



Johanna Baxter

National Executive Committee

A track record of Putting Members First

Report of Exceptional meeting of the National Executive Committee held on 13th May 2015

This meeting of the NEC was exceptional not only because it fell outside our usual schedule but because of the significant issues we were discussing and the electoral context to them. There may only have been one agenda item but we all knew this meeting would have a significant impact on the future of our party, underlined by the fact we had to walk through the press-pack to get into it.

Pete Wilsman and Hilary Benn were welcomed to the NEC – they take the places of Kate Osamor, recently elected to Parliament, and Sadiq Khan, who has stepped down from the shadow cabinet.

Report from Harriet Harman

Thanks were paid to Party staff, candidates, local Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs), members and affiliates for all the work they had put into the election. Tributes were paid to Ed Miliband for his leadership and the dignity he had shown in defeat. Whilst Harriet knew the bitter disappointment everyone would be feeling she stressed there are four things the Party needs to do right now;

- Be an effective opposition. Other parties might try to get headlines by claiming the title but Labour is the official opposition and it's a role we take seriously. We know the Tories will try to rush through their most controversial policies in their first 100 days. They need to be held to account now and the whole PLP needs to contribute to that, including the Leadership and Deputy Leadership candidates and our newest MPs.
- Provide stability for members at this difficult time and remain united in purpose as a party.
- Learn lessons from the defeat. Our Executive Director for Field Operations will conduct the forensic analysis of the results and present these to our scheduled meeting on the 19th May. There will be a separate piece of work done to look at the reasons for the results and the lessons that can be learnt.
- Put in place the mechanisms to elect a new Leader and Deputy Leader and decide the timescales within which that should be done.

It was noted that membership had grown since the election and that it was vital new members are welcomed to the party, have a positive introduction, and are able to play their part in our recovery.

An extensive discussion took place on the results, the reasons for them and the early lessons to be learnt. This would continue at the scheduled meeting of the NEC the following week where a full analysis of the results would be presented.

Several colleagues paid tribute to the work Ed Miliband, Harriet Harman, the Shadow Cabinet, Iain McNicol, the whole party staff, our candidates, members and activists had done in the lead up to the election. We asked that the Party reach out to those candidates who had lost, especially those who had been selected early, and had put everything into their campaign. It was noted that many staff, on General Election contracts, would be leaving the party in the near future and our thanks were placed on record to all of them.

In addition to the Parliamentary results we noted that Labour had gained 5 councils but had lost 8 meaning that we are no longer the largest Party in the Local Government Association (LGA). Concerns were expressed about the future of some local authorities if recent years' funding settlements were repeated in coming years by the new government. The LGA Labour Group will

have a key role to play in highlighting the effects of cuts on the ability of local authorities to deliver their statutory obligations.

I implored the committee to listen to the voices of people in Scotland and provide solidarity to our Scottish Party. The result in Scotland was nothing short of cataclysmic but the warning signs have been there since 2007. As the only CLP representative on the NEC who is Scottish I have warned repeatedly of the difficulties facing the Scottish Labour Party - I have argued for a closer working relationship between the UK Party and the Scottish Party, I argued for additional funds for the Scottish Party to ensure they had the resources needed, not just in the general election campaign but also in the independence referendum, and I have tried to get the NEC to meet and campaign in Scotland so they could experience first-hand the challenging political environment facing us. Too often these requests have fallen on deaf ears. I argued at this meeting that if the NEC did not wake up to what is happening in Scotland the future of our entire United Kingdom will be at risk and that if lessons are not learnt from the rise of nationalism in Scotland we will not be in a position to counter it in other areas of the UK. I pointed out that UKIP came second in 100 constituencies across the UK and that where this is in Labour held areas those MPs are at real risk in future elections if we do not change right now. I have written further about what happened in Scotland and what we need to do going forward [here](#) and I welcome your views.

Report from the General Secretary

The General Secretary reported that the party had more staff on the ground during the short campaign than we have ever had and that organisational strength prevented the results being worse. It was noted that more people had joined the party since the election than in the whole of 2015 and there is a large database of people who took action for the party during the campaign. We discussed the possibility of interrogating the information on Contact Creator to offer a reduced joining rate for those who showed support for the party during the campaign.

Leadership Election

Thank you for the hundreds of replies you sent to my earlier e-mail asking for views on the length of the leadership election – I read all of them prior to the meeting and it really helped me reflect your concerns during the discussion. Several of you wanted Harriet Harman to stay in place for at least a year while we discussed what happened in the election, others wanted a new leader before the end of June – in the end views were pretty evenly split on this so I hope what we have achieved is a reasonable compromise that allows us both the time to test our candidates and get a new team in place before the crucial elections in Scotland, Wales, London and local government next year.

It was noted that the Party rules governing the election of a new leader and deputy were agreed at the special conference in March 2014 and Party rules cannot be changed without a motion to annual conference.

The full timetable, including information on all the hustings, is below. I asked that hustings are held in every nation and region of the UK.

Other Business

The suspension of a member of the NEC was raised. It was noted that this was an administrative suspension whilst an investigation was undertaken. That investigation will be carried out, and will report back, quickly.

This is my personal account of this meeting & should not be taken as the official record, but please do pass on to other Labour members who may be interested.

Leadership and deputy leadership election timetable;

Monday 8 June	Parliamentary Labour Party Hustings Leader
Tuesday 9 June	Parliamentary Labour Party Hustings Deputy Leader
Tuesday 9 June 12 noon	Nominations and supporting nominations open for Leader and Deputy Leader
Monday 15 June 12 Noon	PLP Nominations (Leader) Close. <i>Validly nominated candidates for Leadership to be published.</i>
Wednesday 17 June 12 Noon	PLP Nominations (Deputy Leader) Close. <i>Validly nominated candidates for Deputy Leadership to be published.</i>
Wednesday 17 June	Hustings period opens
Saturday, 20 June	Hustings, Stevenage
Monday, 22 June	Leader Hustings, EPLP and Brussels Labour/Labour International Hustings
Saturday, 27 June	Hustings, Birmingham
Sunday, 28 June	Hustings, Nottingham
Monday, 29 June	Deputy Leader Hustings, EPLP and Brussels Labour/Labour International Hustings
Saturday, 4 July	Hustings, Swindon
Sunday, 5 July	Hustings, Swansea
Friday, 10 July	Hustings, Glasgow
Saturday, 11 July	Hustings, Leeds
Sunday, 12 July	Hustings, Newcastle
Saturday, 18 July	Hustings, Brighton
Sunday, 19 July	Hustings, London
Saturday, 25 July	Hustings, Warrington
Sunday, 26 July	Hustings, Socialist Societies
Friday 31 July 12 Noon	Supporting Nominations Close
Wednesday 12 August 12 Noon	Last date to join as a member, affiliated supporter or registered supporter to get a vote in the Leadership and deputy leadership contest
Friday 14 August	Ballots start being despatched
Thursday 10 September	Ballot closes
Saturday 12 September	Special conference to announce the results