

Constitution of the East of England Liberal Democrats

Revised: October 2011

ARTICLE 1: Nature and Objects

- 1.1. The name of the Regional Party shall be ~~The East of England Liberal Democrats~~
- 1.2. The area of the Region shall be the counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, including the unitary authority areas of Luton, Peterborough, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock and any further unitary authorities which may be created within the boundaries of the aforementioned counties.
- 1.3. The Regional Party is the successor within its area to the Eastern and Chilterns Liberal Parties; the Eastern and Chilterns Social Democratic Parties; and the Eastern and Chilterns 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 and the European 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 and recognised Council Groups within the Region; and
 - (f) to promote diversity of cultures within the Party and to represent the interests of under-represented groups in the Region.
- 1.5. The Regional Party shall have the power and the duty:
 - (a) to make policy on issues which relate exclusively to the Region at meetings of the Regional Conference;
 - (b) to discuss other policy issues on a consultative basis at such conference;
 - (c) if thought fit by the Regional Executive to prepare and publish a regional manifesto for a General Election, provided that the contents of that manifesto are consistent with the manifesto of the Federal Party;
 - (d) to work with other relevant bodies in the Party, including the SAOs, to encourage local parties to co-ordinate campaigning, publicity and policy-making for elections to local authorities and the Westminster and European Parliaments and between elections;
 - (e) to promote the political image of the party within the Region;
 - (f) to stimulate and co-ordinate Party activities within the Region and to undertake regional campaigns;
 - (g) to be responsible for European Parliamentary elections within the Region;
 - (h) to develop, maintain and implement a strategic plan for the Region;

(i) to undertake such other functions as may be appropriate or which the local parties may vest in the Regional Party.

1.6 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 may vest in the Regional Party.

1.7. In this constitution:

-The Regional Partyø means the body governed by this constitution:

-The Regionø means the area of the Counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, including the unitary authority areas of Luton, Peterborough, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock.

-The Partyø means the Liberal Democrats;

-The Party in Englandø means the Liberal Democrats in England;

-The Party Constitutionø means the Federal Constitution of the Party and the Articles of the Party in England;

øRecognised Council Groupö means a Council Group on a Local Authority which has been recognised in accordance with the procedures set out in Article 8 of the Articles of the Party in England;

-Parliamentarianø means members of the House of Commons representing constituencies in the region: members of the House of Lords being members of a local party in or holding elected office within the region; and members of the European Parliament representing the region.

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

ARTICLE 2: The Regional Conference

2.1. A Regional Conference shall be held not less than once in each year. Subject to the provisions of this Constitution and of 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 be the Annual General Meeting of the Regional Party. The number of Conferences to be held each year shall be determined by the Regional Executive. All other matters concerning the Conference shall be determined by a Conference Committee, as specified in Article 10.

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 since the previous Conference;

(b) to receive reports from the Parliamentary Parties in the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the European Parliament (the House of Commons and European Parliamentary reports to be given by members representing Westminster and European Constituencies within the Region);

(c) to make policy on issues which relate exclusively to 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 the auditors' report;

- (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;
- (c) appoint for the current financial year Auditors to produce an independent report on the accounts for the next Annual General Meeting;
- (d) 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.
- (e) in even-numbered years, elect the Officers of the Regional Party, the Ordinary Members of the Regional Executive, Regional Candidates Committee and other committees for the following two calendar years;
- (f) elect representatives to the English Council and such other bodies as the Regional Conference may specify.

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 21 days written notice of the date, time and place of any 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 President and Officers of the Regional Party;
- (b) representatives elected by Local Parties;
- (c) representatives of the Specified Associated Organisation representing Youth and Students;
- (d) representatives of recognised Council Groups on principal local authorities within the Region;
- (e) Members of the Parliamentary Parties in the House of Commons and the European Parliament representing constituencies within the Region;
- (f) Members of the House of Lords who are members of local parties within the region;
- (g) prospective Parliamentary and European Parliamentary candidates for constituencies and European 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
- (h) 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 representatives of Local Parties shall be elected at the same time, in the same manner and for the same term as Federal Conference Representatives but on the following scale:

Membership of Local Party	Number of Representatives
30 to 50	5
51 to 75	6
76 to 100	7
101 to 150	8
151 to 200	9
201 to 250	10
251 to 300	11
301 to 350	12
351 to 400	13
401 to 450	14

together with one further representative for every 100 members (or part thereof) in excess of 450.

