



# Recommendations from Momentum's Members Council

The Members Council met up in London at the Irish Centre on December 2nd 2017 to generate recommendations for Momentum's Submissions to the Labour Party Democracy Review. They voted to focus on the following areas of party reform:

1. *'Developing democratic policy-making procedures, including strengthening the role of Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) and of Party Conference, the role of contemporary motions and the development of local and regional plans'*
2. *Strengthening the involvement and participation of our hundreds of thousands of new members in constituency parties and other aspects of the Party's work;*
3. *The role, accountability, and transparency of regional structures;*

The recommendations were generated over a full day of debate and discussion, and further feedback in an online forum. These recommendations will be used as a basis for further discussion between individual Momentum members, within Momentum groups and Momentum's National Coordinating Group. The final recommendations are as follows:

## **Priority 1: Strengthening the involvement and participation of our hundreds of thousands of new members in constituency parties and other aspects of the Party's work;**

### *Broad Outline*

The focus of the breakout group was to find ways to make CLPs more welcoming, empowering, and accessible to party members. There was a particularly strong focus on improving transparency over key documents such as standing orders, increasing clarity over data rules (which may be altered in line with upcoming legislation), and improving accessibility for people with disabilities and people unable to attend meetings, including through online voting, which was widely popular.

### *Details*

- a) All CLPs should be both required to develop meaningful and effective membership engagement strategies. These strategies should include welcome packs, skills audits,

phoning and visiting new members in person, the purposeful organising of social events to welcome and enthuse new members, as well as political education. These strategies should have the full logistic support of regional officers, as well as paid organisers in CLPs with high memberships;

- b) All branch and CLP standing orders should be made available to relevant members on membersnet;
- c) Data protection laws governing the use of data by branches and CLPs should be made available to members on membersnet, along with short, clear explainers which clearly outline the implications of this for the use of data at the CLP level, as well as the measures to be implemented in the case of infringements of the law;
- d) CLPs should be able, and encouraged, to upload minutes onto membersnet which can be accessed by members within the relevant branch or constituency;
- e) Online voting to be made available to CLP delegates or members (in CLPs which use All Member Meetings) to allow higher levels of participation by people unable to attend;
- f) A requirement for every CLP to have a disability officer role as an executive position, either as a standalone position, or alternatively incorporated into the remit of another executive position (this could also form the basis of submission under the '*Improving diversity at all levels within the party*' theme)

*To be discussed:*

- a) There was some discussion of establishing roles for randomly selected members in CLPs. However there was not full agreement over this because some members questioned whether randomly selected members would turn up and participate meaningfully;
- b) There was also discussion over whether there should be term limits for CLP or branch officers (e.g. 5 years);
- c) There was broad agreement on the importance of providing creche facilities, but also recognition of the legal and safeguarding obstacles to doing so. One possible solution to this was to specifically focus on teachers who are already CRB checked and ask see if they could look after the creches (this could be a better fit under the 'Greater participation of women' theme);

**Priority 2: Developing democratic policy-making procedures, including strengthening the role of Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) and of Party Conference, the role of contemporary motions and the development of local and regional plans**

*Broad objectives*

Radical reform of the existing National Policy Forum, so that there continues to be a rolling body of policymaking, but that it is more responsive to party members, has more support to develop meaningful policy, and is able to feed back into CLPs to ensure party members are able to

engage with it effectively, as well as changes made to democratise and strengthen Conference as the party's sovereign decision-making body.

### *Details*

- a) The policymaking body would have a composition of 50% members, elected through Omov, and 50% representatives of affiliated organisations. MPs and councillors would have non voting roles (advisory only);
- b) It would focus on doing what Conference cannot do, including developing more detailed policy
- c) Policy forums and events need to be more highly advertised and made more transparent through a clearly advertised programme of public consultative events in which members are invited to have their say;
- d) There should be more transparency about the process of developing the reports, and how staff decide what proposals go into them and which ones don't;
- e) The policymaking body would have clear mechanisms to communicate with members;
- f) There should be surveys to members allowing them to sign up to particular issues;
- g) The publishing of the commission reports should be published sufficiently in advance of Conference to allow CLPs to debate them, and if they choose, to mandate delegates accordingly;
- h) To allow proper democratic choice, Conference should be able to vote on alternative options that are supported by a minority of NPF delegates.

### *Conference*

- a) Delegates to Conference would be allowed to attend and vote remotely rather than attending in person, thus increasing CLP representation while limiting the logistical pressure on Conference staff;
- b) Getting rid of the restrictive 'contemporary' criteria.

### *To be discussed*

- a) Whether or not to retain the name 'National Policy Forum' or to replace it with another name (please make suggestions). This is important because making a democratic policymaking body work effectively requires people to believe in it, so a lot of the promotional work is could be really important.
- b) Mandating should be formalised by CLPs so members know how their mandated delegates vote. There wasn't total clarity on how this could be achieved. One option suggested was sending in their mandating decisions on all topics which are expected to be discussed at Conference to membersnet in advance. These could be publically available, as should the final votes of the CLP delegates (as is currently the case with the NCC voting).

- c) There was a discussion of the priorities ballot but it wasn't clear if any definitive recommendation was arrived at.
- d) There was also a discussion of the role of policy experts, but there needs to be further discussion of how these are integrated into the policymaking process.

### **Priority 3: The role, accountability, and transparency of regional structures**

#### *Broad Outline*

There was widespread agreement on the need for regional bodies to be supportive and facilitative. Currently they are experienced by many members simply as being prohibitive and constraining. In addition, there was consensus on the importance of greater transparency, and clearer lines of accountability, so that members have a better understanding over which positions are accountable to whom, as well as for greater clarification of the relationship between the regional offices and elected regional boards.

#### *Details*

- a) Better understanding and publicising of the respective role and powers and elected representatives and paid staffers;
- b) More regular regional board visits to CLPs to report back and response to questions
- c) Transparency of regional staff appointments;
- d) Statement produced by regional office emphasising the positive role that they can play in supporting CLPs and local party members;
- e) Nations to be included in the Democracy Review;

#### *To be discussed*

- a) The role of an ombudsperson to whom party members can go to if they have complaints about the behaviour of the region;
- b) Strengthening the involvement and participation of our hundreds of thousands of new members in constituency parties and other aspects of the Party's work.

### **Moving Forward**

The Members' Council will meet for the next time on March 10th in London, when they will discuss remaining issues, or continue discussions over the same issues, relating to the Democracy Review covered under Track 3 (leadership elections, NEC composition, regional structures, local council, policymaking structures).