

Scotland
forward
not back

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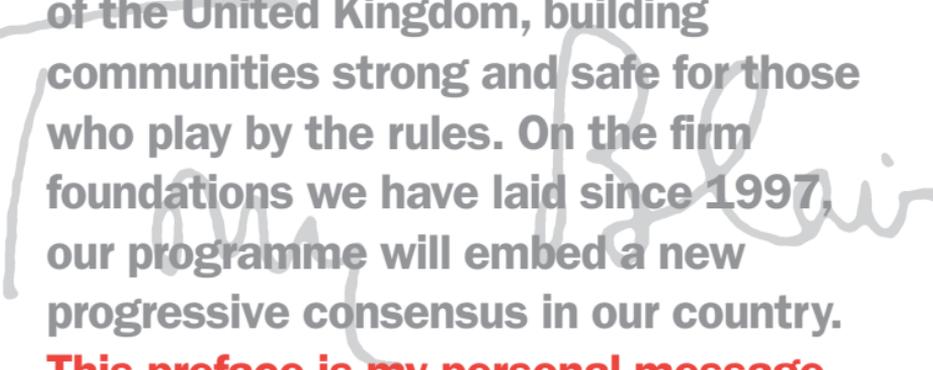
A red rectangular box containing the text "Scotland forward not back" in white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The text is arranged in three lines: "Scotland" on the first line, "forward" on the second, and "not back" on the third.

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Preface Tony Blair

New Labour's 2005 manifesto applies the unchanging values of our party to the new priorities of the British people. It is a plan to improve the lives of hard-working families and prepare our country for success in a fast-changing world. Our case rests on one idea more than any other – that it is the duty of government to provide opportunity and security for all in a changing world. Every chapter relates back to that goal: breaking down the barriers that stop people fulfilling their talent, extending opportunity to every corner of the United Kingdom, building communities strong and safe for those who play by the rules. On the firm foundations we have laid since 1997, our programme will embed a new progressive consensus in our country.

This preface is my personal message.

A large, light grey, handwritten signature of Tony Blair is overlaid on the text, starting from the left margin and extending across the middle of the page.

Eight years ago, I offered new leadership – fresh, idealistic, energetic, but untested. You voted for change and gave me the chance to serve. In our first term we banished the demons of ten per cent interest rates, mass unemployment, wages of £1.50 an hour, and years of underinvestment in schools and hospitals. We put Labour values into action. And we banished Labour demons too: we showed we could run the economy well, cut crime, and stand up for Britain abroad. We proved our competence.

Four years ago, I said we needed to continue the modernisation of our economy, coupled with investment and reform to achieve change in public services. At the end of this second term we have delivered an unprecedented period of stability and growth. And at both Holyrood and Westminster, we have increased investment and we have embarked on a radical programme of reform to put the people themselves in the driving seat of our public services. We have made difficult decisions. In the process we have proved our resilience. Now we go to the people, not only having delivered on our promises, but setting new and more ambitious goals for our public services and our country.

But Britain can be better still.

I know the change is possible. Not just because I have studied the statistics, but because I have seen it with my own eyes across the length and breadth of the United Kingdom.

I have spoken to NHS staff who tell me how their new hospital and the new funding is letting them improve care for their patients.

I have heard teachers tell me how they no longer have to work in crumbling classrooms without books and computers – and pupils show me, with pride, round their sparkling new school.

I have met youngsters whose lives have been transformed by the New Deal – once written off, they are now full of confidence and ambition.

I've been to communities where the Sure Start programme is helping overcome disadvantage and seen for myself the remarkable revival of our great cities.

I have met aid workers in Africa who tell me how this country is improving the lives of the poorest on our planet.

These are not the fantasy of politicians. They are the stories of real life in our country and abroad. Not for everyone. Not everywhere. But for enough people and in enough places for us to know it is not a fluke. Personal prosperity and the good society; the fruit of partnership between the British people and a government on their side.

Now we have to decide whether to go forward or back.

Britain is on the right track. We will not change direction. Neither will we rest on our laurels. Our third-term opportunity is to build on the progress we have made. That progress, first as a party then in government, began with the insight that the only way to advance decent progressive values was to develop a new policy agenda. Our understanding of the world and the great changes under way in our society led us to reject the false choices of the past. This is the foundation stone of new Labour.

I believe that in our third term we can embed a new progressive consensus. One that reflects the mission of our movement, and the hopes and values of our people. And as much as the pursuit of this consensus represents an unprecedented opportunity for progressive politics, so it will be bitterly opposed by those who seek to take us back to the divisions of the past.

In our third term, we will forge an even stronger bond between the goals of economic progress and social justice. No going back to fiscal irresponsibility. No going back to a Conservative government that says mass unemployment is a price worth paying. Going forward instead to an opportunity economy, spreading prosperity through high employment and welfare reform, spreading opportunity through widening access to university and training, spreading ownership through the Child Trust Fund, and expanding homeownership.

In our third term, working in partnership in Holyrood and Westminster, we will make public services safe for a generation. No going back to one-size-fits-all monolithic services. No going back to the Tory years of cuts and privatisation. Going forward instead to services free to all, personal to each: breaking once and for all the drop-out culture in education and the long-wait culture in health, by raising investment and driving innovation through diversity of provision and putting power in the hands of the patient, the parent and the citizen.

In our third term we will cement a new social contract with rights matched by responsibilities. No going back to ‘no such thing as society’. Going forward instead to power and resources in the hands of the law-abiding majority. A government committed both to abolishing child poverty and to putting the values of individual responsibility and duty at the very heart of policy.

In our third term, we will show that our national interest can only be pursued by engaging with the world’s great challenges. No going back to a Britain marginalised and weak. Going forward to a stronger country in a safer, fairer world. Leading on Africa, leading on the environment, at the heart of Europe, working together to tackle terror and spread peace and justice.

We do not duck the tough choices – from independence for the Bank

of England to the tax rise we made for the NHS, to the war in Iraq. We made decisions because we believed them right – not because they were destined to be popular.

But we refuse to accept false choices. The British people never wanted to choose between wealth creation and social justice. They never wanted to choose between national security and overseas aid. They never wanted to choose between equal rights and protection from crime. These are the false choices that landed us with economic decline and social division.

The British people have the capacity to make this a great country. Our ideals are undimmed: extend opportunity to all, demand responsibility from all, secure justice for all. Our policies are refreshed: never has a governing party proposed a more wide-ranging programme of change for the country. Our vision is clear: a country more equal in its opportunities, more secure in its communities, more confident in its future. It is our social contract: we help you, you help yourself; you benefit and the country benefits.

So now I fight my last election as Leader of my party and Prime Minister of our country. My call is a passionate one: let's together make irreversible the positive changes that are happening in our country. Let's make the values of social justice and a fair deal for all the governing ideal of our country not just for some time but for all time. People freed from barriers of class, building a better future for themselves and for the country. Self-interest and national interest together.

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Preface

Alistair Darling and Jack McConnell

Scotland will only move forward with both a Labour Government in Westminster and Labour in Holyrood. Scotland is stronger when Britain is stronger. Our vision is of a Scotland with increasing prosperity, growing opportunity and improving public services. It is a vision of confidence in a changing world, driven by our values and by our determination to make poverty history at home and in the wider world. It is also a powerful symbol of the growing maturity of the devolution settlement delivered by Labour.

In Westminster and Holyrood, we have worked in partnership towards a common purpose. Together we have been able to invest in Scotland's future because of the platform of economic stability and low interest rates delivered by Labour in the UK. Labour's vision and values reflect the country and society people want to see. The Labour Government's economic record makes it possible. And the partnership between Labour at Westminster and Holyrood makes it happen.

This manifesto sets out where Labour will take Scotland in the years to come. It builds on the progress made and sets out what we can achieve for Scotland. Investing in schools – the biggest building programme in Europe. More people in apprenticeships and in higher education. New laws to protect Scots from crime. Action to reduce long NHS waits. And there is a choice. We can continue with the hard-won economic stability which has allowed us to increase investment in public services, lift children and pensioners out of poverty, and help hard-working families. Or we can return to the economic failure and Tory cuts of the past.

Scotland will not be immune from Tory cuts at Westminster. The outcome of this election matters in Scotland and the choice is very clear. A Labour vision of opportunity, choice, and fairness for all in a changing world. A strong economy and better services. Or a return to Tory boom and bust, high unemployment and cuts in services.

That is why this election is so important, and why this manifesto contains detailed policies to be delivered by Labour in Westminster and Holyrood. Scotland has tremendous potential. This manifesto sets out what we can achieve together.

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New Labour's record:

The contract delivered

Our country is changing for the better, because we fulfilled the promises of our 1997 and 2001 manifestos. Here is what has changed

■ Prosperity for all

Britain now has a stable, growing economy with the lowest inflation since the 1960s.

Since 1997, two million more people across the UK are in work, and Britain has the lowest unemployment for 30 years. Tax credits and the minimum wage are ensuring that work pays for everyone.

Because of this we are saving £5 billion a year on the costs of unemployment – that's £84 for every citizen in Britain – money that is being invested in frontline services such as schools and hospitals.

Across the UK, there are more than one million extra homeowners, saving on average nearly £4,000 a year, thanks to the lowest mortgage rates for 40 years.

Since 1997, average incomes have increased by 19 per cent and the income of a typical family has increased by 17 per cent, with living standards rising in double digits for every part of the income spectrum.

There are 30,000 more businesses in Scotland than in 1998, providing jobs and increased prosperity.

Across the UK, there are two million fewer children and nearly two million fewer pensioners living in absolute poverty.

■ World-class public services

Investment in public services is up with an extra £1,863 per secondary pupil, and spending on the NHS in Scotland has almost doubled to over £8 billion. There are almost 1,500 more teachers and 5,800 teaching assistants. The National Health Service in Scotland now has almost 3,500 more nurses and over 1,600 more doctors. And public servants – from nurses to police officers – are better rewarded for their work.

Since the introduction of free entry, visits to our national museums and galleries have risen by 75 per cent across the UK.

Deaths from heart disease are down by over 30 per cent and cancer deaths down by nine per cent.

■ **A modern welfare state**

Thanks to our New Deal, long-term youth unemployment has been virtually eradicated, with over half a million young people helped into work.

By October 2005, families with children will be on average £1,400 a year better off as a result of our tax and benefit measures compared to 1997.

Thanks to our reforms pensioner households are on average £1,500 a year better off, rising to £2,000 for the poorest third.

Maternity leave has increased to 26 weeks and maternity pay has almost doubled.

There are 1.2 million more older people in employment. The employment rate for people aged between 50 and pension age has increased by over five percentage points to 70 per cent.

■ **Strong and safe communities**

Crime has fallen by 29 per cent in Scotland and we have record crime clear-up rates.

There are record numbers of police, nearly 1,200 more, assisted by 550 new Community Wardens.

New powers to tackle anti-social behaviour have been introduced, with nearly 377 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders issued so far.

We have introduced fast-track hearings and Youth Courts, with the aim of approximately 60 days from offence to disposal.

More than 80 per cent of initial decisions on asylum claims are now processed in two months.

■ **Britain strong in the world**

Britain's and Scotland's interests are at the heart of an enlarged European Union, with economic reform putting jobs first.

Our international aid budget for the world's poorest countries has more than doubled.

We have successfully pressed for the restarting of world trade talks which will focus on the needs of developing countries.

Our strong, effective and responsive armed forces are ensuring the defence of Britain's interests.

We introduced greenhouse gas-trading to cut pollution – the first country to do so – reducing emissions by 9.8 million tonnes in the first two years.

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Chapter 1

Economy: Rising prosperity in an opportunity society

**Forward to increased prosperity,
not back to boom and bust**

**1979-1997: Interest rates average over
ten per cent**

**1997-2005: Britain, the fourth largest economy
in the world, with the longest ever
period of continuous growth**

**2010: Full employment in every region
and nation**

Labour's economic record is unprecedented – the highest employment ever, longest period of uninterrupted growth in modern history, lowest sustained interest and inflation rates for a generation. Scotland takes strength from being part of a strong UK economy. In Scotland, there are more people in work than ever before, our employment rate is better than anywhere else in the UK, and the only country in Europe closer to full employment than Scotland is Denmark. Our economic policies will build on the platform of stability and growth in three ways – entrenching a low-debt/high-employment economy which generates investment in public services; supporting enterprise and wealth creation by making Britain the best place to do business; and helping every part of Britain and every person in Britain to contribute to and gain from the strength of our economy. And as we work globally to tackle climate change we recognise the challenge and the opportunity of achieving sustainable development at home.

■ **The new Labour case**

Our economic record has finally laid to rest the view that Labour could not be trusted with the economy. We are winning the argument that economic dynamism and social justice must go hand in hand. In the future, the countries that do best will be those with a shared purpose about the long-term changes and investments they need to make – and have the determination to equip their people for that future. So, we approach new challenges with a progressive strategy for growth. In our third term, we will build new ladders of social mobility and advancement on the firm foundations of stability, investment and growth.

■ **Low debt and high employment**

In the last eight years we have pioneered a British way to economic stability. The British economy has grown in every quarter with this

Government. Interest rates have averaged 5.3 per cent since 1997, saving mortgage payers on average nearly £4,000 per year compared to the Tory years.

