



# Labour chooses Gordon

There was a real buzz around Westminster this week as the Labour leadership election nominations opened for MPs.

At a packed special meeting of the Parliamentary Party on Monday General Secretary Peter Watt spoke to us about how the process was going to work.

Then it was a case of picking up your forms from the PLP office.

As of close of nominations on Thursday the following nominations were in:

For the **leadership** of the Labour Party:

<b>Nominations</b>	
<b>Gordon Brown</b>	<b>313</b>

For the **deputy leadership** of the Labour Party:

<b>Nominations</b>	
<b>Hilary Benn</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Hazel Blears</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Jon Cruddas</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Peter Hain</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Harriet Harman</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Alan Johnson</b>	<b>73</b>

I believe the outcome of the nominations process has reflected the views of the Labour Party in Corby and East Northamptonshire..

We now move on to the next stage of our leadership elections, with Gordon Brown and the six deputy leadership candidates engaging with and listening to the country, starting on at our first hustings in Coventry.

In around 5 weeks time Britain's most successful Chancellor ever becomes Party Leader.

Meanwhile the business of government continues.

We have said throughout this contest that the British people come first, and we continue to govern in the interests of the whole country.

Over the coming weeks the candidates will be setting out their vision for the future of Britain.

This site is the place where you can find out the facts about our leadership elections, so keep on checking it for all the latest news:



***'I am truly humbled that so many of my colleagues have nominated me for the leadership of the Labour Party and I formally accept the nomination, the responsibility it brings, and the opportunity to serve the people of Britain.'***

***'I will strive to earn your trust.'***

***'To earn your trust in our schools, in our hospitals, in our public services, and to respond to your concerns.'***

Gordon Brown accepting the nomination as Leader of the Labour Party

# Labour's tough action against bad employers

On Wednesday I was briefed about some new measures to target bad employers with tougher fines if they pay below the minimum wage.

Labour's Trade and Industry Secretary Alistair Darling wants to see fixed penalty fines linked to the number of workers underpaid given to those who break the law.

I think this is a good move that will further protect workers from being ripped off. At the moment some disreputable employers take the risk of ripping off their staff as the amount they get fined is not enough. Now they will get hit even harder in the pocket if they con their staff.

Alistair Darling also said that if his proposals go through for the first time businesses would have to pay interest or other cash to workers they have underpaid on top of repaying arrears.

Of course paying less than the minimum isn't only unfair to the workers- it's unfair to

the vast majority of employers who obey the law, because it lets rogue businesses undercut them.

I think Labour's action on this will give this simple message to bad employers: pay less than the minimum wage and it will cost you. The vast majority of employers obey the law already so why should a minority get away with it.

Labour introduced the minimum wage in April 1999. David Cameron opposed it and said it would increase unemployment. In fact, we've achieved record employment and at the same time we have increased the minimum wage to £5.35 an hour, up 30 per cent in real terms since 1999

We have already helped tens of thousands of workers recover £22.6 million in unpaid wages - but these new proposals will go further and mean that less people are ripped off by a minority of bad employers.

I'll keep you posted on what happens.

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## Bill to boost regeneration

Last week the Empty Property Rates Bill was published to encourage empty buildings back into use as part of Labour's efforts to regenerate areas.

Presently, most empty commercial property receives relief from taxation whereas empty warehouses and factories receive a permanent exemption from rates.

It simply does not make sense to provide tax relief for buildings that sit empty. I will be looking forward to voting on this Bill as I know that in **Corby and East Northamptonshire** this change in the law could benefit the area significantly.

From April 2008, empty commercial property will be liable for the full business rate after an initial rate-free period of three months, or six months for factories and warehouses.

These reforms will provide a strong incentive to bring empty shops, offices and factory buildings back into use, and so improve access to property and also reduce rents for businesses.

Empty property held by charities will be completely exempt from business rates, as will empty property held by community and amateur sports clubs.