

new Labour
for Britain

Partnership in Power

Second Year **Consultation**

Britain in the world

creating sustainable communities

crime, justice, citizenship and equalities

education and skills

health

prosperity and work



Thank you for taking the time to get involved in Labour's policy making process - Partnership in Power.

Through Partnership in Power we aim to constantly discuss and respond to the evolving challenges we face as a party of government. Partnership in Power recognises that we stay relevant as a political party through our connections to, and involvement in, our local communities. So we hope this document will be used by Members of Parliament, local constituencies, candidates, councillors, government ministers and stakeholders to spark debates, discussions and ultimately ideas in local policy forums and meetings across the country.

This is one of six documents produced by Labour's policy commissions and the NPF. The six second year documents are:

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



These documents reflect the comments and submissions received on the first year consultation document "Securing Britain's Future" which was published in 2006. All six documents set out key challenges which have been identified by the commission and the National Policy Forum.

We want to know, have we identified the right issues and raised the right challenges? What are the broad issues we need to consider and address to meet the challenges in our next manifesto?

We welcome comments on these documents until February 2008. The documents will then be redrafted and considered at a meeting of the National Policy Forum in 2008. These final year documents will help shape our manifesto for a fourth term Labour government.

Information on how to make a submission can be found at the back of this document.

Thanks again for your interest - I hope you take the time to submit your views and help shape Labour's next manifesto.

Best wishes

Pat McFadden MP
Chair of the NPF

Introduction

The Sustainable Communities Policy Commission is concerned with a wide range of cross cutting issues which directly affect quality of everyday life within our communities - housing, local government, culture, transport, energy and the environment. All of these areas of policy have a clear impact, independently of each other, on how effectively our communities function. But they are also linked, and cannot be considered separately if we are to fully understand the way in which they impact on our quality of life.

Labour is the party of stronger cities, towns and communities. Our aim is to build strong, inclusive communities with affordable homes, good transport links, and thriving commercial centres. The last decade has seen a renaissance in Britain's great cities. Urban centres such as Glasgow, Cardiff, Belfast, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, Liverpool and Leeds now look to the future with confidence.

Over the past year the Sustainable Communities policy commission has been examining the key policy topics in this area. Tackling climate change has obviously been a major focus. It has become increasingly clear that no longer can areas of policy linked to the development of communities and infrastructure be considered outside of the context of our wider responsibility to protect our environment.

With the publication of Sir Nicholas Stern's report on the Economics of Climate Change, there is widespread recognition that radical action is necessary to avert the threat of catastrophic climate change. The submissions received by the commission over the past year have reflected growing public concern. There have been many suggestions of innovative ways to bring down domestic and commercial emissions and waste, and many points of view on the energy debate, including a clear consensus on the need to continue developing renewable sources into a key part of Britain's energy mix.

Transport policy, another major area of interest for the group, is of course inextricably linked with the discussion on how to protect the environment. Submissions have shown that there is widespread support for further improvements and capacity increases on the rail network and the 'Putting Passengers First' proposals to give those local authorities that need them more powers over local bus services. There has also been a lot of interest in the development of innovative ways to enable and promote low-carbon travel, including walking and cycling.

The commission also looks at local government and housing policy, again both areas with environmental outcomes. The latter, and social housing in particular, has been a major area of discussion for the commission. Many submissions on local government have demonstrated support for the devolutionary agenda, while also putting forward ways of involving and empowering communities in local governance.

The Commission has also taken an interest in the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and in particular the regeneration plans and opportunities involved, both in terms of the area surrounding the main Olympic Park in East London, and the wider outcomes. Clearly, as submissions received by the commission suggest, we must ensure that the Games are beneficial for all of Britain.

Tackling Climate Change

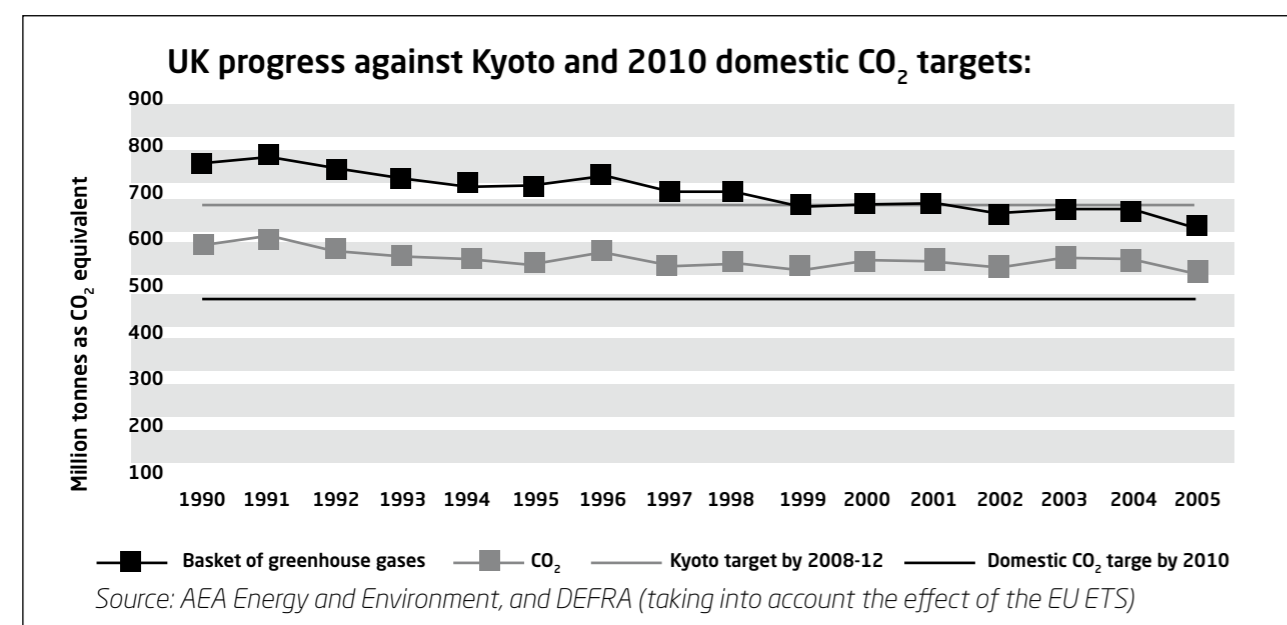


Labour in government has shown consistent leadership in the field of climate change, at home and abroad, by setting bold targets and pursuing ambitious policies. Labour is committed to securing a strong multilateral agreement beyond 2012, and within the EU, is pushing hard for ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets, and to move to a low-carbon economy. At home, we have already shown progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and are set to do so by nearly double our Kyoto target.

However, the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has confirmed that the window of opportunity to avoid dangerous climate change is closing more quickly than previously thought. There is now much stronger evidence that the emission of greenhouse gases, produced as a result of fossil fuels burnt for transport, heating and industry, as well as a result of deforestation, among other things, are responsible for the warming observed since pre-industrial times.

The potential human and economic costs of climate change are great. As the Stern Report has shown us, if we do not take radical action to further lower our greenhouse gas emissions, the overall costs and risks of climate change will be equivalent to losing at least 5 per cent of global GDP each year, now and forever. If a wider range of risks and impacts is taken into account, the estimates of damage could rise to over 20 per cent of GDP. In contrast, Stern estimates, the costs of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst impacts of climate change can be limited to around one per cent of global GDP each year.

Stern and the IPCC have given us the evidence on which to act. The next stage is to reach out further to the public to build a new national shared consensus for action on climate change - not just to reduce our emissions but to address the impacts of climate change which we will now inevitably experience such as flood risk and coastal erosion, and internationally to play our part in protecting the planet.



Labour is committed to both domestic and international action to meet these challenges and to help the UK grasp the opportunities on offer. Our vision is to see the UK secure as a productive and successful low carbon economy in a world on the path to sustainable development.

