

Streatham Labour Party

Affiliate Consultation Responses 2019

Dear Member,

In October 2018, Jennie Formby, General Secretary of the Labour Party, issued the following instructions to Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) who are planning to meet to decide whether or not to adopt an all-member structure for general committee meetings.

“CLPs must use the time between receipt of such a proposal and the special all member meeting to consult with other Party and affiliate branches and ensure that they are aware of the proposal and can express their views on it.”

At Streatham’s November Executive Committee meeting, the Executive Committee agreed to write to every affiliated Union/Socialist Society and seek their views on the proposed change from the current General Committee (GC) structure to an All Member Meeting (AMM).

We have published the responses below for your reference.

Yours sincerely,

Streatham Labour Party Executive Committee

* * *

**Joint TULO Statement (ASLEF, BFAWU,
Community, CWU, FBU, GMB, MU, NUM, TSSA,
Unison, Unite, Usdaw)**

Party Conference passed a rule change that sets out the process by which CLPs can switch between two different methods of organisation – an “all member meeting” structure, where decisions are made at regular meetings with all members invited and eligible to vote, and a

delegate-based structure, with local Party and affiliated branches electing delegates to represent them at regular General Committee (GC) meetings (some CLPs have a hybrid structure, with all members invited to attend, but only elected delegates having voting rights). Trade Unions support delegate-based structures for local CLPs, because they allow trade union branches that have affiliated to the CLP to be formally represented and take part in the CLP's decision-making processes. All member meetings do not allow affiliated trade unions to be represented in CLP decision-making, and this weakens the relationship between the Party and the unions at a local level.

We believe that the link between the Party and the trade union movement gives Labour a foundation in thousands of workplaces across the country. Together, trade unions bring the collective voices of nearly 4 million working people to the heart of our Party. It is this direct link to working people that makes our Party unique, and we believe that this link is crucial locally as well as nationally.

The rule change passed at Conference makes it clear that the NEC of the Party may make guidelines setting the minimum requirements for consultation with local affiliates. We urge CLPs initiating processes to move between methods of organisation to pause the process until those guidelines have been issued, and until they have fully consulted with their affiliated unions and societies.

Co-operative Party

Lots of CLPs are discussing this since the Labour Conference rule change. We will put the guidance to local parties on CLP related issues round again. The move to an AMM is an inevitable diminution of our rights/position as a CLP affiliate which is to be regretted. As a local Co-op Party you should feel free to make those representations at the meeting, alongside trade union colleagues and others. Given the ambition of the Democracy Review to build a mass movement it has always struck me as strange that in some cases these debates end up seeking to reduce the role of affiliates in favour of OMOV when trade unions and the coop movement are mass social movements there to be engaged and worked with.

Claire McCarthy, General Secretary of the Co-op Party

LGBT Labour

Dear Joel,

LGBT Labour is of the view that General Committee style committee meetings are preferable. We believe that holding meetings where there is guaranteed representation of LGBT and other minority voices is absolutely essential, it's our belief in this that encourages

us to affiliate to so many CLPs every year, and why we have affiliated to Streatham Labour Party. Further to this, the General Committee style helps to ensure gender balancing of delegates which is vital if women are to be properly represented in your CLP.

We understand that people feel engagement can be encouraged via all member meetings however with this style, minority voices are often drowned out. There are many other ways local parties can encourage engagement across the CLP. Many other socialist societies and trade unions share this belief with us as it's vital those organisations that founded the party and are the backbone of it, continue to be represented.

Yours sincerely,

Melantha Chittenden
Co-Chair, LGBT Labour

UNISON

Thank you for your email.

UNISON, as an affiliated union to the Labour Party, supports the TULO position on all members meetings.

Accordingly, UNISON continues to support delegate-based structures for local CLPs as the current structures allow our branches affiliated to the CLP to be formally represented and take part in the CLP's decision-making processes.

Any move to AMM's will exclude affiliated trade unions from decision-making, weakening the relationship between the Party and the unions at a local level.

I have written to all UNISON delegates across London outlining the TULO position and have been heartened by both the level of activity and contributions our members make to their local constituency party and their wish to continue doing so.

UNISON has had a long standing relationship with your CLP, sponsoring events and working together on joint campaigns of mutual interest; it's key now that with the possibility of a snap General Election and the Mayoral Election just over a year away we renew our partnership not sever it.

Please share these views with your members and please let me know the outcome of your deliberations.

Best wishes

Steve Terry
Political Officer, UNISON

Jewish Labour Movement (JLM)

Dear Joel,

The Jewish Labour Movement has been formally linked to the Labour Party since 1920, and will shortly be celebrating our centenary of our affiliation. JLM affiliated to the Labour Party shortly after its foundation, and joined the coalition of Trade Unions, independent Labour parliamentarians, Fabians, Christian Socialists and others as it was at the time. Throughout JLM's association with the Labour Party, many of the rules and norms governing the Party structures have understandably changed to suit the requirements of the day. Important throughout that history has been the vital link between the Party's membership structure and its affiliated organisations.

This link is practically maintained through ensuring that affiliates retain both rights and responsibilities within the Party. At Party Conference, JLM votes within the Affiliate bloc. In Leadership elections, within the Affiliate section of the electoral college. We are represented on the NEC, NCC, NPF and other structures through our Socialist Society reserved seats. The principle of ensuring representation from affiliated organisations extends for the Trade Union section, with dedicated TU Liaison committees, seats and officer positions. This well-established principle has operated at a national, regional and local level for a considerable time.

Socialist Societies, including JLM, also play an important role as gateway organisations to grow the Party's membership. Whilst as with Trade Unions, Labour Party membership is not required under the provisions of the Party's Rule Book, it is strongly encouraged. Those joining affiliated organisations because of their special character or specialism invariably go on to take membership of the Party. For JLM, this is particularly important in parts of the UK with a substantial Jewish population.

For these reasons, JLM cannot support the proposed AMM structure.

With best wishes,
Peter

Peter Mason
National Secretary, Jewish Labour Movement

Labour Party Irish Society (LPIS)

Dear Joel,

LPIS supports the General Committee structure for Constituency Labour Parties. It is all too easily forgotten that the Irish community has faced discrimination and oppression for centuries in the UK and that the Labour Party has been crucial in bringing around progressive change in the way those of Irish heritage are treated in our society. We therefore stand in solidarity with other minority voices in our Labour movement and ask that members vote against any move to limit Irish representation in Streatham CLP.

Best,

Matthew Doyle
Secretary, LPIS

GMB

Dear Joel,

Thank you for informing me that Streatham CLP is considering moving to an All Members Meeting (AMM) structure at its next meeting. Below is our GMB response, please can you ensure that members of the CLP are given this information.

GMB fully support the Unions Together/TULO statement on AMM. This statement has been agreed by all Labour Party Affiliated unions.

[See Joint TULO Statement above]

I would appreciate it if you could ensure these comments are circulated to CLP members in advance of the meeting and those attending the meeting are also made aware of them. If you have any questions please let me know.

Yours Sincerely,

Michelle Gordon
Regional Political and Equality Officer, GMB Southern Region