



Radical Hope: strategy for Compass 2017 and beyond Amended and passed at the Compass AGM 2017

1. The context Compass is now operating in

1.1 We live in incredible times. The old orthodoxies have either been discredited or are clinging on for dear life – for good and for bad. We can take our pick from Trump, Brexit and Labour’s surprise and welcome vote share in June 2017, on a programme that at least challenges some neoliberal orthodoxies. Added to this, the ability of activists on social media and out campaigning to challenge the dominance of the Daily Mail and Murdoch is a game changer. So many people are looking for change – it is the job of Compass to help ensure it is progressive, transformative and enduring change.

1.2 At the last AGM in March 2016 all was fairly serene, other than the turbulence within Labour. That was before Brexit, Trump and before a watershed election. Brexit and then Trump changed the game, as a slow burn dissatisfaction with the status quo for so many came back to bite the centre-left political establishment.

1.3 Compass has not taken a position on Brexit. We guess that the majority of our members and supporters voted to stay and would do so again. Compass has always worked for a good Europe that is more equal, democratic and sustainable and we will continue to do that. We are against ethno-nationalism and any anti-immigrant sentiment. But we want to listen to and work with those who voted leave out of frustration from being ignored and those in despair about the referendum's outcome. There was a referendum. As democrats we dismiss the result at our peril. We need to build bridges between key political sections of our society – not polarize them further. Our role is to be able to engage with progressives on both sides of the Brexit divide and ensure that the future positive relationship we must have with Europe doesn’t further alienate the good people who voted to leave.

***Amendment 1**

***Amendment 6**

1.4 And then came the snap general election. A full account of what happened can be found in Barry Langford’s book [All Together Now](#) but, suffice to say, the organisation should be incredibly proud of the role it played in getting the Progressive Alliance (PA) off the ground so quickly and effectively. We ran a national campaign that was top of the political agenda for the first half of the election. In the end we played a big part in stopping an overall Tory majority. Every day that passes

without draconian right wing legislation and as a hard, conservative Brexit becomes less likely – we can reflect on the movement of which we were a big part. Compass members and supporters were amazing over those seven weeks; the money and time you gave was incredibly generous.

1.5 But the outcome was bittersweet. There were more than 60 seats that could have been won if the PA had been properly supported from all sides and there would now be a Labour-led government doing good, not just an opposition trying to reign in the bad. And it was particularly bittersweet for the Green Party, who gave so much and got so little back from the Labour leadership. But it is partly their triumph that it is the Tories who are now in crisis, and it is their generosity that means so many have tasted a new kind of politics, where the common good is placed above tribal party interest. People will not forget that experience of collaboration for a greater good. In order to proceed, we will need to push the Labour Party to change their rules to allow Local Parties to enter electoral alliances with other parties in order to defeat the Conservatives. More broadly, a culture change needs to happen within Labour to embrace pluralism.

We will seek to ensure that any future progressive alliance will be a genuine alliance, which all parties involved stand to gain from, and not simply an anti-Tory tactical voting campaign.

1.6 With Jeremy Corbyn now established as Labour's leader until the next election our job is to push for more radical and transformative economic, democratic and sustainable policy ideas. It's likely there will be time to do this in detail before a further election. The government's deal with the DUP could collapse, but more likely they will hold on until they think they have the best chance of winning after any Brexit has been delivered. So the task now is to shape the Corbyn revolution, which has re-energized Labour both morally and practically and through ideas and policy to build progressive alliances across parties and civil society. Labour needs a second revolution to make the party more plural and democratic, more in-tune with the networked culture of the 21st Century, more committed to sustainability as a core concern, more genuinely egalitarian in deed as well as word, and more committed to a politics of Europe and international networks to make the maximum potential of the global era we are living through.

1.7 The oxygen of hope is being sucked back into our lungs. That doesn't mean Compass isn't aware of the threats from the Right – but for the first time in a generation or more – everything feels like it is up for grabs. Hope has to be radical and feasible.

1.8 Let us remember that the unique place of Compass is to bring people from all progressive parties and places together to build a new political culture and programme that can really start the transformation towards a good society. There is a huge space for a politics that is not just egalitarian but also democratic, plural, green, liberal, international and modern. That is the space Compass has to fill.

2. Work plan for 2017 and beyond

2.1 To do that we are proposing a major piece of work over the next two years called *The Common Programme*. This will be a vision, ideas and policy vehicle to bring together a huge alliance of diverse politicians, thinkers and activists to produce a platform for the transformative politics we so desire. It will set out what a good society and life could feel like, and how a new economy and new democracy can help achieve them. This project will take up the majority of our time over the next two years and will allow the idea of progressive alliances to be sustained and evolved.

2.2 Local Compass/PA groups will be critical to driving the project as we reach out to thousands of people and organizations to help us build a programme that can unite progressive individuals and organisations across the country. In particular the Common Programme must engage with issues ideas and people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well the new mayors and towns and cities across the UK and key issues in the global context, such as climate change, armed conflict and economic injustice.

