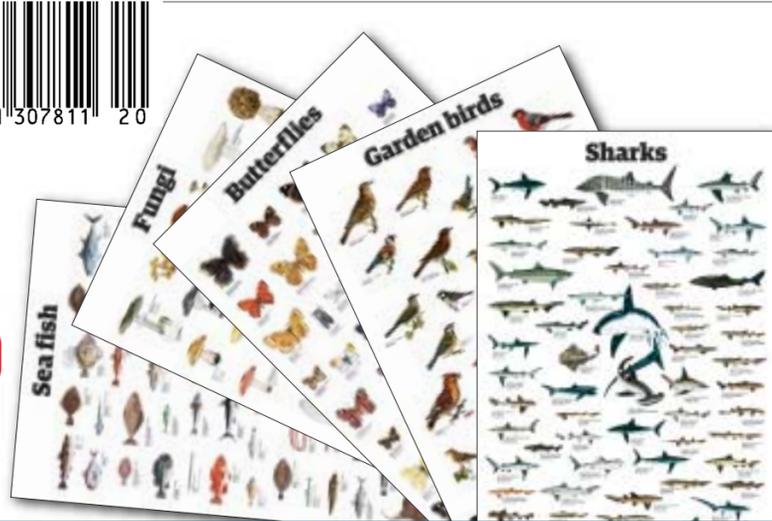


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## Blair's new bid to 'rescue' public services

### Shadow of leadership battle hangs over launch of party consultation

**Will Woodward**  
 Chief political correspondent

Tony Blair will today attempt to re-establish control over the domestic political agenda by calling for an overhaul of the criminal justice system, which he believes to be in worse shape than any other public service.

After a slide in the polls and three weeks of negative headlines, the prime minister will launch a programme of party events designed to establish the territory for Labour's next election manifesto.

But uncertainty remains as to whether he will be able to shake off questions about his succession, with noises off continuing at the weekend from the separate camps of both the PM and his likely successor, Gordon Brown.

Under the banner of Let's Talk, Mr Blair will lead the Labour party into a series of conferences on public service reform. His frustration at the administration of justice predates the fiasco over foreign prisoners, and controversy over the human rights of convicted criminals, but has been given further fuel by them. "I believe people want a society without prejudice but with rules; rules that are fair; that we all play by; and rules that, when broken, carry a penalty," Mr Blair will say.

"The truth is most people don't think we have such a society. The problem of crime can be subject to lurid reporting or undue focus on terrible but exceptional cases. But even allowing for this, the fundamental point is valid.

"Despite our attempts to toughen the law and reform the criminal justice system – reform that has often uncovered problems long untouched – the criminal justice system is still the public service most distant from what reasonable people want."

In a formal minute released in full today, the prime minister tells the home secretary, John Reid, to ensure "that the criminal justice system is shaped around targeting the offender and not just the offence, in order to enhance public protection and ensure that the law-abiding majority can live without fear".

He calls on Mr Reid to "build on, and seek to accelerate" a reduction in crime, and to ensure that the police "radically improve their performance on customer and victim satisfaction". Mr Reid is the fourth of Mr Blair's four home secretaries to be told that the department needs to perform better.

At the launch today in London, Mr Blair will call on the Labour party to accept new forms of delivery, and to embrace and harness ideas from outside opinion-formers and "stakeholders". Organisations including Microsoft, the CBI, the Red Cross, the National Consumer Council, and the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations, are being co-opted into the Let's Talk process.

Hazel Blears, the new party chairman, is attending meetings of the new ministerial teams in each department to enlist their involvement. The Let's Talk proposals will be debated at party conference and be finalised at the party's national policy forum in November.

"There is a new agenda to be grasped and shaped by progressive politics," Mr Blair will say today. "Modern social democracy must find answers to these new questions or fall back. We need this debate to be open, frank, and engage public as well as party. The most effective politics today is not tribal. It is issues-based. And we should play our part with confidence."

