

Constitution for the North West Regional Party of the Liberal Democrats in England (Issue 1.9)

(Approved at the Annual General Meeting of the North West Regional Party of the Liberal Democrats in England on 26 October 2002 as amended by Amendments 1 and 2 approved at Annual General Meeting on 25 October 2003, Amendment 1 approved at Cheadle Spring 2005, Amendments 1, 2 and 3 approved at Annual General Meeting on 29 October 2005, Amendment 1 as approved at Caton, 21 March 2009 and amendments 1 and 2 approved at Widnes 17th October 2009), Amendment 1 as approved at Lancaster, 19 October 2013, Amendment 1 as approved at Warrington, 11 February 2017, Amendment 1 as approved at Lancaster, 16 October 2019.) Further revisions approved at Stockport 23 November 2024 and Online AGM 25 October 2025.

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ARTICLE 1: NATURE AND OBJECTS

- 1.1 The name of the Regional Party shall be "The North West Liberal Democrats".
- 1.2 The area of the Region shall be the North West of England as defined at item 1.6 below.
- 1.3 The Regional Party is the successor to the North West Region Liberal Party, to the Social Democratic Party in the Region and to the North West Regional Parties of the Liberal Democrats.
- 1.4 The objects of the Regional Party shall be:
- (a) to seek to achieve the objects set forth in the Preamble to the Party Constitution;
 - (b) for that purpose, to secure the election of Members of Parliament from constituencies in the Region and of members of regional, local and other elected public authorities in the Region;
 - (c) to participate in the formulation of party policy and to play a full part in the democratic processes of the Party;
 - (d) to play a full part in the campaigning activity of the Party at all levels;
 - (e) to assist Local Parties within the Region; and
 - (f) to encourage diversity of cultures within the Party and to represent the interests of under-represented groups in the Region.
- 1.5 In furtherance of its objects the Regional Party shall exercise the powers and fulfil the duties conferred upon Regional Parties by the Party Constitution in the manner specified in this constitution, and shall also undertake such other functions as the Local Parties in the Region, acting singly or jointly, may vest in the Regional Party.
- 1.6 In this constitution:
- "The Regional Party" means the body governed by this constitution including Branches created under Article 6.9 hereof;
- "The Region" means the area of official North West region of England and comprising the ceremonial counties of Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Lancashire and Cumbria;
- "The Party" means the Liberal Democrats;
- "The Party in England" means the Liberal Democrats in England;
- "The Party Constitution" means the Constitution of the Federal Party approved by Federal Conference of the Liberal Democrats and the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England approved by the English Council of the Liberal Democrats taken together, including any amendments, re-enactments or re-issues of the same in force for the time being;

“The Membership Rules” means the Membership Rules made and approved by the English Council under Article 2 of the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England including any amendments, re-enactments or re-issues of the same in force for the time being;

“The Regional Assembly” means the North West Regional Assembly of England;

“Local Party” has the meaning given to it in Article 3 of the Federal Constitution;

“PPERA” means the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 or any subsequent re-enactment or statutory revision thereof, including any Orders in Council made pursuant thereto and Statutory Regulations made thereunder;

All terms defined in the Party Constitution shall have the same meaning in this Constitution.

- 1.7 Nothing in this constitution may be taken to oust the laws of England, nor provisions of the Party Constitution.

ARTICLE 2: THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

- 2.1. A Regional Conference shall be held not less than once in each year. Subject to the Party Constitution, the Regional Conference shall be the sovereign representative body of the Regional Party. One meeting of the Regional Conference shall be held in October or November each year and shall also encompass the Annual General Meeting of the Regional Party.
- 2.2. The business of the Regional Conference shall be:
- (a) to receive a report from the Chair on the activities of the Regional Party and the Regional Executive and representatives elected by Conference to other bodies for the current year;
 - (b) to receive reports from the Parliamentary Parties in the House of Commons, the House of Lords and reports to be given by members representing national Constituencies within the Region) and from representatives of the Party serving on the Regional Assembly, the Regional Development Authority and any other Regional bodies to which the Regional Party may provide members in the name of the Party;
 - (c) to make policy on issues which have particular impact upon the Region;
 - (d) to discuss and express its views upon other policy issues on a consultative basis; and
 - (e) to submit motions and amendments including proposals to amend the Party Constitution to the Federal Conference and to the English Council.
- 2.3 In addition to the ordinary business of the Regional Conference, the Annual General Meeting shall:

- (a) consider and, if thought fit, approve the accounts of the Regional Party for the previous financial year together with an independent report on those accounts;
 - (b) receive a report from the Treasurer on the financial affairs of the Regional Party for the year to date together with an outline budget for the following year; appoint for the current financial year (i) Auditors if required by PPERA or (ii) a person or persons to produce an independent report on the accounts for the next Annual General Meeting;
 - (c) determine for the following year the division of subscription income remitted by the Party in England (as determined under Article 6 of the Articles of the Party in England) between Local Parties and the Regional Party;
- 2.4. The Regional Conference shall (on the proposal of the Regional Conference Committee) adopt Standing Orders for the conduct of Conference. These Standing Orders shall provide for not less than twenty-one (21) days' written notice of the date, time and place of each Conference to be given to all voting members of the Regional Conference and to all Local Parties within the Region.
- 2.5. The following members of the Regional Party shall be voting members of Regional Conference:
- (a) the Officers of the Regional Party;
 - (b) members of Local Parties in the region;
 - (c) representatives of the Specified Associated Organisation representing Youth and Students (and other Specified Associated Organisation(s)) elected in accordance with Article 2.8 below;
 - (d) members appointed, nominated or elected by or through the Party of the Liberal Democrat Group on the Regional Assembly;
 - (e) Members of the Parliamentary Parties in the House of Commons representing constituencies within the Region;
 - (f) prospective Parliamentary candidates for constituencies within the Region from the date of their selection until the end of the calendar year in which they stood for election, unless a new prospective candidate is selected for the constituency; and
 - (g) the members of the English Council elected by the Region.

Members entitled to attend in more than one capacity shall not be entitled to vote more than once.

- 2.6. The provisions of the Party Constitution relating to cessation of office, election of additional representatives, and election of substitutes shall also apply to voting members of Regional Conference.
- 2.7. All Liberal Democrat members of the Regional Assembly shall be voting members of the Regional Conference.

