLPs a minimum cash allocation of 10% of each paid-up member’s subscription and a guaranteed minimum package of support for all CLPs.

 ***Note:*** *Recommend oppose. The basis for distributing money to CLPs was changed radically in 2011. Before then, CLPs received just under 25% of subscriptions. However, they had to pay election insurance, a Euro-election levy and Contact Creator out of their share, and for small CLPs this exceeded their annual income and took them further into debt each year. The new system paid these fixed costs, plus one conference pass, centrally, a package now worth £1,405 per CLP. In addition CLPs were given £1.50 per member, index-linked to inflation from 2013 and raised to £2.50 per member in May 2017. The balance of the money goes into two NEC-administered funds, with CLPs able to bid for part-funded local organisers or projects which enhance democracy and diversity. It’s worth noting that (a) £2.50 is 10% of the reduced rate subscription and 83% of the lowest £3 rate (b) if membership falls below 294,000 the fixed costs will not be fully covered, and (c) there may be a case for reviewing the whole system, but it is too complicated to pull out one element.*

6. Proposed by Cheltenham CLP

 Adds that exceptions to the requirement for 12 months’ membership for annual conference delegates can only be made with the approval of the NEC or an officer with delegated powers.

 ***Note:*** *I don’t understand what this is for. This year a number of applications have been rejected by the conference arrangements committee because the members joined after 23 June 2016, a year before the original deadline for registrations. The CAC can already use its discretion in individual cases. Unless I’m missing something, would recommend opposing.*

7. Proposed by Newport West CLP and Filton & Bradley Stoke CLP

 Debate amendments from CLPs and affiliates in the year that they are submitted, rather than waiting till the next year.

 ***Note:*** *the NEC always opposes this on the grounds that the extra year is needed to allow consideration of any legal or constitutional or unintended consequences. This might be reasonable if the NEC started looking at rule changes immediately after conference, instead of waiting till the following July, and in some cases September NEC meeting. We only looked at the rule changes submitted in June 2016 on 4 July 2017. So I recommend support, but doubt if it will be carried.*

8. Proposed by Blackpool North & Cleveleys CLP

 Add a clause which says that Young Labour shall have its own constitution and standing orders, to be determined by the Young Labour AGM.

 ***Note:*** *there is currently a lot of discussion around Young Labour and its relationship with Labour Students, and the three-part division of Young Labour conferences into young members, Labour Students, and affiliates. Don’t think these issues will be resolved simply by passing the rule change, and if the current Young Labour structures need to change, they may not be the best mechanism for agreeing a new structure. So probably best referred back to an overall review of Young Labour at every level. The NEC has not yet discussed this, but I would be inclined to oppose.*

9. Proposed by Enfield North and Leyton & Wanstead CLP

 Replace local campaign forums (LCFs) with a variant of the former local government committee.

 ***Note:*** *Some questionable details e.g. removing the right of Labour group leaders to attend meetings, but main issue is that current structure was agreed following wide consultation in 2011, and this amendment has involved no consultation with councillors, members or affiliates. Recommend oppose.*

10. Proposed by Leicester South CLP

 Calls on Labour councillors to attend meetings of their CLPs and branches, and adds ways for city mayors and deputy mayors to report to and be accountable to local parties.

 ***Note:*** *currently the new mayors don’t really fit in anywhere, and this would help to make them accountable. Recommend support.*

11. Proposed by Brighton Pavilion CLP

 Allow motions to be submitted to conference on any policy, campaigning, organisation or financial matter, not restricted to “contemporary” issues.

 ***Note:*** *NEC likely to oppose. Recommend support, current system is silly.*

Ann Black, 30 August 2017