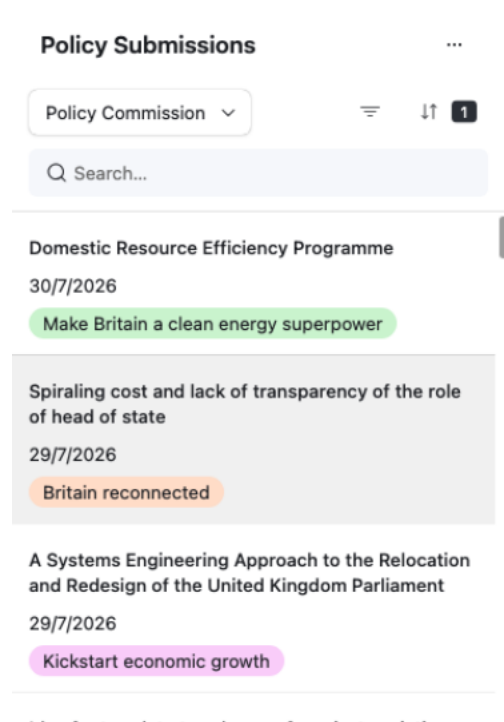


Richard Williams – NPF Report

This year I had the pleasure of representing LI to Labour’s National Policy Forum (NPF). The NPF is divided into various commissions, each dedicated to a different policy area, and as LI we were assigned to the “Britain Reconnected” commission. As the name suggests, our primary focus was foreign policy, with a lot of discussion around EU relations and wider global partnerships. Given this focus, Yvette Cooper was chairing our commission and joined us for one session to give an insight into her work at the FO.

I will refrain here from recapping everything that is already in the now published NPF report. Instead, I would like to give an insight into how the NPF works, and how submissions are dealt with.

Submissions



All members of the NPF have access to the database tool “Airtable.” The software allows us to browse through any submissions made to the NPF in real time, complete with filtering and search options. We can see the submission date, relevant contact person, and the commission for which the submission is intended. Attachments are also visible, which some CLPs make use of to submit longer motions.

The role of submissions to the NPF is secondary. Before each consultation meeting, all of the recent submissions are circulated to committee members for review. This normally takes the form of a rather long (10 pages plus) word document, which theoretically forms the basis for much

fruitful discussion. Naturally, many submissions overlap substantially with one another, most notably on Palestine, defence spending, and electoral reform. Only the commission related submissions are circulated to the respective commission members in this manual step.

Meetings and Consultations

The NPF Consultation Period ran from March to early July this year. Outside of this window, the commissions do not meet. During this time period I attended 4 “consultations” and 2 “evidence sessions.” All meetings were self-contained within the commission; we did not have touch points with other commissions.

Both types of meetings lasted 60 minutes with strict timekeeping and functioned with the same structure:

- 0:00 - 0:05 – Organisational updates and waiting for delegates to join
- 0:05 – 0:30 – Presentation from a guest speaker
- 0:30 – 0:45 – Questions to the guest speaker
- 0:45 – 1:00 – Discussion of guest speaker input and relevant submissions

Consultations generally featured cabinet members or junior ministers as guest speakers – most notably Yvette Cooper and Bridget Phillipson - whilst evidence sessions generally featured field experts or representatives from think tanks, across fields such as sovereign AI and closer relations with the EU.

Key Takeaways

In theory, our commission had 30 delegates. In practice, meetings were not particularly well attended. I did not take part in any session where more than 8 delegates were present. I believe this is due to the awkward scheduling during working hours, with meeting times often sent out less than a week in advance and requiring an RSVP to receive the meeting link. These meetings also required attendees to be admitted by the hosts, which often did not work right away, so that the entire agenda would get pushed back 5-10 minutes whilst maintaining the hard cut finish. This meant that at least two sessions did not feature any discussion around submissions at all.

The organisers and hosts of each session were Labour Party staff. They chose and invited all the speakers, set the agenda, controlled the time and also decided on the focus topic for each session. Discussion in the final part of the meeting was then kept to the chosen topic; in our sovereign AI evidence session, we therefore exclusively discussed issues around sovereign control of tech and how that specific issue should influence policy.

By far the most effective delegates were the trade union members. I was particularly impressed by Ross Holden from the GMB. Regardless of the topic, Ross was laser focussed on two variants of the same question: *How will this create / guarantee jobs for our members?*

I believe a laser sharp focus is what is required to make an impact on the NPF going forward. The limited discussion of motions and question time necessitates a kind of “campaigning mindset,” which I did not expect. In short: the NPF is not a bottom-up body. It is strictly top-down and its agenda is set by Labour Party staff (in turn the NEC) and not delegates. For the future, we must agree ahead of the consultation period what we want from the NPF and be relentless in promoting that at every turn.

Motions on non-core topics or anything submitted outside of the consultation window will likely not find time to be discussed. For the coming year, I will share the draft schedule and expected core topics for the consultation period in 2027 with members. I then suggest we decide on one single overarching priority we would like to achieve and submit motions exclusively to this end.

Secretary report

The branch and national activities are resuming after the summer break, with conference business, communications, and regional engagement progressing across several fronts.

Key Developments

- **Post-summer restart:** Activities across Labour International CLP are restarting following the summer holidays, with working groups and branch meetings recommencing.
- **Conference motions:** Voting on conference motions has been completed for both the national conference and the women's national conference, and results have been formally notified to the respective conference arrangements committees.
- **Communications:** The Comms working group has restarted and is actively promoting Labour International's channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Blue Sky, and others), with additional platforms to be added; the Communications Officer will provide further detail in due course.
- **Africa branch:** Under the Vice-Chair's leadership, Africa branch meetings have resumed; engagement is expected to build gradually over time.
- **Asia branch:** An August meeting attempt attracted only one attendee; further meetings will be scheduled in September at varied times to better accommodate the membership base.
- **Policy engagement consultation:** In the coming weeks, the Executive Committee (EC) will invite volunteers to join a consultation group to consider mechanisms for improving Labour and government response and engagement with policy proposals from Labour International.
- **Emergency motions deadline:** Emergency motions for the national conference must be sent to the Secretary by 22 September; members should consult the CAC rules published on the Labour International website.

Membership changes in last two months

Branch	Removed	New	In arrears
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Africa and the Middle East	3	2	0
Asia-Pacific	3	5	7
Belgium – Brussels	1	1	2
Central Eastern and Northern Europe	0	5	4
Germany and Switzerland	4	5	2
Netherlands	1	1	4
Northern France and the Channel Islands	10	2	13
Southern Europe	4	4	11
Southern France, Ireland and the Isle of Man	5	5	10
The Americas	6	7	7
USA – New York	1	2	1