

## JOB DESCRIPTION – GROUP OFFICERS

### Group Leader

#### 1. Contributing to group unity and cohesiveness

- To provide a general overview to policy direction so as to ensure consistency, strategy and purpose in Labour's approach, together with the group whip and secretary, ensuring the unity of the group and local party.
- To be readily accessible and open to non-executive members and members of the local party who have ideas and suggestions.
- To share leadership with a team of group officers and cabinet members, committee chairs or lead spokespeople, recognising that leaders cannot provide every skill on their own.
- To bring to the group or group officers' attention issues or problems that may be made known to him/her to enable a full discussion and group decision where necessary.

#### 2. Providing internal and external leadership to Labour locally

- To act as the public face of the Labour party on the council (unless there is a directly elected Labour Mayor), in co-operation with other party spokespeople, cabinet members etc.
- To represent the Labour party outside the council, in the media, to local people and organisations and at a national and regional level.
- To represent the Labour group to the local party and report on its work to wards, constituencies and district/county/borough parties.
- To ensure that the local party is consulted on policy matters such as the budget strategy.
- To ensure, with the group press officer, that the party's communications strategy is being implemented, and the group's policies and actions are communicated to local residents and other stakeholders.
- When in opposition, to be the focus of Labour's campaigning locally and to play a leading role in the council's scrutiny process.

3. Model person specification – desirable attributes:

- Able to prioritise and manage time effectively
- Trusted
- A good communicator
- Politically astute
- A good listener
- With a clear vision
- Able to take a decision and stick to it
- Inclusive
- Every group leader will bring different skills to the job, and changing circumstances will require different skills and styles, so it is important to be flexible. Recognise that the key aim should be to build a team, whatever the approach required, depending on the strengths of the group.

## **Deputy Group Leader**

1. Contributing to group unity and cohesiveness

- To support the leader in her/his responsibilities and duties and deputise for the leader in his/her absence.
- To complement the leader's position by bringing different skills and interests to the group executive.

2. Fulfilling specific responsibilities as agreed by the group

- To enhance the deputy leader's role by giving them specific functions, for example:
  - i. Liaison with the local party membership, building branch organisation or ensuring a Labour presence in opposition-held wards.
  - ii. Councillor training and development to build a stronger group and encourage party members to become councillors.
  - iii. Pastoral support for members of the group, especially newer members.
  - iv. To work up detailed policies to complement the leader's strategic vision.
  - v. To take on particular time-specific projects

3. Model Person Specification – desirable attributes:

- Able to prioritise and manage time effectively

- Trusted
- A good communicator
- Politically astute
- A good listener
- With a clear vision
- Able to take a decision and stick to it
- Inclusive

Every deputy leader will play a different role, depending on the character and style and strengths of the individuals involved. The group should determine in advance the kind of roles it wishes to see fulfilled and try to elect members to carry out those tasks on its behalf.

## **Group Chair**

### 1. Contributing to group unity and cohesiveness

- To ensure that meetings are conducted in a comradely fashion in accordance with the standing orders and to ensure that all members of the group have a reasonable entitlement and ability to contribute to the discussion and debate of the group.
- To remain impartial and in particular to protect the interests of non-executive members in group meetings.
- For the above reasons, not to hold another group office or an executive or lead scrutiny position, in accordance with standing orders.
- Jointly with the other group officers, to monitor progress with implementing the Labour manifesto, and to ensure the fullest possible discussion is held in group where necessary to ensure joint ownership of policy proposals and scrutiny work.

### 2. Ensuring group meetings are an effective forum for political debate

- To arrange group meetings in conjunction with the group secretary, working out timings for each item and sticking to them to enable time for debate on important agenda items.
- To conduct group business efficiently while ensuring maximum participation and discouraging repetition.
- To allow differences to be discussed amicably and to be sensitive and aware of opportunities to make progress by agreement and common consent.
- To enable the group to take clear decisions at the end of debates, summing up all

relevant issues and achieving a consensus wherever possible.

3. Model Person Specification – desirable attributes:

- Respected
- Patient
- Assertive
- Inclusive
- Able to manage time effectively
- Fair
- Impartial
- Able to facilitate debate
- In smaller groups, it may be appropriate to consider asking a non-councillor to act as chair eg one of the party observers or an unsuccessful candidate. This would enable all elected members to participate fully in the discussion.

The chair would normally be expected to chair group executive and group officers' meetings as well as meetings of the full group.

## **Group Secretary**

1. Contributing to group unity and cohesiveness

- To ensure all group members receive all relevant information in time and when needed to enable them to take effective decisions.
- To ensure clear records are kept of all group decisions so that there is an agreed understanding and ownership of the group political agenda.
- Jointly with the other group officers, to monitor progress with implementing the Labour manifesto, and to ensure the fullest possible discussion is held in group where necessary to ensure joint ownership of policy proposals and scrutiny work.
- To convene the annual meeting of the group in accordance with standing orders, including arrangements for the election of the group officers and Labour nominees for council office etc to ensure that officers and nominees as a whole reflect the gender, ethnic, geographical and political composition of the group and will form an effective team for leading the delivery of Labour's agenda on the council.

