Maitland Political provides dedicated political insight, strategic direction and practical application to our clients. We have a thorough understanding of the public policy landscape, matched by our strength in forgoing relationships and building alliances across the board.

Comprehensive research underpins all our work. We help clients understand and influence government decision making to create competitive advantage on issues that directly relate to their business.

Campaigns are at the heart of everything we do. We plan and deliver strategic communications programmes, in order to achieve specific goals for our clients.

Success is our driver: Success to us to help our clients succeed on their public policy objectives either in protecting their business or being able to help grow it.
During the EU referendum campaign the mainstream political opinion was that should Britain vote to remain, and the Conservative Party would split down the middle. A civil war of sorts would erupt as the eurosceptics blamed their defeat on David Cameron's campaign tactics. As we now all know, in reality the exact opposite has happened. Whilst the Tories sit atop the polls looking largely united, Brexit has left Labour riven with factions. The vast majority of MPs, members and voters chose to remain, but the Labour heartlands in the north of England and Wales voted to Leave. Meanwhile the leader, Jeremy Corbyn, a lifelong eurosceptic, voted to remain. Put simply; the party does not know how it should react.

At a time in which the party is split so firmly on the leadership Brexit insults an already painful injury. There are some MPs, who passionately supported Remain who now believe that Labour must accept the result, but try and build a “progressive Brexit”. This group also tends to agree that we need “some control on immigration” and that the UK should leave the customs union in order that the Government can sign trade deals with other countries.

The other side take a more traditionalist approach to opposition, believing that Labour should fight the Government at every step, from the vote to trigger article 50, until the end. In order to ensure that if Brexit does carry the economic cost that many “experts” suspect, it will be the Tories and not Labour that carry the burden into the ballot box.

Maitland Political along with the Labour think tank Progress have brought together some of the leading figures formulating Labour’s Brexit strategy to debate the future pf the party, the country and left of centre politics throughout the continent.
Whichever way you look at the Labour Party, it is clear that Brexit has created a squeeze in Labour’s poll share since the 1980s. In the Labour heartlands of the North, Labour are challenged by UKIP; in cities, the Liberal Democrats are chasing the Remainer vote; and in swing seats, Theresa May is proving to be the most popular new Prime Minister since Tony Blair. As a result, Labour wants to tell the North of England that it will “take back control” and deliver the will of the people in the referendum. Meanwhile, the party wants to tell city dwellers that the Conservatives are pursuing a hard Brexit that will be cataclysmic for the economy.

Keeping together the coalition of middle class voters in metropolitan areas and working class voters in Northern cities, and biting into the commuter belts is the way Labour gets into Government. Brexit has smashed through that coalition and Labour now has to convince the two groups--one wanting a hard Brexit and the other not wanting any Brexit at all.

As Labour have reached to try and bring these people together, the Conservatives have taken Copeland--a Labour seat for a century--and have cemented their position as Scotland’s second party.

Although Labour were beaten in Copeland by the Conservatives, and made all but invisible by the Liberal Democrats in Richmond, they did win in Stoke on Trent. The city was flooded by Labour activists, and although Stoke was meant to be “the capital of Brexit” Labour still managed to attract a loyal base of supporters.

Key Facts

**Richmond by-election**
Labour received 1,515 votes or 3.7 per cent of the vote, losing their deposit. The number of votes is lower than number of members in the local constituency party, which claims to have more than 1,600 members.

**Referendum vote**
Seven out of ten Labour held constituencies voted to leave.

**Copeland by-election**
The Conservatives become the first governing party to gain a seat in a by-election since 1982, beating Labour with a swing of 6.7 per cent. It was the biggest gain, in share of the vote, by a governing party in a by-election since 1966.
Shaping negotiations

While accepting the referendum result, there is a determination not to settle for a “Tory Brexit” defined entirely by Theresa May’s vision. They reject the PM’s mantra that no deal at all would be better than a bad deal, and insist that the UK must continue to have full, tariff-free access to the Single Market. Labour will try to impact the negotiations as much as possible in the Commons chamber and through select committees.

EU nationals

Labour finds itself more united and in tune with its members on the demand that EU national living in the UK are given a guarantee that they may remain post-Brexit. Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell has spoken of the importance of “the moral pressure that we'll be able to exert” on government during the negotiation process and securing a commitment on this will be a key test.

Workers’ rights

Labour has pledged to resist any moves toward a tax and regulation race to the bottom that would see the UK become an “Atlantic Singapore”. Therefore, one of the other key battles ahead for the party will be in ensuring that EU regulations governing workers’ rights are maintained and enhanced.

A Progressive Brexit

In opposition to a hard Brexit, Shadow Brexit Secretary Keir Starmer has proposed “a new and strong relationship based on the principles of co-operation, collaboration and mutual benefit.” Labour will demand that exiting scientific, educational, cultural and defence ties remain in place and allow Britain to continue in a leadership role, rather than embracing a more isolationist stance.
Institute for Global Change
Tony Blair set up the Institute for Global Change to combat the rise of populism on the left and right and reinvigorate the centre ground. Its mission is to arm front-rank politicians with strategies and policies to rebuild faith in liberal democracy.

