

The Prime Minister's Speech to Labour Party Conference

The Prime Minister and Leader of the Labour Party addressed the Labour Party Conference on Tuesday 29th September 2009. His speech, *in full at Annex A*, contained a number of policy announcements.

This briefing pulls out the key commitments from the speech, area by area.

Economy & Business

- Our deficit reduction plan to cut the deficit in half over four years, will be made law in a new fiscal responsibility act.
- We will pass a new law to intervene on bankers' bonuses whenever they put the economy at risk. Any director of any of our banks who is negligent will be disqualified from holding any such post.
- We will create a new national investment corporation to provide finance for growing manufacturing and other businesses; our £1 billion innovation fund will the back the creativity and inventions that are essential to the economy.
- New designated low carbon zones around the regions of this country.

Public Sector Pay

- We will raise tax at the very top, cut costs, have realistic public sector pay settlements, make savings we know we can and in 2011 raise National Insurance by half a percent and that will ensure that each and every year we protect and improve Britain's frontline services.

Skills & Employment

- We can offer in partnership with the Federation of Small Businesses, ten thousand skilled internships.
- We will create over a quarter of a million new green British jobs.
- We will work with the Eden project and Mayday Network to create the biggest group of green work placements we have ever done- up to 10,000 green job placements.

Education

- In the next five years we cannot and will not cut support to our schools. We will not invest less, but more.

- Our guarantee to parents is a ruthless determination to raise standards in every school.
- We will aggressively turn round underperforming schools so that your child will have a good local school no matter where you live.

Health & Social Care

- In the next five years we will ensure every patient has the right to see a GP in the evening or at the weekend.
- We will finance a new right for cancer patients to have diagnostic tests carried out, completed and with results – often same day results – within one week of seeing your GP. That is our early diagnosis guarantee, building on our current guarantee of only two weeks wait to see a specialist.
- We will bring together the National Health Service and local care provision into a new National Care Service.
- The best starting point for our National Care Service is to help the elderly get the amenities to do what they most want: to receive care and to stay in their homes as long as possible. For those with the highest needs we will now offer in their own homes free personal care.

Pensions

- In the next five years will restore the earnings link for the basic state pension.
- In every year of the next five years we will increase it.

Children & Families

- Child benefit and child tax credits for families will continue to rise every year.
- By reforming tax relief we will by the end of the next Parliament be able to give the parents of a quarter of a million two year olds free childcare for the first time.
- From now on all 16 and 17 year old parents who get support from the taxpayer will be placed in a network of supervised homes. These shared homes will offer not just a roof over their heads, but a new start in life where they learn responsibility and how to raise their children properly.

Law & Order and Antisocial behaviour

- Starting now and right across the next Parliament every one of the 50,000 most chaotic families will be part of a family intervention project – with clear rules, and clear punishments if they don't stick to them.

- Every time a young person breaches an ASBO, there will be an order, not just on them but on their parents, and if that is broken they will pay the price.
- We will give local authorities the power to ban 24 hour drinking throughout a community in the interests of local people.
- When someone is found guilty of a serious crime caused by drinking, the drink banning order which is available to the courts should be imposed.
- Where there is persistent trouble from binge drinking, we will give local people the right to make pubs and clubs pay for cleaning up their neighbourhood and making it safe.
- If it's an emergency you must get action in minutes, where it's a neighbourhood priority within the hour, and where it's a general but not urgent enquiry no one will have to wait more than 48 hours for a reply or a visit.
- Between now and Christmas, neighbourhood policing will focus in a more direct and intensive way on anti-social behaviour. Action squads will crackdown in problem estates, protect the public spaces you want safe and hold monthly beat meetings to consult you directly on your priorities for action.

Immigration & Identity

- Tightening our points-based immigration system ensures that those who have the skills that can help Britain will be welcomed, and those who do not, will be refused.
- We will reduce the information British citizens have to give for the new biometric passport to no more than that required for today's passport.
- In the next Parliament there will be no compulsory ID cards for British citizens.

Northern Ireland

- We will give every support to complete the last and yet unfinished stage of the peace process – the devolution of policing and justice to the people of Northern Ireland, which we want to see happen in the next few months.

Global Security & Overseas Aid

- We will work to end nuclear proliferation; we will work as partners to end the world's nuclear arms race.
- We will pass legislation that the British government is obliged to raise spending on aid to the poorest countries to 0.7% of our national income.

