*Suggested Rule Change*

**Three year rule**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2014 Chapter 3 Party Conference Clause III Procedural Rules for Party Conference 2. Conference rule 2 – Agenda section H (page 13) reads as follows:

‘When party conference has made a decision on a constitutional amendment, no resolution to amend that part of the constitution or rules of the party shall appear on the agenda for a period of three years from the time such decision is made, except such resolutions to amend the constitution and rules that are in the opinion of the NEC of immediate importance.’

**Amendment:**

Delete these words and replace them with:

‘When party conference has debated a proposed rule change, no proposal to amend the constitution or rules of the party that has the same main purpose (if the proposed rule change was rejected), or whose main purpose is to reverse it (if it was agreed), shall appear on the agenda of the three following annual party conferences, except such resolutions to amend the constitution and rules that are in the opinion of the NEC of immediate importance.’

**Supporting Argument**

*This proposal is intended to clarify this clause (known as ‘the three year rule’) to prevent the abuse of the rulebook to stop constituency parties’ proposed rule changes being considered. The original intention of this clause was to prevent repeated discussion of the same issue year after year, and these words were interpreted in that way for many years. In recent years, however, it has been interpreted increasingly widely and unpredictably: the word ‘part’ is not defined by the rules and has been interpreted to mean a whole clause or even more, covering in some cases several pages. Amendments on completely different issues to the subject of a proposed rule change which happened to fall in the same clause, sometimes no more than drafting changes, have been used to prevent debating and voting on constituency proposals. CLP rule changes which are ruled in order and scheduled for debate have also been ruled out later in the week because of NEC rule changes (often on different issues) to the same clause made earlier in the week. These results are arbitrary and contrary to the spirit of the three year rule. The amendment clarifies the rule and helps the CAC reach its decision by considering what a proposed amendment is really designed to achieve, rather than simply asking whether the proposal relates to the same ‘part’ (whatever that means).*

**Closing date for constitutional amendments: 20 June 2014**

*Suggested Rule Change*

**Right of Party members to select candidates**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2014 Chapter 5 Selections, rights and responsibilities of candidates for elected public office, Clause I General rules for selections for public office, section 2 (page 21) reads as follows:

‘Party units shall act in accordance with guidance that shall be issued by the NEC in the application of these rules. The NEC has the authority to modify these rules and any procedural rules and guidelines as required to meet particular circumstances or to further the stated objectives and principles of these rules. Further the NEC has the power to impose candidates where it deems this is required by the circumstances.’

**Amendment:**

Delete the words ‘Further the NEC has the power to impose candidates where it deems this is required by the circumstances.’ And replace with:

‘However, the NEC shall not override the general right of party members who reside in the electoral area concerned to participate in any selection except where the party finds itself for any reason without a duly selected candidate within two weeks of the close of nominations. In such cases, the NEC may appoint a selection panel of its members drawn by lot from those available (or, in the case of candidates other than for the UK or European parliament, available members of the NEC or appropriate Regional Board members or party officials), plus the same number of members appointed by the appropriate party body for the electoral area concerned. In other cases where the timetable requires an abbreviated process and the NEC considers it necessary to impose a shortlist, and in the event of a parliamentary by-election, the NEC may appoint a shortlisting panel with the same composition and in the same manner as the shortlisting panel described in this paragraph. This panel shall draw up a shortlist of not fewer than six candidates (unless fewer than six candidates have been nominated) if time permits from those nominated by party branches (or from specially convened meetings of members within ward boundaries where there are no members branches) and affiliated organisations, giving due cognisance to the weight of nominations received, and otherwise from those who have self-nominated.’

**Supporting Arguments**

*At recent general elections, there has been considerable concern about the number of late selections where candidates have been ‘parachuted’ into constituencies either by imposing candidates selected without any local involvement or by imposing shortlists which excluded popular local candidates. In many cases the time taken to organise the NEC selection or shortlisting process was no quicker than would have been possible at a local level by reducing the time allowed in the normal timetables for selection. In 2010, such decisions were taken without even the presence of local observers. This amendment therefore restricts the imposition of candidates to the most extreme circumstances, and in the case of imposition of either candidate or shortlist, that decisions are taken jointly with local representatives. Where it is necessary to impose a shortlist, it should still be done jointly, and from those nominated locally whenever possible.*

**Closing date for constitutional amendments: 20 June 2014**

*Suggested Rule Change*

**Full involvement by party branches and branches of affiliated organisations in the selection of Westminster candidates**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2014 Chapter 5 Selections, rights and responsibilities of candidates for elected public office, Clause IV Selection of Westminster parliamentary candidate (page 23)

**Amendment**

Insert new subclause 2 as follows:

‘The NEC’s procedural rules and guidelines for the selection of candidates for Westminster parliament elections shall include provision for party branches and branches of affiliated organisations to both interview prospective candidates and make nominations to the long list. The drawing up of the final shortlist will give due cognisance to the weight of nominations each candidate receives.’

and renumber existing subclauses (2) onwards to now be subclauses (3) onwards.