Only with Labour, which constructed this framework, will this continue. We will maintain our inflation target at two per cent. We will continue to meet our fiscal rules: over the economic cycle, we will borrow only to invest, and keep net debt at a stable and prudent level.

■ **Public spending and taxation**

The longest period of uninterrupted growth in modern times has enabled the Government to deliver the longest period of sustained investment in public services for a generation. Social security bills for unemployment have been halved since 1997, saving £5 billion a year, and we are also saving £4 billion a year on debt interest payments.

Every pound we invest goes further because of our drive for efficiency and reform. Labour will complete the implementation of Sir Peter Gershon's recommendations to improve public service efficiency and root out waste, liberating over £21 billion for investment in frontline services across the UK. And in Scotland, we are implementing an Efficient Government programme to attack waste, bureaucracy and duplication in Scotland's public sector. This will deliver savings of at least £1.7 billion across the public sector over three years which will be re-invested in frontline services.

Labour believes tax policy should continue to be governed by the health of the public finances, the requirement for public investment and the needs of families, business and the environment.

We will not raise the basic or top rates of income tax in the next Parliament. We renew our pledge not to extend VAT to food, children's clothes, books, newspapers and public transport fares. We will

continue to make targeted tax cuts for families and to support work. As a result of personal tax and benefit measures introduced since 1997, by October 2005 families with children will be on average £1,400 a year better off in real terms. Living standards in Britain have been rising, on average, by 2.5 per cent per year since 1997 – a total increase of nearly 20 per cent.

We want a tax regime that supports British business. That is why we have cut corporation tax to its lowest ever level, introduced the best regime of capital gains tax in any industrialised country and a new Research and Development tax credit.

■ Full employment

Our goal is employment opportunity for all – the modern definition of full employment. Britain has more people in work than ever before with the highest employment rate in the G7. Our long-term aim is to raise the employment rate to 80 per cent. And, as we move more people from welfare to work, the savings on unemployment benefits will go towards investing more in our public services.

We will make work pay. With Labour's tax credits a family with two children pays no net tax until their earnings reach £21,000.

We will implement the recommendations of the Low Pay Commission to raise the minimum wage to £5.05 from October 2005 and £5.35 from October 2006.

The New Deals and the creation of Jobcentre Plus have made a major contribution to cutting unemployment. The active welfare state created since 1997 is working.

The Tories trebled the number on incapacity benefits. We will help people who can work into rehabilitation and eventually into employment,

*'We are winning
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recognising the practical assistance to disabled people of the Access to Work scheme. We will build on the successful Pathways to Work programme and reform Incapacity Benefit with the main elements of the new benefit regime in place from 2008. The majority of claimants with more manageable conditions will be required to engage in both work-focused interviews and in activity to help them prepare for a return to work. Those with the most severe conditions will also be encouraged to engage in activity and should receive more money than now. We will continue to welcome new independent and voluntary sector partners to provide job-seeking services.

■ Supporting enterprise

Government does not create wealth but it must support the wealth creators. That is why our priorities are the national infrastructure of skills, science, regulation, planning and transport. The economy of the future will be based on knowledge, innovation and creativity. That applies both to manufacturing and services.

In a fast-changing global economy, government cannot postpone or prevent change. The modern role for government and the case for a modern employment and skills policy is to equip people to succeed, to be on their side, helping them become more skilled, adaptable and flexible for the job ahead, rather than the old Tory way of walking away leaving people unaided to face change.

Successful manufacturing industries are vital to our future prosperity. Labour backs British manufacturing: from launch investment for Airbus A380 Super Jumbo to the creation of a Scottish Manufacturing Advice Service later this year.

Public procurement is a big opportunity for business in Britain and the source of many jobs. We will promote a public procurement strategy that safeguards UK jobs and skills, under EU rules, to ensure that

British industry can compete fairly with the rest of Europe.

Britain has some of the strongest capital markets in the world. Indeed, the financial sector is one of the most important sectors of the Scottish economy. And we are determined they – and our financial services industry – should prosper. We will ensure that companies have the right framework of corporate governance and relationships with the institutions that invest our pension funds and savings in them.

Scotland is a small but open economy, and our future will depend on our ability to embrace increased globalisation, not to resist it. Working in partnership in Holyrood and Westminster, we are investing in our global connections: in digital communications and infrastructure in air and sea route development, and we will more than double our staff who promote Scottish business overseas.

We have also turned around Scotland's tourism industry from the low point in 2001 and we aim to increase the value of tourism to the Scottish economy by 50 per cent by 2015. We are doubling the marketing budget for VisitScotland and are working to improve the quality of the visitor experience.

■ **Skills at work**

Lifelong learning contributes to a successful Scotland by creating the skills and knowledge both the economy and society need to prosper and to close the opportunity gap. Labour wants to stimulate a passion for learning in the people of Scotland.

Our goal is clear: we want to create a Scotland where people have the confidence, enterprise, knowledge, creativity and skills they need to participate in economic, social and civic life.

Scottish universities are first class and our colleges provide quality

training and education in local communities. The number of school leavers in Scotland studying in higher education is a third more than in the rest of the UK. Labour in Scotland will invest 23 per cent more in higher education, and will increase capital budgets by 400 per cent to drive up standards and the quality of teaching and research in buildings fit for the 21st century. Our objectives for lifelong learning are clear:

- *We aim to reduce the proportion of 16- to 19-year-olds not in education, employment or training. We will do that by supporting youngsters from low-income families to stay at school through the Educational Maintenance Allowance, raising the quantity and quality of Modern Apprentices and inspiring youngsters at school through our ground-breaking enterprise education programme, Determined to Succeed.*
- *We will increase the number of graduates as a proportion of Scotland's workforce and we will improve the chances of young Scots from low income families to participate in higher and further education by building on the reformed system of student support in Scotland.*
- *A genuinely employer-driven system – in every sector there will be a Sector Skills Council determining the training strategy; and in Scotland we will encourage more workplace learning with our 'Business Learning Accounts'.*
- *A strong partnership with trade unions to boost workplace training including a new union academy and continued support for Union Learning Reps.*

■ Supporting science

The alliance of scientific research and business creativity is key to our continued prosperity. Labour in Westminster and Holyrood will build on the joint international reputation for the quality and relevance of our science.

Looking ahead, we are committed to a ten-year strategy on science and innovation that will continue to invest in our science and industri-

al base at least in line with trend GDP. Our ambition now is to raise the UK's total private and public sector investment in research and development, as a proportion of national income, from its current 1.9 per cent to 2.5 per cent by 2014.

Our pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries are world leaders. We have created one of the world's best environments for stem-cell research in Britain, and Scotland's life sciences industry is growing by almost twice the European rate. With less than 0.1 per cent of the world's population, Scotland produces 1 per cent of the world's published research.

In Scotland, in addition to our extra investment in our universities over the next three years, we are investing £450 million over ten years in new Intermediate Technology Institutes to get new research into the marketplace.

Across a range of environmental issues – from soil erosion to the depletion of marine resources, from water scarcity to air pollution – it is clear now not just that economic activity is their cause but that these problems in themselves threaten future economic activity and growth. We will continue to work with the environmental goods and services sector – which is already worth £25 billion to the economy to promote new green technologies and industries in the UK and internationally, and use the purchasing power of government to support environmental improvement. And in Scotland, Labour is implementing a Green Jobs Strategy to promote new green technologies and to develop Scotland into the Green Energy Capital of Europe.

■ **Competition, planning and regulation**

Competition is a driving force for innovation. Our competition regime has been toughened with independent competition bodies and stronger penalties.

To the benefit of business and household consumers we are liberalising the postal services market, while protecting the universal service at a uniform tariff.

As we said in our policy document *Britain is Working*, we have given the Royal Mail greater commercial freedom and have no plans to privatise it. Our ambition is to see a publicly owned Royal Mail fully restored to good health, providing customers with an excellent service and its employees with rewarding employment. We will review the impact on the Royal Mail of market liberalisation, which is being progressively introduced under the Postal Services Act 2000 and which allows alternative carriers to the Royal Mail to offer postal services.

We have reformed our energy markets to make them open and competitive. And we are a leading force in the campaign to make Europe's energy markets the same. Our wider energy policy has created a framework that places the challenge of climate change – as well as the need to achieve security of supply – at the heart of our energy policy. Scotland is playing a leading role in the development and promotion of renewable energy as part of the UK's strategy of having a mix of energy sources from nuclear power stations to clean coal to micro-generators.

We will only regulate where necessary and will set exacting targets for reducing the costs of administering regulations. We will rationalise business inspections. The merger of the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise will cut the administrative costs of tax compliance for small businesses.

We will take further action in Europe to ensure that EU regulations are proportionate and better designed. We strongly support the creation of an EU single market in services to match the single market in goods – and want an effective directive to provide real benefits to consumers

and new opportunities to British business. We will protect our employment standards. In developing the directive we will want to avoid any undermining of our regulatory framework.

We will continue to work to protect the rights of consumers, working in partnership in Westminster and Holyrood to bring forward proposals to strengthen and streamline consumer advocacy. We look forward to action from the banking industry to remove delays in processing cheques and other payments and, if necessary, will legislate to ensure this early in the next Parliament.

There are many bank accounts that are lying dormant and unclaimed, often because people have forgotten about them or because the owner has died. We will work with the financial services industry to establish a common definition and a comprehensive record of unclaimed assets. We will then expect banks, over the course of the Parliament, to either reunite those assets with their owners or to channel them back into the community.

An effective planning regime protects the environment while promoting economic growth – and does so quickly and responsively. Labour in Scotland will reform the planning system so it supports sustainability; is simpler, faster and more responsive to local and business needs; and is based on meaningful community consultation and securing our objective of growing the economy and regeneration of our towns and cities.

■ **Fostering entrepreneurship**

There are 30,000 more businesses in Scotland since 1998. We are tackling barriers to finance for small and growing businesses – especially enterprises in deprived areas through Scotland's local enterprise network and Regional Selective Assistance.

*‘In Scotland, there are
more people in work
than ever before,
our employment rate
is better than anywhere
else in the UK...’*

In Scotland we will extend our successful enterprise education scheme into every school, so that every pupil in Scotland will be exposed to the concepts of enterprise. We will attract fresh talent to create more diversity and dynamism in the Scottish economy.

■ **Modern transport infrastructure**

An efficient transport system is vital to the country's future, to our economy and to our quality of life. Investment, better management of road and rail and planning ahead are vital to deal with the pressures on the system and meet our environmental objectives.

We have increased transport investment since 1997 and will increase it further, levering in private investment at the same time. The Eddington Review will work with the Government to advise on how this investment should be targeted – in particular, where transport is vital to underpin economic growth.

We are taking charge of setting the strategy for rail to further raise the standard of service and reliability. The biggest devolution of powers to Scotland since 1999 means that Scottish Ministers now have powers over track and train for rail services in Scotland.

We will examine options for increasing capacity, including a new generation of high-speed trains on intercity routes and will look at the feasibility and affordability of a new UK North-South high-speed link.

In Scotland, because of the increased investment made possible by the Labour Government at Westminster, we have massively increased the level of funding for transport, so that by the end of 2006 we will be spending £1 billion per year, of which 70 per cent will be targeted on public transport.

This has enabled Labour in Scotland to undertake a series of important transport improvements:

- *We are completing the gaps in the road network and will make major investment to complete the M74, upgrade the A8 and A80, and build the second Kincardine Bridge and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.*
- *We will continue to support the growth in bus provision, and will extend the free local-bus travel for all pensioners and disabled people into a Scotland-wide scheme by Spring 2006.*
- *We will work with local authorities and our new Regional Transport Partnerships to ensure that public transport provision and road policy are properly aligned.*
- *We will open a series of new rail services and rail lines such as the Larkhall to Milngavie rail link and the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine rail link. We are also supporting the Airdrie-Bathgate rail link, the rail links to Edinburgh and Glasgow Airports and improving Edinburgh Waverley Station. We also intend to make a start on the Borders Rail link.*
- *We will build on the new air routes to Scotland we have funded through our air route development fund and will continue our support for lifeline ferry and air services to our remote island communities.*

We will tackle congestion on our roads. Across the UK, because of the long-term nature of transport planning, we will seek political consensus in tackling congestion, including examining the potential of moving away from the current system of motoring taxation towards a national system of road-pricing.

We will explore the scope for further use of economic instruments as well as other measures to promote lower vehicle emissions and continue to support the shift of freight from road to rail, using our rail freight scheme. Safety in our transport system will remain a priority. We will aim to reduce further deaths and serious injuries among children, and we will review the target of 50 per cent set for 2010 to see if

it is ambitious enough. We will act strongly to tackle dangerous driving, especially drink driving.

We will continue to support air travel by implementing the balanced policies set out in our Aviation White Paper. We are committed to using the UK's 2005 presidency of the European Union to promote the inclusion of aviation in the EU's emissions trading scheme.

For shipping, our introduction of the tonnage tax has led to a trebling in size of the fleet since 1997. We want more ships to fly the British flag to boost jobs and training, and to increase shipping and port capacity.

■ **Opportunity for all**

Throughout the UK, Labour is determined to spread the benefits of enterprise and growth to every community in the country. Within Scotland our aim is to grow the Scottish economy in a way that contributes to regional development and reduced economic disparities.