Taking action at home

Labour's groundbreaking draft Climate Change Bill marks the beginning of a fundamentally new approach for the UK to tackling climate change, as well as demonstrating leadership to the international community. When the Bill passes into law, a radical new system of five-year carbon budgets will be put into place, leading up to a target of a 60 per cent reduction in emissions by 2050. Britain will become the world's first country to adopt a long-term legal framework for managing the transition to a low carbon economy. This framework will provide greater clarity and confidence for businesses and individuals to plan and invest in delivering the changes needed to move to a low carbon economy. The key measures contained in the draft bill include:

- Challenging targets to cut net UK carbon dioxide emissions by 26-32 per cent by 2020 and at least 60 per cent by 2050 from the 1990 level made legally binding
- A new independent body, the Committee on Climate Change, to advise Government on the optimal path of emissions reduction
- Legally binding five-year carbon budgets set three periods (15 years) ahead in secondary legislation, aligned with the Kyoto Protocol
- Annual reporting and accountability to Parliament on progress in cutting emissions and every five years on national adaptation to climate change

The recently published Planning and Energy White Papers and the Waste and forthcoming Water Strategies are all part of an integrated framework for tackling climate change and wider environmental concerns, and increasing energy security. The White Papers call for several important public consultations to be launched by the end of 2007 - on planning reforms (especially major energy infrastructure projects), the Renewables Obligation and the detailed design of the Carbon Reduction Commitment.

Many CLPs and external organisations have submitted suggestions for measures that may help bring down our carbon emissions. For example, Kingswood CLP suggested a set of requirements which it feels should be imposed on all new public buildings, including double glazing and solar panels. Many others have submitted similar ideas regarding buildings and planning, as well as transport and energy efficiency measures. Currently, the energy used to heat, light and run our homes accounts for 27 per cent of all of the UK's carbon emissions - around 40 million tonnes. To help tackle this, Labour is proposing that all new homes be zero carbon by 2016.

There is a major role for local authorities in tackling Britain's emissions. Many have signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, pledging to work towards delivering our national

emissions targets, while nearly 50 local authorities now have a requirement for renewable energy in new developments, with many more working up proposals. One question for the near future will be how the local government performance framework takes account of responsibilities to combat climate change. This is expected to be announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review in autumn 2007.

"Climate change can only be effectively combated by community action – and local authorities should be the key local organisation, bringing together suppliers, customers, QUANGOs and Government... There needs to be a shift in local authority thinking so that environment and sustainability interests are considered equally alongside economic and social interests."

Local Government Association Labour Group

Methane emissions from waste in landfill account for 3 per cent of UK greenhouse gas emissions, while reducing waste and increasing reuse and recycling reduces emissions. Our aim must be to break the link between economic growth and waste growth. Products should be made with fewer resources. Most products should be re-used or their materials recycled. Energy should be recovered from other wastes where possible and landfill should be the very last resort.

Strides have been made: recycling and composting of household waste in England has nearly quadrupled since 1997 to 27 per cent. But we still lag behind many of our European neighbours. We have to do more; for example we should have tougher regulations to reduce the amount of packaging and increase the amount recycled. Single-use carrier bags should be phased out. We should explore whether financial incentives have a role to play in encouraging households to produce less waste and recycle more. We also need to strengthen incentives for waste reduction, reuse and recycling in the commercial and industrial sectors, which produce the majority of waste.

10 years ago... just seven per cent of household waste was recycled.

Today... 27 per cent of household waste recycled.

10 years from now... How do we further promote and incentivise both recycling and the reduction of waste produced by households and business?

International cooperation

Britain has already demonstrated that, with Labour in government, we can play a role as an international leader on tackling climate change. From Kyoto to the EU emissions trading scheme, we have been at the forefront of efforts to secure agreement and promote action and awareness among other countries.

We must continue working to make climate change and energy security a matter for national leaders and their governments, both in the developed and the developing worlds. We should continue working with other developed economies to show that the transition to a low carbon economy is possible without compromising economic growth or social welfare; and we must work with developing countries to build their resilience to climate change through suitable adaptation strategies and projects, supporting their development into successful and low carbon economies. Alongside our partners, we must support and invest in low carbon technologies providing financial support for joint research into development and demonstration of new technologies such as carbon capture and storage.

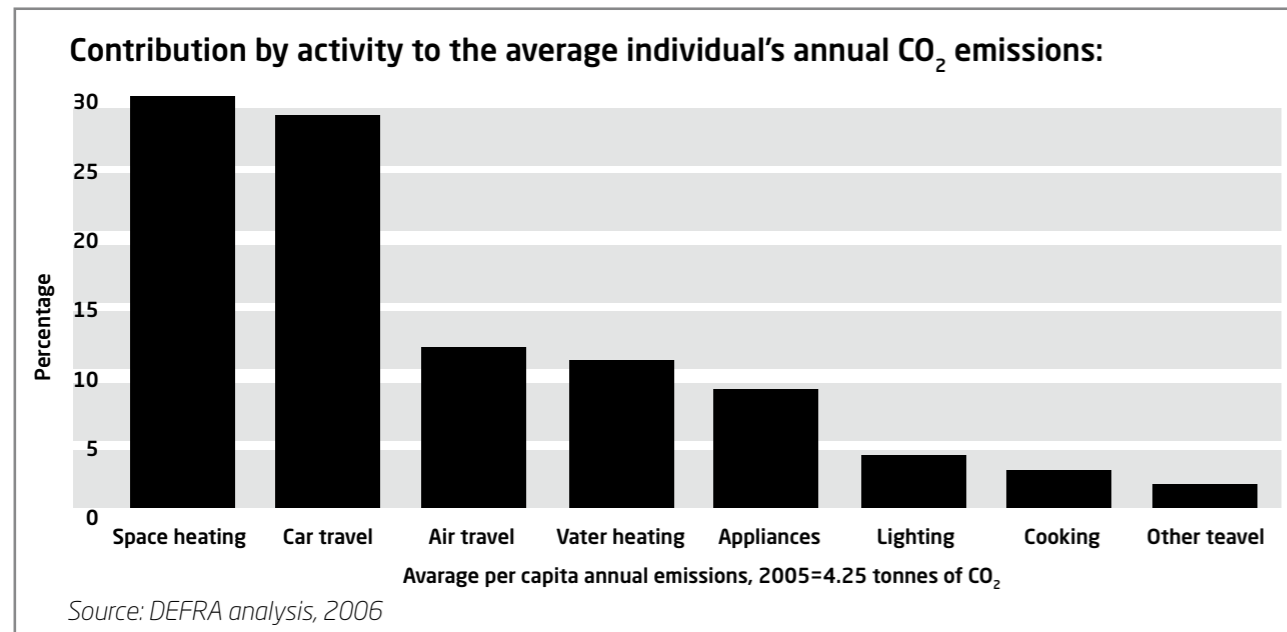
The international community must collectively agree and deliver a post-Kyoto plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase energy efficiency and develop the new technologies that will ensure the transition to a new low carbon world. Britain must continue to engage with leaders of the 'G8 plus 5' group, via a series of events leading up to the next formal UN climate change meeting in Bali in December 2007, and beyond.

Working with communities and individuals

There are many simple and affordable changes that can significantly reduce the emissions created by individuals and families. These are 'quick wins' which are neither difficult nor demanding, and which can also save money. Lower energy consumption generally means both lower CO₂ emissions and less expense on electricity, gas and fuel. Other simple adjustments to shopping habits, recycling and water use can have a measurable impact on household consumption of natural resources.

Many people are aware of the environmental problems, but not the solutions. The Government's role includes raising awareness, removing barriers and enabling new technologies so that individuals are encouraged and enabled to make more sustainable choices.

In the first year consultation document, *Securing Britain's Future*, we asked 'How can we encourage people to take individual action to reduce the threat of climate change?' Responses to this question demonstrate that many CLPs and external organisations see this, and raising awareness of measures that can be taken, as central challenges in the environmental agenda. Many expressed the need to convince people that small, domestic measures can make a great difference when undertaken collectively, while others proposed schemes and incentives to make energy-efficient and low carbon options more financially viable.



"We need to motivate individuals to act locally but think globally and show developing countries how they can reduce pollution whilst still maintaining the growth they are entitled to. Individuals feel very small compared to the problem and don't believe that them changing a lightbulb or three will really save the planet. The critical political task is to build the belief that we can all make a difference if we act together."