- 2.8. The representatives elected by the Liberal Democrats' Group on the Regional Assembly shall be elected by and from those Groups to serve for the calendar year. No person may participate in any such election who is not a current and 'paid-up' member of the Party.
- 2.9. Where the number of representatives to be elected by any body at the same time is three or more, not less than one-third or, if one-third is not a whole number, the whole number nearest to but not exceeding one-third ("the Specified Number") shall be men and women respectively, provided that there is at least twice the Specified Number of male and female candidates respectively validly nominated by the close of nominations.
- 2.10. All members of the Regional Party who are not voting members of Regional Conference shall be encouraged to attend the Regional Conference as observers, and shall be entitled to speak at the Regional Conference subject to such restrictions as may be appropriate.
- 2.11. Five (5) voting members of Regional Conference, Local Parties, Specified Associated Organisations, Liberal Democrat Groups on principal local authorities or on the Regional Assembly or may submit motions for the Regional Conference by the Regional Executive or the Regional Policy Committee.
- 2.12. Special meetings of the Regional Conference may be summoned on the requisition of
- (a) the Regional Executive;
 - (b) ten (10) Local Parties within the Region; or
 - (c) fifty (50) voting members of Regional Conference.
- The requisition must specify the business to be conducted, and no other business shall be taken at the meeting.
- 2.13. The Regional Executive may postpone any meeting of the Regional Conference if it conflicts with a General Election or for other urgent reason.
- 2.14. There shall be a Regional Conference Committee, which shall comprise the Chair of the Regional Conference Committee (who shall be one of the Officers of the Region elected in accordance with Articles 3 and 4 of this Constitution), the Chair of the Regional Policy Committee and up to eight (8) other members. The said eight (8) other members shall consist of up to four (4) selected by the Regional Executive from among such members of the Regional Party as may have been nominated in writing either by a Local Party (of which two officers shall sign the nomination) or by ten (10) members of the Regional Party (all signing the nomination), the remainder selected by the Regional Executive not less than four (4) being from among its members. Subject to direction by the Regional Executive on matters of finance, the Regional Conference Committee shall be responsible to the Conference for:
- (a) the organisation of the meetings of the Regional Conference;
 - (b) the preparation of Standing Orders for the Regional Conference, subject to the approval of the Conference;

- (c) determining in consultation with the Policy Committee, subject to the Standing Orders, the business to be transacted at each meeting of the Regional Conference, including the selection of motions and reports for debate;
- (d) maintaining (in co-operation with the Secretary) a register of the voting members of Regional Conference; and
- (d) promoting the Regional Conference and encouraging attendance at Regional Conference by members of the Regional Party.

2.15. Lapse or revocation of party membership shall automatically and immediately disqualify any member from voting or speaking at Conference.

ARTICLE 3: THE OFFICERS

3.1. The Officers of the Regional Party shall be:

- a) the President;
- b) the Chair of the Regional Party;
- c) the Vice-Chair (Candidates);
- d) the Vice-Chair (Policy);
- e) the Vice-Chair (Conferences);
- f) the Vice-Chair (Organisation and Practice);
- g) The Vice-Chair (Campaigns);
- h) The Vice-Chair (Membership and Development);
- i) the Secretary;
- j) the Treasurer and
- k) A Diversity & Inclusion Officer to be appointed by the executive.
- l) such other Officers as from time to time the Regional Executive may appoint.

3.2. The Chair shall be the principal public representative of the Regional Party.

3.3. The Chair of the Regional Party shall chair the Regional Conference (save insofar as provision is made in accordance with the Conference Standing Orders for some other person to chair all or part of the Conference), shall chair all meetings of the Regional Executive and shall have a casting vote at such meetings, shall be the Regional Party's representative on the English Council Executive, shall be jointly responsible with the Treasurer for the Region's compliance with PPERA and shall be the Regional Party's principal executive officer.

- 3.4 At its first meeting of each year the Regional Executive shall elect a Vice-Chair of the Regional Party to deputise for the Chair when required and when chairing the Regional Executive shall have a casting vote and shall exercise such other functions as may be prescribed by the Regional Executive.
- 3.5 The Vice-Chair (Candidates) shall be Chair of the Candidates Committee and together with that Committee shall be responsible for the exercise under the Party Constitution of the Region's functions in connexion with the approval and selection of Parliamentary Candidates and candidates for Regional Assembly elections, as set out in Article 5.4 below, and shall be the Region's member on the English Candidates Committee.
- 3.6 The Vice-Chair (Policy) shall be Chair of the Policy Committee and shall together with that Committee, be responsible for the development of Regional Party policy and for promoting the involvement of members of the Regional Party in the development of Party policy, as set out in Article 5.4 below.
- The Vice- Chair (Policy) shall keep the Chair, the Officers, the Executive and where desirable Local Party Chairs of developments in Party policy and shall normally seek election to the Federal Policy Committee.
- 3.8 The Vice-Chair (Conferences) shall be Chair of the Conferences Committee and shall, together with that Committee, be responsible for arranging the meetings of the Regional Conference, subject to the standing orders of the Regional Conference, and for maintaining a record of its proceedings and decisions taken, as set out in Article 5.5 below.
- 3.9 The Vice-Chair (Organisation and Practice) shall be the Chair of the Local Parties Committee and shall, together with that Committee, be responsible for the monitoring and maintenance of standards of honesty and probity in the Regional Party and all Local Parties in the Region, for Best Practice in the Regional Party and Local Parties, for the enforcement in the Region of this Constitution and the Party Constitution, for control of Local Parties' Constitutions, and for organization in the Regional Party, as set out in Article 5.6 below.
- 3.10 The Vice-Chair (Campaigns) shall be Chair of the Campaigns Committee and shall, together with that Committee, be responsible for the organization and co-ordination of all election campaigns concerning the Region as a whole, for support and guidance to candidates, agents and activists in all Parliamentary and local election campaigns within the Region, for ensuring compliance with the law and lawful regulations, and with the standards of the Party, in all elections in the Region and for general campaigns and publicity not specifically connected with an election, as set out in Article 5.8 below.
- 3.11 The Vice-Chair (Membership and Development) shall be Chair of the Membership & Development Committee and shall, together with that Committee, be responsible within the Region for the development of the party organization in the Region as a whole, for the recruitment and retention of members, for support and assistance to Local Party officers and for the training of members in administrative and non-campaigning activities. The Vice-Chair (Membership and Development) shall help maintain a list of members of the Regional Party.