Scotland's two economic development agencies, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, are charged with promoting economic growth and narrowing the disparity in unemployment between different parts of Scotland.

In 1997 many parts of our towns and cities were suffering from deeply entrenched and multiple disadvantage. Our multi-million pound Cities Growth Fund is beginning to make a visible difference to the quality of Scotland's six cities – turning each City-Vision into reality.

Through our Community Regeneration Fund, we will provide £318 million to promote the regeneration of the 15 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods, through improvements by 2008 in employability, education, health, access to local services, and quality of the local environment. We will also learn lessons from the new Urban

Regeneration Companies in Edinburgh, Stirling and Clydebank to stimulate comprehensive regeneration in other areas. And we will continue to work with businesses and local authorities to establish Business Improvement Districts.

■ Fairness at work

Since 1997 the Labour Government has introduced new rights for people at work and new opportunities for trade unions to represent their members. We see modern, growing trade unions as an important part of our society and economy. They provide protection and advice for employees, and we welcome the positive role they have played in developing a modern model of social partnership with business representatives. The Labour Party has agreed a set of policies for the workplace (the Warwick Agreement) and we will deliver them in full. They are good for employees and for the economy.

We have introduced, for the first time, an entitlement for every employee to four weeks' paid holiday and we propose to extend this by making it additional to bank holiday entitlements.

■ Promoting equality at work

A strong economy draws on the talents of all. We have extended legislation to protect people from discrimination at work to cover not only gender, disability race and ethnicity but also religion and sexual orientation and – from 2006 – age. Labour has transformed legal rights for disabled people. Next, we will expand and promote the Direct Payment scheme for people with disabilities so that they can decide for themselves what they need to improve their life chances.

We will take further action to narrow the pay and promotion gap between men and women. The Women and Work Commission will report to the Prime Minister later this year.

We will implement the National Employment Panel's report on measures to promote employment and small business growth for ethnic and faith minorities. We will take forward the Strategy for Race Equality to ensure that we combat discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnicity across a range of services. The Equalities Review reporting to the Prime Minister in 2006 will make practical recommendations on the priorities for tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity for all groups.

■ **Thriving rural areas**

Since 1997 Labour has brought in guidance to ensure wide consideration before the closure of a rural school, put in £750 million to support rural post offices across Britain and extended rate relief on village shops to more Scottish businesses. In Scotland, through the rural transport fund we have already created over 400 new or enhanced bus and ferry services.

We have already made considerable improvement to rural housing in Scotland, including funding 8,300 affordable homes in rural areas, and raised the rural share of the housing investment programme to 28 per cent – an all-time high. First-time buyers in rural Scotland will also benefit from Labour's new Homestake shared-equity scheme.

Because of our success in achieving extensive reforms in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), 2005 will be the first year for decades when farmers will be free to produce for the market and not simply for subsidy. We will continue to push for further reform of the CAP in the next Parliament, starting with the sugar regime.

We will continue to promote the competitiveness of the whole food sector, and assure the safety and quality of its products. In Scotland we have introduced guidance for schools, hospitals and local government to consider local sourcing of fresh produce where possible. We will

continue to improve the environmental performance of agriculture. Scottish farmers will be able to draw on a new package of measures to protect the environment and improve their businesses through the Land Management Contracts Menu Scheme to achieve the highest standards of stewardship of the land. We will also play our role in promoting biomass, bio-fuels and non-food crops for their environmental and economic benefits. We will work to tackle water pollution by ensuring that all human impacts that have a harmful effect on the water environment are properly controlled.

Under difficult circumstances, Labour is working with the fishing industry to create a sustainable long-term future for the fishing communities of the United Kingdom. We have reformed the Common Fisheries Policy and will continue to protect the marine environment and ensure fish stocks and their exploitation are set at sustainable levels.

The choice for 2010

The Conservatives are the party of high interest rates, high inflation, mass unemployment, and house repossessions. Their tax-and-spend promises do not add up, and they would cut £35 billion from public investment. With new Labour, Britain can seize the opportunities of globalisation, creating jobs and prosperity for people up and down the country. We can only do so if we build a clear sense of shared national economic purpose, not just around economic stability but also investment in infrastructure, skills, science and enterprise. The choice is to go forward to economic stability, rising prosperity and wider opportunities with new Labour. Or go back to the bad old days of Tory cuts, insecurity and instability.

**Scotland
forward
not back**

Chapter 2

Education: More children making the grade

**Forward to higher standards and
personalised learning, not back
to mass failure**

1997: Crumbling schools and rising class sizes

**2005: Biggest schools building programme in
Scotland's history and smaller class sizes
in P1-P3**

**2010: Every 16-year-old offered a place as an
apprentice or to go to college, university
or volunteer for a year**

Education is a key priority and Scotland has benefited enormously from Labour's increased investment. Without a Labour Government in Westminster, Scotland could not have made the progress which has ensured Scotland's education system is one of the best in the world. We want what parents want for their children – the learning and teaching that is right for them; languages and music as well as English and maths in primary school; inspiring environments through new and refurbished schools in which to learn; the guarantee of a place as an apprentice or to go to college, university or volunteer for a year; quality places in higher education. And at each stage we are clear – every child has a right to a good education, but no child has the right to disrupt the education of other children.

■ **The new Labour case**

Scotland will be held back if our education system delivers excellence for a minority and others are left behind. Labour's goal for Scotland is excellence and opportunity for all. We will raise standards and participation for all by meeting the individual needs of every pupil and student. To meet diverse needs, we need greater choice in what to study and when; a strong parental voice throughout the education system; a wide and rich curriculum that prizes academic and vocational aptitudes; and firm policies on discipline. Our third term will expand educational opportunities across the UK wider than ever before.

■ **Every pupil with better teaching**

There is no greater responsibility than teaching the next generation. We expect a lot from Scotland's head teachers, teachers and support staff. They are getting better pay, better leadership, better training and more professional freedoms. We want them to get the respect they deserve. There are now 1,475 more teachers than in 1997 and we have over 5,800 teaching assistants; graduate teacher applications are up 30

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per cent since 2002; average salaries are up by more than 30 per cent. We will now go further – to expand in-service training for teachers, to open new routes into teaching, to help more teachers and pupils get the benefit of the range of support staff now working in schools. By 2007, we will increase the number of teachers to 53,000.

We have already made great steps in ensuring the quality of teaching in Scotland's schools. We have reduced class sizes in P1-P3 to 30 pupils or less. So we will now go further, and by August 2007 we will have increased funding and trained enough new teachers to allow class sizes in P1 to reduce to 25 and to 20 in Maths and English classes in S1 and S2.

The goal is clear – every pupil with extra support in their weakest subjects and extra opportunities in their strongest. As we continue investment and reform, we will drive for ambitious, excellent secondary schools across Scotland. There will be more tailored provision to meet diverse needs; more gifted and talented students stretched; more apprenticeships and vocational education, as well as greater access to colleges and universities, to prepare teenagers for their chosen career. Children with additional needs will be given dedicated help by trained staff in mainstream or special schools, and children in local authority care expected and enabled to succeed like other children.

■ **Every school with more money and effective leadership**

Since 1997, school investment has risen and spending per secondary pupil has now surpassed £5,000 for the first time. That investment – an increase of nine per cent since last year – will be maintained and increased. We will continue to raise the share of national income devoted to education. With an investment of £1 billion, Labour pledged to build or renovate 100 schools. We pledged that these schools should be available to the whole community and include high quality facilities for drama, music, sport, IT and in secondary schools,

science laboratories. To date, 121 have been completed. And we are committed to delivering 200 more by 2006, rising to 300 by 2009.

Parental involvement is essential to the success of every school. We are currently consulting on ways of increasing parental involvement in school life, embedding new rights to parental information and involvement, giving more choice to parents in how that is best achieved locally, and requiring local authorities to do more to promote parental involvement in schools.

■ **Enriching primary schools**

The focus on the quality of the education system in Scotland is reflected in exam results. Year after year, our children are improving their levels of attainment. Since 1997, the average improvement rate is nine per cent in reading, writing and maths and is up by as much as 20 per cent in reading in secondary schools. In the most recent OECD survey, Scotland was confirmed as one of the best performing nations in the world of education, high up in the top third in attainment and standards. We are proud that children across all communities, no matter their background, have been given the opportunity to achieve more.

We recognise that encouraging creativity is central to development. We want to universalise access to high quality tuition in the arts, music and modern languages and that is why we have introduced 12 months free music tuition by primary six. We will also guarantee the opportunity to learn a modern, European language during primary school.

■ **Excellent local schools for every pupil**

Successful secondary education depends on creating excellent local schools that set out high expectations as the norm; high quality leadership with strong head teachers managing the school; clear rules consistently applied to promote good discipline; setting by ability and aptitude groups; more curriculum flexibility and other measures to

‘Every pupil has the right to learn without disruption; no teacher should be subject to abuse or disrespect; and we have given head teachers the powers needed to maintain discipline and set the highest standards...’

ensure that learning engages all pupils; and high class facilities that inspire students and teachers. Ambitious, excellent schools that will offer every pupil maximum choice and the best of opportunities. These are our priorities.

The way to achieve them is to create choice within good, local schools – not force parents to choose between pockets of privilege across the country. Ambitious, Excellent Schools introduces a new gold standard – the Excellence Standard – for top performing schools; a new 3-18 curriculum to inspire and interest pupils; a review of Standard Grades to simplify the exam structure; a new Leadership Academy to help head teachers lead from the front; new Skills for Work courses; and allows primary school teachers to work in secondary schools, so pupils performance does not suffer when they move from P7 to S1.

We have a new Schools of Ambition programme to help those who most need it to transform their performance and to join others in setting new standards of excellence. With a multi-million pound investment, at least 20 Schools of Ambition will be funded, with more coming on stream in a rolling programme of improvement. They will be local, all-ability comprehensives with areas of the curriculum in which they will stand out as having particular expertise. These schools will join with others in ensuring universal excellence across the state system – modern comprehensives, diverse, colourful, exciting, offering greater choice than ever to their pupils. Schools of Ambition will contribute to the eradication of the greatest inequality of all: a poor education.

Scotland has a long tradition of supporting parents' wishes in education. Denominational schools, offering more choice to parents and a context for distinct beliefs are strongly supported by parents in Scotland. We will continue our support of denominational schools and we will expand our support for Gaelic medium schools, offering across Scotland more

choice and a distinct character to aspects of our education.

We support partnership between the state and private sectors – bringing fresh thinking, focus and drive. Already private donors and philanthropists are supporting enterprise education and leadership development in our schools, and we will offer further opportunities for involvement through, for example, the Schools of Ambition programme.

We will continue to develop opportunities for our young people to use holiday periods for residential programmes, organised play and adventure.

■ **Good discipline**

Every pupil has the right to learn without disruption; no teacher should be subject to abuse or disrespect. We have given head teachers the powers needed to maintain discipline and set the highest standards of conduct. That is why we have introduced the first National Policy on Discipline; introduced new programmes of staged intervention to support teachers; are piloting restorative justice in our schools; and funding additional support staff, leaving teachers free to teach. We have made clear we will back head teachers in their decisions to exclude disruptive pupils whenever they think that is necessary.

■ **No more dropping out at 16**

Too many of our pupils are disengaging from learning because choice in what to study has been too narrow and vocational education too weak. This has led to high rates of drop-out and low average standards of basic skills. We are determined to raise the status and quality of vocational education. Designed with the help of employers on the basis of industry needs, new vocational courses are being piloted and more will be established in key areas of the economy, leading to apprenticeships, to further and higher education and to jobs with training. We will build on the success of Modern Apprenticeships ensuring even greater quality.

We want every pupil to be stretched, including the brightest, so we will develop the employment prospects of every pupil, by allowing them the choice to take courses in further education colleges as part of the school-based curriculum.

We will not let economic disadvantage stand in the way of young people staying in education beyond the age of 16. We will roll out Educational Maintenance Allowances, providing lower income students with a £30-a-week staying-on allowance.

■ **World-class higher education, open to all**

Universities are as vital as schools in supporting individual opportunity. Scotland's colleges and universities are world class and attract students and academics from around the world. We will enhance that worldwide reputation with a 23 per cent increase in funding for universities and a 400 per cent increase in their capital budgets to modernise equipment and buildings by 2007-08.

Fifty per cent of under-21s in Scotland study in Higher Education – a third more than in the rest of the UK. The challenge for us now is to make higher education accessible to even more. In Scotland, we have abolished up-front tuition fees and introduced access payments of up to £2,000, targeted at students from lower income families, funded by the Graduate Endowment. To further support the excellence in our universities, we will encourage universities to raise more charitable and private funding for student bursaries and endowments.

The choice for 2010

The Conservatives have made it clear they would cut funding to public services, putting at risk money we have already committed to extra teachers, new school buildings and school support staff. The choice for 2010 is forward with new Labour – so that pupils have clear routes through the system from three to 18;

parents have the confidence that, where there is no improvement, there will be intervention; teachers know that quality will be supported and rewarded; and employers benefit from a system that gets the basics right and provides the skills that industry needs. Or back to cuts, fewer staff and crumbling buildings under the Tories.