Mr Blair has likened the Let's Talk

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### Hitting the woodwork



A fan climbs a tree to get a better glimpse of Liverpool's FA cup-winning team during their victory parade yesterday Photograph: Nigel Roddis/Reuters

## Children to be taught 'traditional values'

**Matthew Taylor**  
 Education correspondent

Schoolchildren should be taught "traditional British values" as part of an attempt to challenge extremism and promote a more cohesive society, the higher education minister, Bill Rammell, will say today.

Under the proposals, all 11 to 16-year-olds will learn about free speech and democracy in the UK, as well as the contribution made by different communities. Mr Rammell will announce a six-month review of the school curriculum by a leading headteacher to see how best "core British values" can be incorporated into the school timetable.

Speaking at South Bank University, Mr Rammell will say the UK is a strong multicultural and multiethnic society, but to prosper it must focus on shared "core values". These include the tradition of free speech; the contested view that Britain was founded on freedom, democracy and liberty; and the contribution of different communities to building a modern, successful country.

"I very strongly believe that we are a multicultural, diverse society and I think that gives us incredible strength and richness," he told the Guardian. "But I think it is crucial that we recognise that there are some core British values that are central and common to us all."

Speaking at the end of a 10-month consultation with Muslim students and academics, Mr Rammell will also warn there needs to be a public debate about what different religious groups can reasonably expect in a historically Christian society. "Some of the demands that are being put forward are unrealistic and I think we have to have a public debate and be clear about what counts as reasonable and what does not," said.

Last night Amar Latif, of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies, accepted there should be a debate about role of Islam but there were other issues the government had to tackle. "It is not solely about teaching Muslims how to be good citizens. The government also needs to address its foreign policy and gain a greater understanding of the challenges ... faced by Muslims," he said.

### National

## Two British soldiers killed by Iraq bomb

Two British soldiers died after a roadside bomb exploded during a patrol north of Basra, southern Iraq. The soldiers, from the 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment, were in an armoured Land Rover at the time. A third soldier was injured in the incident on Saturday night. A military helicopter with an emergency team on board took the casualties to a hospital at Shaibah Logistics Base. The names of the soldiers are expected to be released today. The MoD said the regiment was training members of the Iraqi police, army and customs. The deaths bring to 111 the number of British military casualties in Iraq since 2003.

### National



Britain's butterflies are facing dramatic falls in their numbers, research finds

### International

## Darfur attacks go on despite ceasefire

"They told us that we were slaves and that they would finish us," said Hussein Ahmed Abdullah, a passenger on truck attacked last week by Arab raiders in Darfur. The gunmen shot the driver and robbed the passengers before raping all 15 women on board. Ten days after the Sudanese government signed a ceasefire deal with the main rebel group in Darfur, peace has still to reach the region. The deal was supposed to stop three years of fighting and end one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, but little has changed on the ground. Xan Rice reports from Menawashie in south Darfur, where bandits still attack with impunity.

### Financial

## £220m C&W bonus plan angers unions

Union leaders have condemned as "outrageous" a proposed new management bonus scheme at the struggling telecoms group Cable & Wireless which could deliver £220m to senior executives. Later this month C&W, which has repeatedly failed to find a new growth strategy, is expected to post annual profits of the same amount – £220m. Last year it made £368m. Under the terms of the four-year scheme, C&W's two divisional heads could receive £22m each; the remaining £176m would go to 30 other senior executives. Details of the proposed plan emerged only a few weeks after C&W announced 3,000 job losses.

### Sport

## Jayawardene gives hope to Sri Lanka

Mahela Jayawardene gave Sri Lanka a glimmer of hope for saving the first Test of the summer against England at Lord's yesterday. The captain posted his 14th Test century before being dismissed by Andrew Flintoff, to steer the Sri Lankans into an unlikely lead. When bad light curtailed play, they headed England by 22 runs with four second innings wickets remaining. Flintoff's side should win but, with bad weather forecast today, Sri Lanka have given themselves a chance of drawing a match that looked well beyond them at lunchtime on Saturday after they had been bowled out for 192.