- 3.12 The Secretary shall be responsible for arranging General Meetings of the Regional Party (including Annual General Meetings), for arranging the meetings of the Regional Executive, for keeping minutes of such meetings and for the Region's communications with Local Parties and other bodies within the Party. The Secretary shall help maintain a list of members of the Regional Party.
- 3.13 The Treasurer shall have charge of the Regional Party's funds, shall be the Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee and together with that Committee shall manage the financial business of the Regional Party and shall provide financial reports for management purposes to the Regional Executive and annual statements as required by the Party Constitution, as set out in Article 5.8 below.
- 3.14 The Diversity & Inclusion Officer shall be responsible for promoting Diversity & Inclusion within the party, ensuring compliance with anti-discriminatory law and training and encouraging all members within the region to do the same.
- 3.15 An Officer of the Regional Party either
- (a) charged by a prosecuting authority with any offence which on conviction could result in a penalty that would disqualify a local government councillor from office, or having entered into or having had imposed any arrangement that would automatically disqualify a local government councillor from office, or charged by a public authority with any criminal offence where the offence relates to the officer's conduct in office or
 - (b) the subject of a motion for revocation of membership proposed in accordance with Article 6 of the Membership Rules

shall immediately be deemed to be suspended without prejudice from office from the making of the charge or proposal of the motion, subject to ratification by the Regional Executive which shall be convened as soon as practical and in any case in not less than twenty-one (21) days. Failing such ratification within that time the said suspension shall automatically be deemed to be annulled.

Should such a charge later result in acquittal by a court or should the police or Crown Prosecution Service announce a decision not to continue prosecution, or should such a motion not lead to revocation of membership, then the suspended Officer shall be automatically and immediately re-instated in office.

Should such a charge result in conviction or should such a motion result in revocation of membership and any appeal against such conviction or revocation fail, the suspended Officer shall automatically be dismissed from office with immediate effect PROVIDED that after full discharge of the penalty imposed by the court or eventual restoration of membership the dismissed officer may be restored to office by the secret vote of not less than two-thirds of the Regional Executive.

During a period of suspension of an Officer under this Article, that Officer's duties and responsibilities shall be assumed by the Chair of the Regional Party, or in the case of suspension of the Chair of the Regional Party by the President.

- 3.16 An Officer of the Regional Party may be suspended from office either in the event of permanent or long-term incapacity (as to which the opinion of a medical practitioner shall rule) or upon the passing by a majority of two-thirds of the Regional Executive of a motion of no confidence (whether implying censure or not) of which they have been given fourteen (14) days' written notice with a written statement of the reason for the motion. Voting on such a motion shall be by secret ballot. Such suspension shall last until the end of the next Regional Conference. The Regional Executive may appoint a substitute for the suspended Officer for the period of suspension. If the suspended Officer so requires, the Regional Conference shall be invited to vote for their re-instatement in office. Failing such re-instatement the suspended Officer shall be permitted to resign, failing which he or she shall be deemed to be dismissed.
- 3.17 Lapse or revocation of party membership shall automatically and immediately disqualify an Officer from office.

ARTICLE 4: THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE

- 4.1. The Regional Executive shall be responsible, subject to the authority of the Regional Conference and in compliance with the Party Constitution and with PPERA, for directing, co-ordinating and implementing the work of the Regional Party. The Regional Executive shall develop, maintain and implement a strategic plan for the Region.
- 4.2. The members of the Regional Executive shall be:
- (a) the Officers of the Regional Party;
 - (b) thirty-two (32) Ordinary Members to be elected such that twenty-four (24) places are allocated in proportion to the number of members in each of the Region's five (5) Counties, to be elected in accordance with Article 10 hereof by the voting members of Regional Conference; one (1) member chosen by the Specified Associated Organization for Youth and Students, in accordance with their own procedures;;
 - (c) all Liberal Democrat Members of Parliament representing constituencies in the Region;
 - (d) all members of the House of Lords who are members of the Regional Party;
 - (e) all members of the Liberal Democrat group in the Regional Assembly appointed, nominated or elected by or through the Party;
 - (f) up to five (5) additional members to be co-opted by the Regional Executive. Co-opted members shall have the same rights, including voting rights, as elected members. The power of co-option shall be used, inter alia, to ensure that there is fair representation of under-represented communities in the Region, taking into account race, religion, age, disability, gender or sexual orientation and that this would create a composition of the Executive that reflects the community within the Region.

PROVIDED that the total number of members drawn from all of the categories specified at items (e)-(h) above inclusively shall not exceed ten (10) in all. If more than ten (10) persons so qualify then they shall agree among themselves as to who shall represent the group and in default of agreement the matter shall be determined by the longest-serving among them at their sole discretion.

Lapse or revocation of party membership shall automatically and immediately disqualify any member from membership of the Regional Executive.

- 4.3 The Officers and the Ordinary Members shall be elected annually by the voting members of the Regional Conference by postal ballot, nominations to close at the close of the Annual General Meeting.
- 4.4 A Candidate for election as an Officer of the Regional Party or Ordinary Member of the Regional Executive must be a member of the Regional Party at the date when nominations close, but need not be an elected voting representative to the Regional Conference.
- 4.5 No person may hold more than one office, nor be both an Officer and an Ordinary Member of the Regional Executive.
- 4.6 The term of office of the Officers and all other members of the Regional Executive shall be from 1st January following their election until the following 31st December, save that the President shall be elected to serve for a period of two years from 1st January following their election. They shall be eligible for re-election, save that the Chair of the Regional Party shall not serve more than three consecutive terms and shall then not be eligible for election as Chair or Vice Chair for a period of two years. The President shall be eligible for re-election for a second term of two years.
- 4.7 The Regional Executive shall fill any vacancy occurring among the Officers or Ordinary Members. A vacancy in the Chair of the Regional Party shall be filled from amongst the Regional Officers if any one of them is willing to accept the post, and if not from amongst the Ordinary Members of the Regional Executive. Any other vacancy may be filled from any member of the Regional Party.
- 4.8 Within seven (7) days of the conclusion of the elections, the Returning Officer shall send a list of the names and addresses of all Officers to the Chair of the Party in England and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party. The Secretary shall send details of any later change of Officers to the Chair of the Party in England and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party within seven days of such changes occurring
- 4.9 The Regional Executive shall meet at least four (4) times a year. The Secretary shall give at least seven (7) days' notice of meetings to all members of the Regional Executive, specifying in the notice the business to be transacted at the meeting. The agenda for each ordinary meeting of the Regional Executive shall include reports from each Regional Officer and from each Committee of the Regional Executive and shall include a report from the Region's representatives on the English Council, English Council Executive and English Candidates Committee.

