



Dear Dave,

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to respond to some of your members' concerns. It's always been a pleasure to work with you and the CWU over the years, not least when I led the Labour Party's response to the privatisation of the Royal Mail and the Postal Services Act as Shadow Postal Services Minister. We ran the campaigns together to save our Post Offices and the dreadful situation of the Horizon computer system that is still unresolved.

I was proud to stand alongside your members in that fight and in your fights, such as the four pillars campaign, since. I would very much welcome the support of the CWU in my campaign to become Deputy Leader of the Labour Party. Over the past decade we have seen the threat the Tories pose to workers in the postal and telecoms sectors – not just directly at work, but through their persistent attacks on working people which have left them poorer and struggling to make ends meet.

The result of the election in December was devastating and I never want to have to go through an election like that again. To win again, we need to build trust with the public in areas where we lost, and that has to start with regaining seats in Scotland. If I am still the only Scottish MP at the next election, to win a majority Labour will have to win over 120 seats from the Tories, including Jacob Rees Mogg's seat in North East Somerset. We need to show people in Scotland – and in every nation and region of the UK – that the Labour Party is listening. It is my view that putting a Scot in the leadership team of the Labour Party would be a clear way to do this.

Thank you again for this opportunity – you can find my responses to your questions below.

Best wishes

Ian Murray MP

1. Policy

- **Are you committed to the direction on Labour's 2017 and 2019 manifestos – are there any specific manifesto policies which you would want to change or amend?**

The Labour Party has always stood up for the people in this country that need us most, from the founding of the NHS under a Labour Government in 1948 to the creation of the minimum wage under a Labour government in 1998. We were right to commit to reversing the harsh austerity measures imposed by the Coalition and Tory governments that have harmed so many people, and I was proud to stand on a

manifesto that committed to investment in public services, infrastructure, health and education. It is investment that this country desperately needs, that it is being deprived of by this Conservative government.

But whilst we know we can deliver the change that this country needs when we are in government, the election result shows that public do not believe it to be the case. We must do better at communicating our vision to voters; we need to get out in every region and nation of the United Kingdom to listen to what voters want, and what they care about, and consider and reflect on the what they tell us when we ask them to vote Labour and they say that they cannot. In order to achieve government, we should not only commit to a radical transformation of society but we must also work at convincing voters that they can trust us to follow through on our promises.

I thought the Green policies were transformations and the analysis that the economy does not work for the majority of people in the country was the right analysis. We must continue with that analysis and provide the solutions of the future. Automation, artificial intelligence, the world of work, skills, public service provision, climate change, and how we deal with our demographic problems are all challenges we must face.

There was too much in the manifesto but the general direction for the country was the correct narrative.

- **Do you support the renationalisation of Royal Mail?**

As Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment when the Royal Mail was privatised I opposed the privatisation. I firmly believe that Royal Mail should have been kept in public ownership as this would have given the taxpayer a direct interest in maintaining the universal postal services we all rely on, it would have helped safeguard the vital link that Royal Mail has with the Post Office and ensured the taxpayer could share in the upside of a modernised Royal Mail. In the years since the privatisation it's clear that the Government have undervalued Royal Mail and short-changed taxpayers, giving huge profits to their friends in the City and a relation of David Cameron at one of the big hedge funds. Indeed, Royal Mail shares started trading 44% higher than the Government's valuation, costing the taxpayer millions.

I know that the NFSP warned that the privatisation of Royal Mail would be a 'reckless gamble' and I share their concern that it could have a serious impact on post office services. That is why I believe the priority for a future Labour Government should reverse the damaging privatisation as soon as practically possible and return the Royal Mail to public ownership where it flourished for over 500 years. This vital service has to be run for the benefit of the public and not for the benefit of the shareholders.

- **Do you support the introduction of a publicly owned national post bank?**

The previous Government renewed the POCA (Post Office Card Account) contract with Post Office Ltd in 2008, expanded the services that were available at post offices and had plans to create a Post Office or 'People's Bank', which would have offered reliable, affordable banking services to people across the UK.

The Government promised to make the Post Office the “front office of Government” but that was as dreadful a lie then as it is now. The Government have devastated front line services and the Post Bank would be a way of re-energising the Post Office network.