Parliament & Democracy

- Where there is proven financial corruption by an MP and in cases where wrong-doing has been demonstrated but Parliament fails to act we will give constituents the right to recall their Member of Parliament.
- In Labour's next manifesto there will be a commitment for a referendum to be held early in the next Parliament it will be for the people to decide whether they want to move to the Alternative Vote.
- In this next year we will remove the hereditary principle in the House of Lords once and for all. And then unlike the last election we will ask for a clear mandate to make the House of Lords an accountable and democratic second chamber for the very first time.

Further Reading

The full speech is at *Annex A* and can be found at <http://www.labour.org.uk/gordon-brown-speech-conference,2009-09-29>

October 2009

Annex A: Prime Minister's Speech to Labour Party Conference 2009

(Tuesday 28th September 2009)

And so today, in the midst of events that are transforming our world, we meet united and determined to fight for the future.

Our country confronts the biggest choice for a generation. It's a choice between two parties, yes. But more importantly a choice between two directions for our country.

In the last eighteen months we have had to confront the biggest economic choices the world has faced since the 1930s.

It was only a year ago that the world was looking over a precipice and Britain was in danger. I knew that unless I acted decisively and immediately, the recession could descend into a great depression with millions of people's jobs and homes and savings at risk.

And times of great challenge mean choices of great consequence, so let me share with you a little about the choices we are making.

The first choice was this: whether markets left to themselves could sort out the crisis; or whether governments had to act. Our choice was clear; we nationalised Northern Rock and took shares in British banks, and as a result not one British saver has lost a single penny. That was the change we chose. The change that benefits the hard working majority, not the privileged few.

And we faced a second big choice – between letting the recession run its course, or stimulating the economy back to growth. And we made our choice; help for small businesses, targeted tax cuts for millions and advancing our investment in roads, rail and education. That was the change we chose - change that benefits the hard working majority and not just a privileged few.

And then we had a third choice, between accepting unemployment as a price worth paying, or saving jobs. And we in Britain made our choice, it's meant half a million jobs saved. And so Conference even in today's recession there are 29 million people in work. 2 million more men and women providing for their families than in 1997.

And then we faced the mortgage choice –to do nothing as repossessions rose or save the family homes people have worked so hard to buy. 200,000 homeowners given direct government support to stay in their home. That was the change we chose – change that benefits the mainstream majority and not just a few.

And then we faced another choice; between going our own way, or acting with other countries. And everybody knows the choice we made – we picked internationalism over isolationism, leading the G20 to a global deal that will save 15 million jobs.

Every government across Europe made the choice to act. Every government across the G20 chose to act. Almost every major political party across the world chose to act.

Only one party thought it was best to do nothing.

Only one party with pretensions to government made the wrong choice; the Conservative Party of Britain.

They made the wrong choice on Northern Rock.
The wrong choice on jobs and spending.
The wrong choice on mortgage support.
The wrong choice on working with Europe.

The only thing about their policy that is consistent is that they are consistently wrong.

The opposition might think the test of a party is the quality of its marketing but I say the test for a government is the quality of its judgement.

The Conservative Party were faced with the economic call of the century and they called it wrong.

And I say a party that makes the wrong choices on the most critical decisions it would have faced in government should not be given the chance to be in government.

And what of the big choices that this country has to make now - to help young people into work or to see, like the 80s, a wasted generation. And I'll tell you the choice we're making. To reject every piece of Conservative advice and instead we will ensure school leavers training, guarantee the young unemployed work experience, expand university places and to increase, not cut the apprenticeships we need. I'm sorry to say that by opposing these measures conservative policy would callously and coldly return us to the lost generation and cardboard cities of the 1980s – we say never again. That's the change we choose, the change that benefits the many, not the few.

Every day we are facing the business choice – to support our companies from car manufacturers to the self-employed or simply let great British businesses go to the wall. And we are making our choice. Labour believes in the businesses and enterprise of Britain. More than 200,000 agreements signed to give direct support to small businesses.

That was the change we chose; change that benefits the enterprising backbone of Britain. In opening up planning in improving transport, in opting for nuclear energy it is Labour that is the party of British business and British enterprise and the Conservative Party's whose policy has been to walk away.

And the Conservatives were wrong on all these choices, because they were wrong about something more fundamental still.

Because what let the world down last autumn was not just bankrupt institutions but a bankrupt ideology. What failed was the Conservative idea that markets always self-correct but never self-destruct. What failed was the right wing fundamentalism that says you just leave everything to the market and says that free markets should not just be free but values free.