Scotland
forward
not back

Chapter 3

Crime and security:

Safe communities, secure borders

Forward to better policing in the community, not back to rising crime

1979-1997: Crime rate peaked in 1991

2005: Almost 1,200 more police

2010: A policing team in every community

The safety of our communities is a joint responsibility between Westminster and Holyrood, with tough new anti-social behaviour legislation in Scotland backed up by new national security legislation introduced by the Labour government. We can only deliver stronger communities with Labour at Westminster and Labour at Holyrood. Crime has fallen by 29 per cent in Scotland but our security is threatened by major organised crime; high ‘volume’ crimes like burglary and car theft, often linked to drug abuse; and anti-social behaviour. Each one needs a very different response. So we will support strong communities, giving the police and local councils the power to tackle anti-social behaviour and improve policing in every community. We will modernise our asylum and immigration system, act across the UK to tackle serial and organised crime, and take the necessary measures to protect our country from international terrorism.

■ **The new Labour case**

The modern world offers freedoms and opportunities unheralded a generation ago. But with new freedoms come new fears and threats to our security. We will counter these threats with strong communities built on mutual respect and the rule of law. We prize the liberty of the individual but that means protecting the law-abiding majority from the minority who abuse the system. In a third term we will make the contract of rights and responsibilities an enduring foundation of community life.

■ **Improved policing in every community**

Already, across Scotland there are 323 fewer crimes per 10,000 population than when crime peaked in 1991. Much of the credit lies with the record numbers of police, almost 1,200 more than in 1999, who are working with over 550 new community wardens to prevent, detect and punish crime. We will continue our investment to maintain police

numbers, supported by a record number of civilian support staff so that more police officers' time is spent on frontline policing. Local people want a more visible police presence on the streets. Our plans to free up police time and introduce community wardens across Scotland will ensure that communities get policing that is dedicated to serving their priorities. And we will work with representatives of police officers to develop a modern career framework for the whole police team.

■ On the side of communities against anti-social behaviour

People want communities where the decent law-abiding majority are in charge, where those that play by the rules do well, and those that don't get punished. Labour's new laws to fight anti-social behaviour are cracking down hard on those who abuse and intimidate decent people and families.

With additional powers for the police and local councils and a direct phone number in every community so that people can get quick help and advice, action is now being taken across Scotland. Dispersing groups from known trouble spots is helping Scotland's law abiding citizens to get their communities back.

Across Scotland and the UK, alcohol-fuelled violence and anti-social behaviour is a real problem and must be tackled. We will modernise Scotland's licensing laws to give local communities an active role in the decisions that are taken about where licensed premises open up, and we will introduce strong 'no proof, no sale' rules, an end to the irresponsible drinks promotions that encourage binge drinking, and increased training for bar staff so that they can do their job safely.

Intimidation and violence are unacceptable in the workplace. So Labour in Scotland has acted to introduce new laws and tougher penalties to protect emergency service workers from assault and obstruction.

■ A better alternative for young people

We are undertaking a radical reform of youth services through investment in Community Safety Partnerships and by increasing the resources that local councils have to invest in community leisure facilities. Better provision will be allied with a stronger voice from the young people themselves in designing places to go and things to do. We will create Project Scotland, a national youth volunteering scheme to open up more opportunities for young Scots.

But some of our young people do get involved in crime and we are determined to deal with them swiftly. Already we have established Youth Courts and the fast-track hearings system to deal quickly with persistent offenders. We will increase the number of secure accommodation places to 125 and make more use of intensive community programmes, including electronic tagging to better deal with them in the community.

But parents have responsibilities too, and not all of them live up to these. So we will introduce court parenting orders to make them face up to their responsibilities to help their children move away from crime.

■ Cutting crime through cutting drug dependency

Arrest referral schemes and mandatory drug testing for certain crimes will provide an opportunity at the point of arrest to get drug users into the treatment they need to come off drugs and stop committing crime. And Drug Treatment and Testing Orders are now available to target those offenders with a lengthy history of drug misuse.

Crime reduction depends on drug reduction and we are committed to tackling Scotland's drug problems at the source – the dealer. New laws are ensuring that dealers are being hit where it hurts – in their pockets. And these seizures have been used to fund local projects and the Shop a Dealer campaign, which gives people across Scotland a safe way to

‘We prize the liberty of the individual but that means protecting the law-abiding majority from the minority who abuse the system.’

help police catch local drug dealers. Furthermore, the Scottish Drugs Enforcement Agency has already seized drugs with a street value of £37.4 million. We will build on this success and establish a multi-agency law enforcement campus, bringing together key law enforcement agencies to fight serious and organised crime.

From 2006, the Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency will work with the Serious Organised Crime Agency to ensure that across the UK and Europe we take on the drug dealers and people traffickers.

■ Reducing the use of guns and knives

Dangerous weapons fuel violence. We have banned all handguns, introduced five-year minimum sentences for those caught with an unlawful firearm, tightened the law on replica weapons, and raised the age limit for owning an air gun. We are committed to tackling knife and gun crime. We will restrict the sale of replica guns and will now tighten the law on air guns. We will introduce new stop and search powers for the police in the fight against knife crime and encourage pubs and clubs to search for knives on their premises. We will introduce tougher sentences for carrying replica guns, and double the sentences for those involved in serious knife crimes.

■ Punishing criminals, reducing offending

People want to see criminals made to pay for what they have done, with sentences that make sense. We have set up the Risk Management Authority to deal with the small number of high risk violent offenders. But we believe that making sentences make better sense is a job where we need the expertise and independence of others to guide us. Using advice from the Sentencing Commission, we aim to reduce the number of crimes committed while people are on bail. We will improve the management of offenders throughout their sentence so that we improve public safety, giving the offender the chance to change their behaviour and lead a law-abiding life.

For some offenders, the risk to the public must be managed with real effort and determination. Until now, anyone convicted of a sex offence and given a prison sentence of less than four years is automatically released halfway through their sentence, without any community supervision. But we know that most sex offenders, if left without any control, are likely to commit another crime. So Labour in Scotland will ensure that by 2007 no sex offender will be released from prison without having their risk of reoffending assessed. Every sex offender will be supervised after release.

We will increase the use of electronic tagging for offenders in the community; and through an integrated offender management service, we will reduce the public safety risk – and in the long term, the number of offenders who offend again.

‘We will introduce ID cards, including biometric data like fingerprints, backed up by a national register and rolling out initially on a voluntary basis as people renew their passports.’

The improvements we are planning for community-based justice will place increased importance on the offender paying compensation to the victim of crime. Offenders will have to do more reparation work to pay back their community for the damage they have caused. We will give local communities more say in devising this reparation.

■ Making sure crime does not pay

We have introduced laws that enable the courts to confiscate the assets and property of drug dealers and other major criminals.

We will consider additional measures to give fine enforcement officers more powers and improve the speed of payment and raise the level of fiscal fines from £100 to £500. We will also review the use of the ‘fine on time’ sentences to make offenders repay the damage they have done to the community, and increase the use of fiscal compensation orders, making the offender repay the damage they have done to their victim.

■ Backing the victim

Our legal system must bring justice to the victim as well as the accused and we have improved the way courts work for victims, witnesses and jurors by building a Scotland-wide network of witness and victim support units.

We have taken steps to make sure that our court staff and prosecutors are sensitive to the way victims feel and are able to work well with them. We have introduced the victim impact statement, which allows the court to consider the impact of the crime on the victim before determining sentence on the offender.

We will continue to improve the way courts deal with domestic violence. For child and vulnerable witnesses we have introduced new laws to offer them special protection when giving evidence. And we continue to offer court protection from the publication of names and other information in certain circumstances. These new protections are being used first for child witnesses in all the courts in Scotland and will be introduced for adults in the coming months.

Following consultation on the draft Bill we have published at Westminster, we will legislate for a new offence of corporate manslaughter

ter in England. And we will work with employers, unions and health and safety experts to consult on appropriate legislation for Scotland.

■ **Migration: The facts**

Over seven million people entered the UK from outside the EU in 2003, of whom 180,000 came here to work and over 300,000 to study, with the rest coming here as business visitors and tourists. People from overseas spent almost £12 billion in the UK, and overseas students alone are worth £5 billion a year to our economy. At a time when we have over 600,000 vacancies in the UK job market, skilled migrants are contributing ten to 15 per cent of our economy's overall growth. Scotland's population is declining faster than almost anywhere else in Europe and could fall below the symbolically important five million threshold by 2017. This will threaten the future of our schools, the dynamism of our economy and weaken our communities.

Since 1997, the time taken to process an initial asylum application has been reduced from 20 months to two months in over 80 per cent of cases. The number of asylum applications has been cut by two-thirds since 2002. The backlog of claims has been cut from over 50,000 at the end of 1996 to just over 10,000. There are 550 UK immigration officers posted in France and Belgium to check passports of people boarding boats and trains, and Airline Liaison Officers and overseas entry clearance staff are helping to stop 1,000 people a day improperly entering the UK.

■ **Building a strong and diverse country**

For centuries Scotland and Britain have been a home for people from the rest of Europe and further a field. Immigration has been good for Britain. We want to keep it that way.

Scotland needs fresh talent: to boost our population, but also to create a more diverse and dynamic economy. We will attract new people to

live and work in Scotland and we want to attract Scots back home too. That is why Labour will promote Scotland as a place with opportunities and a great quality of life. We will be as welcoming to new people as others were to Scots in the past. We have created a unique relocation advisory service that demonstrates our welcome by advising on public services, immigration rules, and opportunities to work and study.

With Labour working in partnership, there are new rules to allow overseas graduates to remain in Scotland for a further two years after graduation.

But any abuse of our immigration system undermines it for others. We need controls that work and a crackdown on abuse to ensure that we have a robust and fair immigration system fit for the 21st century that is in the interests of Scotland and Britain.

■ **A points system for immigration**

We need skilled workers. So we will establish a points system for those seeking to migrate here with special arrangements so that Scotland can attract the brightest and best. More skills mean more points and more chance of being allowed to come here.

We will ensure that only skilled workers are allowed to settle long term in the UK, with English language tests for everyone who wants to stay permanently and an end to chain migration.

Where there has been evidence of abuse from particular countries, the immigration service will be able to ask for financial bonds to guarantee that migrants return home. We will continue to improve the quality and speed of immigration and asylum decisions. Appeal rights for non-family immigration cases will be removed and we will introduce civil penalties on employers of up to £2,000 for each illegal immigrant they employ.

■ **Strong and secure borders**

While the Tories would halve investment in our immigration services, we would invest in the latest technology to keep our borders strong and secure.

By 2008, those needing a visa to enter the UK will be fingerprinted. We will issue ID cards to all visitors planning to stay for more than three months. Over the next five years we will implement a new electronic borders system that will track visitors entering or leaving the UK.

Across the world there is a drive to increase the security of identity documents and we cannot be left behind. From next year, we are introducing biometric 'ePassports'. It makes sense to provide citizens with an equally secure identity card to protect them at home from identity theft and clamp down on illegal working and fraudulent use of public services. We will introduce ID cards, including biometric data like fingerprints, backed up by a national register and rolling out initially on a voluntary basis as people renew their passports. In Scotland, the Scottish Parliament would consider whether ID cards would help and protect people accessing devolved services.

■ **Fair rules**

We can and should honour our obligations to victims of persecution. In Scotland, refugees will be helped to integrate into local communities so that they too can contribute to Scotland's success. But at the same time, we must tackle abuse of the asylum system. We will:

- * *Fast-track all unfounded asylum seekers with electronic tagging where necessary and make more use of detention as we expand the number of detention places available.*
- * *Remove more failed applicants. We have more than doubled the number of failed asylum seekers we remove from the UK compared to 1996. By fingerprinting every visa applicant and prosecuting those who deliberately*

'We will continue our investment to maintain police numbers, supported by a record number of civilian support staff so that more police officers' time is spent on frontline policing.'

destroy their documents we will speed up the time taken to redocument and remove people and will take action against those countries that refuse to cooperate. By the end of 2005, our aim is for removals of failed asylum seekers to exceed new unfounded claims.

■ **Tough action to combat international terrorism**

We know that there are people already in the country and others who seek to enter the United Kingdom who want to attack our way of life. Our liberties are prized but so is our security.

Police and other law enforcement agencies now have the powers they need to ban terrorist organisations, to clamp down on their fundraising and to hold suspects for extended questioning while charges are brought. Over 700 arrests have been made since 2001. Wherever possible, suspects should be prosecuted through the courts in the normal way. So we will introduce new laws to help catch and convict those involved in helping to plan terrorist activity or who glorify or condone acts of terror. But we also need to disrupt and prevent terrorist activity. New control orders will enable police and security agencies to keep track of those they suspect of planning terrorist outrages including bans on who they can contact or meet, electronic tagging and curfew orders, and for those who present the highest risk, a requirement to stay permanently at home.

We will continue to improve coordination between enforcement agencies and cooperation with other countries so that every effort is made to defeat the terrorists.

The choice for 2010

Labour's goals for 2010 are clear. Overall crime down, the number of offenders brought to justice up, with improved policing in every community to crack down on crime and disorder, and a modern criminal justice system fit for the 21st century. And to

reduce threats from overseas: secure borders backed up by ID cards and a crackdown on abuse of our immigration system. The Conservative threat is equally clear. They would abolish Scotland's plans to attract fresh talent, putting at risk our economic growth and long-term prosperity. There would be savage cuts to our border controls, 'fantasy island' asylum policies, and investment in record police numbers would be put at risk.