2.3 By involving key politicians and influencers and, just as importantly, building a movement in support of a radical Common Programme amongst activists in the progressive parties and civil society, we can translate new thinking into new policy orthodoxies for the next election and beyond.

2.4 Alongside this we will continue the critical work on political strategy – examining how to build a transformative project through what we call *45 Degree Politics* – the faultline of a new society which links horizontal or bottom up activity and the vertical resources and legitimacy of the state to sustain this emerging participatory culture.

2.5 And in terms of ideas, we will focus in on policies that act as a prism for the big transformation we want to see – hence a continued focus on Universal Basic Income and our continued support for Proportional Representation – particularly working with others to get Labour to back it. In addition, through our Thinkpieces and events, we will examine tricky issues such as electoral strategy, immigration, Europe etc.

2.6 The Progressive Alliance showed us that we can add electoral organization to our skill set. But there is unlikely to be a general election for some years. So we need to find the right campaigning vehicles to prosecute our politics. Compass needs to choose the key campaign issues and themes that speak to a very different politics and society such as House of Lords reform/replacement, PR, UBI, democratised public services/workplace democracy?

***Amendments 4 and 9**

2.7 In terms of our own organization – because of the PA campaign we have moved from a supporter base of 30,000 to over 60,000 and we continue to build our membership. But we need to make a real push in the following areas:

- i. To keep building the membership and supporter base – we should look to build both by 20% over the next year and every subsequent year
- ii. We currently have 17 existing and emerging local groups across the country – we have to ensure they are sustained and expanded, as well as launching new groups in every region of the UK. In particular we need to ensure we are in touch with and supporting members the length and breadth of the UK.
- iii. Over the next year, we need to shift to a position where the majority of our funding comes from members and supporters, to give us the freedom, security and political autonomy to carry out core activities such as alliances between parties and movements.
- iv. We should devise a national fundraising strategy to involve national and local groups, to make possible 2.2 and 2.3
- v. We need to involve members in more decisions and activities. We are currently working on a plan for enhanced engagement.
- vi. We plan to rebuild the website – in particular to reflect the Common Programme project
- vii. Finally, in everything we do, we will work to take the necessary steps to ensure Compass reflects the diversity of the society we seek to transform, actively reaching out to individuals and groups who are underrepresented in the fields of political thought and action.

2.8 Compass continues to grow and develop intellectually and organizationally. The Progressive Alliance gave us a flavour of what we are capable of. We now have a bigger base to build from – the next year is critical to ensure we can have a bigger, deeper, more sustained influence on UK and wider politics.

Remitted Member Amendments

*A1: Replace 1.3 with: “Compass has not taken a position on Brexit up until this point. We acknowledge that there are good people, progressives with whom we normally agree, who voted leave in June 2016. As democrats, we accept the result of the referendum. Compass is against ethno-nationalism and any anti-immigrant sentiment, and has always worked for a good Europe that is more equal, democratic and sustainable. We will continue to do that and, to this end, we believe that this is best achieved by a strong, close relationship with the European Union that respects the result of the vote to leave in June 2016. We believe that, by doing this, we can build the bridges that we need to between key political sections of our society, rather than pursue the divisive strategy of the Conservative government.”

*A6: After "Compass has not taken a position on Brexit", insert "up to now".
After "There was a referendum", insert "which provided the basis for negotiations to leave the EU. However we are alarmed by the way in which the Tories have

proceeded with Brexit, with some seeking a wide-ranging deregulation agenda, some seeking an exit without a deal with the EU, and the Government itself seeking to avoid proper public and Parliamentary scrutiny."

After "As democrats we", insert "now want to see a vote on the outcome of those negotiations. In the event of such a referendum, we will campaign for a 'Remain' vote."

Delete "dismiss the result at our peril ... good people who voted to leave."

Decision: The above two amendments were remitted and it was agreed that Compass would organise a deliberative process to determine Compass' position on Brexit, with the involvement of Compass members

*A4: Add 2.7:

"The Progressive Alliance showed us that we can add electoral organization to our skill set but there is unlikely to be a General Election for some years. We need to find the right campaigning vehicles to prosecute our politics. Compass needs to choose the key campaign issues and themes that speak to a very different politics and society, such as House of Lords reform, PR, UBI, democratised public services and workplace democracy. Particularly, Compass needs to identify constituencies where a progressive party is well-placed currently and historically to defeat the Conservatives and mobilise volunteers and produce resources to prepare for the next General Election."

Decision: The amendment was remitted as it may cause problems with electoral regulation. However the MC committed to take appropriate action to prepare for an election.

*A9: Add new 2.7:

"Although a General Election is unlikely in the near future, Compass will retain and update its election strategy in the event of another snap General Election, and other important elections e.g. by-elections, where it can make an impact. Local Compass branches may also decide to intervene in local elections. Compass will build its supporter' capabilities, election artefacts and processes, and disseminate information to support this effort.

Decision: The amendment was remitted as it may cause problems with electoral regulation. However the MC committed to take appropriate action to prepare for an election.