One day last October the executive of a major bank told us that his bank needed only overnight finance but no long term support from the government.

The next day I found that this bank was going under with debts that were among the biggest of any bank, anywhere, at any time in history. Bankers had lost sight of basic British values, acting responsibly and acting fairly. The values that we, the hard working majority, live by every day.

Like the small businessman who came to see me when his credit dried up at the bank. He was crying with the shame of missing some payments, but so responsible was he, that he was determined that every penny he owed would be paid. Or like the woman who wrote to me and said that when we announced our decision to rescue Icesave and her family's savings it was the first night's sleep she'd had since the crisis started.

When markets falter and banks fail it's the jobs and the homes and the security of the squeezed middle that are hit the hardest. It's the hard pressed, hard working majority – the person with a trade, the small business owner, the self-employed. It's the class room assistant, the worker in the shop, the builder on the site.

It's the millions of people who do their best and do their bit and in return simply want their families to get on not just get by.

It's the Britain that works best not by reckless risk-taking but by effort, by merit and by hard work.

It's the Britain that works not just by self-interest but by self-discipline, self-improvement and self-reliance.

It's the Britain where we don't just care for ourselves, we also care for each other.

And these are the values of fairness and responsibility that we teach our children, celebrate in our families, observe in our faiths, and honour in our communities.

Call them middle class values, call them traditional working class values, call them family values, call them all of these; these are the values of the mainstream majority; the anchor of Britain's families, the best instincts of the British people, the soul of our party and the mission of our government.

And I say this too; these are my values – the values I grew up with in an ordinary family in an ordinary town.

Like most families on middle and modest incomes we believed in making the most of our talents.

But we knew that no matter how hard we worked free education was our only pathway to being the best we could be. Because like most parents, my parents could not easily afford to put me and my brothers through fee paying schools. And I come from a family which, independent and self reliant as it was, could not have kept going without the compassion and caring of the NHS, because my parents could not easily have afforded to pay for operations on my eyes.

So I come from a family for whom the NHS was quite simply the best insurance policy in the world.

For us the NHS has not been a sixty year mistake but a sixty year liberation.

And it has been those experiences, and that background, that has taught me that yes, too much government can make people powerless. But too much government indifference can leave people powerless too.

Government should never try to do what it cannot do but it should never fail to do what it needs to do. And in a crisis what the British people want to know is that their government will not pass by on the other side but will be on their side.

So we will not allow those on middle and modest incomes to be buffeted about in a storm not of their making.

And so this is our choice – to toughen the rules on those who break the rules.

Markets need what they cannot generate themselves; they need what the British people alone can bring to them, I say to you today; markets need morals.

So we will pass a new law to intervene on bankers' bonuses whenever they put the economy at risk. And any director of any of our banks who is negligent will be disqualified from holding any such post.

Some people believe that the public will end up subsidising the bankers' mistakes.

And so I tell you this about our aims for the rescue of the banks: the British people will not pay for the banks. No, the banks will pay back the British people.

That's what we need to do to rectify the problems of the past. Now it's time to make changes that are even more fundamental for a world that is being utterly transformed.

In the uncharted waters we sail, the challenge of change demands nothing less than a new model for our economy, a new model for a more responsible society and a new model for a more accountable politics.

Staying with the status quo is not an option.

The issue is not whether to change, but how.

And always a party of restless and relentless reformers, the new mission for new Labour is to realise our passion for fairness and responsibility in these new global times. And as we rise to the challenge of change so this coming election will not be a contest for a fourth term Labour government, but for the first Labour government of this new global age.

Our new economic model for a strong economy is founded on three guiding principles.

That in future finance must always be the servant of people and industry and not their master
That our future economy must be a green economy
And that we must realise all of Britain's talent if we are to lead and succeed

The best way finance can serve our country now is to help ensure that the inventions and

innovations pioneered in Britain are developed and manufactured in Britain. So we will create a new national investment corporation to provide finance for growing manufacturing and other businesses; our £1 billion innovation fund will back the creativity and inventions that are essential to the economy.

And I want the Post Office - to play a much bigger role, bringing banking services back to the heart of people's communities.

And our economic future must be green.

We are already global leaders in wind power, green cars, clean coal and carbon capture. And now we will lead again, with new designated low carbon zones around the regions of this country. And I say to you today – we will create over a quarter of a million new green British jobs.