- 4.10 A special meeting of the Regional Executive shall be convened by the Secretary at the request of the Chair of the Regional Party or one-third of the members of the Regional Executive, to deal with the business specified in the notice of requisition.
- 4.11 One third of the voting members of the Regional Executive shall form a quorum. A meeting may continue without a quorum if no member present objects. Any member may within one week of despatch of the minutes of a meeting require the reference to the next meeting of any decision taken in the absence of a quorum.
- 4.12 The Regional Executive shall have power to make, and from time to time revise, Standing Orders for the conduct of its business.
- 4.13 In urgent circumstances the Officers may act on behalf of the Regional Executive. They shall report on such actions to the next meeting of the Regional Executive.
- 4.14 The Regional Executive may appoint and dismiss employees of the Regional Party, who shall be appointed on terms not less favourable than those agreed by the Federal Party.
- 4.15 The provisions of Articles 3.13 and 3.14 above shall apply mutatis mutandis to members of the Regional Executive who are not also Officers, EXCEPT that there shall be no substitution for suspended members.

ARTICLE 5: COMMITTEES OF THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE

- 5.1 The Regional Executive shall establish the Regional Committees set out in this Article 5 and may also from time to time establish such other Committees, Sub-Committees or working groups as it shall consider appropriate to carry out the work of the Regional Party; and may assign special responsibilities to any of its members, including duties which would otherwise pertain to Officers. The Regional Executive may also delegate authority to committees jointly constituted with other regions for particular purposes. No Committee, working group or individual member shall take action on behalf of the Regional Executive beyond their terms of appointment. All Committees of the Regional Executive, Sub-Committees and working groups shall report on their activities to the Regional Executive except as provided in Article 5.2 below. Lapse or revocation of party membership shall automatically and immediately disqualify any member from membership of any Committee of the Regional Executive.
- 5.2 The Regional Committees may likewise establish Sub-Committees or working groups for particular purposes giving them written terms of reference which shall be subject to the approval of the Regional Executive. Such Sub-Committees and/or working groups shall report periodically to the relevant Regional Committees and their reports shall form part of the periodic reports of those Committees to the Regional Executive
- 5.3 The Chairs of the Regional Committees described in this Article 5 shall be the Vice-Chairs and Officers specified in Article 3 above and shall be members of the Regional Executive. All members of Committees, Sub-Committees and working groups and all the Region's representatives on Committees jointly constituted with other regions shall, save as expressly provided to the contrary in this Constitution, be members of the Regional Party.

- 5.4 The Candidates Committee shall be responsible to the Regional Executive for
- (a) the regulation of all selection and approval of Liberal Democrat candidates in the Region, including (by advice and guidance to Local Parties) candidates for local elections;
 - (b) training of candidates, prospective candidates and potential candidates;
 - (c) training of returning officers, short-listers and members of assessment panels;
 - (d) performance of the tasks and compliance with the requirements set out in Article 7 of this Constitution.
- 5.5 The Policy Committee shall be responsible to the Regional Executive for
- (a) advising the Regional Chair and the Executive on matters of policy and
 - (b) performance of the functions set out in Article 8 below.
- 5.6 The Conference Committee shall be responsible to the Regional Executive for
- (a) planning, arranging and managing conferences of the North West Liberal Democrats (the Regional Party) with the objects of
 - ❑ providing a forum for debate and resolution of policy,
 - ❑ the conduct of party business including annual general meetings,
 - ❑ the receipt by members of reports from the Chair and Officers,
 - ❑ providing an opportunity for Sub-Regional Groups (as described in Article 11 below) and/or Associated Organizations and Specified Associated Organizations to present themselves to members,
 - ❑ providing a social background helpful to co-operation, understanding and party spirit and
 - ❑ raising funds for the Regional Party,
 - (b) subject to the approval of the Regional Executive, viewing and booking Conference venues and negotiating prices and charges,
 - (c) subject to the approval of the Regional Executive, preparing and keeping amended the Standing Orders for Conferences,
 - (d) arranging speakers,
 - (e) preparing agenda and arranging persons to chair debates and meetings,
 - (f) co-ordinating with the Vice-Chair (Policy) the motions and topics to be debated and controlling the timing of debates and other events,

- (g) booking caterers and overseeing arrangements for food and refreshments at Conferences,
- (h) co-ordinating with the Secretary the distribution of registration forms and other mailings,
- (i) providing the Treasurer with a budget for each Conference,
- (j) arranging the collection of registration fees and other payments and
- (k) providing a financial report to the Treasurer after each Conference.

5.7 The Local Parties Committee together with the Secretary shall be responsible to the Regional Executive for:

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- (a) proposing amendments and modifications to this Constitution as changing circumstances may indicate,
- (b) ensuring conformity of this Constitution and any standing orders or rules made under it with the Party Constitution,
- (c) liaison with Local Parties,
- (d) monitoring and approval of Local Party Constitutions in the Region and ensuring their conformity with the Party Constitution,
- (e) organization of the Regional Party,
- (f) assistance to the Treasurer in matters concerning financial compliance with PPERA and
- (g) observance and enforcement of Article 6 below.

5.8 The Campaigns Committee shall be responsible to the Regional Executive for:

- (a) the stimulation and co-ordination of campaigning and publicity activities within the Region, including, under the guidance of the Policy Committee, dissemination of Party policy in the Region;
- (b) the undertaking of regional campaigns and the superintendence of elections to principal local authorities covering more than one Local Party;
- (c) the management of Regional Election campaigns for the Regional Assembly
- (d) the encouragement of Local Parties to co-ordinate campaigning for Parliamentary and local elections;
- (e) the promotion of the political image of the Party within the Region;
- (f) providing and co-ordinating assistance to Local Parties for Parliamentary and local elections;

- (g) training of campaigners, activists, election agents, prospective candidates and other members in the Region, except those training functions that fall within the duties of the Candidates Committee set out in Article 5.3 above and Article 5.9 (b) below; and liaison in respect of these matters with appropriate Associated Organisations and Specified Associated Organisations;
- (h) assistance to Local Parties in dealing with the media.