Scotland
forward
not back

Chapter 4

Our NHS: Free to all, personal to each

Forward to personalised healthcare, not back to two-tier healthcare

1997: **Waiting more than 18 months for operations**

2005: **No one waiting more than six months for in-patient treatment**

2008: **No one waiting more than 18 weeks from referral to outpatient appointment**

Labour in Scotland is committed to investing in and reforming our National Health Service. But only with Labour in power in Westminster and Holyrood can we continue with our achievements. The NHS is being restored to good health: more doctors, more nurses, better facilities. We are committed to cutting waiting times and the survival rates for Scotland's three biggest killers are significantly improving. The revolution in quantity of care must be matched by a revolution in quality of care, with equal access for all and no charges for operations. That means new types of health provision, more say for patients in how, where and when they are treated, and tackling ill-health at source.

■ **The new Labour case**

Healthcare is too precious to be left to chance or wealth. This means defeating those who would dismantle the NHS. But it also means fundamentally reforming the NHS to meet new challenges – such as higher expectations, major advances in science and medical technology, and changes in both the composition and the needs of the population. So, our aim is an NHS free to all and personal to each of us. We will deliver through high national standards backed by sustained investment, by using new providers where they add capacity or promote innovation, by devolving power in the NHS, and through giving patients and their families the information they need to make the right choices for their health.

■ **Getting the basics right**

NHS spending in Scotland has almost doubled since 1997, and will reach £10 billion for the first time by 2008. Since 1997 Scottish Labour has recruited an extra 1,829 doctors and 4,126 nurses for the NHS; and we have funded 48,000 more operations a year, including over 2,200 more hip and knee operations and 5,700 more cataract operations. We have built or refurbished over 120 clinics,

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improving.’*

wards or hospitals, including eight new hospital developments. And we have also ensured that all NHS staff can take on more and different tasks. We have widened the responsibilities of nurses and pharmacists, paramedics and porters, creating health services more convenient for patients.

Together with our organisational reforms, the investment is paying off. The maximum time that people waited for operations in 1997 was well over 18 months. Now no one waits longer than nine months for in-patient treatment, reduced to six months by the end of 2005. Already no one is waiting longer than 18 weeks for angioplasty or heart bypass surgery or eight weeks for an angiography. For those under 75, death rates from heart disease are down by 30 per cent since 1996 and those from cancer by 8.5 per cent.

But there is still much room for improvement. No one should have to wait more than two days to see their GP, nurse or other health professional, or more than four hours in Accident and Emergency, from arrival to treatment.

Now that maximum waiting times for hospital treatment are coming down, we will be the first government to include other waiting times in the calculation, including waiting for outpatient appointments and test results. By the end of 2007, no one will wait longer than 24 hours from admission to hip surgery; the maximum wait for cataract surgery will be 18 weeks; and the maximum wait from GP to cardiac intervention will be 16 weeks. There will be no hidden waits.

By the end of 2007, no NHS patient will have to wait longer than 18 weeks from GP referral until their first outpatient appointment – down from 18 months under the Tories.

We will deal with the challenge of MRSA. Infections acquired in

hospital are not new. The time to destroy MRSA was in the early 1990s – when only five per cent of the bacteria were resistant to antibiotics. At that time the Tory government did not even keep records about the incidence of MRSA and were forcing hospitals to contract out cleaning services. Thanks to the tough measures we have already taken, our MRSA rates are now stable and will fall, but there is still some way to go. Every patient has the right to expect treatment in clean hospitals, where the risk of infection is minimised. Nurses are back in charge of ward cleanliness and are backed by clear accountability and support for their actions; 3,500 frontline staff are receiving additional training in infection control; and tough standards are now spelled out in cleaning contracts to make sure that the hospital environment is managed so that the risk of infection to patients, staff and visitors is minimised.

We have tightened the rules on NHS operations so that ‘health tourists’ now have to pay for treatment.

■ **Getting the organisation right**

Advances in medical science and new technology are making it possible today to save lives that only a few years ago would have been lost. At the same time, improved techniques and the expanding skills of the whole health care team means that we can move more healthcare services into the local community. Our goal is to improve the NHS so that health services are as local as possible, but as specialised as necessary to increase the patient’s chance of survival and recovery.

So we will make sure that it is possible for the NHS to change the way in which it organises its services, so that quality, safety and accessibility are maintained and enhanced. Our new Community Health Partnerships will lead the drive for high-quality, local services making full use of the skills of every member of the healthcare team. Every Health Board will produce a health plan and work with

*‘Healthcare is too precious
to be left to chance or
wealth. This means
defeating those who would
dismantle the NHS.’*

*‘One principle underpins
our reforms – putting
patients centre stage.
Choice is important
because it helps ensure
that services meet
patient needs.’*

the local community to design the services required to meet its needs. We will strengthen patient advocacy services, giving patients the information they need to make the right choices about their health care.

In the light of the findings of the Shipman inquiry, we will strengthen clinical governance in the NHS to ensure that professional activity is fully accountable to patients, their families and the wider public.

We will require registration of all clinical trials and publication of their findings for all trials of medicinal products with a marketing authorisation in the UK.

■ **Innovation and reform**

To achieve our goals, we need to expand and develop different types of provision. Health services that only a few years ago were specialised can now be delivered in local and rural hospitals. More GPs delivering more advanced services; specialised diagnostic and treatment services; and comprehensive out-of-hours services.

To help provide more choice and improve convenience, we will need a new generation of NHS modern healthcare services that will provide diagnostics, day surgery and outpatient appointments closer to where people live and work. We will establish a new public-private partnership to develop these new, state-of-the-art facilities.

Expansion in NHS capacity will come both from within the National Health Service and the independent sector, where specialist services are available to the NHS at NHS prices. In the past year alone we have commissioned the independent sector to provide over 3,000 operations through the NHS for patients in Scotland. And in the coming year we will greatly expand this provision to reduce waiting times and bring more quality healthcare through the NHS to patients.

■ **Empowering patients: Choosing not waiting**

One principle underpins our reforms – putting patients centre stage. Choice is important because it helps ensure that services meet patient needs. For a convenient time for a non-urgent operation. For different types of maternity provision. For a location close to relatives.

We have already made sure that patients have access to a database of outpatient waiting times, allowing them to choose from any consultant who can provide the treatment recommended by their GP at the NHS price. We need more patients to know about this service and more GPs to encourage them to use it.

By providing guarantees on waiting times for specified treatments, we are making sure that patients can be assured that they will get what they need. By increasing the capacity of the NHS, building new local healthcare centres, using the specialist provision of the Golden Jubilee National Hospital and contracting the private sector to provide mobile diagnostic services and treatment facilities, we will make sure that patients in every part of Scotland can get the care they need, when they need it and as close to their home as possible.

We are providing the public with more convenient access to much better information about health and health services through the National Waiting Times Database, the national advice helplines, and by using NHS24.

■ **Empowering patients: Long-term conditions and social care**

For over a million people in Scotland, many of them older people with long-term conditions, we will ensure that they have greater control of their own care. In healthcare, we shall extend the ideas of case management to long-term conditions, helping to keep people out of hospital by providing better care at home. The new GP contract emphasises

the importance of GPs and GP practices actively looking after their patients with chronic conditions and helping them positively look after their own health.

Our free personal and nursing care service is making sure that older people can live where they want to and how they want to – and for many that means living in their own home, close to their family and their neighbours for longer. All without the added burden of financial worry.

There can be no good health without good mental health. For too long this has been a neglected area struggling against a climate of suspicion and stigma. That is changing. We now have what many regard as the most enlightened and ambitious mental health legislation in Europe. We have made improved mental health services a top priority for the NHS in Scotland, and will reinforce the work we have begun with a public telephone helpline, a campaign to reduce stigma and action to prevent suicide.

For those with a terminal illness and for their loved ones, the support and personal dignity of palliative care is essential. Our goal is to make sure that high-quality palliative care is available as close to home as possible, giving people the care and support they need at every stage.

■ Living healthier lives

We are working hard and getting results in improving the healthcare patients receive from the NHS in Scotland. But the big job is to improve our national health. For a long time, Scotland carried the tag of ‘sick man of Europe’, but there are now genuine signs that things are improving.

We all want to stay healthy for longer. And we should all have the chance to do so – no matter where we are born and no matter where

we live. Eating more healthily, exercising, stopping smoking – we know what each one of us has to do. But we also know that this is harder for some than it is for others.

People need to take responsibility for their own health, but they have the right to ask for some help from Government. So now we need to step up our action on diet, exercise and smoking – and change the habits of Scotland.

■ **Healthy choices for children**

We will start the drive for better health early. We are radically improving the quality of school meals and food eaten at school at each stage of a child's education – from nursery to secondary school. We have introduced the Hungry for Success programme, a £63 million drive promoting tougher nutritional standards and putting Scotland in the lead in promoting healthy eating for children. Every child in Scotland now receives free fruit for the first two years of primary school. We are integrating healthy eating into the curriculum, and we will legislate to extend high standards of nutrition to cover food across the school day. We will ban certain products, which are high in fat/salt content from school meals and ensure that fresh fruit and vegetables are part of every school meal. By the end of 2007, we will spend £20 million on the development of Active Primary Schools and at least 600 School Sports Development Officers.

■ **Healthy choices for all**

We will put in place a simple system of labelling to make it easier for busy shoppers to see at a glance how individual foods contribute to a healthy balanced diet. We will simplify nutritional labelling and make it mandatory on packaged goods. We will help busy parents by restricting further the advertising and promotion to children of those foods and drinks that are high in fat, salt and sugar.

Thirty-five people a day in Scotland die from smoking-related illnesses. Labour in Holyrood believes people have the right to live, work and socialise in a smoke-free environment so we will legislate to restrict smoking in enclosed public places, the most important legislation to improve public health for decades.

The choice for 2010

Conservative cuts to public spending would impact on Scotland and put at risk much-needed investment in extra doctors, nurses and equipment. The Tories would take the extra investment that we have made out of the NHS to subsidise the treatment of those who can already afford to go private. The choice is forward with new Labour to a health system with patients in the driving seat, free to all and personal to each of us. Or back with the Tories to cuts, longer waits, and fewer doctors and nurses.

Scotland
forward
not back

Chapter 5

Older people: Secure today, prepared for the future

**Forward to new opportunities in
old age, not back to poverty and
insecurity**

- 1997: 2.8 million pensioners in poverty, the poorest living on £69 per week**
- 2005: Minimum income for pensioners of £109 per week**
- 2010: A long-term settlement for pensions**

Our priority since 1997 has been to tackle pensioner poverty. Nearly two million pensioners have been lifted out of absolute poverty across the UK, with 170,000 lifted out of poverty in Scotland. As a result of Labour's measures, the poorest third are now getting an extra £2,000 a year. Our priorities now are to build a national consensus for tomorrow's pensioners, combining public and private pension schemes to build security in retirement, and to extend the quality of life of older people.

■ **The new Labour case**

By 2020 there will be more people over the age of 80 than under the age of five. For a progressive government there can be no compromise on our duty to today's pensioners. But while we fulfil that duty we must also see old age as a time of independence and opportunity. On pensions, our aim is a system that provides security and decency for all, encourages and rewards saving, and is financially sustainable. And because, more than anything, people need certainty to plan for the future, we will seek a national consensus – cross-party, cross-generation – for long-term reform.

■ **Tackling pensioner poverty:**

The success of the Pension Credit

In 1997, 2.8 million pensioners were living in poverty – 260,000 here in Scotland – with the poorest expected to live on just £69 per week. Labour's Pension Credit now means that no pensioner need live on less than £109 per week. It rewards saving and helps over three million pensioners, with women in particular benefiting. We will increase Pension Credit in line with earnings up to and including 2007-08.

All pensioners have benefited from improved universal benefits like the state pension, help with council tax, the Winter Fuel Payment (now worth £300 per year for the over-80s) and free TV licences for the over-75s. And in Scotland, pensioners will continue to benefit from

our free central heating and home insulation programme. This year all households expected to pay council tax that include anyone over 65 will receive £200 towards the cost of council tax.

Labour has already delivered free local off-peak bus travel for Scottish pensioners. This will be extended to all national bus journeys in the spring of 2006.

Pensioners are among those most affected by fuel poverty. Millions have benefited from our fuel poverty programme. Our goal is to eliminate fuel poverty for vulnerable groups by 2016, and ensure that all social housing has effective insulation and central heating by 2015.

■ **Pensions for the generation of tomorrow**

The generation retiring in the future will be different in many ways from their predecessors. Their jobs will have been different; the expectations of women will be transformed; their retirements will be longer and healthier. We have begun to lay the foundations for the pensions system of tomorrow, for example: by introducing the State Second Pension to ensure carers, low earners and disabled people have a chance to build up a decent pension for the first time; encouraging automatic enrolment into company pension schemes; creating the Pension Protection Fund; enabling pensioners for the first time to work part time and draw down their occupational pension; as well as offering an increased state pension or lump sum for those deferring their pension. We will work to increase the proportion of pension fund trustees nominated by scheme members, along with access to proper training. We will keep this issue under review, with consultation in the expectation of further progress to 50 per cent member-nominated trustees.