And every day we stall on a climate change deal, the people of the world are denied the chance to protect their world. And so I say – I will go to Copenhagen and I will go with our British plan to secure a climate change deal this year.

And the new model for education in the 21st century –the biggest step we can take into the future - is to unlock the talents of all young people.

Let the new economy be one where social mobility is not held back and in this new economy there must be no cap on aspiration no ceiling on opportunity and no limit on where your talents can take you.

And so I can tell you that in the next five years we cannot and will not cut support to our schools. We will not invest less, but more.

And our guarantee to parents is a ruthless determination to raise standards in every school.

We will aggressively turn round underperforming schools so that your child will have a good local school no matter where you live.

Our guarantee to all young people is that with millions of new opportunities from apprenticeships to internships to a new class of modern technicians, we will discover, coach, develop and showcase the wealth of aspiration and talent that exists in Britain.

And to add to the 100 thousand new young people's jobs we are already creating, we can today offer in partnership with the Federation of Small Businesses, ten thousand skilled internships so that, even in the midst of tough economic times, we are encouraging a whole new generation of young Britons to embrace ambition and British enterprise.

And I can also announce that we will work with the Eden project and Mayday Network to create the biggest group of green work placements we have ever done- up to 10,000 green job placements so that our young people can make the most of the opportunities the low carbon economy will open up to them.

And friends let me talk bluntly; to pay for our schools, hospitals, police, and the change we want to make we have to make choices about taxation and public spending.

Let no one be in any doubt: as a result of Labour's economic management, Britain started the downturn with the second lowest debt of any G7 economy.

And just as we have always taken the hard and tough decisions on stability in the past, we will continue to apply the same rigour to our decisions in the future.

Our deficit reduction plan to cut the deficit in half over four years, will be made law in a new fiscal responsibility act. And I can say today that every change we make, every single pledge we make, comes with a price tag attached, and a clear plan for how that cost will be met.

For there are only two options on tax and spending – and only one of them benefits Britain's hard-working majority.

One is reducing the deficit by cutting front line public services – the conservative approach.

The other is getting the deficit down while maintaining and indeed improving front line public services – the Labour approach.

So we will raise tax at the very top, , cut costs, have realistic public sector pay settlements, make savings we know we can and in 2011 raise National Insurance by half a percent and that will ensure that each and every year we protect and improve Britain's frontline services.

Our opponents would take a different approach.

They want to cut spending now, so that means less money now for frontline services.

They want to cut inheritance tax for the 3,000 wealthiest estates, so that means even less money for frontline services.

And they are against the measures we took to raise taxes and so that means even less money for frontline services.

These are not cuts they would make because they have to – these are spending cuts they are making because they want to.

It is not inevitable – it is the change they choose.

And when people say faced with the constraints of the recession can you make progress towards a fairer and more responsible Britain let us tell them we did, we can, and we will.

In 1997 we held back spending and people said there could be no progress - but we introduced the new deal, sure start the minimum wage and paved the way for tax credits and new hospitals and schools

In the last 12 years we've already given teenagers educational maintenance allowances to help them stay on until 18. And in the next five years not just some but all young people will be staying in education or training until 18.

We've already ensured that three quarters of our GP practices are open out of hours – and in

the next five years we will ensure every patient has the right to see a GP in the evening or at the weekend.

We've already lifted 900 thousand pensioners out of poverty – and in the next five years will restore the earnings link for the basic state pension.

And in the last twelve years we created the first legal national minimum wage.

And in every year of the next five years we will increase it.

The minimum wage was the dream of Neil Kinnock – and he's with us today.

It was the dream of John Smith – whom we remember today.

And it was one of the achievements of Tony Blair, and we thank him today.

And when the minimum wage rises this month it will be 60% higher than when it started.

And I can say today that not just the minimum wage, but child benefit and child tax credits for families will continue to rise every year.

And for all those mums and dads who struggle to juggle work and home, I am proud to announce today that by reforming tax relief we will by the end of the next Parliament be able to give the parents of a quarter of a million two year olds free childcare for the first time.

And I do think it's time to address a problem that for too long has gone unspoken, the number of children having children. For it cannot be right, for a girl of sixteen, to get pregnant, be given the keys to a council flat and be left on her own.