**Supporting argument**

*The selection of parliamentary candidates is one of the party’s most important tasks. Some MPs serve for 40 years and it is vital that every effort is made to secure the very best candidates. This should mean involving all party members and affiliated members through their branches and seeking to select PPCs that are representative of their communities. Unfortunately, in recent years, the opposite has been happening. Party branches nominate from CVs without interview, affiliated branches are not properly involved at all, and, according to the latest NEC survey, as few as 9% of current Labour MPs have a manual background, whereas 27% are from the Westminster village. Ed Miliband has made a commitment to giving members a greater role and influence. Nowhere is this more important than in the selection of Labour parliamentary candidates.*

**Closing date for constitutional amendments: 20 June 2014**

*Suggested Rule Change*

**Election of the Conference Arrangements Committee (constituency section) by OMOV**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2014, Chapter 4 Elections of national officers of the party and national committees, Clause III Procedural rules for elections for national committees, subclause B Election of Conference Arrangements Committee, (i) b. reads as follows:

‘The other two members, at least one of whom shall be a woman, nominated by CLPs shall be elected by means of a ballot among delegates from CLPs at party conference on a card vote basis as provided in these rules Chapter 3.III.3.A above.’

**Amendment**

**Delete:** ‘among delegates from CLPs at party conference on a card vote basis as provided in these rules Chapter 3.III.3.A above.’

**Replace with: ‘**conducted among all eligible individual members of the party by means of a national one-member-one-vote postal ballot conducted to guidelines laid down by the NEC.’

**Supporting argument**

*In recent years there has been a consistent trend towards giving all party members a direct vote for their representatives on our national committees. These moves have given the grassroots membership some rights and influence within their own party, which is particularly important given the countertrend towards more power accruing to the centre and the party machine.*

*In 1997, party members were given the right to elect the constituency section of the NEC by one member-one-vote (OMOV) and recently they were further given the right to elect the constituency section of the National Policy Forum (NPF) by OMOV.*

*The Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) is the Standing Orders Committee of the party’s annual conference and it has two constituency seats (at least one of which must be held by a woman). These two seats are elected every second year. It is an important committee, for example it decides which conference motions from CLPs are valid and which are not valid. It would therefore be an important step forward for grassroots democracy if these two constituency seats on the CAC were also to be elected by means of OMOV. This reform need not cost extra money because the CAC election could run alongside the OMOV elections for the NEC and NPF.*

*A considerable number of CLPs no longer send delegates to conference and therefore they and their members are totally disenfranchised from the CAC election. This reform would effectively enfranchise every member in every CLP.*

**Closing date for constitutional amendments: 20 June 2014**

Suggested Rule Change

**To allow motions to Young Labour conference**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2014 Chapter 11 (B) Young Labour National Committee (page 44), Clause VIII. Conference.

**Amendment**

Add at end a new subclause 2

2. Each Young Labour Group, affiliate and CLP shall have the right to submit one policy motion to the agenda of Young Labour conference.

**Supporting argument**

*Currently the rules for Young Labour conference are vague and have resulted in it not having a proper procedure for deciding policy. This has meant that Young Labour's policy process has not allowed young members to have a proper voice, with Youth Conference only being host to policy discussions and workshops rather than actually deciding policy as it should. This rule-change will lay out a clearer and more democratic procedure for deciding Young Labour's policy allowing young members to have a voice.*

**Closing date for constitutional amendments: 20 June 2014**

*Suggested Rule Change*

**Give all young members and affiliates the right to vote for Young Labour Chair**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2014, Chapter 11(B) Young Labour National Committee, Clause III Chair (page 43), reads as follows:

Young Labour delegates at Youth Conference shall elect a Chair who must be a woman at least every other term.

**Amendment**

**Delete**: ‘Young Labour delegates at Youth Conference’

**Replace with:** ‘An electoral college made up of one half ballot of affiliates and one half ballot of all Young Labour members’.

**Supporting argument**

*Currently the Chair of Young Labour is elected by delegates at Youth Conference which excludes grassroots young members from having a say. Furthermore, currently affiliated trade unions and socialist societies have no say at all in who the chair of Young Labour is. This rule-change would increase the say of grassroots members in who the chair of young labour is and open up the system away from just the Youth Conference, which often only a privileged few can attend. It would also give a proper say to affiliated trade unions and socialist societies in the election of Young Labour Chair.*

**Closing date for constitutional amendments: 20 June 2014**

*Suggested Rule Change*

**Policy Reports: end the choice between all or nothing**

**Allow conference to vote in parts**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2014 Chapter 3 Party conference, Clause III Procedural Rules for Party Conference, Conference rule 2 - Agenda. G (page 13) reads as follows:

‘Party Conference shall consider policy reports and draft reports as part of the rolling programme, the NPF report, the NEC annual report, NEC statements and development strategy, constitutional amendments and contemporary motions or emergency resolutions submitted and accepted. It shall not consider any business unless recommended by the NEC or the CAC. At any special session of party conference, the NEC shall determine the business to be conducted.’