City of York CLP

Others have highlighted the role that education can play in raising awareness of climate among younger people. Certainly there is an important role for schools to play in educating young people on climate change, and central and local government should work with schools to promote awareness, encourage sustainable behaviour and where possible to act as an example.

"Awareness of climate change should be part of the curriculum from Primary School onwards, to ingrain environmental awareness in children, to promote recycling, sustainability and improvement of local areas."

Bolton North East CLP policy forum

The Government has launched the 'Act on CO₂' campaign, which aims to introduce the concept of a personal carbon footprint, and to encourage behaviour change to help reduce personal carbon emissions. As well as TV, press and other advertising, this campaign includes an online carbon calculator, and follow up advice on how to reduce the individual's footprint.

We must also ensure that product information is available to consumers to help them make informed choices, through labelling, meters and advisory services; while making low carbon options more accessible. High quality emissions offsetting schemes that invest in clean energy and energy efficiency in developing countries also have a role to play. Members felt there should be a 'kite mark' for schemes that meet high standards so that consumers can be sure their money delivers genuine emissions reductions.

Challenges for the future

- Educating and supporting families and individuals in reducing their environmental footprint and waste, while removing barriers to sustainable behaviour.
- Working with business to reduce the environmental impact of products and services, for example by reducing packaging and increasing energy efficiency of electrical goods.
- Securing a post 2012 agreement with our international neighbours, and including major developing economies such as China and India, as well as the US.
- Creating a long term, international price for carbon, through development of emissions trading.
- Supporting the development of green technologies.

A sustainable and integrated transport network



Meeting Britain's future transport needs is a complex challenge. Communities depend on reliable transport links in order to survive, while businesses need to be able to move goods, and people, in order to thrive. Today we travel further for business or leisure, and expect to be provided with a range of reliable options for making our journeys.

The key challenges in this area are linked to the capacity of our network – our road and rail systems are, at times, affected by demand outstripping capacity, the results being congestion, and public dissatisfaction. Crucially we have to consider the impact of our transport policies on climate change, and look at how we can enable and promote greener travel choices.

Tackling road congestion

Despite over £140 billion of planned central government transport investment over the 10 years up to 2015, on current trends congestion could get 25 per cent worse. This gridlock would present significant costs to the economy. The Eddington Report estimated that by 2025 congestion could cost the country £22 billion more annually. The public are also frustrated by the delays to, and unpredictability of their journeys that congestion can cause.

- The number of vehicles on our roads has increased from 26 million in 1996 to around 33 million today.
- The number of miles travelled by these vehicles has increased from 279.8 billion in 1997 to 310.8 billion in 2005.

These trends are expected to continue.

Our 2005 General Election manifesto gave the commitment that: "we will seek political consensus in tackling congestion, including examining the potential of moving away from the current system of motoring taxation towards a national system of road-pricing." The Government called for a national debate on road pricing, and this has clearly been taking place – as mass media coverage has demonstrated. It is also clear that the public are currently sceptical about road pricing.

Doing nothing however is not an option, for the economic reasons outlined above as well as for the direct impact congestion can have on individual road users.

The Government is working with interested local authorities to bring forward local schemes to address local problems. It has been made clear that any scheme will include a package of measures, including significant investment in public transport. It is only on the evidence of these established schemes that any decision on national road pricing would be made.

"There is plenty of evidence to suggest that road congestion is a serious impediment to the well being of the economy, the environment and the quality of people's lives. The Government must act boldly and be pro-active in a number of areas, including, at the earliest opportunity, introduce a national system of road pricing, invest much more in all forms of public transport and make it more affordable, and invest in the infrastructure necessary to make it possible to transport the maximum amount of freight by rail."

Transport Salaried Staff Association

In addition to working to reduce congestion, we must also continue working to ensure our roads are safe, both for pedestrians and motorists. Labour has a strong record in this area – indeed Britain has one of the world's best road safety records, but of course as long as there are deaths and serious injuries on the roads, there is more to be done.

Public transport and low carbon travel

Vital to the success of any attempt to tackle congestion effectively is the development of a sustainable and integrated public transport network which meets the need of commerce and individuals. Rail and bus travel provide the backbone of our public transport network, but this is not to underestimate the role that other forms of transport such as light rail, cycling and walking, and waterways can play.

Several CLPs and external organisations have emphasised the importance of promoting walking and cycling as healthier and more preferable options to the car for short journeys, and making sure that walking and cycling routes are accessible and safe. Much good work is already being done to this end, by central and local government, and by the voluntary sector - we should ensure that examples of good practice are widely promoted. Labour has encouraged parents to do the school run on foot, by pledging support towards schemes that help encourage walking to school, with £15million (over three years) to support 'walking bus' schemes. Walking to school helps to cut school run traffic, reducing pollution, as well as helping children get more exercise. Meanwhile we should also back cycle schemes and the expansion of cycle routes, which must be genuine and viable routes.

"Measures to invest in active travel such as walking and cycling create a 'win all round' situation of reduced congestion, improved accessibility, less carbon emissions and improved health."

Sustrans

Safety on all forms of public transport is also an important issue. We must work to ensure that no one feels vulnerable or insecure on, or waiting for buses, trains and trams, including of course those who drive our buses, or work on our trains and at stations.

Furthermore, we have a duty to ensure that all modes of public transport are made as accessible as possible to all users.

"To ensure people are part of their community, they must be able to travel in their community. The research by DPTAC 'Attitudes of disabled people to public transport' found that disabled people travel a third less often than non-disabled people... Disabled people also find it difficult to travel to basic services, such as their GP or post office, and are twice as likely to turn down a job because of travel difficulties"

SCOPE

We must also work to keep public transport accessible and affordable to all members of our communities. Simpler fare structures and integrated ticketing systems also have an important role to play.

Promoting high quality bus services:

Two thirds of all public transport journeys are made by bus. They are a lifeline for many communities, particularly those in more rural areas. Integrated, reliable bus services will be essential to areas where any future local road pricing schemes are initiated. The Government is extending the existing free local travel concession for disabled and older people nationwide. So, from April 2008, up to 11 million people will benefit from free local travel in any local authority area across the country, not just the one in which they live.

The Department for Transport's review of bus services across the country found that, while the post-war decline in bus use is now levelling off, and we are delivering the first year-on-year growth in bus use for decades, the quality of bus service provision still varies greatly from place to place. In London and York, for example, we have seen an increase in the number of people using local bus services in recent years. A key ingredient of these successes has been effective partnership working, with a shared willingness on the part of local authorities and bus operators to work together to invest in the long-term future of the bus sector.

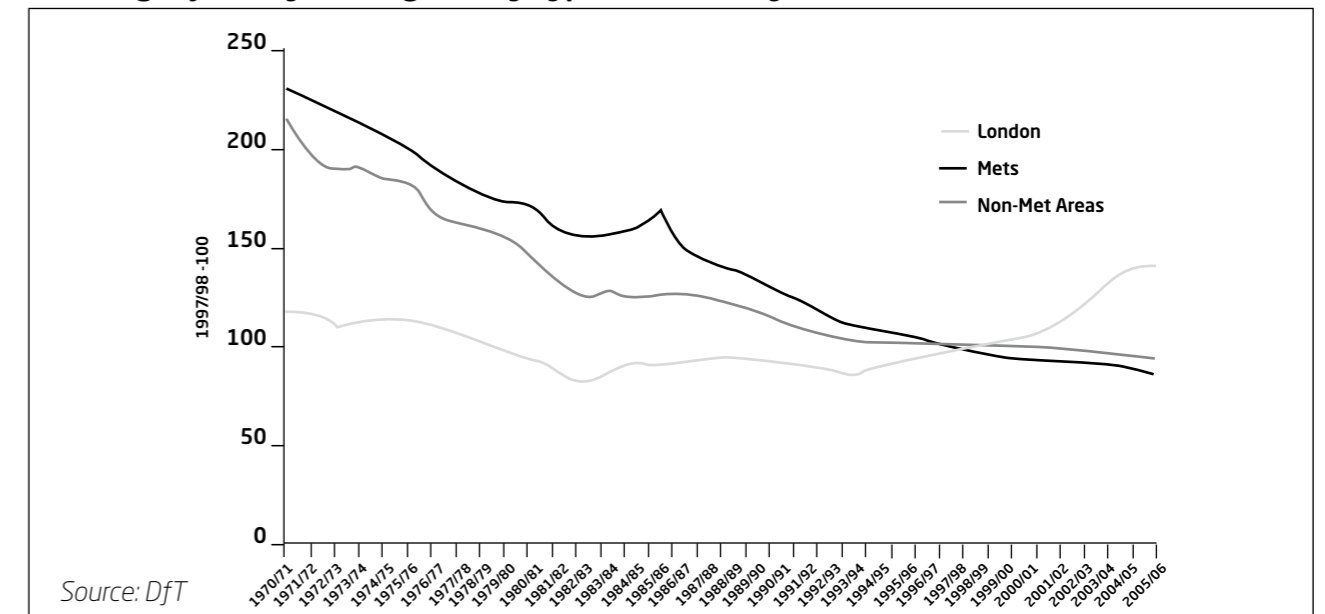
But in many areas, including many major cities, partnership is not working effectively enough. Without further action, we risk a significant decline as falling demand and rising costs force operators to raise fares and cut back services, so further reducing use, or creating a need for increasing levels of subsidy to maintain a dwindling service.