From now on all 16 and 17 year old parents who get support from the taxpayer will be placed in a network of supervised homes. These shared homes will offer not just a roof over their heads, but a new start in life where they learn responsibility and how to raise their children properly. That's better for them, better for their babies and better for us all in the long run.

We won't ever shy away from taking difficult decisions on tough social questions.

Because we have to be honest – its not just bankers and politicians that have lost the people's trust. Even though there is so much that is amazing about Britain, if you ask your neighbours or your workmates how they feel right now in this fast changing world, they will probably talk about their sense of unease.

The decent hard working majority feel the odds are stacked in favour of a minority, who will talk about their rights, but never accept their responsibilities.

In a faster changing more mobile world of communities where family breakdown is more common, where children are at risk on the internet, where elderly people are too often isolated in their communities, the new society must be explicit about the boundaries between right and wrong- and about the new responsibilities we demand of people in return for the rights they have. And I stand with the people who are sick and tired of others playing by different rules or no rules at all.

Most mums and dads do a great job – but there are those who let their kids run riot and I'm not prepared to accept it as simply part of life.

Because there is also a way of intervening earlier to stop anti-social behaviour, slash welfare dependency and cut crime. Family intervention projects are a tough love, no nonsense approach with help for those who want to change and proper penalties for those who don't or won't.

I first saw this tough approach at work in Dundee where a young single mother who got into trouble with drugs was at risk of her kids being taken into care. But within months she was going to college to get a decent job to look after the children she loved.

Family intervention projects work. They change lives, they make our communities safer and they crack down on those who're going off the rails.

Starting now and right across the next Parliament every one of the 50,000 most chaotic families will be part of a family intervention project – with clear rules, and clear punishments if they don't stick to them.

And we have said that every time a young person breaches an ASBO, there will be an order, not just on them but on their parents, and if that is broken they will pay the price.

Because whenever and wherever there is antisocial behaviour, we will be there to fight it.

We will never allow teenage tearaways or anybody else to turn our town centres into no go areas at night times. No one has yet cracked the whole problem of a youth drinking culture. We thought that extended hours would make our city centres easier to police and in many areas it has. But it's not working in some places and so we will give local authorities the power to ban 24 hour drinking throughout a community in the interests of local people.

And let me say this bluntly; when someone is found guilty of a serious crime caused by drinking, the drink banning order which is available to the courts should be imposed. And where there is persistent trouble from binge drinking, we will give local people the right to make pubs and clubs pay for cleaning up their neighbourhood and making it safe.

Neighbourhood policing is now a reality in every council ward in our country.

Recent cases have shown it is time for a better service for the citizen. So if it's an emergency you must get action in minutes, where it's a neighbourhood priority within the hour, and where it's a general but not urgent enquiry no one will have to wait more than 48 hours for a reply or a visit. That's what I mean by public services personal to people's needs.

And I can tell the British people that between now and Christmas, neighbourhood policing will focus in a more direct and intensive way on anti-social behaviour. Action squads will crackdown in problem estates, protect the public spaces you want safe and hold monthly beat meetings to consult you directly on your priorities for action.

This is a new and more mobile world and so we have to step up the protection of our borders against terrorism and illegal immigration. And it means we must take a tough approach to

who gets to come to our country and who gets to stay.

Tightening our points-based immigration system ensures that those who have the skills that can help Britain will be welcomed, and those who do not, will be refused.

And the ID cards for foreign nationals are working.

But in the last two years we have looked again at how we can give the best security to our British citizens whilst never undermining their liberties.

We will reduce the information British citizens have to give for the new biometric passport to no more than that required for today's passport.

And so conference, I can say to you today, in the next Parliament there will be no compulsory ID cards for British citizens.

So I have been candid about the challenges we face. But we are also proud of our achievements and what makes this country we love so special.

Britain – the four home nations – each is unique, each with its own great contribution and we will never allow separatists or narrow nationalists in Scotland or in Wales to sever the common bonds that bring our country together as one.

And let me say to the people of Northern Ireland we will give you every support to complete the last and yet unfinished stage of the peace process which Tony Blair to his great credit started and which I want to see complete – the devolution of policing and justice to the people of Northern Ireland, which we want to see happen in the next few months.

I want a Britain that is even more open to new ideas, even more creative, even more dynamic and leading the world and let me talk today about how we will do more to support the great British institutions that best define this country.

The first is the one I spoke about in detail on Sunday when I talked about the mission of our brave men and women in Afghanistan.