5.9 The Membership, Diversity & Inclusion Committee shall be responsible to the Regional Executive for

- (a) the stimulation of recruitment and retention of party members throughout the Region
- (b) training of Local Parties in recruitment and retention;
- (c) support and assistance to Local Parties in developing their organization and making best use of their resources, including fund-raising and publicity;
- (d) consultation and assistance to any Local Parties which may appear to be at risk of falling into the situation envisaged in Article 10.9 below, including where practical the stimulation and organisation of local recruitment drives;
- (e) general campaigns throughout the Region or any significant part of it to encourage recruitment and retention.

5.10. The Finance and Administration Committee (which shall be chaired by the Treasurer) shall be responsible to the Regional Executive for:

- (a) ensuring the compliance of the Regional Party with the reporting and recording requirements of PPERA in relation to donations, expenses and financial management;
- (b) planning and administration of the budget and finances of the Regional Party;
- (c) consideration of the accounts of the Regional Party, submission of regular financial reports to the Regional Executive and preparation of the reports required under Article 2.3 (e) above;
- (d) submission of estimates of income and expenditure for approval by the Regional Executive;
- (e) control of fund-raising for the purposes of the Regional Party in accordance with the fund-raising and data protection policies of the Party and the management of fund-raising activities specified by the Regional Executive;
- (f) negotiations with the English Council Executive on the proportion of subscription income to be remitted to the Regional Party; and
- (g) preparation for approval by the Regional Executive of business motions for the Federal Conference.

- (h) provision of office accommodation, office equipment and consumables,
- (i) office management,
- (j) employment of staff, their terms of contract, their welfare and (in co-operation with the Treasurer) their salaries, allowances and National Insurance, in conformity with relevant employment law,

ARTICLE 6: LOCAL PARTIES AND MEMBERSHIP

- 6.1 The Local Parties Committee of the Regional Party shall exercise the Region's powers and duties under the Party Constitution in relation to the adherence of Local Parties to the Party Constitution and to their own respective constitutions, and the compliance of such constitutions and any proposed amendments with the requirements of the Party Constitution. In particular, it shall be responsible for:
- (a) ensuring in conjunction with the Treasurer the compliance of Local Parties with PPERA, the Party Constitution, this constitution and their own respective constitutions, including any amendments to or re-issues of such constitutions as may be made from time to time;
 - (b) reviewing any proposed new constitution for a Local Party or any proposed amendment to its existing constitution to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the law, the Party Constitution and this constitution;
 - (c) investigating the affairs of any Local Party if there is reason to believe that the Local Party is not complying with PPERA, the Party Constitution, this constitution or its own constitution; or that events in connexion with the affairs of the Local Party which are or may be seriously detrimental to the Party have taken place or are about to take place; or if requested by the Local Party itself to carry out such an investigation;
 - (d) implementing recommendations resulting from such an investigation;
 - (e) exercise of the powers of the Regional Party in constituencies where no Local Party is recognised or where the Local Party has been suspended;
 - (f) determining disputes as to proposed combinations of constituencies or local authority areas to form a Local Party; and
 - (g) exercise of the powers of the Region under Article 2 of the Articles of the Party in England (Membership).
- 6.2 For the purposes of any investigation envisaged at item 6.1(c) above, the Regional Executive shall appoint one or more persons (who must be members of the Party but not necessarily of the Regional Party) to act as investigators. No such person shall be a member of the Local Party concerned. At least one of such persons shall be a member of the Regional Executive and of the Local Parties Committee, and any such member shall take no part in any subsequent proceedings of the Executive or of the Local Parties Committee relating to action to be taken in consequence of the investigation. The investigators shall have such access as they require to the books and records of the Local Party concerned. The Local Party and any affected Local Party officer concerned shall be

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informed of any allegations against it and given a reasonable opportunity to reply or to take corrective action

- 6.3 The Regional Executive shall receive reports on all investigations under this Article and shall be responsible for the implementation, so far as it may think fit, of recommendations resulting from such investigations. For such purposes the Regional Party may act on behalf of and in the name of the Local Party (or any officer or organ thereof).
- 6.4 The Regional Party may suspend a Local Party if the Local Parties Committee is satisfied that the Local Party is not adhering to PPERA, or to the Party Constitution, this constitution or its own constitution, or that events in connexion with the affairs of the Local Party which are or may be seriously detrimental to the Party have taken place or are likely to take place if preventative action is not taken. . The Regional Party may order that a specified Local Party officer vacate his or her post if the Local Parties Committee is satisfied that the officer concerned is not adhering to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 or to the Party (or its own) Constitution or that by their actions, events are occurring or about to occur in connection with the affairs of the Local Party which are or may be seriously detrimental to the Party. In case of urgency the power of the Regional Executive may be exercised on its behalf by its Local Parties Committee which shall forthwith report the action it has taken to the Regional Executive.
- 6.5 There shall be a right of appeal to the Appeals Panel for England against the suspension of a Local Party or the ordering of a Local Party Officer to vacate his or her post on the ground that the suspension was unreasonable. Pending the appeal the Regional Executive may direct that the suspension shall take effect.
- 6.6 The Regional Party, through the Local Parties Committee, shall have the following powers and responsibilities with regard to any constituency where no Local Party has been recognised, or the Local Party has been suspended under the Party Constitution:
- (a) to exercise the functions of the Local Party under the Party Constitution
 - (b) to act as an enrolling body for new members under the Party Constitution;
 - (c) to summon and supervise meetings of members to form a Local Party or reconstitute a Local Party as soon as possible;
 - (d) in conjunction with the Treasurer to hold and manage the assets of the Local Party for the benefit of the members of the Local Party; and
 - (e) to rule on disputes and give directions under the Party Constitution as to proposed combinations of constituencies. Members in any constituency in the proposed combination shall have the right to appeal to the English Council.
- 6.7 Where the Region has directed a Local Party officer to vacate office the Local parties Committee shall either direct that there is to be a by-election for that post, in which case the previous incumbent would be ineligible to stand and the Local Parties Committee shall nominate a Returning Officer, or it may appoint a suitably qualified member of the Party (but not necessarily the Local Party) to the role.