The Government has published new proposals to give local authorities that need them more powers over bus services in their areas. It proposes a range of measures that local authorities are able to access, so they can deliver what suits them best. These measures aim to improve the partnership arrangements between local authorities and bus operators, including minimum frequencies, timings, and where appropriate maximum fares.

Clearly, improvements to local bus services must be central to the policy framework of any local road pricing schemes. One of the reasons that the London congestion charge has proved successful is the quality and accessibility of the London bus network.

Alongside measures to improve local bus services, we should also look at creating opportunities for the community transport sector, which, in many areas where commercial services are not viable, can act as a lifeline for communities.

Passenger journeys in England by type of authority:



10 years ago... £1 billion annual investment in bus services.

Today... investment in buses more than doubled to around £2.5 billion.

10 years from now... how do we ensure that bus services in all parts of the country - whether urban or rural - are better integrated and more reliable?

Rail - building capacity and maintaining stability:

Overall, in recent years, reliability and safety have improved on Britain's railways. In contrast to the years of underinvestment and a botched privatisation under the Tories, Labour in government has brought stability to, and delivered sustained investment in the railways. The number of passenger journeys has increased by 35 per cent since 1996-97, and the railways carry over 1 billion journeys a year, the highest since the early 1960s. The amount of freight carried on the network has increased 46 per cent since 1997.

But many challenges remain for our rail network. The significant growth in passenger numbers is contributing to pressures on parts of the network. The Government has already announced an additional 1,000 carriages during 2009 to 2014, which will deliver significant capacity increases on certain routes. Network Rail is now providing a national strategic approach to maintenance and capacity increases that is delivering results - whereas Railtrack was laying as little as 250 miles of track a year, Network Rail replaced 870 miles in 2003-04, and investment in rail infrastructure in 2003-04 was over 240 per cent higher than in 1997.

Investment and improvement must be sustained if railways are to meet increasing demand. The same is true of reliability and safety. The Department for Transport is due to publish a framework document later this year assessing the key future challenges for the railways, which should prove a further catalyst for debate on future policy direction.

"Breaking our dependence on our cars is going to be difficult, particularly as the integration of the public transport system is far from complete. More work needs to be done on bus/train interchanges, transferable ticketing and the synchronisation of timetables"

Harpenden Branch Labour Party

Some submissions from CLPs and affiliates have also called for the promotion of rail freight as an alternative to road haulage, such as those from TSSA and the transport forum at Labour South East Regional Conference. Clearly, across the transport spectrum, we need to work with business to identify ways to make the transportation of goods as sustainable and low-carbon as possible.

10 years ago... years of underinvestment and a botched privatisation resulted in instability and unreliability.

Today... Labour has brought stability and sustained investment to our railways, and we now have the highest level of use since the 1960s.

10 years from now... how can we meet the growing demand for greater rail capacity?

Aviation

Aviation is a major industry in Britain. Over 180 million passengers are carried each year, as well as over 2.1 million tonnes of freight. Demand for air travel is growing – while the public appetite for long-haul travel grows, budget airlines have made air travel more accessible than ever before. However, the benefits of aviation growth must be balanced with the environmental impacts of flying. Labour's aim is to develop a long-term framework for aviation that will maximise the beneficial aspects of aviation, while attempting to minimise the negative ones.

In 2003, the Government published the Future of Air Transport White Paper. Three years later it published a progress report to reaffirm its commitment to the strategy set out in the White Paper. The strategy rejected a predict and provide approach and sets out the importance of responding to the environmental challenges of aviation. It also promotes the better use of existing airport capacity primarily, but also supports the construction of further runways at Stansted and Heathrow. At Heathrow, where the shortage of runway and terminal capacity is most acute, the Government is continuing its assessments of whether further expansion can meet strict noise and air quality limits. The Government will also consult on an Emissions Cost Assessment to inform its decisions on major increases in airport capacity.

This approach recognises, as any future developments in aviation must, the need to mitigate against the environmental impacts of growth. The Government has also called for the Chicago Convention to be updated, to enable appropriate global regulation of aviation emissions. The Government has welcomed the recent proposed inclusion of aviation in the EU ETS as an important first step. As well as the environmental impact of the carbon emissions that result from aviation, we must also be mindful of the impact on people living near airports - noise, air quality problems, congestion on local roads, and the urbanisation which is often associated with airport development.

Challenges for the future

- Improving bus services and increasing use.
- Increasing rail capacity to meet demand, while continuing to improve reliability and safety.
- Reducing congestion on Britain's roads.
- Promoting and enabling sustainable transport choices for every journey.
- Ensuring that growth in aviation takes place in an environmentally sustainable way.

A secure and sustainable energy supply



In energy policy we face two huge and complex challenges: climate change and maintaining security of supply, in an increasingly unstable world. If we don't act to reduce carbon emissions from energy-use, they will continue to contribute to the threat of climate change.

Meanwhile our energy supplies are becoming less secure as we enter a period of greater dependence on foreign imports from politically challenging parts of the world alongside the need to replace a third of our power stations in the next 20 years.

We must aim to see, in the future, a Britain much more efficient in its use of energy, and with greenhouse gas emissions at a fraction of those today, drawing on a mix of low carbon energy sources.

Promoting energy efficiency

While securing our supply and lowering emissions from energy production, we must improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, products and transport. Britain is already on this path: the energy intensity of the economy fell 25 per cent between 1990 and 2005.

Technological improvements can increase the efficiency of power plants and energy-using equipment such as appliances, vehicles, lighting and buildings. One of our key challenges is to ensure that such technological improvements come forward – working with industry and consumers to raise awareness and explain the benefits.

Meanwhile, we must promote domestic energy efficiency. Measures such as the introduction of free household energy meters can help individuals and families better understand and take steps to reduce their own energy use. Using energy more efficiently, making the most of the energy opportunities here in the UK, and moving to new low carbon technologies will serve our energy security and climate change objectives. It must be a collective effort. Individuals, communities, business and government need to join together to reduce the carbon dependency of our economy. Simple, affordable changes can reduce energy use significantly. Lower energy consumption generally means both lower CO2 emissions and less expense on electricity, gas and fuel.

Many CLPs have highlighted the role that measures such as clearer product labelling and higher energy efficiency standards in white goods can play in the supporting individuals and families in lowering their energy usage. As many also point out, measures like this and others provide long term financial savings, which should be emphasised as a key selling point in encouraging people to use energy more sustainably.