The heroism of our fighting men and women is unsurpassed and we owe them a debt we can never fully repay. And let us on behalf of the British people pay tribute to them and their courage today.

The British armed forces truly are the finest in the world. And let us say to them – all British forces will always have all the equipment they need and the best support we can give.

And conference let me say, Britain will work with President Obama and 40 other countries for peace and stability for the people of Afghanistan, and to make sure that terrorism doesn't come to the streets of Britain.

And we will work for peace and stability for the peoples of Israel and Palestine.

We will work to end nuclear proliferation and as I said last week when I talked of the contribution Britain can make; we will work as partners to end the world's nuclear arms race.

And I say to Iran as they face a crucial date this week; join the international community now or face isolation.

And let me say what was once an aspiration – 0.7% of national income spent on international development aid, has become with Labour a promise, and will in future become a law. We will pass legislation that the British government is obliged to raise spending on aid to the poorest countries to 0.7% of our national income. Others may break their promises to the poorest, with Labour Britain never will.

And there is huge debate around the world today about how countries can manage health care. Countries from every continent look to our NHS for inspiration. And this summer didn't we show them – we love our NHS.

We can sometimes talk about the NHS purely in statistics – purely about the record numbers of doctors and nurses and operations and treatments under Labour. But it isn't about the figures – it's about the individuals who get help.

I got a letter from Diane, a mother from Rugby who wrote to me saying her life had been saved because the NHS used its extra investment to reduce the age for breast cancer screening.

Before she would have had to wait until 50 – and her surgeon told her that if she had, she'd probably be dead. But thanks to the changes we made, Diane was diagnosed early, treated early, and was back at work within three weeks.

When she wrote to me about us lowering the screening age she said “this may seem small in comparison to all the other issues you deal with, a small thing to do but it probably saved my life.”

And so I say to you today; Labour fought for the NHS, you fought to save and invest in the NHS, and because you did, you are saving lives every day.

You should be very, very proud.

Because if you've changed one life you've changed the world.

And because we know that our investment in breast cancer screening works and early intervention saves lives, I am proud to announce that we will go much further.

We will finance a new right for cancer patients to have diagnostic tests carried out, completed and with results – often same day results - within one week of seeing your GP. That is our early diagnosis guarantee, building on our current guarantee of only two weeks wait to see a specialist.

And so with three major steps forward – early diagnosis, early treatment and our historic investment in research for cancer cures, we in Britain can transform cancer care; and our ambition is no less than to beat cancer in this generation.

That is the change we have chosen; change that benefits not just the few who can pay but

the mainstream majority.

For a few days this summer Sarah and I worked helping in a local hospice near our home and I say now that the care and compassion shown by volunteers and staff must be matched by greater support for this work of mercy.

And in our times there is a new challenge that no generation has ever had to face before. We have an ageing society and new rightful demands for dignity and for support in old age. And so we need social care for our elderly which is not subject to a post code lottery, but available to all – to the hard working majority, and not just the few who can pay.

And so we will say in Labour's manifesto that social care for all is not a distant dream, that to provide security for pensioners for generations to come – we will bring together the National Health Service and local care provision into a new National Care Service. That is the change we chose.

And we can start straight away.

Today more and more people see their parents and grandparents suffering from conditions like Alzheimer's and dementia, and they see their dignity diminish.

And for too many families the challenge of coping with the heartbreak is made worse by the costs of getting support.

The people who face the greatest burden are too often those on middle incomes, who have savings which will last a year or two, but then they will see their savings slip away. And the best starting point for our National Care Service is to help the elderly get the amenities to do what they most want: to receive care and to stay in their homes as long as possible.

And so for those with the highest needs we will now offer in their own homes free personal care.

It's a change that makes saving worthwhile, makes every family in this country more secure and is a much needed reassurance for the elderly and their children.

This is the change we choose; change that will benefit not just the few who can afford to pay, but the mainstream majority.

But a fair and responsible Britain must be an accountable Britain – a nation not of powerful institutions but powerful people.

And just as I have said that the market needs morals I also say that politics needs morals too.

Let me say that the vast overwhelming majority of our Labour Members of Parliament are in Parliament not out of self interest but to serve the public interest. And our new generation of Parliamentary candidates want to join them not to make a personal gain but to make a difference.

But there are some who let our country down. And never again should any Member of

Parliament be more interested in the value of their allowances than the values of their constituents.

Never again should it be said of any Member of Parliament that they are in it for what they can get; all of us should be in Parliament for what we can give.