I believe a future Labour Government should be ambitious for our communication network instead of the managed decline which has characterised the last decade. As part of that new ambitious programme we should commit to making the Post Office a fully independent ‘People’s Bank’. We know this kind of initiative works well across Europe and would help to continue to keep the Post Office self-funding in the long term.

A new ‘People’s Bank’ would also help offset the withdrawal of major commercial banks from our high streets and would form part of Labour’s plans to reinvest in and invigorate our high streets.

- **What are your views on a Labour Party strategy to support our members in the telecoms and financial services industries, including the policy of universal broadband and renationalisation of relevant parts of BT?**

I welcomed the ambition of Labour’s plan on broadband. However having spoken to many in the industry I think the best approach would be to nationalise the ducts and telegraph poles currently owned and maintained by Openreach. That would transform the industry and give lots of government control. This would give all providers fair access to infrastructure, drive prices down and stop the monopoly of Openreach.

Also, if the government really wanted to provide free broadband they could use a voucher scheme and let consumers choose a provider. That would transform our digital infrastructure much quicker.

I would also consider using all the money allocated to HS2 to create a digital revolution.

- **Are you committed to repealing the existing Trade Union Act and how would you support Trade Union organisation and values being reasserted across the world of work?**

As the political arm of the Trade Union movement, the Labour Party has been, and always will be at the forefront of the fight for better rights and conditions for those at work in this country. The right to organise within your workplace, and to organise collectively, has been the catalyst for social progress for centuries, but the Tories’ draconian measures designed to suffocate and restrict trade unions has made standing up for workers’ rights more difficult.

In government, Labour should, without apology, stand up for workers in this country. As deputy leader, I would be at the forefront of the fight for workers’ rights in the United Kingdom, whilst standing in solidarity with workers across Europe and the world. That means scrapping the pernicious Trade Union Act. I was Shadow Minister for Employee Relations when this Bill was going through and we did everything we could to stop it and dilute it working in partnership.

- **Given the passing of the withdrawal agreement, how will you respond to the ongoing Brexit negotiations?**

I fully agreed with the Labour Party's position on Brexit in the 2019 manifesto. It took a long time to get there but a vote on any deal within 6 months with the option to remain was superb.

However, Scotland was a clear example of what happens if you try to face both ways on major constitutional issues and they failed to notice it.

We should have stuck with our Labour values of internationalism and solidarity – not tried to triangulate and please both sides. The voters in Leave seats thought we were Remain, in Remain seats voters thought we were Leave. That is why we need to move forward and change the party into a credible alternative government capable of winning again.

The key for the next 12 months is to set the bar high for what we expect from our future relationship with the EU. The bar has to be much higher than stopping a no deal and look to protecting workers and consumer rights, environmental protections and jobs. Industries are going to start seeing the reality of Brexit and we will have to bend and shape our future relationship to protect our manufacturers and businesses for the sake of jobs, future prosperity and our communities.

The Withdrawal Agreement Bill has now received royal assent and under Boris Johnson's Government we will be leaving the European Union on 31st January. We must never compromise on our Labour values, and Labour values are European values. I want to see a future relationship that allows us to be as close to the EU as we can possibly be. We must minimise the inevitable damage an 80 seat Conservative majority will do to our communities when negotiating our future relationship with the EU.

As the next Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, I will launch a Labour Party Campaign for Britain's Future to galvanise Labour members and the public behind a plan to reform the UK, restore our global reputation after the damage of Brexit and campaign for the closest possible relationship with Europe.

It will place Labour's values of solidarity and internationalism at its heart, with a specific focus on rebuilding bridges with Europe in the post-Brexit landscape.

We need the closest possible relationship with the EU and other European nations to enhance Britain's place in the world and to ensure that our jobs and livelihoods are protected, and we can grow our economy. This is about fighting for workers in every community, Leave or Remain, so that Britain remains competitive on the world stage. We must rebuild our relationship with EU countries following Brexit, and should



never rule out campaigning to be part of the EU again in the future. It is inevitable the debate will arise.

The Labour Party is an internationalist party – we believe in solidarity and working together. The majority of our members oppose leaving the European Union and campaigned to remain. We are leaving the European Union on January 31st, but that won't change what our members believe. We need to stay true to our values and show people across the country that while we will listen, we will also lead. There can be no uncertainty about where we stand on the biggest issues of our time.