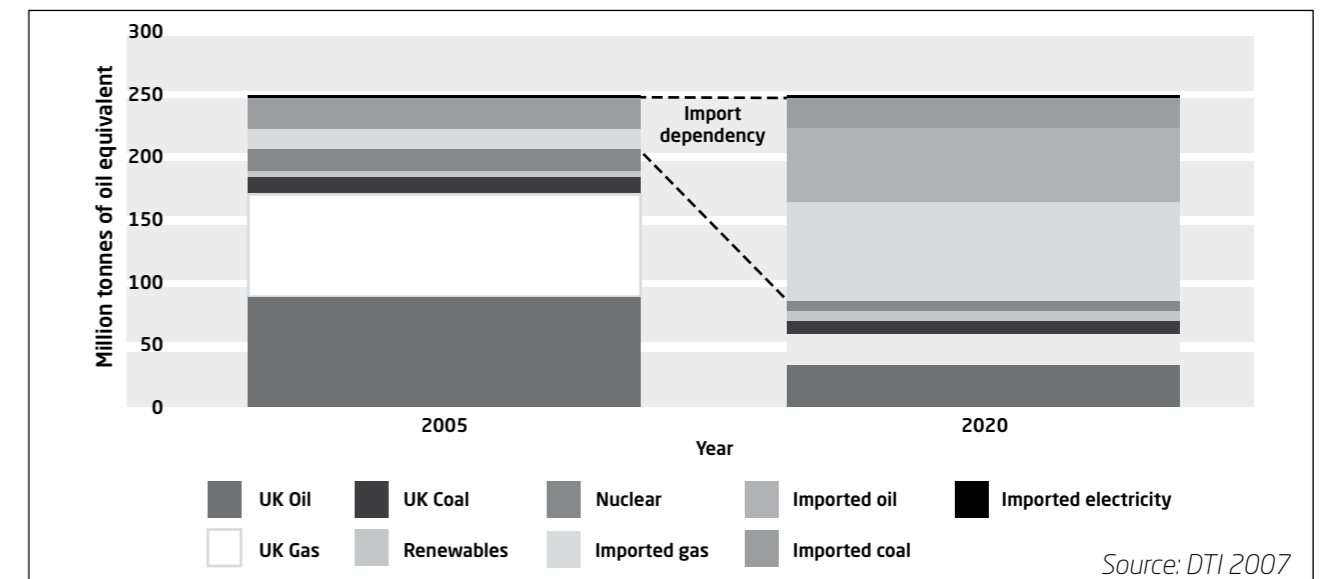
Diversity and security of supply

The origin of the energy on which our economy, and families rely is changing. For the last 30 years, British energy security has been largely assured by the reserves of oil and gas in the North Sea. But finding and exploiting new reserves is becoming more challenging and costly. While it

will continue to produce for several decades, output from the North Sea has peaked and is set for long-term decline.

By 2020, Britain will be importing the majority of the gas we use and almost half the oil. Like many other major economies, we are set to become increasingly dependent on a smaller number of suppliers, many of them in less stable parts of the world.

The UK could be importing around two-thirds of its energy by 2020:



While making the most of our reserves of oil, gas and coal, we must also ensure that we have a diverse range of sources for our imports, and make further progress, working with Europe and opening up markets more widely.

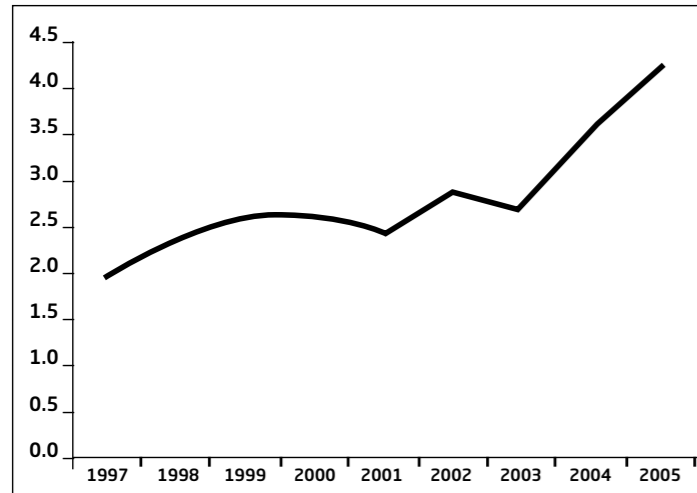
We also need to replace about a third of our electricity generation over the next 10-20 years. Faster decisions on planning are necessary to ensure that new power sources of all kinds come on line in time to meet need. Alongside the significant reforms outlined in the Planning White Paper, the Government has promised a three month deadline for taking consent decisions on large scale energy projects.

A low carbon energy mix

Given the challenges we face, we need to make sure we have a mix of energy sources to provide greater security and for this mix to be as low carbon as possible to combat climate change.

The climate change levy and renewable obligation have achieved much success in promoting energy efficiency in the commercial sector and the development of renewable energy sources by producers. To encourage investment in a new generation of green energy, we must work to ensure a long term market price for carbon, through strengthening the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

Electricity from renewable sources as percentage of total electricity generation:



Source: DEFRA

In developing a diverse energy mix, Labour in government is working to triple renewable electricity by 2015. We are already one of only eight countries to reach 2 GW of our electricity from wind. The proportion of electricity from renewable sources more than doubled, from two per cent in 1997 to 4.2 per cent in 2005.

While increasing the proportion of our energy provided by existing green sources, such as wind, there is also clearly a need to invest in new technologies, as reflected by many submissions received by the Sustainable Communities Policy Commission.

"The group's strongest recommendation was that the Government needed to initiate much more research and development of new technologies for energy production, renewables and 'clean coal'."

Gateshead CLP policy forum

Labour is committed to creating a new Energy Technology Institute to accelerate the development of secure, low-carbon energy technologies. We are changing the way the Renewables Obligation works in order to give more support to newer green energy sources – particularly offshore wind, wave and tidal power. We are also leading in the development of carbon capture and storage which could enable us to continue to use fuels like coal and gas while capturing the carbon they emit. Large storage caverns exist in the North Sea and elsewhere that could provide long-term storage for trapped CO₂. We want to see the UK leading these developments.

Nuclear power, another low carbon energy source, currently delivers about 18 per cent of our electricity. However, most nuclear power stations are set to close over the next ten to twenty years at a time when we know demand for electricity is expected to increase as the economy grows. Excluding nuclear from the mix could mean that more higher carbon generation plants would be built, with higher overall costs to supply energy and less security of supply.

The Government has reached the preliminary view that it would be in the public interest to allow energy companies to invest in nuclear power and is carrying out a consultation on this view. It has made clear that if any new nuclear plant is built, it will be for the private sector to fund and operate them and cover the cost of decommissioning and their full share of long-term waste management costs.

The Sustainable Communities policy commission has received a range of submissions on nuclear power, both in favour of and against the building of new plants to replace our outgoing fleet. Others have proposed a position somewhere in between.

"The option of nuclear power should be investigated, but this should not come at the expense of developing alternative energy sources. A balanced energy policy is essential for this nation."

Newbury CLP

Labour also believes that combined heat and power (CHP) can play an important role in lowering emissions. This is reflected in the Energy White Paper. CHP can increase the overall efficiency of fuel use to more than 75 percent, compared with around 50 percent from conventional electricity generation. The strategy confirms the Government's belief that CHP has an important role to play in meeting the White Paper aims.

There is no single answer to the challenges we face and we believe that there needs to be as wide a choice of low carbon options as possible so that we don't become over reliant on any one form of electricity generation.

Tackling fuel poverty

Labour believes that every household in the UK should be able to heat and light their homes affordably. However, for some people, meeting this basic need accounts for a disproportionate amount of their income. And despite the progress we've made since 1997, for example through Warm Front, recent high energy prices have contributed to fuel poverty.

10 years ago... the Tories refused to acknowledge the existence of fuel poverty, having introduced VAT on fuel.

Today... the Warm Front scheme has already provided grants for insulation or central heating to over a million households.

10 years from now... how do we go on to eliminate fuel poverty in all households completely?

Supporting local communities



The Government intends to work with Ofgem to determine the current levels of energy companies' corporate social responsibility activity. We must seek to encourage companies to do more in this area.

We must also support vulnerable customers to use the energy market to get the best deal, working with Ofgem and Energywatch, while looking at whether there are ways to encourage best practice in protecting the most vulnerable consumers from the large differences in bills because of the payment method they use.

Challenges for the future

- Promoting competitive energy markets, maintaining a secure and mixed energy supply.
- Eradicating fuel poverty.
- Promoting and enable greater household energy efficiency.
- Achieving our targets for carbon reductions in energy production.