Open Britain
Open Britain is the post-referendum sequel to Britain Stronger in Europe. It boasts a plethora of supportive MPs and leads campaigns around the country against a so-called “hard-Brexit”.

Vote Leave Watch
Vote Leave Watch is chaired by Chuka Umunna MP and is a grassroots campaign dedicated to holding the Vote Leave campaign and their allies to account for claims made during the referendum campaign. Its patrons include Emma Reynolds MP.
British Future
British Future was set up by a cross-party coalition Remain and Leave supporters, including Stephen Kinnock, Caroline Flint and Daniel Hannan MEP, to come together to set out a shared vision of how the UK can ‘Brexit Together’.

Labour Leave
Labour Leave has remained active since the referendum last June, including publishing their top 5 manifesto objectives which include complete controls on immigration and returning all law-making powers to the UK Parliament.

Labour Future
Founded by Labour Leave chairman, John Mills, Labour Future aims to develop election winning policies based on set priorities including immigration and working-class support.
Labour membership polls

March 2017

▶ A poll of Labour members clearly illustrates the difficulty the party faces in balancing its approach to Brexit. A majority of party members support a second referendum, a policy firmly rejected by the leadership. Subsequently, the bulk of Labour members feel that Jeremy Corbyn has mishandled the issue, and that more needs to be done to shape Britain's withdrawal in a progressive direction.

Would you support or oppose holding a second referendum on Britain’s membership of the European Union to confirm or reverse Britain’s decision to leave the EU?

How well or badly do you think Jeremy Corbyn has handled Labour’s position on Brexit since the European referendum result last June?

Do you think the Labour Party are or are not doing enough to hold the government to account on Britain’s exit from the European Union?

Source: YouGov/Election Data
https://election-data.co.uk/labour-membership-poll-results-2017
Sir Keir Starmer MP | Shadow Brexit Secretary
“The government is recklessly talking up the idea of crashing out of the EU with no deal. They have repeated the mantra that ‘no deal is better than a bad deal’. ‘What’s clear…is that there is no result that would be worse for the British economy than leaving with no deal; no deal would be the worst possible deal. The government should rule out this dangerous and counter-productive threat before article 50 is triggered.”

Jonathan Reynolds MP, Shadow Economic Secretary
“I don’t think it’s a credible position to take that we can continue with freedom of movement or have a second referendum on this. We can’t be sitting around sulking about the result of the referendum. That’s not going to be good for Labour; that’s not going to be good for the country.”

Stephen Kinnock MP
“The debate about how best to deal with immigration in the wake of the referendum has also driven the Labour party to an existential fork in the road: we can either resist any call for reform and drift away from relevance, or we can rediscover the courage of our convictions, and demonstrate that we are ready to reunite the country with a progressive, fair and managed migration system that works for all.”

Diane Abbott MP
“64% of Labour voters across the country voted to Remain. But the majority of Labour MPs serve constituencies that voted by a majority to leave. Labour is therefore presented both with a conflict of interests and a conflict of principles like no other party. In many ways we are much more representative of the divisions in the country over Brexit than any other party. My view is that we must resolve the conflicts of principle and leave the conflicts of electoral interest to resolve themselves.”

Barry Gardiner MP, Shadow International Trade Secretary
“64% of Labour voters across the country voted to Remain. But the majority of Labour MPs serve constituencies that voted by a majority to leave. Labour is therefore presented both with a conflict of interests and a conflict of principles like no other party. In many ways we are much more representative of the divisions in the country over Brexit than any other party. My view is that we must resolve the conflicts of principle and leave the conflicts of electoral interest to resolve themselves.”
Brexit Timeline

29 March 2017  ➔ Theresa May triggers Article 50

March – April 2017 ➔ EU summit, without the UK, to agree to give the European Commission a mandate to negotiate with the UK. After the Summit, the European Commission is to publish the negotiating guidelines on how to handle the Brexit negotiations.

May – June 2017 ➔ EU-27 agrees on negotiating directives to add detail to the mandate.

May 2017 ➔ Britain will repeal the European Communities Act of 1972 and incorporate EU law into domestic law "wherever practical" with the Great Repeal bill.

23 April and 7 May 2017 ➔ French Presidential elections.

24 September 2017 ➔ German parliamentary elections.

December 2017 ➔ The UK government would like to hold divorce negotiations alongside trade relations negotiations.

March 2018 ➔ UK’s deadline for agreeing on a transition.

October 2018 ➔ Michel Barnier’s deadline for a deal to be agreed upon.

March 2019 ➔ The deal would have been voted and ratified by EU member states, the European Council, the European Parliament, and the UK’s parliament before it takes effect.

April 2019 ➔ The UK’s departure from the European Union should be formally completed.
GLOBAL REACH

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▷ NETWORK OF COMPLEMENTARY CAPABILITIES, DELIVERING THE RIGHT SKILLS AT THE RIGHT TIME

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Through our network we can offer best-in-class corporate communications consultancies with representation in all of the world’s key financial centres.