Five years on from the independence referendum, we're still arguing about it. The same is going to happen when it comes to our relationship with Europe. We must learn lessons, look forward and be clear about where we stand.

- **What would your top 3 priorities be if you were elected as Deputy Leader?**

The scale of the challenge Labour faces at the next election is significant. We are not going to win power at the next General Election by maintaining the status quo or by being timid in response to the challenges we face as a party or as a country.

My first priority as Deputy Leader is to understand what went wrong. That is why I will visit every nation and region of Britain before the next Labour Party Conference and meet voters, members, supporters and trade unionists to hear their analysis of why Labour did so badly in 2019. However, listening does not go far enough. If people are to believe that we are serious about winning again, we also need to act on what people tell us. That is why I will use what I learn to provide a report to Labour Party Conference in September with a series of recommendations for the future and a plan to change our party to make it an election winning machine again. I don't believe there are any quick fixes, but we must start immediately if we are to have any chance of success at the next election.

My second priority is standing up for every part of Britain. It troubles me that while Labour did well in cities, our vote collapsed in our towns and coastal communities. In Scotland we were wiped out for a second time and all over the country we lost seats which we had held for generations. Too many people feel that politics in Westminster has become distant from them and their lives. We've known this for years, but our party hasn't done nearly enough to bridge that gap. We need to be a party of the whole of Britain or we will never win again. That means, firstly, standing up for the UK and standing against Scottish independence. The CWU stood with us in 2014 and, in doing so, protected the jobs and incomes of people across Scotland. The continuation of the UK is a fight for all parts of the Labour Party – not just in Scotland. Second, we need to reform Labour's network of regional and national offices to give them far more power and ability to make decisions for their own areas. Decisions about what happens across the country should be taken at a regional level, using the knowledge and expertise of our talented staff and activists. Finally, we must build broad coalitions. I have only ever won my seat in Edinburgh South by never assuming that people



wouldn't vote Labour – I go after every vote. As a party, we need to do the same and build coalitions of support that can sustain us from election to election.

My final priority would be transforming the culture of our party and dealing with bullying, harassment and anti-Semitism. As a party, we should always engage in debate, but that should never stray into bullying. In recent years, the party has failed to get a grip of accusations of bullying, harassment and anti-Semitism. I will take responsibility for rooting out any bullying, harassment and anti-Semitism across our party and will demand weekly progress reports on complaints to ensure that we can never be accused of complacency on this issue again.

2. Media and Engagement

It is critical in our view that Labour develops a more robust communications and media strategy.

- **How would you improve the overall communications of the Labour Party?**
- **How would you use the media to convince the electorate Labour is ready to govern at the next election.**
- **How would you increase our influence with the mainstream media?**

I agree with you that we need to develop a more robust communications and media strategy. There are elements within the media that has always historically sought to damage the Labour Party; all of our leaders have faced attacks in the press, as was Ed when newspapers ran personal attacks on his father. There will always be vested interests in all sections of society that seek to harm the advance of the Labour movement. Whilst we must resist these attacks and find new and modern ways of reaching the electorate through new mediums, and through social media, we must also have a broad appeal that does not alienate all of the mainstream media. That does not mean compromising our values, but ensuring that we do not play into the hands of the people we know will seek to damage us.

As Deputy Leader, I would go out there and take the fight to those that use their platforms to attack the party. I would stand up for our values and our policies whenever the opportunity came up, and I would be a critical friend to whoever is elected Leader. I would have an honest relationship with them, constantly analysing what works and what does not in driving us closer to government. For too long too many leaders have surrounded themselves with people that agree with them. I will be a very loyal lieutenant but a critical friend when required. I can't be the voice of the Labour movement in the party without having to have difficult conversations when required.

We also need to learn from the mistakes of the last election. Our media strategy in 2019 was very centrally driven and appealed to a narrow audience. Even with the rise of new media and social media, we can't lose sight of the fact that most people still consume news through evening broadcast shows, and often through their own regional news. We need to have a proper strategy for engaging with the media that

also includes regional television and radio, and commercial stations as well as public service radio. It is right that the Labour Party should have a well staffed press office in London, but our regional communication officers need far more support to break into existing and emerging regional news outlets that are too often neglected.