Local government is the closest level of government to the individual citizen. It has direct responsibility for the provision of many of the key services on which communities depend. Much of Labour's work in this area over the last ten years has been to bring local government closer to people, to enable and promote participation, and to give local authorities and councillors the tools to become champions for the communities that they serve.

However, many people still feel distanced from local government. One of the key challenges in this area is to provide the means for people to become involved and enfranchised in the discussion about local service delivery.

Labour wants strong local councils, truly representing their localities, with visible, accountable leadership. We want local leaders to be known, in tune with local concerns, and reflecting their own localities. We especially want to see more women and people from black and ethnic minority communities elected to serve as councillors.

Councils should have more powers to build strong communities, to provide excellent services, to tackle insecurity and anti-social behaviour, to provide support for the vulnerable, and to create places where people can afford to buy their homes, and live in safety and security.

Local authorities also have a crucial role in creating strong, united communities, in tackling extremism, and in preventing terrorism through the battle for 'hearts and minds'.

A new concordat is being agreed between central and local government which will enshrine the relationship between councils and central government. This concordat will assume that councils should have a full range of powers to serve their communities, unless specifically not allowed by law or regulation.

Challenges also remain in terms of local government finance and the funding of local services. Sir Michael Lyons said that there is no magic bullet or simple solution to local government funding, and this is clearly true. He also concluded in his report that council tax is not broken. Labour have provided ten successive years of above inflation grant increases to local authorities, and are ensuring that low income households receive council tax benefit. However, Lyons' work on longer term alternatives for local government finance will need to be examined.

A stronger voice for communities

Democracy does not stop at the town hall. Labour believes in devolution to the doorstep. Our democracy must be multi-faceted and pluralist. Far from being a challenge to the primacy of local government, the encouragement of greater citizen engagement and more active citizens brings benefits to local councils. The best way for councils to continuously improve their services and reflect local needs is through bottom-up pressure, not central diktat.

We support measures to involve people in local decision making, for example through new local community-level councils, or through, where appropriate, the transfer of assets to community groups, such as parks, leisure centres or community centres. Another method is 'participatory budgeting', where local citizens can direct the spending of their local council budgets through a process of debate, deliberation and decision-making. We want to encourage more use of deliberative democracy, for example citizens' juries, panels and more use of local referenda.

At the heart of our democracy must be political parties, which provide a platform for ideals and values, identify and nurture local leaders, and which 'make sense' of the democratic system for local voters.

We want to create the conditions for more people to step forward to become active citizens, for example by serving as school governors, magistrates, prison visitors, on the boards of regeneration partnerships, as tenants' and residents' representatives, on housing association boards, the boards of NHS Foundation Trusts, youth club volunteers, special constables, or in voluntary organisations.

"Councillors need to survey and consult their residents regularly, to identify local issues and act on them. Councillor's ward improvement funds should be enhanced, giving them more power to spend in their communities. There is more respect for politicians when they are seen to deliver locally"

Gillingham & Rainham CLP

Many other CLPs sent in suggestions similar to the above, around the principal of neighbourhood level consultation and participation – evidence that this is an agenda widely embraced by the Labour movement. There also appears to be a commonly held view that local councillors, given support and resources, can achieve much more on a neighbourhood level.

"Area committees are a good idea which should be given more teeth to become more than just 'whinging shops'. Councillors should be supported by officers to develop neighbourhood plans and have the resources devolved to them in order to implement them. Local people should be able to put things on the agenda via a community call for action."

Leeds Labour policy forum

Alongside measures already or soon to be implemented, we should continue to look at how we can devolve to local government and how in turn local government can devolve greater power to neighbourhood levels and empower citizens.

Promoting strong local leadership

Communities need strategic leadership to help bring together local partners to improve the services citizens receive and local quality of life. Issues such as community safety, health, and community cohesion require local authorities to align services provided by a number of agencies in their area. Labour aims to put in place a new framework for strategic leadership in local areas, bringing together local partners to focus on the needs of citizens and communities. We must also look to empower individual councillors to resolve issues of concern to the communities they represent.

Meanwhile, we must promote stronger local leadership across the country with greater freedom and capacity and clearer mandates to allow local leaders to act and take tough decisions to help deliver better public services.

The Government has already set out to lessen reliance on top-down controls through rebalancing and streamlining the performance framework, underpinned by a robust risk assessment process which will deliver a better targeted, proportionate inspection regime.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill contains a number of devolutionary measures designed to empower local authorities. The Secretary of State's role in confirming by-laws made by local authorities will end, reducing bureaucracy and shorten the time it takes to enact by-laws. The process for creating parishes will be devolved to councils; and communities in London will be given the same right to establish parishes as exists elsewhere. The Bill also devolves most decision-making on standards of conduct to local authorities, by providing for a new locally-based conduct regime for authority members and a revised strategic role for the Standards Board.

"What measures can we take to strengthen the leadership of our towns, cities and regions? Involving stakeholders in the council process, not just elected members. Take a similar model to the regional assemblies that include social and business partners in the decision making processes."

Labour North West Regional Policy Forum

Local Area Agreements (LAAs), and the duty on key public sector partners to co-operate with setting and meeting the targets in each agreement, should provide further incentives to local agencies to work with their communities in a joined up way to improve services and local quality of life. New arrangements for LAAs, set out by the Bill, should massively reduce reporting burdens on local authorities and their partners. Labour is massively reducing the number of targets and performance indicators which local authorities have to meet, to just 35 targets negotiated between central and local government, and approximately 200 indicators.

Challenges for the future

- Helping authorities to involve communities in the delivery of local services.
- Giving people a sense of ownership over their local communities and services; finding ways of involving and engaging people in local government.
- Supporting and developing the role of the local councillor.
- Ensuring an adequate and equitable system for local government finance.
- Supporting and maintaining quality and value for money in local government.

Affordable housing



Substantial progress has been made in housing over the last ten years, including:

- **Over a million social homes made decent**
- **a drop in homelessness and reduction of rough sleeping by two thirds**
- **more than a million more homeowners.**

But major challenges remain. The availability of high quality affordable housing that meets the aspirations of people to build a prosperous future for themselves and their families is an issue that goes right to the heart of Labour values. A booming property market and growing demand has put pressure on the availability of affordable housing for millions of young people, key workers and families in communities right across the Britain.

Because of the complexity of this subject, the Sustainable Communities policy commission agreed to form a sub-group to look in detail at affordable housing. Since Spring 2006, this group has taken and considered evidence from a wide range of sources. This section of the Sustainable Communities chapter of the document draws largely upon the work to date of the sub-group.

Failure of supply

There has been a rise in the number of households seeking affordable housing to buy or rent, who cannot afford to buy on the open market, and supply has not kept up. There are variations in need in different localities in the UK, with some areas having excess supply of affordable housing and others a shortage of supply. Local authority provision and financial circumstances are variable, with some retaining stock, others with ALMOs and particular problems for those covering rural areas. There is a need to establish a fair deal for prospective and existing owners and tenants across the UK despite these variations.

It would be a mistake to think that social housing and the private market operate without any influence upon one another. The lack of availability of affordable private sector homes has led to increased demand for new affordable and social housing.

The need for more affordable homes is highlighted by subsidiary problems – overcrowding in social and affordable housing, and the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation. Overcrowding is a cause of key social and economic problems such as underperformance in education and poor health. Good progress has been made on tackling homelessness – since 1997 rough sleeping has fallen by over 70 per cent. However, around 94,000 households still live in temporary accommodation. While the quality of this accommodation has improved enormously in recent years, clearly there is work still to be done.

Increasing supply and meeting future needs

Central to meeting future housing need is the building of new affordable housing to rent or buy. Because we need to build new homes not just to own but to rent, we must bring together the private sector, housing associations and local authorities to renew the promise of social housing for our communities. Both public and private suppliers must act to bring about solutions.

Local authorities should play a key role in strategies for delivering affordable housing. We should support the building of council homes as well as housing association homes where it is good value for money. The affordable housing sub-group believes that some of the obstacles in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which make it difficult for councils to build new homes on their own land, could be removed. It would be better if councils could operate within a longer term financial framework in the way that Housing Associations are able to do. This would provide more of a level playing field. But any such moves should be underpinned by a principle that any funding for such projects must be contingent on a record of sound performance and financial management. The progress of the pilot authorities examining the implications of leaving the national HRA subsidy system should be monitored closely in the coming months and years.