A Local Party comprising more than one Parliamentary constituency shall be entitled to the higher of (i) the number of representatives which each component constituency with 30 members or more would be

entitled to if it formed a separate Local Party or (ii) the number of representatives which that Local Party would be entitled to send if it comprised a single constituency.

- 2.7. The provisions of the Party Constitution relating to cessation of office, election of additional representatives, and election of substitutes shall also apply to Regional Conference representatives.
- 2.8. The representatives of the Specified Associated Organisation for Youth and Students shall be elected by that organisation in accordance with its own procedures on the same scale as Local Parties with regard to its eligible membership within the Region. Eligibility to vote and to be counted as a member shall be on the same basis as for the election of Federal Conference Representatives.
- 2.9. The number of representatives to be elected by the recognised Council Group on each principal local authority in the Region shall be according to the following scale:

<u>Membership of Group</u>	<u>Number of Representatives</u>
1 to 4	1
5 to 8	2
9 to 12	3

together with one further representative for every 4 members (or part thereof) in excess of 12.

- 2.10. The representatives elected by the recognised Council Groups on principal local authorities shall be elected by and from those Groups. No person may participate in any such election who is not a current member of the Party. The Secretary shall annually in June seek nominations from such groups; nominees shall be deemed to be valid until the following June.
- 2.11. 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.
- 2.12. 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.
- 2.13. Motions for the Regional Conference may be submitted by
- two voting members of Regional Conference,
 - Local Parties,
 - Specified Associated Organisations,
 - recognised Council Groups on principal local authorities,
 - or by the Regional Executive or the Regional Policy Committee.
- 2.14. Special meetings of the Regional Conference may be summoned on the requisition of:
- (a) the Regional Executive;
 - (b) three Local Parties within the Region; or
 - (c) ten voting members of Regional Conference.
- The requisition must specify the business to be conducted, and no other business shall be taken at the meeting.
- 2.15. The Regional Executive may postpone any meeting of the Regional Conference if it conflicts with a General Election or for other urgent reason.

ARTICLE 3: The Officers

- 3.1. The Officers of the Regional Party shall be:
- (a) the Chair
 - (b) the Vice Chair
 - (c) the Treasurer
 - (d) the Secretary and
 - (e) the Chair of the Regional Candidates Committee.
- 3.2. There shall be a President, who shall not be deemed an Officer under the terms of this Constitution, to be elected every two years, beginning with the Annual Meeting in 2014. The President shall have such roles as he or she shall agree with the Regional Executive from time to time to undertake.
- 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 Region's representative on the English Council Executive, shall be jointly responsible with the Treasurer for the Region's compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and shall be the Region's principal executive officer.
- 3.4. The Vice Chair of the Regional Party shall 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 Chair of the Regional Candidates Committee shall, together with the Regional Candidates Committee, be responsible for the exercise under the Party Constitution of the Region's functions in connection with the approval and selection of Parliamentary and European Parliamentary Candidates and shall be the Region's member on the English Candidates Committee.
- 3.6. The Treasurer shall handle the financial business of the Regional Party in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, and shall present the annual accounts and outline budget to the Annual General Meeting.
- 3.7. The Secretary shall be responsible for
- (a) arranging the meetings of the Regional Executive, and keeping minutes;
 - (b) receiving and distributing the minutes of the Regional Party's committees, sub-committees and working groups;
 - (c) maintaining an up-to-date list of regional conference representatives and supervising the conduct of the Region's internal elections; and
 - (d) for ensuring that the Region makes effective communications with Local Parties and other bodies within the Party.

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 the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, 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) 12 ordinary members;

(c) 2 members elected by the elected representatives of the Specified Associated Organisation for Youth and Students;

(d) 1 member elected by Parliamentarians;

(e) one representative of each county co-ordinating committee as defined in Article 14, who shall be the committee's chair unless the committee's constitution provides for an elected representative. The committee's representative may send a substitute to a particular meeting that he or she is unable to attend;

(f) the Chairs of the Committees outlined in Article 5.1, if they would not otherwise be members of the Regional Executive; and

(g) up to 3 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.

(h) one member elected by principal councillors in an on-line secret ballot.

4.3. The Officers and the Ordinary Members shall be elected in even-numbered years by the voting members of the Regional Conference by postal ballot at the time of the Annual General Meeting in accordance with Article 13.

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 a local party within the region 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, or be both an Officer and an Ordinary Member of the Regional Executive. Elections for Officers shall be counted in the order listed in Article 3.1 of this constitution, and for Ordinary Members after Officers. Any votes cast for candidates already elected to office shall be transferred to the voter's subsequent preferences.