**Amendment**

First sentence: after ‘strategy’, end the sentence and insert:

‘Conference has the right to refer back part of any policy document without rejecting the policy document as a whole. Conference shall also consider”

**Supporting argument**

*Conference has always had the right to refer back any section of the NEC Report. But the platform has always refused to extend this right to NEC policy statements (except in 1974 when Tony Benn chaired the Conference). When Partnership in Power was introduced in 1997 delegates were led to believe that National Policy Forum reports would be voted on in parts if Conference so wished. But in practice this has not happened. Conference has to vote for the whole document on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. This means that, inevitably, documents are always passed, although delegates may be unhappy with one or more particular section. This proposed rule would allow Conference to have a separate vote on any part of a policy document. It is a simple democratic procedure that is long overdue. The trade unions are very supportive of this proposal.*

**Closing date for constitutional amendments: 20 June 2014**

*Suggested Rule Change*

**Accountability of Labour MPs: We need a mandatory reselection process, not a ‘trigger mechanism’**

The Labour Party Rule Book 2014 (page 23) Chapter 5: Selections, rights and responsibilities of candidates for elected public office; Clause IV Selection of Westminster parliamentary candidates; subclause 5 reads as follows:

‘5. If a CLP is represented in Parliament by a member of the PLP:

A. If the sitting MP wishes to stand for re-election, a trigger ballot will be carried out through Party units and affiliates according to NEC guidelines. If the MP wins the trigger ballot he/she will, subject to NEC endorsement, be selected as the CLP’s prospective parliamentary candidate.

B. If the MP fails to win the trigger ballot he/she shall be eligible for nomination for selection as the prospective parliamentary candidate, and he/she shall be included in the shortlist of candidates from whom the selection shall be made.’

**Amendment**

Replace paragraphs (A) and (B) by the following:

‘A. If the sitting MP wishes to stand for re-election the standard procedures for the selection of a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate shall be set in motion not later than 42 months after the last time the said Member of Parliament was elected to Parliament at a general election. If the nominations are overwhelmingly in favour of the sitting MP then the NEC has the authority to approve, after consultation with the CLP, a shortlist of one, namely the sitting MP. This shortlist is then put forward to party members in accordance with the aforementioned standard procedures.

B. The said Member of Parliament shall have the right to be included (irrespective of whether he/she has been nominated) on the shortlist of candidates from whom the selection of the Prospective Parliamentary Candidate shall be made.’

Consequential amendments to be made elsewhere in the Rule Book where the ‘trigger ballot’ is mentioned.

**Supporting arguments**

*A mandatory reselection process for sitting Labour MPs was introduced by annual conference some 35 years ago. Prior to this Labour MPs in safe seats effectively had a comfy job for life It was felt that this unsatisfactory situation meant that our MPs were unaccountable to the Party and thus less likely to fight hard to implement policies that seriously challenged the status quo. A powerful alliance of the trade unions and CLPs ensured that mandatory reselection was adopted in the teeth of bitter opposition from many Labour MPs and their supporters in the Party establishment. We were told that MPs would be reduced to being mere puppets of their CLPs and that huge numbers of hard working MPs would be deselected. In fact hardly any MPs were replaced (and as many left-wing ones as right-wing ones). All it meant was that MPs took a little more notice of the policies carried by Annual Conference.*

*But even this small step for democracy (and no different to the mandatory reselection process that has always operated for Labour councillors) was too much for the old guard. They wanted to return to their comfort zone and there was constant pressure behind the scenes to water down mandatory reselection. The old guard eventually inveigled the unions to vote for the ‘trigger mechanism’ on the grounds that this maintained ‘mandatory reselection’ and thus kept MPs on their toes, but saved party officials and members lots of meetings and bureaucracy. In fact, of course, the trigger mechanism has effectively removed mandatory reselection and returned us to the old situation where MPs in safe seats have a comfy job for life.*

*If our Party is to challenge the neo-liberal status quo and properly deliver for Labour voters, our MPs, like our local councillors, must be accountable to our Party and its policies. The ‘trigger mechanism’ is inadequate for this purpose. We need to be bold and make a change to enhance our democracy and give party and trade union members more influence and more hope.*

**Closing date for constitutional amendments: 20 June 2014**