And so where there is proven financial corruption by an MP and in cases where wrong-doing has been demonstrated but Parliament fails to act we will give constituents the right to recall their Member of Parliament.

And if we want a politics that is more open, more plural, more local, more democratic, then we will need to make big changes because the only way to ensure politics serves the people's values is to make all those who wield political power genuinely accountable to the people.

There is now a stronger case than ever that MPs should be elected with the support of more than half their voters – as they would be under the Alternative Voting system. And so I can announce today that in Labour's next manifesto there will be a commitment for a referendum to be held early in the next Parliament it will be for the people to decide whether they want to move to the Alternative Vote.

In this next year we will remove the hereditary principle in the House of Lords once and for all. And then unlike the last election we will ask for a clear mandate to make the House of Lords an accountable and democratic second chamber for the very first time.

I've been honest with you about where we've got it right. And where we've fallen short and have to do more. And I am determined to fight for change to benefit the mainstream majority.

All that we have talked about today would simply not happen if the Conservatives were in power.

The Conservative Party want people to believe that the ballot paper has an option marked change without consequence – that's it's only a change of the team at the top.

They've deliberately held their cards close to their chest.

They've done their best to conceal their policies and their instincts. But the financial crisis forced them to show their hand and they showed they had no hearts.

And so I say to the British people the election to come will not be about my future – it's about your future. Your job. Your home. Your children's school. Your hospital. Your community. Your country.

And so when our opponents talk of change, ask yourself. Is that change that will benefit my family, or only a privileged few?

Listen to what they say - but more importantly demand to know what they would do.

If you're a family that's feeling the pinch – don't take it from me – just ask them the question. If you care about me, why is your first priority to give a 200 thousand pound tax giveaway to

each of the 3,000 wealthiest estates?

And if you're one of the millions of Britons who loves our NHS– don't take it from me – just ask them the question. If you care about us, why would you scrap the right to see a cancer specialist within two weeks?

And if you're worried about crime – don't take it from me – just ask them the question. Why would you cut the Home Office budget by the equivalent of 3,500 police officers this year alone and then make it harder for them to catch the most violent criminals using DNA evidence?

And if you care about a proud Britain – don't take it from me – just ask them the question. Why would you put this country's prosperity and power at risk by placing Britain at the fringe of Europe rather than at its heart?

Ask them; how can you deliver change when you so clearly haven't even changed your own party?

Because there is a difference between the parties. It's the difference between Conservatives who embrace pessimism and austerity and progressives like Labour who embrace prosperity and hope.

And this is a timeless difference in our approach. It's between those like them whose vision is limited to how things are and those like us who reach for the world that can be.

And isn't this the story of Britain at its best and the Labour Party at its best, that we are people who strive for and achieve great changes even when others say it is impossible?

They said a free National Health Service was impossible, then argued it was unworkable, then said it was unaffordable, but in the last 12 years we have rebuilt it and it is now quite simply, for the British people, irreplaceable.

They told me debt relief for the poorest was impossible – but we refused to give in and now thanks to debt relief and aid 40 million more children across the world are going to school.

And even when they told us last year that a great depression was inevitable and the world could not come together, we did, even when others said it was beyond our grasp.

Maybe you think it's because I'm the guy who doesn't take no for an answer, and you're right; I don't.

But it's really because I grew up in a family, a party and a country that believes no obstacle is so great that it can stop the onwards march of fairness and of justice.

And so I urge you, as the poet said, dream not small dreams because they cannot change the world. Dream big dreams and then watch our country soar.

We can build a new economy which tames the old excesses. We can meet and master the challenge of an ageing society with a National Care Service, we can in this generation be the first to beat cancer.

We can transform our politics.

We can do all these things and more if we think big and then fight hard.

Since 1997 Labour has given this country back its future. And we are not done yet.

We love this country. And we have shown over the years that if you aim high you can lift not just yourself but your country - that there is nothing in life which is inevitable – it's about the change you choose.

And I say to you now –

Never stop believing in the good sense of the British people.

Never stop believing we can move forward to a fairer, more responsible, more prosperous Britain.

Never stop believing we can make a Britain equal to its best ideals.

Never, never stop believing. And because the task is difficult the triumph will be even greater.

Now is not the time to give in but to reach inside ourselves for the strength of our convictions.

Because we are the Labour Party and our abiding duty is to stand. And fight. And win. And serve.