Here is what Ed Miliband has proposed

• An end to automatic affiliation
• Union members would have to opt in to pay subscriptions to Labour and could opt not to
• Spending limits and code of conduct for candidates in Labour selection contests
• Open primary to be held for selection of Labour’s candidate for 2016 London Mayor and potentially in other contests
• Consultation needed on the amount MPs can earn from outside interests and rules to prevent conflict of interest
• Restarting all-party talks on capping donations
• Lord Ray Collins, former Labour Party General Secretary is reviewing these proposals

Unite has been concerned for some time that as each parliamentary term passes the number of working people elected to Westminster has decreased. There are now only four per cent of MPs who have a background in manual work. We have gone backwards resulting in a democratic deficit.

The link should not only be about process. If the nature of the relationship is to change the Party has to introduce policies that will galvanise union members to join and, importantly, become active. Policies such as:

• Repealing the bedroom tax on spare rooms in council homes
• Opposing the welfare cap
• Breaking with austerity spending
• Building one million homes
• Increasing the minimum wage from £6.19 an hour by £1.50 and then going on to a living wage

In a speech to members of the executive and regional committees, General Secretary, Len McCluskey outlined the union’s strategy:

“Unite goes into this process with clear objectives, which everyone who cares about the future of the Labour Party needs to share. Our main aims to ensure that as many Unite members as possible, already paying our political levy, now sign up individually, by whatever means have transparency and integrity, to be affiliate members of the party.
“For that to work, and for the trade unions to put their shoulders to the wheel to make it work, the offer has to be an attractive one. Above all, that means a Labour Party that our members want to support, because they believe it can and will make a difference in their lives.

“Not a party that is a pinkish shadow of the present coalition that gives the City a veto over economic decisions and embraces the austerity agenda squeezing the life out of the country. But a party that offers real hope, that stands up for the poor and vulnerable that puts growth at the heart of its agenda, and one that confronts privilege.

For more information please use the links below:
http://guardian.co.uk/politicis/len-mcluskey
http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2013/jul/16/labour-sets-agenda-union-during-inquiry
http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentsisfree/2013/jul09/labour-unite
www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN01528.pdf