- 6.8 Members of the Party resident in the Region, but not affiliated to a particular Local Party nor suitably located to be so affiliated, may at the discretion of the Regional Executive, acting through the Local Parties Committee, be listed as members of the Regional Party and all such members together shall form a branch of the Regional Party. The Local Parties Committee shall draw up a Constitution for such a Branch and shall exercise the functions of such Branch's officers.
- 6.9 Should the membership of any Local Party fall below thirty (30) and remain so for a period of four (4) months or more then the Regional Party, through the Local Parties Committee, shall have the power to take any or all of the following actions:
- (a) to dissolve the Local Party and assume its functions under the Party Constitution;
 - (b) to constitute the members of the dissolved local party into a Branch of the Regional Party and to approve its Branch Constitution;
 - (c) to vest any funds of the dissolved Local Party in the said Branch and to supervise their management;
 - (d) to encourage the election of officers of the said Branch, or at least a Chair and a Treasurer, failing which to assume their functions;
 - (e) to encourage, to guide and to help in recruitment, with a view to restoring the membership of the Branch to a stable level of more than thirty (30);
 - (f) alternatively, with the same objective, to seek to merge the said Branch with a neighbouring Branch or Local Party;
 - (g) if the said Branch should show a membership of more than (30) for a period of not less than four (4) months and satisfy the Regional Executive, acting through the Local Parties Committee, that the membership is unlikely to fall again below that level, then to reconstitute the Branch as a Local Party.
- 6.10 Notwithstanding the foregoing Article 6.8, the Local Parties Committee shall use every endeavour to help Local Parties from diminishing to such low levels of membership and, should it appear that such diminution is likely, to seek to avoid it by merger or other reorganization of Local Parties.
- 6.11 Should a Local Party be suspended under the provisions of the Party Constitution or this constitution then the Regional Party, through the Local Parties Committee, shall have the power to take any or all of the following actions:
- (a) to assume its functions under the Party Constitution;
 - (b) to constitute the members of the suspended local party into a Branch of the Regional Party and to approve its Branch Constitution;
 - (c) to vest any funds of the suspended Local Party in the said Branch and to supervise their management;

- (f) to encourage the election of officers of the said Branch, or at least a Chair and a Membership Secretary, failing which to assume their functions;
- (g) if the outcome of the cause of suspension should require dissolution of the Local Party, then to seek to merge the said Branch with a neighbouring Branch or Local Party;
- (h) if the outcome of the cause of suspension should permit reconstitution of the Local Party, then to manage such reconstitution including the election of officers and to vest in the reconstituted Local Party the remaining funds of the aforesaid Branch.

~~6.12 The Regional Executive may, on the recommendation of the Standards and Practice Committee, on behalf of the Regional Party, in accordance with the Party Constitution and the Membership Rules made under it revoke the membership of any member of the Party in the Region or exercise any of the powers set out in Article 2.7 of the Articles of the Party in England on one or more of the following grounds:~~

Commented [RMC3]: May no longer be possible.

- ~~(a) material disagreement, evidenced by conduct, with the fundamental values and objectives of the Party;~~
- ~~(b) conduct which has brought, or is likely to bring, the Party into disrepute;~~
- ~~(c) standing against the candidate of the Party in any election to public office;~~
- ~~(d) membership of or support for another political party in Great Britain.~~

~~6.13 The member shall be notified of the reasons why revocation or other action is to be considered. Where the Standards and Practice Committee is considering the revocation of membership of any person, it may in accordance with the Party Constitution and the Membership Rules made under it suspend membership if there are urgent reasons for doing so or if sub-paragraph (c) above applies.~~

- 6.14. The decision of the Regional Party whether or not to agree to the admission or re-admission to membership of a person whose membership has been refused or revoked shall be made by the Local Parties Committee.
- 6.15. Lapse or revocation of party membership shall automatically and immediately disqualify any member from office in a Local Party.
- 6.15 The Regional Party shall not use the information contained in the Register of members except for the proper purposes of the Party and shall comply with the Party's rules in relation to the Party's Data Protection Act registration.

ARTICLE 7: CANDIDATES FOR PARLIAMENT, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

- 7.1. There shall be a Candidates Committee of the Regional Party which shall comprise the Vice-Chair (Candidates) (who shall be an Officer of the Region elected in

accordance with Articles 3 and 4 of this Constitution) and four (4) other members elected by the Regional Conference. The Candidates Committee may co-opt up to four (4) additional members and shall use its power of co-option to ensure that the members of the Candidates Committee include at least one member who has contested a Parliamentary election on behalf of the Party within the previous ten (10) years, at least one (1) member who is an approved Parliamentary Candidates assessor and at least one (1) member who is an accredited returning officer for parliamentary selections. Other members of the Candidates Committee shall be encouraged to train to achieve such accreditation within a period of three (3) months.

- 7.2. The Candidates Committee shall exercise the Region's powers and duties under the Party Constitution in relation to the approval and selection of candidates for Parliamentary and Regional Assembly elections and for the election of elected Mayors.
- 7.3. The Candidates Committee shall, if the English Candidates Committee has delegated this function to Regions, determine applications to the Region for inclusion in the Lists of Approved Candidates for Parliamentary elections and in any event shall exercise all the functions of the Regional Party relating to the approval of Parliamentary candidates and/or assistance to other Regional Parties in this regard.
- 7.4. Any applicant to the Region whose application is refused may request to be reassessed and/or may appeal under the Party Constitution.
- 7.5. The Candidates Committee may remove any person from the Lists of Approved Candidates for Parliamentary or Regional Assembly elections subject to the appeal procedure set out in the Party Constitution. No person shall be removed from any List without being notified of the grounds upon which the Committee is considering such removal and being given
 - a) a reasonable time within which to reply and make representations in writing; and
 - b) a right upon request to a personal hearing before the Committee.
- 7.6. The Vice-Chair (Candidates) shall appoint Returning Officers for the selection of prospective Parliamentary candidates and shall decide whether a selection should proceed where sufficient applicants of each sex are not forthcoming or withdraw following the composition of the short-list. The Candidates Committee shall undertake all other functions of the Region under the rules for the selection and adoption of prospective parliamentary candidates. In particular, the Candidates Committee shall decide, in case of disagreement, whether a new selection should be held as a result of boundary changes substantially affecting a constituency.
- 7.7. The Candidates Committee shall prepare for approval by the Regional Executive rules for the approval and selection of candidates for the Regional Assembly. Such rules shall provide for the selection to be by a ballot in which all members of the Party in the relevant electoral area have the opportunity of voting.
- 7.8. The Candidates Committee may make recommendations to Local Parties within the Region for procedures to be followed for the approval and selection of candidates for

local government elections, and shall exercise any functions in respect of such approvals and selections which Local Parties wish to delegate to the Candidates Committee in accordance with the ALDC guidelines on local candidate selection.