We need to forge a national consensus about how we move from a pension system designed for today's pension challenges to one that is right for tomorrow's. We appointed the Pensions Commission to look

‘On pensions, our aim is a system that provides security and decency for all, encourages and rewards saving, and is financially sustainable.’

into the future of pensions and its second report is due in autumn 2005. We are clear about the goals of a reformed system. It must tackle poverty, provide everyone with the opportunity to build an adequate retirement income, and be affordable, fair and simple to understand. In particular, it must address the disadvantages faced by women.

■ **New rights, new choices**

Many older people want to carry on working in their 50s and 60s. The welfare state should be there to help them. Older people with their skills and experience are potentially an enormous resource. That is why we set up the New Deal for the Over 50s with over 150,000 older people helped back to work.

We also need to put the force of the law on the side of older people who wish to continue working. Companies will no longer be able to force people to retire before the age of 65 except where specifically justified. All employees over the age of 65 will have the right to request of their employer that they be allowed to carry on working. After five years we will review whether there should be any fixed retirement ages.

We will give older people greater choice over their care – and consider how to give them more control over the resources that the state spends on their behalf. We have introduced free personal care in Scotland and we will continue to expand and promote the Direct Payments scheme where older people and those with disabilities or additional needs can decide for themselves who provides the services that they need.

■ **Support across the generations**

The challenge of balancing work and family applies to parents but also to people looking after an elderly or sick relative – now one in five adults. Since the introduction of the right to request from their employer flexible working arrangements, a million parents across the UK have changed their working hours. We are consulting on a similar

right for carers of elderly or sick relatives.

■ Services for older people

Modern public services should be responsive to the needs and aspirations of individual older people. Labour in Scotland is taking firm action to deal with delayed discharge from hospital; has created a Care Commission and National Care Standards to ensure quality; financial support, coupled with legal rights, for carers; and is making communities safer through tough measures on anti-social behaviour.

The choice for 2010

The Tories are the party of pensioner poverty. When they left office in 1997, one in four pensioners was living in poverty and the poorest pensioners were expected to get by on just £69 a week. They would phase out the Pension Credit and abolish the State Second Pension, hurting most those most in need. When the one thing we all need is certainty, the Tories have admitted they have absolutely no plans for how to fund their pensions policy beyond four years. The choice is whether we go forward with new Labour: with today's pensioners provided for and poverty falling, a national consensus on fair and sustainable long-term reform and the policies to give older people enhanced rights and choices. Or back with the Tories to rising poverty for today's pensioners and unending insecurity for tomorrow's pensioners.

Scotland
forward
not back

Chapter 6

Families: Choice and support at work and at home

**Forward to family prosperity,
not back to family poverty**

- 1997: Childcare places for only one in eight children under eight**
- 2005: Universal, free, part-time nursery education for all three- and four-year-olds**
- 2010: Universal affordable childcare for three to 14-year-olds**

It is impossible to fulfil the potential of our country – never mind promote social mobility and equality of life chances – unless every child gets the best possible start in life. Government does not bring up children, but it must support parents in their key role. By working together in Westminster and Holyrood, Labour will help parents balance work and family, expand paid leave, deliver the biggest ever expansion in childcare and end child poverty in a generation.

■ **The new Labour case**

Strong families are the bedrock of a strong society. Children cannot be the forgotten constituency of politics; parents put their children first and they deserve support from government. Yet fear of seeming to ‘nanny’ has in the past meant our law and culture have not supported parents and children. Government cannot shirk its responsibilities. Our starting point is that, for children to come first, parents need to be given choices: a tax and benefit system to raise family incomes and tackle child poverty; legal changes to promote a healthy balance between work and family; and services built around the needs of children. Our third-term commitment – not a nanny state but a family-friendly government.

■ **Tackling child poverty**

We will end child poverty, starting by halving it – both in terms of relative low income and in terms of material deprivation – by 2010-11.

Work is the best anti-poverty strategy. Tailored help – especially for lone parents – is key but we are also committed to making work pay – with a guaranteed income of at least £258 per week for those with children and in full-time work.

The benefits system needs to support all children, and those in greatest need the most. That is the rationale for universal child benefit and

*‘We will extend childcare
for school age children,
with more and improved
access to affordable,
after-school facilities.’*

targeted tax credits, and why we have committed to increasing the Child Tax Credit at least in line with earnings up to and including 2007-08. By October 2005, families with children will be on average £1,400 per year better off, and those in the poorest fifth of the population on average £3,200 a year better off compared to 1997. Labour's Child Trust Fund creates a nest egg for newborns that they can access at age 18. It is the world's first example of a government ensuring that all children grow up with a financial stake. We are determined to see it grow and are consulting on making payments at age seven and at secondary school age, in addition to those made at birth.

Those children in greatest need require help from social services. That is why we have a radical reform programme of children's services. In Scotland we have introduced national standards, a tough new inspection system and a new children's charter that puts children at the centre of child protection services. We are improving Scotland's unique Children's Hearing System, which puts the child at its centre and involves local people in the care and welfare of children and young people. And we are improving support for foster carers; improving security and stability for children who can't safely live with their own family, including modernising adoption law and improving the help offered to young adults when they leave care. We will ensure there is one professional with lead responsibility for each vulnerable child. Children cannot afford overlapping services where no one is in charge.

■ Universal childcare

We know that children's experiences in their earliest years are crucial – good-quality early years provision enables all children, especially the most disadvantaged, to improve their skills, learning and their behaviour. Our aim is universal, affordable good quality-childcare for all.

Development in childcare and early years education has been one of the great successes in the early years of devolution. As a result of our

investment, over one in four of all children now receives formal childcare. Over eight out of ten three-year-olds and, effectively, all four-year-olds take up free nursery education. In Scotland, Labour aims to improve nursery provision for three- and four-year-olds. Our goal is more hours for more weeks of the year for every child.

We will offer greater flexibility for parents to choose how they use the free entitlement to help fit in with their work and life patterns. We will focus more resources, through the Sure Start programme, on the childcare and early years needs of our most disadvantaged children and families – as they have the most to gain from early years education. Because bringing up children is never easy we want to offer more support to parents, whatever the age of their child. Support for parenting is an important part of these programmes.

We will extend childcare for school age children, with more and improved access to affordable, after-school facilities. We will see more of our schools open at times to meet parents' needs – early morning till early evening with extended wrap-around care for all children up to the age of 14, using a range of arts, music, sport and study support.

We will help families with incomes of up to £59,000 a year with their childcare costs through more a generous Working Tax Credit, including help for those using a nanny or au pair. Parents using childcare supported by their employer will be able to get a tax break worth up to £50 a week.

Parents in Scotland who need it will continue to benefit from parent support programmes, which we will provide with the voluntary sector and other partners.

■ **Creating time**

Over 350,000 mothers and 80,000 fathers each year are using new

rights to paid maternity and paternity leave. Parents consistently say their top priority is more choice over whether to stay at home with their baby in the first year of its life. We will therefore increase paid maternity leave to nine months from 2007 – worth an extra £1,400 – with the goal of achieving a year's paid leave by the end of the UK Parliament while simplifying the system for employers. We want to give fathers more opportunities to spend time with their children, and are consulting on how best to do this including the option of sharing paid leave. We have already introduced the right to request flexible working to parents of children under six and nearly a million parents have benefited. We need to balance the needs of parents and carers with those of employers, especially small businesses. We are consulting on extending the right to request flexible working to carers of sick and disabled adults as a priority, and also on whether we should extend the right parents of older children.

■ Supporting family life

Common sense, as well as research, says that children need to be able to depend on the love and support of both parents. The financial support we are giving families, along with new rights to flexible working and access to child care, are all designed to support family life. Government can and should support those public and voluntary agencies which support families and parents.

For those parents who separate or divorce, Labour has made sure the first principle in Scottish family law is to put the needs of the child first. We are modernising the law further to promote and support stability in families and to reflect the reality of families today. Court practice needs reform to support contact, conciliation and enforcement of court orders where necessary, as well as greater use of mediation at the time of breakdown. We are committed to tackling the backlog of Child Support Agency claims as efficiently and fairly as possible.

■ Increasing homeownership

A decent home is crucial to family well-being. Homeownership has increased by over one million with Labour across the UK; and by the end of our third term, we aim for it to have risen by another million to two million. Over 65 per cent of Scots now own their own home. But, rising house prices in many areas of the country have made it difficult for people on lower incomes to get a foot on the housing ladder. So we have raised the stamp duty threshold from £60,000 to £120,000 for residential properties, exempting an extra 300,000 homebuyers across the UK from stamp duty every year.

We want to widen the opportunity to own or part own, especially for more young people and those tenants who rent in the private or public sector.

In Scotland, we have set out a comprehensive package of schemes to help more people become homeowners, including:

- * Funding the largest expansion in low-cost homeownership for a decade, to build nearly 5,000 homes for low-cost homeownership over the next three years.*
- * A new Homestake scheme offering 1,000 council and housing association tenants every year the opportunity to buy part of their home, increasing their share over time if they wish. It will be targeted at tenants who are unable to use the Right to Buy to buy their own home.*
- * In addition, we are building 16,500 new homes by 2007 for affordable rent.*

Scottish Labour will build on the success of the community ownership programme that has so far given 100,000 tenants a greater say in the management of their homes by supporting the transfer of an additional 80,000 homes subject to the agreement of the tenants.

We will build on our legislation that has given housing association and

local authority tenants security of tenure, to use the common housing register to introduce choice-based letting and to introduce the registration of all private landlords. We will also strengthen private sector tenants' rights to a well-maintained home and will introduce a Private Rented Housing Panel to help resolve disputes over repairs and to raise standards in private rented accommodation. Scottish Labour will examine the case for making social rents fairer.

The choice for 2010

The Tories are all talk and no action on family policy. They opposed our increases in maternity and paternity pay and the introduction of flexible working rights. Even the measures they have proposed wouldn't come in until 2009 by which time they are committed to making deep cuts in spending. The choice is forward with new Labour to universal, affordable, good-quality childcare, a million more homeowners, more choice for all parents and an end to child poverty. Or back to the risky economic policies of a Tory government that would let families sink or swim whatever the pressures they face.

**Scotland
forward
not back**

Chapter 7

International policy: A stronger country in a secure, sustainable and just world

Forward to international leadership, not back to isolation and powerlessness

- 1997: Marginalised in Europe, aid in decline and Bosnia in ruins**
- 2005: Aid doubled, elections in Iraq and Afghanistan, Kosovo and Bosnia peaceful**
- 2010: A strong Britain in a reforming Europe, 300 million out of poverty, global action on climate change**

Globalisation means that events elsewhere have a direct impact at home. So we will pursue British interests by working with our allies to make the world a safer, fairer place. This means reforming Europe. It means fighting terrorism and stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction. It means transforming our armed forces. And it means using our leading role in the G8, EU, Commonwealth and UN to promote global action on climate change and poverty.

■ **The new Labour case**

Domestic interests and international action are entwined more than ever before. Action on drugs, terrorism, people trafficking, AIDS, climate change, poverty, migration and trade all require us to work with other countries and through international organisations. The best defence of our security at home is the spread of liberty and justice overseas. In a third term we will secure Britain's place in the EU and at the heart of international decision-making. We will always uphold the rule of international law.

■ **Making europe work better for Britain**

We are proud of Britain's EU membership and of the strong position Britain has achieved within Europe. British membership of the EU brings jobs, trade and prosperity; it boosts environmental standards, social protection and international clout. Since 1997 we have gone from marginal players, often ignored, to leaders in the European Union. Working hard with Labour MEPs, we are determined to remain leaders. Outside the EU, or on its margins, we would unquestionably be weaker and more vulnerable.

The EU now has 25 members and will continue to expand. The new Constitutional Treaty that ensures the new Europe can work effectively, and that Britain keeps control of key national interests like foreign policy, taxation, social security and defence. The Treaty sets out what

the EU can do and what it cannot. It strengthens the voice of national parliaments and national governments in EU affairs. It is a good treaty for Britain and for the new Europe. We will put it to the British people in a referendum and campaign whole-heartedly for a 'Yes' vote to keep Britain a leading nation in Europe.

We will also work to reform Europe. During Britain's EU presidency this year, we will work to promote economic reform, bear down on the burden of regulation; make progress in the Doha development trade round; bring closer EU membership for Turkey, the Balkans and Eastern Europe; and improve the focus and quality of EU aid so it better helps the poorest countries.

We will continue to lead European defence cooperation. We will build stronger EU defence capabilities, in harmony with NATO – the cornerstone of our defence policy – without compromising our national ability to act independently. We will ensure the new EU battle groups are equipped and organised to act quickly to save lives in humanitarian crises.

On the euro, we maintain our common-sense policy. The determining factor underpinning any government decision is the national economic interest and whether the case for joining is clear and unambiguous. The five economic tests must be met before any decision to join can be made. If the Government were to recommend joining, it would be put to a vote in Parliament and a referendum of the British people.