Housing policy should have a flexibility that encompasses the variability within regions and between urban and rural areas. The shortage of affordable housing is at its most severe in many of our rural communities. Many of the issues surrounding the market in rural areas, are not necessarily similar to those in larger towns and cities. The Affordable Rural Housing Commission have recommended that planning regulations should be made more flexible to allow greater development in rural areas, and that 11,000 affordable homes are needed a year in market towns and villages.

“Rural communities deserve special consideration as many face a unique combination of housing pressures – from those acquiring second homes, retiring from high-priced urban areas like London, or commuting to well-paid jobs in neighbouring areas – while local incomes remain relatively low. While it is also apparent that the opportunity exists in most rural areas for additional homes to be built, and for a significant proportion of the cost to be covered by planning gain mechanisms”

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Decent homes and decent communities

The group believes that it is important to recognise the progress made by Labour in government over the last ten years. Much of the success in turning around our social housing stock has come as a result of the Decent Homes scheme, which must be viewed as a major step forward in improving housing conditions.

In 1997, we inherited a social housing stock suffering from a backlog of £19 billion worth of repairs and maintenance. Since then, the Government has invested more than £16 billion directly through local authorities, and enabled housing authorities across the country to raise an additional £6.5 billion through private borrowing. Over one million homes have so far been brought up to decent standard, with many more due to be improved over the next few years, benefiting over 8 million tenants by the time the improvements are complete.

But while Decent Homes has been hugely successful, the focus has been on bricks and mortar. The Hills report identified that we must create mixed communities and provide pathways into employment and promote social mobility for social housing tenants. Developments in housing policy are fundamental to the achievement of sustainable communities. The affordable housing sub group believes that, going beyond the Decent Homes standard, housing policy must look towards the creation of decent, mixed, and sustainable neighbourhoods and communities.

We must always ensure that new housing development is matched by infrastructure. Good transport links, and other amenities, are vital. Well-designed parks and green spaces make a critical contribution to our neighbourhoods, towns and cities and to people's quality of life and play an important role in creating a sense of place. Mixed forms of tenure and types of accommodation – ranging for example from family sized houses to smaller, single or two-bedroom housing for younger people and first time buyers – support the development of sustainable and mixed communities.

Tenant involvement and empowerment, and the accountability of housing providers is crucial to the long term success of any effort to build sustainable communities. Action should be taken to increase accountability to tenants and to the wider community. Tenants should have the right to be balloted about changes of landlord.

We must also look to continue rebuilding housing markets in areas, such as parts of the North and Midlands, where demand for housing has been relatively weak, linked to declining population, dereliction, and poor social conditions. The investment made in Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Areas has led to increased confidence in areas where neglect had set in. Pathfinders have also been successful in ensuring communities are not left behind as the regional economy develops. A key success of the programme has been to help local authorities better understand the economic drivers of local housing markets and to invest in long-lasting change.

10 years ago... a £19 billion repairs backlog in social housing - two million homes below decency standard.

Today... we have reduced the number of non-decent social homes by over a million, and increased direct funding for social housing. By 2010, councils and housing associations will have spent £42 billion on making homes decent.

10 years from now... How do we increase supply of social housing to meet future needs while continuing to raise standards of existing stock where necessary?

Green development

We must consider the impact of new housing on the environment, both in terms of climate change and the physical environment. In terms of the latter, the proportion of homes built on greenfield decreased from 44 per cent in 1997 to 26 per cent in 2005. Local authorities have stronger powers than before to turn down planning applications where brownfield targets are not being met, while also having more flexibility to judge sites on their appropriateness for development, rather than simply whether or not they are brownfield or greenfield.

Meanwhile, Labour has also highlighted the need to move towards zero-carbon development. The Government consultation document 'Building a Greener Future: Towards Zero Carbon Development', published December 2006, along with the new Code for Sustainable Homes, outlined a series of proposed measures for achieving carbon neutrality in all new homes in England by 2016.

Gordon Brown's eco-towns proposal is a great step forward, and could help to define a new approach to building communities which are environmentally sustainable and which support the people who live in them in joining the effort to combat climate change.

Meeting intermediate demand - low cost home ownership

Labour in government looks to support people in their aspirations, and to enable them gain a greater stake in their community, which the ownership of property can help to bring.

Shared ownership schemes have benefited 80,000 households so far. The Government is exploring the potential of further shared equity products.

In addition to the schemes already in operation, one model of shared equity ownership which has provoked great interest is the mutual home ownership model. The affordable housing sub-group has been impressed by the case for this model. A key advantage is that the housing is not put out to the open market. It depends upon land being made available as a community asset at no cost to those who will live in the homes on that land. This is achieved through transfer into a Community Land Trust (CLT) – for example from surplus publicly owned land, or from a private land developer through a Section 106 agreement. The CLT may be particularly effective in some rural areas.

"Mutual Home Ownership is a new form of tenure that seeks to increase the supply of affordable intermediate market housing without requiring a major increase in capital investment from Government. Unlike other forms of low cost home ownership, it is designed to remain permanently affordable and not move out into the open market." (Cooperative Development Society, September 2005)

Challenges for the future

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing to buy and rent, to meet future need.
- Improving conditions and management in the private as well as social rented sector.
- Creating and promoting further routes into home ownership.
- Ensuring enough new social homes are built, and enabling councils to play a role in developing new stock.
- Reconciling the need for more house building development with local concerns about new development.
- Working with the building industry to develop quality, sustainable and good value housing.

Rural affairs and animal welfare



Labour believes in supporting rural communities, by tackling unemployment in rural areas, expanding economic opportunity and safeguarding rural public services. We want to see sustainable rural communities with well-paid jobs and affordable housing; ensuring a sustainable future for our farming and food industries; and protect and enhance the natural environment of our countryside for future generations.

Providing for the needs of rural communities often sets challenges which are distinct, or in some cases similar but more pronounced, than those in urban and suburban areas. Like many cities, many rural areas suffer from a shortage of affordable housing. However, the problems that this creates can in some cases be more acute in rural areas. Similarly, rural transport remains a pressing issue. Labour has done much to ensure the maintenance of local bus services linking villages and towns, but we must continue working to ensure the transport needs of rural communities are met. Rural issues should be mainstreamed across policy making, so that no community is left behind.

10 years ago... rural bus services were devastated – only one in four parishes had a regular service.

Today... the rural bus subsidy grant, £55 million in 2007-08, now supports over 2,000 rural bus services carrying 30m passenger journeys annually.

10 years from now... how do we ensure that all rural communities are supported by high quality local transport and have access to all the services they need?

Farming, food and fisheries

Farming is fundamental to Britain's economic, social and environmental wellbeing. This industry contributed £5.6 billion to our economy in 2006. It uses around three quarters of this country's land area, and employs over half a million people. Its influence on society is wide – stretching from food and health to landscape and animal welfare, and to climate change, waste and energy. Supporting Britain's farmers is central to Labour's approach to rural affairs. To ensure a sustainable future for farming and related food industries, we must work together with the farming community and with consumers, to ensure that farming can contribute to a better, cleaner environment and healthy and prosperous communities

Labour is committed to CAP reform: the Common Agricultural Policy remains, in its present form, unsustainable in the long term. Over the past 15 years, the CAP has started to give farmers more freedom in the way they manage their businesses and to recognise their role in bringing environmental benefits for society. Labour seeks to promote the evolution of CAP into a framework which gives farmers freedom to farm and to support themselves, while being rewarded by the taxpayer for achieving specific environmental and landscape benefits.

"The cultural revolution taking place in our restaurants and kitchens is partly a reaction against the industrial and intensive system. It is being driven not by policy, but by changing needs and values. Nor is it just about food: research suggests it is part of a much deeper and wider desire to adopt healthier and greener lifestyles.... To change Britain's food production for the better, we now need to apply the values driving the food revolution, to farming, to the 'food chain' and to the countryside."