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 31st December in the following year. They shall be eligible for re-election, save that the Chair of the Regional Party shall not serve more than two consecutive terms and shall then not be eligible for election as Chair or Vice Chair for a period of four 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 members of the Regional Executive. Any other vacancy may be filled from any party member who is a member of a local party within the Region.

4.8. Within seven 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 times a year. The Secretary shall give at least 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 subcommittee 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. Such Standing Orders shall provide that:
- (a) if any member of the Executive or of any Committee of the Executive has any pecuniary interest direct or indirect in any contract, proposed contract or other matter, that member shall declare that interest and shall withdraw from the meeting while the contract, proposed contract or other matter is under consideration, unless the Executive, after the member has declared his or her interest, invites him or her to remain; and
 - (b) if a dispute regarding any Local Party or any Council Group is the subject of debate at any meeting of the Executive or any Committee of the Executive, any member of that Local Party or Council Group (as the case may be) or anyone directly or indirectly involved in the dispute shall withdraw from the meeting while such a dispute is under debate, unless the Executive or the relevant committee invites him or her to remain.
- 4.13. In urgent circumstances the Management Committee may act on behalf of the Regional Executive. It 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 Joint Employment Council. The Regional Party shall join the Joint Employment Council and shall agree that it shall constitute a negotiating forum between management and staff. Its functions under this paragraph may be delegated to the Management Committee.
- 4.15. The Regional Executive shall appoint a member of the Regional Party who is eligible to be a member of the Federal Appeals Panel and is not and has not within the preceding year been a member of the Regional Executive or of the Regional Candidates Committee to be a member of the Appeals Panel for England. This appointment shall be subject to the ratification of the next Regional Conference.

ARTICLE 5: Committees of the Regional Executive

- 5.1 There shall be the following committees, which shall be constituted as set out in Articles 6-11 (and summarised in Article 5.9), which shall have the delegated powers therein described as well as such further powers as the Regional Executive may decide.
- The Management Committee (see Article 6)
 - The Campaigns Committee (see Article 9)
 - The Candidates Committee (see Article 7)
 - The Conference Committee (see Article 10)
 - The Development Committee (see Article 11)
 - The Policy Committee (see Article 8)
- 5.2 The Executive may also set up:
- A Fundraising Subcommittee (see Article 12.8);
 - Other committees, subcommittees and working groups as defined in Article 5.3.

The Regional Conference may set up:

- County Co-ordinating Committees as defined in Article 14.

- 5.3 The Regional Executive shall establish such further committees, subcommittees or working groups as it shall consider appropriate from time to time 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 one of the Officers. The Regional Executive may also delegate authority to committees jointly constituted with other regions for particular purposes. No committee, subcommittee, 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, subcommittees and working groups shall report on their activities to the Regional Executive.
- 5.4 The Officers of the Regional Party shall have a duty to convene a preliminary meeting of each committee listed in 5.1 above to take place after 1 January after the Annual General meeting of the Regional Party at which the committee was open to election. The business of that meeting shall begin with the appointment of a Chair from amongst the members of the Committee (other than co-opted members), except that the Chair of Candidates Committee shall be elected by the Regional Conference. Further meetings for the rest of the year shall be convened by the relevant committee chair.
- 5.5 The Regional Executive shall appoint the Chair and the members of all committees, subcommittees and working groups set up under the provisions of 5.3 above. The Chair once appointed shall be responsible for convening meetings.
- 5.6 All members of all committees, subcommittees 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.
- 5.7 All committees, sub-committees and working groups shall have the power to co-opt a maximum of two further members.
- 5.8 The Chair of any committee, sub-committee or working group shall, in the event of a tied vote, have an additional casting vote.
- 5.9 The quorum of any committee, sub-committee or working group shall be 50% of its membership, including co-opted members.
- 5.10 The membership of the required Committees set out in Article 5.1 is summarised as follows:

Committee	Elected by Conference	Elected by the Regional Executive	Elected by others
Management	0	All Officers, Chairs	1 staff representative
Campaigns	3 members	2 members	1 member by Parliamentarians
Candidates	Chair, 2 members who contested Westminster or European seats within the past 10 years and 2 other members	2 members	
Conference	4 members	2 members	1 member elected by and from Policy Committee 1 member elected by and from the Executive of the Local Party in which the next Regional Conference is due to take place
Development	3 members	2 members	1 member elected by and from the Campaigns Committee

Policy	3 members	2 members	3 members elected by principal councillors in an on-line secret ballot 2 members by Parliamentarians
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- 5.11 All Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups shall keep minutes and shall submit these to the Secretary of the Regional Party within one month of the meeting at which the minutes were taken. Such minutes shall be copied to Officers on receipt and to the Regional Executive at its next available regular meeting.
- 5.12 (a) Where a casual vacancy shall arise on a Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Group, the Regional Executive shall have power to fill the vacancy.
(b) Where there is a casual vacancy in the chair of a body constituted under 5.1 or 5.3 above, the Regional Executive shall have the power to appoint a new chair: the new chair need not be a member of the relevant body at the time of appointment.
(c) The Regional Executive shall have full discretion to determine the manner and extent of advertising for volunteers to fill such vacancies.