- 7.9. The Candidates Committee shall be responsible for the provision of training to members of the Regional Party who are, or who wish to become, members of assessment panels, selection panels, returning officers or prospective Parliamentary, Mayoral or Regional Assembly elections; and for encouraging persons of all genders, and members of ethnic minorities, to apply for inclusion in the Lists and for selection.
- 7.10 The Candidates Committee shall report on its activities to the Regional Executive and to the Regional Conference, but it shall not be open to the Regional Executive or Conference to vary or reverse decisions taken by the Candidates Committee on matters delegated by this Constitution to the Candidates Committee.

ARTICLE 8: REGIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE

- 8.1 There shall be a Regional Policy Committee which shall comprise the Chair of the Regional Policy Committee (who shall be one of the Officers of the Region elected in accordance with Articles 3 and 4 of this Constitution), and up to six (6) other members. The said six (6) other members shall consist of up to three (3) selected by the Regional Executive from among such members of the Regional Party as may have been nominated in writing either by a Local Party (of which two officers shall sign the nomination) or by ten (10) members of the Regional Party (all signing the nomination), the remainder selected by the Regional Executive not less than three (3) being from among its members.
- 8.2 The Policy Committee shall be responsible for:
- (a) the formulation of party policy on issues relating exclusively to the Region, for presentation to the Regional Conference;
 - (b) preparing policy proposals on other issues relating primarily to the Region, and reporting to the Regional Conference on these and other policy issues;
 - (c) actively promoting consultation within the Region on the development of policy by the Federal Policy Committee;
 - (d) the consideration of policy proposals on which the Regional Party is consulted by the Federal Policy Committee, and the submission of policy proposals to that Committee;
 - (e) the preparation and submission to the Federal Conference Committee of policy motions for the Federal Conference;
 - (f) the expression to the Party (and particularly to the Federal Policy Committee) of the initial views of the Regional Party on topical issues;

- (g) if so instructed by the Regional Executive, the preparation for approval by the Regional Executive of a regional manifesto for Parliamentary Elections;
- (h) the preparation for approval by the Regional Executive of a manifesto for elections to the Regional Assembly;
- (i) liaison with other regional parties on policy issues affecting the Region and such other regions;
- (k) assisting Liberal Democrat Groups of councillors on principal local authorities with policy development by such Groups and liaison on policy issues between principal local authorities within the Region;
- (l) stimulating and co-ordinating the policy-making activities of Local Parties;
- (m) encouraging the participation by members of the Regional Party in the development and making of Party Policy;
- (n) assisting and guiding the Campaigns Committee in the dissemination of policy, including (but not limited to) the provision of authoritative policy statements;
- (o) formulating proposals for applications for funding by the Policy Development Fund controlled by Her Majesty's Government or any successor thereto.

ARTICLE 9: FINANCE

- 9.1 The Region's accounting period shall be annual, ending on the thirty-first (31st) of December each year.
- 9.2 The Treasurer shall keep, maintain for six years and pass to his or her successor accounting records, which shall be available for inspection in accordance with PPERA.
- 9.3 The Treasurer shall ensure that no donation of over such amount as may from time to time be determined under PPERA as the upper limit for single non-declarable donations is accepted except from a permissible donor and shall keep records and submit donations reports to the Finance and Administration Committee and to Chief Executive of the Federal Party.
- 9.4 The Treasurer shall annually produce accounts, which shall be approved by the Finance and Administration Committee and by the Regional Executive, and if required under PPERA shall be audited or certified by an independent financial examiner and submitted to the Electoral Commission.
- 9.5 The Treasurer shall submit the accounts of the Regional Party together with the report and certificate given by auditors or by the independent financial examiner referred to at Article 9.4 above, if any, as the case may be, to the Annual General Meeting.
- 9.6 The Treasurer shall send a copy of the annual accounts to the Treasurer of the Party in England and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party.

- 9.7 The Regional Party shall maintain one or more bank or other appropriate accounts in the name of the Regional Party for which the mandate for withdrawal shall require the signature of at least two (2) Officers who shall not come solely from members of one family or household (as to which the ruling of the Local Parties Committee shall be conclusive). The Regional Party may maintain further accounts for the deposit of money not required for the time being, requiring the same signatures. The Treasurer shall normally be a registered signatory of all such accounts and shall receive and retain all bank statements related to them: but if, with the Treasurer's agreement, for any limited purpose, any bank account in the Regional Party's name be opened and maintained by another person or persons delegated by the Treasurer, then such person(s) shall report at least monthly to the Treasurer on the state of such account(s) and shall promptly pass copies of all relevant bank statements to the Treasurer.
- 9.8 The Finance and Administration Committee shall make arrangements in accordance with the Party's fund-raising and data protection policies for the raising of funds to meet any expenditure of the Regional Party in excess of the proportion of subscription income to be remitted by the Party in England, and may also raise funds for distribution to Local Parties in the Region. For this purpose the Finance and Administration Committee may request the Regional Executive to appoint a Fundraising Committee with appropriate membership and terms of reference. The Regional Executive may, subject to compliance with the Data Protection Act (as amended), authorise the Finance and Administration Committee or the Fundraising Committee to use the list of members in the Region for fundraising purposes.

ARTICLE 10: ELECTIONS

- 10.1. All contested elections under the provisions of this constitution shall be by secret ballot and, subject to Article 10.5 below, by the Single Transferable Vote method in accordance with election rules made under the Party Constitution and in particular the **Federal Election Regulations** of the Federal Party and hereinafter referred to as "the Election Rules". In the event of conflict between rules made under the Party Constitution and the Election Rules the former shall prevail. The Election Rules, or relevant extracts from them, shall normally be printed on the reverse of or enclosed with nomination forms. The Election Rules shall apply within the North West Regional Party for elections to office or representative position in the Regional Party.
- 10.2. Where the Regional Party is entitled to representation on any other body (other than the English Council) the Regional Executive shall determine whether the representatives are to be elected in the manner set out in Article 10.3 below or by the Regional Executive.
- 10.3. The elections of Officers and Ordinary Members of the Regional Executive, members of the Regional Candidates Committee, Regional Policy Committee and Regional Conference Committee and the members of the English Council and representatives on other bodies to be elected by the Regional Conference shall take place following the Annual General Meeting. The Secretary shall invite nominations in the notice convening the Annual General Meeting and the period for receipt of nominations shall close at the end of the Conference at which the Annual General Meeting takes Place.