2. Ensuring group meetings are an effective forum for political debate

- To arrange group meetings in conjunction with the group chair, planning a programme of policy meetings for the year to enable major issues to be discussed

by the group at the appropriate time, in addition to convening group meetings to consider the council agenda, in accordance with standing orders.

- To liaise with cabinet members and scrutiny committee chairs or other lead members to ensure the group is informed and aware of progress in all council forums.
- To enable time for discussion of casework and ward interests where this may have a wider relevance.
- To ensure agendas are relevant to as many members of group as possible.

3. Organising effective internal and external communications for the group

- To ensure that group members have complied with the legal requirements of the 1990 Local Government Regulations.
- To liaise with the local party to ensure that a programme of policy discussion and development is jointly arranged, comprising at least four meetings a year.
- To receive correspondence to, and send communications from, the Labour group, including ensuring that all members are aware of communications, information and advice from the Labour party nationally, regionally and locally.

4. Model Person Specification – desirable attributes:

- Organised
- Fair
- Able to use information technology
- Politically astute
- Efficient
- Accessible to all group members
- A good communicator
- The group secretary is the political administrator of the group and protects the collective and individual interests of the group, even if the group appoints an assistant or minutes secretary or has paid clerical or administrative assistance.

## **Group Whip**

1. Contributing to group unity and cohesiveness

- To ensure that group members are aware of group policy and whether the whip is to be applied on decisions to be taken.

- To ensure that group members vote in accordance with group policy when required.
- Jointly with the other group officers, to monitor progress with implementing the Labour manifesto, and to ensure the fullest possible discussion is held in group where necessary to ensure joint ownership of policy proposals and scrutiny work.
- To liaise between the group leadership and group members, ensuring that comments and information are fed back from the group to the leadership, particularly when Labour is in control of the council.

## 2. Maintaining the Labour group's integrity and standards of behaviour

- To ensure that group members sign (within the statutory timescale) and adhere to any codes of conduct adopted by the council and to the Labour Party code of conduct.
- To maintain the register of members' interests in the form prescribed by the National Executive Committee, detailing for each member and group observer his/her employment, financial interests in companies, membership of trade unions, societies and organisations etc.
- To advise members that they should not vote when they are barred from doing so by reason of a declared interest or council tax or rent arrears (S.108 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992).
- To ensure members engaged in scrutiny sign and abide by any protocols governing their behaviour and conduct agreed by the group.
- To ensure members of the cabinet sign and abide by any protocols governing their behaviour and conduct agreed by the group.
- To initiate such disciplinary measures as are necessary and in accordance with the procedure laid down in Clause 16.XIII of the Labour party's rules for Labour groups (following the advice and procedures provided by the party).
- To monitor the attendance of Labour members at council or committee meetings and their activities in the community, and to maintain a record of this, to be made available to the local government panel assessment panel and to each member on request (a form is provided for this purpose).

## 3. Drawing fully on all the talents of the Labour group

- To ascertain what skills and experience are available in the group and to co-ordinate a training and development programme for members of group, individually and collectively.
- To hold an annual personal review with all members of group to establish their support or other needs and agree a way of meeting these if possible, preferably in

advance of the AGM.

- To co-ordinate committee places allocation in accordance with the group standing orders.

4. Model Person Specification – desirable attributes:

- Sympathetic
- Able to negotiate
- Fair
- Trusted to keep confidences
- Firm
- Able to listen
- Diplomatic
- Able to take a decision and stick to it

**Treasurer**

1. Maintain the financial records of the Group

- To keep accurate records of the Group's income and expenditure,
- To operate a financial year of 1 January to 31 December in common with the national party and party units.
- To present an annual statement of accounts for approval to the Group AGM.

2. Ensure group compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA)

- Ensure that the group, as a Members Association/Unincorporated Association for the purposes of PPERA, has systems in place to ensure that all donations or loans of more than £500 are identified promptly, recorded and checked to ensure the donor/lender is permissible and report donations/loans of more than £7500 in a calendar year from the same donor/lender directly to the Electoral Commission within 30 days of acceptance.
- Where a Labour Group makes contributions to a unit of the party (i.e. CLPs or branches) that add up to more than £25,000 in a calendar year, the treasurer will register the group with the Electoral Commission and directly report the details of contributions as required by PPERA and in accordance with the Electoral

Commission's guidance<sup>1</sup>

- Co-operate with the officers of CLPs and other party units to enable them to comply with their obligations under PPERA. In particular, the Labour group treasurer should ensure that the commercial value of in-kind donations (such as printed materials supplied to a CLP or branch) is communicated promptly to the CLP or other party unit treasurer.

3. Maintain the Group fund and Elected Representative Levy

- Maintain records of individual members' contributions to the Group fund.
- Liaise with the Group Secretary to maintain records of members' allowances.
- Ensure that members pay the Elected Representative Levy of 2% of total council income into the Group fund. Ensure that this is paid to the Party by direct debit.

4. Model Person Specification – desirable attributes:

- Organised
- Numerate
- Efficient
- Good attention to detail
- Accurate

Version 2 (2023) – Internal sign off 070223

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/political-parties-campaigning-and-donations/donations-and-loans-to-other-individuals-and-organisations/guidance-for-regulated-organisations>