ARTICLE 6: The Management Committee

- 6.1 The Management Committee shall comprise:
- (a) all officers
 - (b) all chairs of committees defined under Article 5.1
 - (c) one representative elected by and from staff employed by the Regional Party
At least one of the members shall be a person who is or has within the preceding four years been a councillor on a principal local authority, the Regional Executive using the power to co-opt an additional member if necessary.
 - (d) Regional Training Co-ordinator
- 6.2 The Management Committee shall be responsible to the Regional Executive for:
- (a) ensuring the compliance of the Regional Party with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000;
 - (b) the planning and administration of the budget and finances of the Regional Party;
 - (c) consideration of the accounts of the Regional Party, and the submission of regular financial reports to the Regional Executive
 - (d) the submission of estimates of income and expenditure for approval by the Regional Executive;
 - (e) the raising of funds for the purposes of the Regional Party in accordance with the fundraising and data protection policies of the Party;
 - (f) negotiations with the English Council Executive on the proportion of subscription income to be remitted to the Regional Party;
 - (g) the preparation for approval by the Regional Executive of business motions for the Federal Conference;
 - (h) the appointment, dismissal and terms and conditions of staff,
 - (i) the exercise of the Regional Party's powers and duties in relation to local parties, as set out in Articles 6.3 to 6.17.

(j) the general administration of the Regional Party including the activities of its staff and the provision and maintenance of office accommodation and equipment.

6.3. The Management Committee 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 **and in relation to any question concerning the recognition of Council Groups**. In particular, it shall be responsible for:

(a) ensuring the adherence of Local Parties to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, the Party Constitution, and to their own respective constitutions;

(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 Party Constitution;

(c) investigating the affairs of any Local Party if there is reason to believe that the Local Party is not adhering to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, the Party Constitution or its own constitution: or that events in connection 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 any recommendations resulting from such an investigation;

(e) monitoring the joint arrangements made by the relevant Local Parties for the approval and selection of candidates for local authority elections and imposing and/or appointing a Party member to administer the procedures for the approval and/or selection of candidates for local authority elections where the relevant Local Party or Local Parties have not adopted or having adopted have not followed a procedure for the approval and/or selection of candidates in accordance with the provisions of the Party Constitution;

(f) the exercise of the powers of the Regional Party in constituencies where no Local Party is recognised or where the Local Party has been suspended;

(g) reporting to the Regional Executive on disputes as to proposed combinations of constituencies to form a Local Party;

(h) determining whether to exempt all or any parish or town councils in the Region from the requirements for the approval of candidates;

(i) the exercise of the powers of the Region under Article 2 of the Articles of the Party in England (Membership) and

(j) the exercise of the powers of the Region under Article 8 of the Articles of the Party in England (Councillors and Recognised Council Groups) including determining whether the requirements for the recognition of Council groups shall apply to all or any parish or town councils in the Region

6.4. Where there appears to be any conflict affecting a Local Party or a Council Group, the Management Committee may appoint a conciliator, who shall be impartial and neither a member of the relevant Local Party or authority (as the case may be) nor any Local Party within the area covered by the authority, to seek to mediate and resolve the conflict. Any person who has acted as such a conciliator shall not play any part in any later investigation or formal decision regarding the relevant dispute.

6.5. For the purposes of any such investigation, the Management Committee 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 any such member shall take no part in any subsequent proceedings of the Executive or of the Management 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 concerned and any affected Local Party officer shall be informed of any allegations against it and given a reasonable opportunity to reply or to take corrective action.

