



## A sustainable food policy

*Environment, Energy and Culture Policy Commission*



Thank you for taking part in the Labour Party's 2019 National Policy Forum Consultation, the Party's process for getting input from our members, supporters and stakeholders on how we shape our policies.

This booklet is one of eight policy documents published by the Labour Party as part of our consultation this year.

Each document contains sets of questions for you to answer. You do not need to answer every question, nor is there any specific way to answer them. We suggest picking the questions most important to you and using them as a guide to write a few lines or paragraphs on what you think about the issues in this area.

At the end of the document you can find a guide on how to send in your ideas to us and other ways to get involved in the consultation.

There are seven other documents that might interest you covering different areas of the Party's policies, you can find them in the consultation pack or online. If you have an idea or issue you would like to talk about that is not covered in this year's consultation, you can submit these to us too via [www.policyforum.labour.org.uk](http://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk)

Whether you're a Labour Party member or not, we want to hear your ideas on how the next Labour government should tackle the challenges our country faces, and build a more equal Britain for the many, not the few.

### **Want to know more about how Labour makes policy?**

You can learn more about how Labour makes policy, further details about the 2019 Consultation and find policy events in your area on our website [www.policyforum.labour.org.uk](http://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk)

### **ACCESSIBLE MATERIALS**

The Labour Party is an inclusive member-based organisation that prides itself on being accessible to all who share its values. If you would like an accessible version of these documents please email us at [policydevelopment@labour.org.uk](mailto:policydevelopment@labour.org.uk) to discuss how we can best accommodate your requirements.

## A sustainable food policy

Food is a necessity of human life. Sufficient, healthy nutrition is not a luxury to which we should aspire, it is an essential component of what makes for a good quality of life.

In Britain, we live in one of the world's most fertile, temperate lands but our food production and distribution systems are deeply flawed. The shocking rise in food bank use demonstrates the need to protect the right of all to live free from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. Today, even people in work are found struggling to feed themselves and their families healthily. Sales of cookery books are at a record high and food television programmes have never been more popular but more and more people are living without the corresponding life skills. In modern Britain, food waste sits alongside malnutrition, with an epidemic in food-related ill-health, including obesity, and diabetes.

Labour's Environment, Energy and Culture Policy Commission is seeking views on how best to reform and develop our food systems in order to make sure that everyone can access affordable, healthy, nutritious and sustainably sourced food.

We will need Labour's food policies to future-proof a system based on the needs of people. We will need to put those who produce, process, distribute, sell and consume healthy and local food right at the heart of our agriculture and food systems, not only the demands of transnational companies and our retail giants. We need a food system capable of adapting to the effects of climate changes and also of reducing the carbon footprint which causes them.

## Food Sovereignty

The principles of food sovereignty are:

- Food is for people;
- Food producers are valued;
- Food systems are localised;
- There is democratic control over the food system;
- We build knowledge and skills;
- Our food system works with nature.

1. Are these the right principles on which to build our food policies?
2. Are there other core principles we should adopt?

## The Right to Healthy Food

The right to food is the right to have regular, permanent and unrestricted access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food. This right is only realised when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate healthy food or the means for its procurement. This right is associated with the Sustainable Development Goals to which we are committed, including the goal of ending hunger.

3. What form should a right to food take?
4. Should we be aspirational and visionary in our approach, or should we be measured and incremental?
5. Should we establish in law a universal right to healthy food or should we first prioritise the rights of access to healthy food for certain population groups, such as school children; expectant mothers; elderly and vulnerable people receiving care?
6. Should there be a duty to provide food or should the duty be to avoid hunger, or malnutrition?



## Land

Land should be recognised and valued as an essential resource: for food and shelter and as the basis for numerous social, cultural and other economic practices. The current laws and structures of land ownership and management structures constrain our food and farming systems, as do interactions and competing or conflicting priorities of other land uses.

7. Is there a need to review and reform land law and public land management systems in order to underpin a sustainable food system?
8. Should we establish a Land Commission to conduct a review and make legal recommendations and, if yes, what should its remit be?
9. Should we seek to integrate our vision with that of the devolved administrations which operate under different systems?
10. What should a sustainable land policy look like?

## Food production and distribution

Food production should be an economically and environmentally sustainable enterprise contributing to the overall purpose of feeding people healthy, nutritious and affordable food. Under the current systems of food production, this is not achieved for everyone.

11. What are the national and international barriers, legal, commercial or administrative, that might constrain our development of sustainable, healthy and efficient food systems?
12. What measures should we take first to ensure local food production is environmentally and economically sustainable?
13. What most constrains the economic and environmental sustainability of food producers?
14. How can we best tackle food waste?

## Workforce

A thriving food industry requires a safe and healthy work environment, free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination. Workers should have the right to secure contracts with a living wage and must be guaranteed fair political and union representation.

15. What changes are needed to improve working conditions and safety in the food production and distribution industries?
16. What regulatory measures could reduce economic volatility and provide long-term security in the farming and fishing sectors, and for food producers and their employees?
17. What workforce does a thriving and sustainable food industry require?
18. What measures could deliver the necessary knowledge and skills base in the food industry, and what might encourage new entrants, apprentices or trainees?
19. What steps could be taken to encourage faster or better take up of different, newer emergent technologies in our food production and distribution industries?

Thank you for taking the time to read our consultation document.

We want to harness the views, experience and expertise of our members, stakeholders and the wider public. If you would like to respond to any of the issues in this document, there are a number of ways you can get involved:

- 1. Online:** The best and easiest way to send in your ideas and join the discussion is via our online home of policy making:  
[www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/consultation2019](http://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/consultation2019)
- 2. By post:** If you have written down your ideas, you can post these to us at:  
The Labour Party,  
Policy Unit,  
Southside,  
105 Victoria Street,  
London, SW1E 6QT
- 3. At your local party:** You may want to discuss your ideas with other members of your CLP or local branch. You can suggest to your CLP Secretary that a policy discussion is held at a future meeting.
- 4. Regional Policy Forums:** Look out for events hosted by your regional office, local parties and National Policy Forum Representatives.

You can find out more about the 2019 consultation, upcoming events and more details on how Labour makes its policy at  
[www.policyforum.labour.org.uk](http://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk)

Follow us on Twitter for regular updates during the consultation  
[@Labpolicyforum](https://twitter.com/Labpolicyforum)  
[#LabourPolicy](https://twitter.com/LabourPolicy)

**Please send your ideas before the consultation period ends, it runs until Sunday 30 June 2019.**