- **Would you work to grow a new media in the UK?**

I have been lucky to represent a constituency and a city that benefits from many community news organisations that provide a great service. I fully support new media, but we must always be mindful to the fact that a lack of regulation in this space can sometimes provide a breeding ground for “fake news”. New media needs to be responsible and hold to high standards of journalism that we have, historically, expected in the UK. We also have to be alert to the fact that new media in the UK can also be an outlet for the right as well as the left.

- **Would you implement a dynamic and engaging social media strategy and what steps would you take to achieve this?**

As a constituency MP, I have put a significant emphasis on ensuring that we engage with people on social media and I would do the same as Deputy Leader of the Party. I believe there are three things we need for a winning social media strategy:

- A plan based in research. As with any communication strategy, we need research to determine our key audiences and who we are trying to reach. Making assumptions about the kind of people who use digital channels or the kind of content they like will get us nowhere.
- A properly resourced Digital Team. We need to put digital organising on a par with doorstep organising. But the two cannot be divorced from each other – they need to be fully integrated. I believe that a social media strategy has to be joined up with our whole campaign operation – we shouldn’t have a digital organising strategy that doesn’t reflect the targeting and messaging on the doorstep.
- Finally, we need excellent content creators. People will only view content that is well made and innovative. To do that, we need the best creative brains in the Labour Party and we need to be confident to ask for help externally when we need it.

3. The Party

What sort of internal strategy would you pursue regarding the democratisation of the Labour Party? Including;

- **How would you make local CLP meetings more dynamic?**

CLP meetings are a crucial part of Labour Party democracy, but too often they don’t lead to action. We should be encouraging CLPs to use their CLP meetings to engage people on the issues that are affecting their communities and on directing the



campaign priorities inside CLPs. We all joined the Labour Party to make a difference – our meetings should reflect that and should be action focused.

- **How would you involve members and trade unions more?**

Our members and trade unions are the Labour Party. They should have a central role in deciding the party's programme and in setting our direction. We need to engage members and trade unions in every part of the party – from campaigning through to constituency meetings.

I believe many of the reforms over the past few years have put more power into the hands of members, and that is right. Involving members and trade unions more is now less about the structures of our party and more about the campaigns we run and how we run them.

I want members to have more say over the campaigns that Labour runs centrally and how we deploy them in our constituencies. We need campaigns that are responsive to what our members and trade unions are hearing in communities and in workplaces. We shouldn't just be dreaming our campaign priorities up in a vacuum.

- **What would your approach to annual conference be?**

Party Conference should be the sovereign decision-making body of the Labour Party, but we also need the leadership to be honest with conference about what can be achieved. Last year, Conference adopted policy that the party never implemented in the manifesto because they knew at the outset that it would not be achievable. A situation like this undermines Conference and its place in our party.

I want our Conference to be open and engaging, but we need the leadership to be prepared to be honest with Conference when something that is being proposed is not achievable. In the best traditions of trade unions, we should be able to have a full and frank discussion and come to a sensible conclusion.

Finally, I don't ever want to see individual members on the Conference platform call into question the role of Trade Unions in our conference. Last year's remarks by many delegates were appalling and bely a complete lack of understanding of the Labour movement and the central role of the trade unions.

- **How would you encourage more working-class candidates rooted in their communities to stand for parliament?**

As a candidate for Deputy Leader who was born on a council estate, was the first person in my family to go to University and was raised for much of my life by a single mother, I know the barriers that are put in people's way to get to where I am now.

The cost of running for political office is significant, and even running to be a candidate can be incredibly costly. We need to extend the bursaries that are



available to people as candidates. If we expect people to be candidates for years (as we did at the last election), we should be providing some financial support and the existing bursaries should be extended.

We also need to encourage our CLPs to reach out into their communities to encourage people from all backgrounds to become Labour Party members. If we don't have a diverse membership, we can't expect to have a diverse pool of candidates.

I would also challenge the trade union movement to encourage more of their members to join the Labour Party and become involved. The Labour Party is the Parliamentary wing of the trade union movement – we need more of your members taking an active role in the party.

Best wishes,

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