- 10.4. The Federal Election Regulations approved by the Federal Conference shall apply to all and any contested elections for posts to be elected by the Regional Party, as adapted from time to time by the English Council ("the adapted English Party Election Regulations").
- 10.5. The electorate for the purpose of these elections shall be those members with paid-up membership of the Regional Party on the closing date for nominations. Members who, at the closing date for nominations, are in the grace period following their membership subscription due date can be added to the electorate if they renew their membership at least five working days prior to the close of voting.
- 10.6. All elections will be conducted electronically in accordance with the Federal Election Regulations; note: this includes the submission of nominations, display of candidates' manifestos and casting of votes. The online voting system shall prompt voters to look at candidates' manifestos prior to voting and provide for the randomisation of the names on the ballot paper. Nominations for election have a proposer and seconder (who must be current and 'paid-up' members of the Regional Party) and consented to by the candidate.
- 10.7. The Returning Officer shall make provision for voters who cannot vote electronically to vote by post upon a request in writing. Any such request shall only be valid for the specific election(s) being conducted at the time of the request.
- 10.8. The Regional Executive shall appoint some disinterested person to receive nominations and act as Returning Officer, in accordance with the Federal Election Rules. The Returning Officer shall act according to the Federal Election Rules.
- 10.9. When elections are held at the same time for more than one position or class of position they shall be conducted and counted in the following order:
- (a) Officers in the order set out in Article 3.1;
 - (b) Ordinary Members of the Regional Executive;
 - (c) members of the Regional Executive elected by representatives of Specified Associated Organizations;
 - (d) elected members of Committees;
 - (e) any other persons falling to be elected by the members of the Regional Party or by the Regional Executive.
- 10.10. All costs and expenses of elections under the provisions of this constitution (including but not limited to printing, postage and personal expenses of the Returning Officer) shall be borne by the Regional Party, except that candidates shall be responsible for costs of preparing their electoral statements including art-work.
- 10.11. Lapse or revocation of party membership shall automatically and immediately disqualify any member from voting or speaking at Conference or from voting in any election in the Regional Party (including elections in Local Parties).

ARTICLE 11: SUB REGIONAL GROUPS

- 11.1 The Regional Executive may authorise the setting up of Sub-Regional Groups covering defined areas of the Region. The objects of a Sub-Regional Group shall be to further the objects of the Region in the area covered by the Group. The Group shall be subject to the ultimate authority of the Regional Party.
- 11.2 All members of the Regional Party who are members of Local Parties within the area of any Sub-Regional Group shall be members of that Group. No person who is not a member of the Regional Party may be a member of any Sub-Regional Group.
- 11.3 A Sub-Regional Group shall not be entitled to require a subscription from its members, but the Regional Executive may agree to remit part of its income to a Group. A Sub-Regional Group shall not incur any debts for which the Regional Party shall be responsible. A Sub-Regional Group may, subject to compliance with any directions of the Regional Executive, and subject to PPERA and the fundraising and data protection policies of the Party, raise funds for its own activities.
- 11.4 Each Sub-Regional Group shall be governed by a constitution, which shall provide for:
- (a) a committee which shall include Officers and Ordinary Members, and may include ex-officio and co-opted members;
 - (b) rules for election of Officers, Ordinary Members of the Group Committee;
 - (c) rules for the calling and conduct of an Annual General Meeting and other General Meetings, which may be of all members or on a representative basis, on the request of members or representatives;
 - (d) the names and addresses of the Officers, Ordinary Members [and representatives to the Regional Executive] be notified to, and minutes of General and Committee Meetings to be supplied to the Regional Secretary.
- 11.5 The constitution of any Sub-Regional Group must comply with this Constitution and with the Party Constitution and the adoption and any amendment to the constitution of any Group shall be subject to the approval of the Regional Executive.
- 11.6 The Officers of every Sub-Regional Group shall include a Treasurer. The Group's accounting period shall be the same as that of the Regional Party.
- 11.7 The Group Treasurer shall:
- (a) keep, maintain for six (6) years and pass to his or her successor accounting records which shall be available for inspection in accordance with PPERA;
 - (b) ensure that no donation of over such amount as may from time to time be determined under PPERA as the upper limit for single non-declarable donations is accepted except from a permissible donor and shall keep records and submit donations reports to the Finance and Administration Committee and to Chief Executive of the Federal Party;

- (c) annually produce accounts, which shall be approved by the Finance and Administration Committee and by the Regional Executive, and if required under PPERA shall be audited or certified by an independent financial examiner and submitted to the Electoral Commission.
- (d) submit the accounts of the Regional Party together with the report and certificate given by auditors or by the independent financial examiner referred to at Article 9.4 above, if any, as the case may be, to the Annual General Meeting.
- (e) maintain one or more bank or other appropriate accounts in the name of the Group for which the mandate for withdrawal shall require the signature of at least two (2) Officers of the Group who shall not come solely from the members of one family. The Group may maintain further accounts for the deposit of money not required for the time being, observing the same rule as to signatures.

11.12 A Sub-Regional Group may dissolve itself by a two-thirds majority at a General Meeting; or be dissolved or suspended by the Regional Executive or Regional Conference on the grounds that:

- (a) It is no longer functioning or able to hold such a meeting;
- (b) There have been irregularities in the conduct of the affairs of the Group;
- (c) The affairs of the Group have not been conducted in compliance with PPERA and with its Constitution, this Constitution and the Party Constitution;
- (d) The affairs of the Group are being conducted in a manner contrary to the interests of the Party.
- (e) If a Sub-Regional Group is dissolved or suspended, any member of the Group may request the English Council Executive to conduct an investigation. The Regional Party shall not dissolve a Group until the Group has been given an opportunity to hold its own General Meeting.

11.13 The funds of a Sub-Regional Group shall, upon dissolution, be applied in paying its debts, and any surplus shall be added to the funds of the Regional Party.

ARTICLE 12: AMENDMENT AND INTERPRETATION

12.1. Amendments to this constitution, including any amendment by which the Region seeks recognition as a State Party for the purposes of the Party Constitution, may be made only by the vote of at least two-thirds of those voting on a motion for amendment at a meeting of the Regional Conference. No amendment shall be made which conflicts with the Party Constitution. Motions for amendment shall be submitted to the Regional Conference Committee in time for circulation with the notice convening the Conference.

12.2. In the event of any question of interpretation arising, or any question on which this constitution is silent, the Regional Executive shall have power to act according to its

interpretation of the constitution, or at its discretion, without prejudice to the provisions of the Party Constitution relating to the resolution of conflicts.