The Soil Association

On GM crops, Labour retains an open mind. Our priority is to protect human health and the environment, while remaining pro-consumer choice. Any future development, or use of GM must be guided by sound science.

Britain also has an important fishing industry, with one of the largest fishing fleets and fish processing industries in Europe. Freshwater fisheries are also a major leisure industry in our rural areas. Sustainability must lie at the heart of our fisheries policy. It is vital both to secure the future for our fishing industries and to contribute to national and global environmental objectives. Fish stocks are national and international resources that require careful husbandry. If we lose them from over-fishing, they may take many years to regenerate. We also have to protect all marine species from sea pollution which could wreck their ecology.

Protecting animal welfare

Britain has a long history of defending the rights and welfare of animals. In 1822, we became the first nation to have parliamentary legislation for animal welfare. More recently, with the enactment of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, Labour has put the most fundamental piece of animal welfare legislation for nearly a century into law. The act introduced a new duty of care on people to ensure the needs of any animal for which they are responsible; while creating a new offence of failing to provide for the needs of an animal in your care. The new laws place more emphasis on owners and keepers who now need to understand their responsibilities and take all reasonable steps to provide for the needs of their animals.

These strong new measures come in addition to several other key achievements in this area: the banning of fox hunting, fur farming, driftnet fishing and the testing of cosmetics, toiletries, alcohol and tobacco on animals; better welfare standards, at a European level, for battery hens and meat chickens, increased prison sentences for wildlife crime, and a halt in the decline in farmland birds, with increased rare and woodland bird populations

While Labour has a strong record in this area, it is important that we look to ensure that the measures contained in the act are rigorously enforced and to continue protecting the rights of animals, whether domestically or on-farm, while seeking also to win domestic and international support for further measures which protect the well being of animals in Britain and around the world. We must tackle cruelty head on, working to ensure that cruel and illegal practices such as fighting with dogs are stamped out.

The Arts, Culture, and Sport



"Prior to the 1997 election victory, the Labour Party... set out principles and specific goals for animal welfare under a Labour Government. To its great credit, the Government has achieved many of these goals. Fur farming is now banned, for instance, and the commitment to a free vote on hunting with hounds led to this cruel practice being outlawed. Other commitments have yet to be implemented and, ten years on... some new objectives are now needed."

Labour Animal Welfare Society

Challenges for the future

- Supporting Britain's farming industry in developing sustainably while responding to changing public demands and the threat of climate change.
- Protecting our countryside and wildlife for future generations.
- Ensuring that healthy and sustainable food choices are affordable for everyone.

Culture and the arts

Britain's arts and creative industries have seen a renaissance since Labour came to power. London can today justifiably claim to be creative capital of the world. And British people are taking advantage of our cultural success.

Cinema admissions have increased by 43 per cent in 10 years, while UK films took 34 per cent of the UK box office in 2005, compared to 23 per cent in 2004.

Britain's museums and art galleries are also thriving, in no small part due to Labour's free admissions policy. In the first five years of free admission there were 29 million extra visits to the museums and galleries which previously charged. With 6.8 million additional visits to former charging museums in 2006 alone, this has been the most successful year ever for the free access policy. The benefits are felt across the country – visits to National Museums Liverpool are up by 139 per cent, to the Natural History Museum in Tring by 91 per cent and to the National Railway Museum in York by 64 per cent to take just three examples.

The key challenges for Labour in government are to ensure that our creative industries, our theatres, our museums and other arts and culture venues continue to go from strength to strength, and that these institutions, and participation in arts and cultural activities, are open to all people from all backgrounds. Children in particular benefit from exposure to the arts, and from attending museums and libraries, and we must aspire to the goal of all children having the chance to do so. The arts, and cultural facilities and events, can also have great benefits on community cohesion and wellbeing. Community, and grassroots arts, musical and cultural events should be supported.

We must also continue to advocate good quality and service for tourists, from the UK and overseas. Tourism benefits our national and local economies, provides employment for many, and helps to promote a positive image abroad. We must work with the tourism industry to improve what it has to offer our visitors.

10 years ago... visitor numbers at museums were falling, regional theatres closing and audiences at the National Theatre were low.

Today... 34 million additional visits to national museums since the introduction of free admission, more people attending the theatre than ever before, and a boom in regional theatre.

10 years from now... How do we ensure that a full range of art and cultural experiences are accessible to all?

Sport

Sport can change and improve lives. It has an unmatched ability to mobilise and excite people in their millions. Sport matters to most people, in some way, but too few of us play sport or are physically active on a regular basis.

We believe that school sport should play a central role in the school day, and that every child must have the opportunity to take part. Regardless of natural ability, sport can make children healthier, raise self-confidence and self-esteem. It helps to develop teamwork, discipline and a sense of fair play.

80 per cent of children now do at least two hours of school sport per week, compared to just 25 per cent in 2002. Labour's new £100 million school sport campaign will give every child the chance of five hours of sport every week. The campaign involves schools, parents, volunteers, coaches and the sports world to help provide children with the equivalent of an hour of sport, every day of the school week. The plans include greater emphasis on competition within and between schools, a network of competition managers and a new National School Sports Week.

In addition, we must continue to support the development of our elite sports men and women. We have delivered record financial support for elite athletes, with an extra £200 million to nurture potential medal winners at the Beijing and London Olympic Games, around 1,500 athletes supported on the UK Sport Pathway Programme, across 26 Olympic sports and 19 Paralympic sports and over 2,000 individual young athletes supported through the Talented Athlete Sponsorship Scheme.

London 2012

In 2012, London will welcome more than 23,000 competitors and officials from more than 200 countries. Among them will be the world's greatest sportsmen and women. The Olympic and Paralympic Games will deliver thousands of new jobs and homes, a huge range of opportunities for businesses of every size up and down the country, and will transform one of the most deprived

parts of London. The Games will also inspire a new generation to greater sporting activity and achievement and will help to foster a healthy and active nation.

The Government has set out an ambitious vision for the London 2012 Olympic Games: combining world class venues and facilities with a legacy of regeneration for one of Europe's poorest areas and inspiration for a generation of Britain's young people.

Responding to the first year consultation, one common theme among submissions has been the importance of ensuring that the Games are for all of Britain, not just London itself. Clearly this must be a guiding principle in the preparation and delivery of all aspects of the Games. As the Local Government Association Labour group point out, local government can play a key role in achieving this.

"Visible commitment and leadership from Labour councils will be essential if the benefits of the 2012 Games are to reach across all parts of the UK. All should be signing up to the national effort to define and market the local government offer... Labour in Government, and in local government, should encourage Labour councils to explore and exploit all opportunities presented by the Games, particularly those that can enhance economic growth, such as developing tourism."

Local Government Association Labour Group

The challenge for Labour is to ensure that we maximise the economic, social, health, environmental and sports participation benefits of the Games, for London and the rest of Britain, and to implement a viable legacy use for Olympics sports facilities. The Games should also be a celebration of diversity, as well as of British culture – we have the opportunity to show the best of our country to the world, and must make the most of it.

"The Olympics should be an example of environmentally sound technology, from transport systems to renewable energy, with the most advanced technology possible."

Mold and District Branch Labour Party

Challenges for the future

- Broaden access for all to a rich and varied artistic and cultural life.
- Ensure that young people have the opportunity to participate in the arts and culture, and to develop artistic talent.
- Making the most of the many sporting and regeneration opportunities that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games offer.
- Ensuring the benefits are felt not just by London but by all of Britain.

notes

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The consultation period for this document closes in February 2008.
Please email your submission to:

PiP3.communities@new.labour.org.uk

or send written submissions to:

Creating sustainable communities

The Labour Party
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0HA

For ideas on how to organise a local policy forum or who to contact in your region for advice and support please see labour.org.uk

Devolution in the UK requires different policies that reflect the particular needs of England, Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland. Many, but not all, of the policy areas addressed in this document apply to England only, but are a statement of values and goals throughout the UK.

Some areas are covered in this document which have been devolved to the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and the Northern Ireland Assembly. Where this is the case this policy document refers to Labour's work in England. The party's policy making processes in Scotland and Wales have responsibility for developing policy in those parts of the UK.