■ Protecting British interests and British citizens abroad

We will continue to provide effective support to British businesses and trade unions abroad, and we will continue to improve our ability to respond quickly to international crises and disasters that affect our citizens. The Foreign Office already provides a wide range of services for British people in difficulty overseas, and we will consult widely before

drawing up a comprehensive statement spelling out the rights and responsibilities of British travellers abroad. This will include the help that people can expect from their government in times of need.

■ **Helping make you more secure**

We have worked closely with the US and other nations to combat the threat of terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq. The threat of the proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons – and their use by rogue states or terrorist groups – is a pressing issue for the world today. We have worked with the US to ensure that Libya has given up its WMD, and we will continue with France and Germany to ensure that Iran does not develop nuclear weapons. In North Korea we will support the multilateral approach of the Six Parties talks. We will continue to strongly support the peace process between India and Pakistan, and back moves to resolve the long-running dispute over Kashmir. And we will continue our work to put an end to the international network of trade in weapons of mass destruction. Labour has already introduced a strict regime to control the export of conventional weapons, and we led moves for EU-wide measures. We will work actively to secure an international treaty on the arms trade.

■ **Promoting human rights, peace and democracy**

We need to be tough on terrorism and its causes. The threat of terrorism and the danger to British citizens are proven, not just by September 11th but by repeated attacks in Europe and around the world. So we cannot sit back and hope that we will be unaffected. It is right that we do everything in our power to disrupt terrorist networks, and to challenge the conditions that help terrorism to breed.

The UN Charter proclaims the universal principles of human rights and democracy. In an uncertain world they are not only right in principle, they are important guarantees of our national security and prosperity too.

There have been major strides forward in recent years: in Indonesia, Afghanistan and many parts of Africa and Latin America, democracy is being extended.

We mourn the loss of life of innocent civilians and coalition forces in the war in Iraq and the subsequent terrorism. But the butchery of Saddam is over, and across Iraq eight million people risked their lives to vote earlier this year. Many people disagreed with the action we took in Iraq. We respect and understand their views. But we should all now unite to support the fledgling democracy in Iraq. British troops should remain in Iraq under a United Nations mandate as long as the democratically elected government there wants them. They will continue to train Iraqi security forces to take responsibility for their own future.

We welcome the wider process of democratic reform across the Middle East, and we will work with our allies to encourage and promote economic and political change.

We strongly support the peace process between Israel and Palestine. Resolution of the conflict is crucial to peace in the region and the wider world. The conference held in London in March 2005 has started the process of helping a democratic government in Palestine build security and prosperity. We will work tirelessly to bring about a peace settlement in which a viable and independent state of Palestine lives alongside a safe and secure Israel.

■ **Supporting our armed forces**

Britain's armed forces are amongst the best in the world. They are able to play a key role in advancing our interests and values. We will keep it that way.

We are immensely proud of the bravery, skill and dedication our armed forces have demonstrated in Afghanistan, Iraq, Sierra Leone,

*‘We have more than
doubled aid since 1997.
We have cancelled the
debts of the poorest
countries and are now
pushing others to follow
our lead...’*

the Balkans and elsewhere across the world. They are a force for good. We will never commit forces to battle unless it is essential; but when they are committed they will have the investment, strategy, training and preparation they need. That is one reason we have given the armed forces the biggest sustained increase in funding since the end of the Cold War. But we also know that modern demands on our armed forces are changing. That is why reform and modernisation are essential.

A reduction in the number of infantry battalions, made possible because of the improved security situation in Northern Ireland, has allowed extra resources for the vital support services such as signals, engineers, intelligence and logistics units – the parts of the army most under pressure. This is essential to allow our infantry soldiers to be fully supported when they go into action on our behalf and has resulted in the creation of the Royal Regiment of Scotland from our existing single battalion regiments. This will ensure that the names and traditions of our regiments, such as the red hackle of the Black Watch, can be maintained. We will continue with the investment and reform that make our fighting forces the most flexible and effective in the world.

We are also committed to retaining the independent nuclear deterrent and will continue to work, both bilaterally and through the UN, to urge states not yet party to non-proliferation treaties, notably the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to join.

■ **Veterans**

Labour has always recognised the sacrifice and bravery of our servicemen and women. That is why we were the first government to appoint a Minister for Veterans Affairs. This has enabled us to put veterans' affairs at the heart of decision-making at the Ministry of Defence. Labour has also put more money than ever before into veterans' issues, including £27 million of Lottery funding over the last two years. We

will continue to give priority to veterans' affairs as we mark 60 years since the end of the Second World War.

■ Reforming the United Nations

The UN is crucial to our efforts to build a more secure and more prosperous world. We support the reform of the Security Council so it becomes more representative and has a stronger focus on conflict prevention. We support the recommendation of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel for a Peace-building Commission to assist countries emerging from conflict and to develop mechanisms to enhance conflict prevention. We will press for more radical reform of the UN humanitarian system, so it is better equipped to save lives. We will also press for reform of the World Bank and IMF to improve transparency, give more say to developing countries and, with the EU, better focus their efforts on the poorest countries, particularly in Africa.

■ Climate change and Africa

Britain has the chair of the G8 this year. We will use the summit for two particular purposes.

First, climate change is one of the most pressing challenges that the world faces. We will continue to lead internationally on climate change, and to strive for wider acceptance of the science and the steps needed to combat the problem. We will look beyond Kyoto and promote an international dialogue to reach agreement on the long-term goals and action needed to stabilise the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. We will also work for effective international action to adapt to the impact of climate change.

The UK has already met its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol. We remain committed to achieving a 20 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions on 1990 levels by 2010, and our review of progress this summer will show us how to get back on track. A 60 per cent

reduction by 2050 remains necessary and achievable.

We will continue to promote and develop renewable energy sources, aiming to see 40 per cent of Scotland's electricity produced from renewable technologies by 2020, to seek high standards of energy efficiency in the public and private sectors, and to support emissions trading in Europe and beyond.

Secondly, we will focus on Africa and the global fight against poverty. We have more than doubled aid since 1997. We have cancelled the debts of the poorest countries and are now pushing others to follow our lead and offer 100 per cent debt relief for the poorest. We are proud to have established a Department For International Development, with a clear mission to reduce poverty. Now, for the first time ever, the UK has a clear timetable – 2013 – for achieving the UN target of 0.7 per cent of national income devoted to development. Globally we are pressing for a doubling of aid backed by getting international agreement for an International Finance Facility as supported by the Commission for Africa.

But aid will not be successful without conflict prevention, good governance and zero tolerance of corruption. We will work for faster repatriation of stolen assets from UK financial institutions, ratification of the UN Convention on Corruption, and more open and accountable reporting of revenues from oil and mining – that so often fuel local conflicts. Our commitment is to the people of the developing world; our contract is with their governments for reform. But if poor countries are committed to good governance and poverty reduction we then believe they should be in control of their own policies. We will end the practice of making aid conditional on sensitive economic policy choices, such as trade liberalisation and privatisation.

With this leadership and extra money, we can now work to ensure all children go to school, and millions of people in Asia and Africa suffering from AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria have access to treatment. In particular, we will press for an international agreement on universal access to AIDS treatment by 2010 and for all people in poor countries to have access to free basic healthcare and education. Our long-term aim is to help lift a billion people out of poverty

■ Fair trade

We also know that without fairer trade rules and private investment poor countries will not generate the growth needed to lift themselves out of poverty. We will press for the conclusion of an ambitious trade deal that will completely open markets to exports from poorer countries; and for further reform of rich countries' agricultural subsidies, including the EU's Common Agricultural Policy and a 2010 timetable to end agricultural export subsidies. We do not believe poor countries should be forced to liberalise. We will allow them to sequence their trade reforms, so they can build their capacity to compete globally.

The choice for 2010

In 1997 the Tories had left Britain isolated in Europe, overseas aid had declined and we lacked any coherent vision of our place in the world. With Labour, a strong Britain will help force international terrorism into retreat and help spread democracy and freedom around the world. We will be leaders in a reformed Europe and, with others, make significant progress towards raising a billion people out of extreme poverty. We will fight for a new global agreement on climate change, an arms trade treaty, and a trade deal that makes trade work for the many, not just the few. Our armed forces will continue to be the best in the world. The alternative is to go back to the Tories with their record of cuts in aid and defence and their policies of tearing up the Social Chapter, and marginalising Britain in Europe and the world.

Scotland
forward
not back

Chapter 8

Quality of life: Excellence for all

Forward to Olympic gold, not back to cuts in sports and culture

1997: Arts spending cut in real terms over preceding five years

2005: A National Theatre for Scotland

2012: An Olympic legacy for Britain

Arts, culture and sport are thriving in Britain and Scotland – enriching individual lives and transforming communities, towns and cities. They are important in their own right – as nourishment for our imagination or a source of plain enjoyment – and our local environment should be a source of pride. We will work to improve the quality of life of every community.

■ **The new Labour case**

We believe in the inherent value of arts, culture and sport. Our towns and cities are being energised by sports and culture, and as they are regenerated the quality of life for all is transformed. As we build on this change, our progressive challenge is to broaden participation as widely as possible, making the links between sport and health, and culture and well-being. We must combine the broadest base of participation with the ability for the most talented to progress to the very top. Our third term will embed the expectation that every child and every adult have the maximum chance to develop their creative or sporting talents

■ **Arts, culture and museums**

Since 1997 we have greatly increased funding for the arts. Thanks to our policy of free admissions, the number of people visiting formerly charging national museums and galleries has risen by 75 per cent over three years. Many are first-time visitors, with the biggest increases amongst children.

Britain's cultural industries now make up over eight per cent of our national income – and from computer games to fine arts, British talent is gaining global recognition and generating real wealth. This is one of the fastest growing and fastest changing areas of the economy. We will encourage and support the wider creative industries, supporting the promotion of Scottish films and programmes overseas.

We will support a National Theatre for Scotland that will build on our

world-class plays and productions. A reformed Scottish Opera and the rejuvenated Scottish Ballet will take centre stage at the International Festival in Edinburgh this year alongside other internationally renowned artists and companies.

Our aim is that everyone should have the opportunity to participate in cultural life. From one year's free music tuition in primary schools to sending Scottish bands to perform in the South by Southwest music festival in the USA, we will support all forms of participation.

The delivery and governance arrangements for the arts, culture and creative industries are being reviewed in Scotland. We want to deliver a stronger sector and will consider the Cultural Commission's recommendations to see how best we can do that. We will work with EventScotland to maximise the contribution that culture, sport and the arts can play in boosting the economy and the promotion of Scotland, establishing Scotland as a recognised venue for major events.

And in 2007, we will support the Scottish Year of Highland Culture, promoting the uniqueness of Scotland's history and culture, and promoting tourism and economic growth. We will ensure the legacy of 2007 can be enjoyed by future generations.

To help young talent get the right start, we will work to establish Creative Apprenticeships. Through the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) we are funding the Creative Pioneer Academy which will develop the entrepreneurial skills of recent graduates with outstanding talents and original business ideas – and for some there will be the offer of up to £35,000 to start their own business.

■ **Sport for all**

Our aim is to increase participation in sport at all ages. Central to this

is having modern, high-quality facilities close to where people live.

Around £50 million of capital has already been earmarked for the National and Regional Sports Facilities Strategy for the development of ten world-class competition and training facilities across Scotland.

Investment in schools, including the recruitment of school sports coordinators and 400 new PE teachers, means that every child will have two hours of quality physical education in school. We are boosting participation in competitive sports and creating a greater variety of physical activities for young people to get involved in, so that dance classes or multi-gyms in modern facilities are offered as well as traditional sports.

We will also develop accreditation schemes to allow even more people to act as sports coaches and physical activity trainers. In particular, we will promote New Deal programmes, which provide opportunities to train as sports assistants.

Having passed the necessary legislation, we remain committed to completing the sale of the Tote to a Racing Trust.

■ The Olympics and the Commonwealth Games

Britain's medal hauls at the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and in Athens in 2004 were the best for over 80 years, and we maintained our position as one of the leading nations in the Paralympics. Now we are supporting the bid to bring the Olympics to London in 2012, and if successful, it would inspire a generation of sportsmen and women throughout the United Kingdom. Scottish business has already won contracts through the bid process alone, and we will maximise the economic gain from this bid for Scottish business.

We are also studying plans to bring the Commonwealth Games to

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is transformed.’*

Glasgow in 2014. Our plans would bring regeneration to the East End of Glasgow and leave lasting sporting, economic and cultural legacies that would benefit the whole country.

As we approach the Olympics we will continue to support the training and preparation programmes for elite athletes who are potential medal winners through the Athlete Support programme.

■ Libraries in the information age

Where they are at the heart of communities and offer new services like IT learning and access to other council services, our libraries are thriving. We will work with local councils to ensure that those that offer the best in library leadership, customer focus and improved back-office functions serve as role models for library development across Scotland as a whole.

■ Public service broadcasting and the BBC

We support a strong, independent and world-class BBC with clearly defined public purposes at the heart of a healthy public broadcasting system. We will replace the BBC governors with a BBC Trust to ensure that the BBC's governance and regulation is accountable to the licence-fee payers to whom it belongs. The licence fee will be guaranteed for the whole of the ten-year Royal Charter that will take effect on 1 January 2007. Channel 4 will continue to be a publicly owned broadcaster providing distinctive competition to the BBC. ITV and Five will also be retained in our public service broadcasting system.

■ Digital switchover

The success of satellite and cable television in driving take-up of digital shows how changes in technology bring real benefits – in terms of greater choice, and increasingly, in access to services. Our aim is to make those benefits available to all. We will achieve digital switchover between 2008 and 2012 ensuring universal access to high-quality,

free-to-view and subscription digital TV. This will happen region by region, and we will make sure that the interests of elderly people and other vulnerable groups are protected. We will encourage the establishment of a dedicated digital Gaelic TV channel, promoting the use of Gaelic and ensuring this language is able to take advantage of the newest technology

■ **Digital challenge**

In Scotland, we have worked with suppliers and businesses to increase dramatically the availability of broadband services across Scotland. By the end of 2005 we expect to have ensured that there is affordable broadband in every community in Scotland. Take-up of broadband by business has doubled in the last year alone.

We will continue to encourage both the availability of broadband services and their take-up across Scotland. In addition, we will work through schools and libraries to improve computing skills and knowledge to help stimulate home take-up of the internet.

We will establish a new National Internet Safety Unit to make Britain the safest place in the world to access the internet.

■ **Copyright in a digital age**

We will modernise copyright and other forms of protection of intellectual property rights so that they are appropriate for the digital age. We will use our presidency of the EU to look at how to ensure content creators can protect their innovations in a digital age. Piracy is a growing threat and we will work with industry to protect against it.

■ **Film**

The strength of Britain's film industry is a source of pride and employment. We will continue to make the UK the right place to invest in film production. We will legislate to provide new tax reliefs that will ensure

support is delivered directly and efficiently to those who produce films. We will also support the development of Scotland as a production centre for film and TV and as a location for film-making.

We will work with the UK Film Council to achieve a higher priority for funding film festivals around the country, including for the Edinburgh Film Festival, the oldest in Britain.

■ The Lottery

Every single part of British life has been touched by the £15 billion generated for good causes by the Lottery. Labour has made the Lottery more inclusive and more in tune with people's priorities. We have created the Big Lottery Fund and given it an explicit mandate to involve people not just in setting strategy but also in awarding grants. Our Lottery Bill will give a duty and a power to every Lottery distributor to involve the public more radically in decision-making at every level.

By the end of 2005 we will put in place a new, national consultation on the way that the National Lottery good causes proceeds are spent after the new Lottery Licence is awarded in 2009.

■ The local environment

From the litter in the street and how we travel each day, to the home we live in and the products we buy, our daily choices each have an impact on the environment. Graffiti, litter, poor lighting and bad design affect everyone's sense of well-being.

Scotland's bathing waters, rivers and drinking water are now of the highest quality. Ninety-three percent of bathing waters reach European standards. We are cleaning up and reusing vacant and derelict land and reusing empty property; we are also investing in flood prevention schemes and investing in housing estates across Scotland

to improve the conditions in which people live. We have declared Scotland's first ever national parks. And our Anti-Social Behaviour legislation for the first time brings together action to improve the quality of the local environment, including measures to tackle crime and disorder, litter and refuse, graffiti and fly-tipping. Tackling environmental issues is part of our commitment to social justice. It is the poor that suffer the most from poor environmental quality and we will further crack down on environmental crime.

We are investing in energy-efficient homes, have set new housing design standards and have introduced a new Quality standard for new housing to bring an end to dampness in Scotland's housing. Labour will also ensure that the reform of the planning system in Scotland will mean that communities are properly consulted for the first time and that their views are heard.

We will provide widespread separated kerbside collections across Scotland – bringing recycling to over 90 per cent of households by 2020. Specially trained environmental prosecutors have helped see fines for pollution double in recent years. We will examine schemes whereby polluters will have the opportunity to invest in environmental remediation or new, local environmental projects, rather than just pay fines. We will emphasise environmental education throughout the school years, including environmental involvement through work experience.

Through a Marine Act, we will introduce a new framework for the seas, based on marine spatial planning, that balances conservation, energy and resource needs for UK-wide matters. To obtain best value from different uses of our valuable marine resources, we must maintain and protect the ecosystems on which they depend.

We will further improve access to coastal areas and introduce an Animal Health and Welfare Bill to prevent the suffering of pets.

The choice for 2010

The Tories have always neglected the arts, seeing them as an easy target for cuts. They do not understand the role that culture can play in the lives of individuals, in the futures of our towns and cities, and in the prosperity of our country. The choice is forward with new Labour to more sport in schools, arts for all children and young people, and continued investment in culture. Or back to the Tories with cuts across culture, arts and sport.

**Scotland
forward
not back**

Chapter 9

Democracy: Power devolved, citizens empowered

**Forward to reform and
decentralisation, not back to
opportunism and neglect**

1979-1997: Power centralised to Whitehall

**1997-2005: Power devolved to Scotland, Wales,
London**

**2010: Stronger local government, with local
communities able to make the key
decisions about their own
neighbourhoods**

In our first two terms we enshrined a new constitutional settlement between the nations of the United Kingdom. In our next term we will complete the reform of the House of Lords so that is a modern and effective revising Chamber. And we will devolve more power to local authorities and local communities, giving people real power over the issues that matter most to them.

■ **The new Labour case**

Widening access to power is as important as widening access to wealth and opportunity. National standards are important to ensure fairness. But the best way to tackle exclusion is to give choice and power to those left behind. Our political institutions – including our own party – must engage a population overloaded with information, diverse in its values and lifestyles and sceptical of power. However, people are passionate about politics – when they see it affects them. So our challenge is to bridge the chasm between government and governed. Our third term will build upon our unprecedented programme of constitutional reform, embedding a culture of devolved government at the centre, and self-government in our communities.

■ **Building from the neighbourhood up**

People want a sense of control over their own neighbourhood. Not a new tier of neighbourhood government, but new powers over the problems that confront them when they step outside their front door – issues like litter, graffiti and anti-social behaviour. That is why Labour in Scotland has created new laws that give power back to the decent majority and that mean action is taken by the police and councils to tackle anti-social behaviour. We are funding Quality of Life projects that improve local areas and can help tackle issues such as litter and graffiti. In Scotland, Labour has devolved the management of community assets in many local council areas where community activists are given a budget and allowed to manage a facility.

■ **A vibrant civil society**

We believe that the mutual, cooperative and voluntary sectors have an important role to play in the provision of a range of services. They can unleash creativity, innovation, create jobs, and provide new services, especially in neighbourhoods where traditional services have failed people in the past.

We have introduced a new legal form – the Community Interest Company (CIC) – and we want to support new enterprises. And Labour in Scotland will create a Co-operative Development Agency to help grow many more cooperative projects and businesses.

We understand that often the spark for local innovation and change comes from one or two dedicated, visionary individuals. We want to create more of these ‘social entrepreneurs’, and they will get our full support. Determined to Succeed is Scotland’s national Enterprise in Education programme, teaching youngsters initiative and enterprise, creating a new generation of adults capable of inspiring others, both within the workplace and within the community. Working with the four Scottish Clearing Banks, we are providing low-cost loans and grants to stimulate enterprise and wealth creation in under-invested communities.

Citizenship is a core part of Scotland’s curriculum in schools but we want to do more to encourage strong citizenship, volunteering and community activism.

To encourage young people to volunteer and open up more opportunities, Labour is creating Project Scotland, a new national youth volunteering scheme that will give young Scots the opportunity to take a year out to contribute to their communities on high-quality volunteer placements. The first group of youngsters will start their Projects this summer.

■ **Councils: more freedom, less bureaucracy**

Strong communities ultimately require strong local government. We have given councils further freedoms to deliver better local services subject to minimum national standards. We will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy for councils by integrating inspections and cutting their costs; and we are simplifying the many funding streams by implementing Outcome Agreements, where the way an initiative is funded is secondary to the objective of the initiative. Labour in Scotland has introduced three-year funding in councils to cut end-of-year waste, and we are encouraging joint procurement and shared services between different councils through our Efficient Government initiative.

■ **Stronger leadership**

Strong local government requires strong leadership. Labour in Scotland has reformed the governance of local councils, recognising the vital role elected councillors make to their communities. We have changed the law so that more people can stand for election, established an independent remuneration committee for councillors, and reformed the way in which councillors are to be elected. Labour wants to make it easier for people to participate in elections and we will consider innovative new ways of improving democratic participation. We will consider carefully the recommendations of the Arbuthnott Commission.

■ **Council tax under control**

Labour recognises the concerns that have been raised about the level of council tax. That is why we have established an Independent Local Government Finance Review to look at different forms of local taxation, including reform of the council tax.

We will continue to invest in local services with year-on-year increases in grant to local councils, and we will work with our colleagues in local government to apply downward pressures on council tax levels. In

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Scotland, the yearly council tax increases with Labour have been less each year than any of the years under the Conservatives.

We remain concerned that many council taxpayers are not claiming reductions in their council tax bills to which they are already entitled. We will therefore introduce measures to make it easier for pensioners and people on low incomes to claim Council Tax Benefit.

■ The nations and regions of the UK

In our first term, we devolved power to Scotland and Wales and restored city-wide government to London. Britain is stronger as a result. In the next Parliament, we will decentralise power further. In Wales we will develop democratic devolution by creating a stronger Assembly with enhanced legislative powers and a reformed structure and electoral system to make the exercise of Assembly responsibilities clearer and more accountable to the public. We will also review the powers of the London Mayor and the Greater London Authority. And we will devolve further responsibility to existing English regional bodies in relation to planning, housing economic development and transport.

■ Northern Ireland

The Belfast Agreement on Good Friday 1998 was a remarkable achievement. Life in Northern Ireland is immeasurably better as a result. A huge programme of reform in policing, justice and rights, together with the lowest ever unemployment has helped address the inequalities of the past and has created a new confidence.

It is unacceptable that seven years after the agreement there are still paramilitary groups involved in criminality and punishment attacks. This has to end. The period of transition is over. Unionist politicians have made it clear that they are prepared to share power with nationalists and republicans if violence is ended once and for all. It is time for

all groups in Northern Ireland to make it clear they will only use democratic and peaceful means to advance their aims.

We will work tirelessly with the parties in Northern Ireland and with the Irish government to re-establish the devolved institutions. But this can only happen on an inclusive basis if the IRA ends paramilitarism and criminality for good and decommissions its weapons. Bringing this about so that normal politics can take over in the Province will be our principal aim.

Loyalist paramilitary violence and criminality are equally intolerable. We will ensure that they are dealt with severely while providing the assistance necessary to Loyalist communities to ensure that prosperity is spread throughout Northern Ireland.

■ **Parliamentary reform**

Labour has already taken steps to make the House of Commons more representative through all-women shortlists. Labour will also continue to support reforms that improve parliamentary accountability and scrutiny led by the successful Modernisation Committee.

In our first term, we ended the absurdity of a House of Lords dominated by hereditary peers. Labour believes that a reformed Upper Chamber must be effective, legitimate and more representative without challenging the primacy of the House of Commons.

Following a review conducted by a committee of both Houses, we will seek agreement on codifying the key conventions of the Lords, and developing alternative forms of scrutiny that complement rather than replicate those of the Commons; the review should also explore how the Upper Chamber might offer a better route for public engagement in scrutiny and policy-making. We will legislate to place reasonable limits on the time bills spend in the second chamber – no

longer than 60 sitting days for most bills.

As part of the process of modernisation, we will remove the remaining hereditary peers and allow a free vote on the composition of the House.

Labour remains committed to reviewing the experience of the new electoral systems – introduced for the devolved administrations, the European Parliament and the London Assembly. A referendum remains the right way to agree any change for Westminster.

Having been the first Government to take action to clean up the funding of political parties, we will continue to work with the independent Electoral Commission to explore how best to support the vital democratic role of political parties while recognising that campaigning activity must always be funded by parties from their own resources.

■ A voice for all

A fully democratic society depends on giving everyone a voice and stake. Only Labour governments have ever introduced race relations legislation, and laws passed in 2000 are ensuring that all public bodies promote diversity and tackle discrimination against black and Asian Britons. We will continue to promote civil rights for disabled people, ensuring full implementation of the new positive duty on the public sector to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. We will also introduce a similar duty to promote equality of opportunity between women and men, and will further extend protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief. In Scotland we are taking action against religious hatred and we are creating a national consensus to tackle the scourge of sectarianism.

We are committed to improving the rights and opportunities of gays and lesbians. That's why we have brought in legislation on civil partnerships, reduced the age of consent, and repealed Section 2a.

We are proud to have brought in the Human Rights Act, enabling British citizens to take action in British courts rather than having to wait years to seek redress in Strasbourg. But rights must be balanced by responsibilities, so we will continue to bear down on abusive or frivolous claims.

In the next Parliament we will establish a Commission on Equality and Human Rights to promote equality for all and tackle discrimination, and introduce a Single Equality Act to modernise and simplify equality legislation.

The choice for 2010

The Tories have only one policy on democratic reform – opportunism. Arch centralisers when in office, they now claim to be localists. Having refused for decades to accept any reform of the archaic House of Lords, some of them now claim to support a fully elected House. The choice is forward with new Labour to modern institutions and more power than ever devolved to communities and successful local authorities. Or back with the Tories to a government indifferent to the health of our democracy and negligent of our institutions.