- 6.6 For the purposes of any such investigation, the Management Committee shall appoint a person (who must be a member of the Party but not necessarily of the Regional Party) to act as an investigator. No such person shall be a member of the Local Authority concerned nor of any Local Party covered by the authority. The investigator shall have such access as they require to the books and records of the Recognised Council Group concerned. The Recognised Council Group and any affected councillor shall be informed of any allegations against it and given a reasonable opportunity to reply or to take corrective action.
- 6.7 The Management Committee shall receive a report on any investigation under this Article and shall be responsible for the implementation, so far as may be thought fit, of any recommendations resulting from the investigation and for such purpose the Regional Party may act on behalf of and in the name of the Local Party (or any organ thereof).
- 6.8 The Management Committee may suspend a Local Party if it is satisfied that the Local Party is not adhering to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 or to the Party (or its own) Constitution or that events in connection 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 Management 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. At the discretion of the Regional Party Chair the power of the Management Committee may be exercised on its behalf by the Regional Executive as a whole. The powers of the Management Committee under this Article may not be delegated to Officers.
- 6.9 There shall be a right of appeal to the Appeals Panel for England on the ground that the suspension was unreasonable. The Regional Executive may direct that the suspension shall take effect pending the appeal. This power may not be exercised by the Management Committee.
- 6.10 The Regional Party may de-recognise a formerly recognised Council Group if the Regional Executive is satisfied that:
- (a) there is persistent or serious non-adherence on the part of the Council Group either to the Liberal Democrat Federal Party Constitution, the constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England, or its own Standing Orders, or
 - (b) by the actions of the Council Group, events are occurring or about to occur in connection with the affairs of the Council Group which are, or may be, seriously detrimental to the Liberal Democrats.

Such power shall not be exercised without the Council Group being informed of what is proposed and offered a reasonable opportunity to reply or take corrective action. Any member of the Council Group concerned or any Local Party covered by the authority concerned may appeal to the English Appeals Panel against a decision to de-recognise.

- 6.11 The Management 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:
- (a) to exercise the functions of the Local Party under the Party Constitution;
 - (b) to ensure, in consultation with local members, that a prospective candidate is in place for any Parliamentary Election. unless the Management Committee is satisfied that this is not appropriate for the time being;
 - (c) to take such steps as may be appropriate, in consultation with local members, to organise the fighting of local authority elections;

- (d) to act as an enrolling body for new members under the Party Constitution;
- (e) to summon and supervise meetings of members to form a Local Party or reconstitute a Local Party as soon as possible;
- (f) to hold and manage the assets of the Local Party for the benefit of the members of the Local Party or of any Local Party to be formed in place of the Local Party; and
- (g) 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.

- 6.12 Where the Region has directed a Local Party officer to vacate office the Management 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 Management 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.
- 6.13 The Management Committee on behalf of the Region may 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 on one or more of the following grounds:
- (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.
- 6.14 The member shall be notified of the reasons why revocation is to be considered. Where the Management 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 subparagraph (c) above applies.
- 6.15 The decision of the Regional Party whether or not to agree to the admission or readmission to membership of a person whose membership has been refused or revoked shall be made by the Management Committee.
- 6.16 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.
- 6.17 The Management Committee shall report on its activities to the Regional Executive, but it shall not be open to the Regional Executive to vary or reverse decisions taken by the Management Committee on matters delegated by this Constitution to the Management Committee, except as provided under Article 6.8 or 6.9.

ARTICLE 7: Parliamentary and Regional Assembly Candidates

- 7.1. The Candidates Committee shall comprise:
- (a) the Chair of Candidates Committee, elected by Regional Conference representatives
 - (b) two members, who have contested Westminster or European elections in the last ten years, elected by Regional Conference Representatives
 - (c) two further members elected by Regional Conference representatives
 - (d) two members appointed by the Regional Executive.
- 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.

- 7.3. The Candidates Committee shall, if English Candidates Committee has delegated this function to Regions, determine applications to the Region for inclusion in the Lists of Approved Candidates for Parliamentary and European Parliamentary elections and in any event shall exercise all the functions of the Regional Party relating to the approval of Parliamentary candidates.
- 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. In the event of direct elections to the Regional Assembly, the Candidates Committee shall maintain a list of approved candidates for Regional Assembly elections. It shall determine and publish procedures to be followed by persons wishing to be included in such list and shall determine applications to the Region for inclusion in such List.
- 7.6. The Candidates Committee may remove any person from the Lists of Approved Candidates for Parliamentary, European 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.
- 7.7. The Regional Candidates Chair 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 shortlist. 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.
- 7.8. The Candidates Committee shall appoint the Selection Committee for the selection of prospective European Parliamentary candidates for the Region.
- 7.9. The Candidates Committee shall prepare for approval by [Regional Conference][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.
- 7.10. 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.
- 7.11. The Candidates Committee shall be responsible for encouraging both men and women, and members of ethnic minorities, to apply for inclusion in the Lists and for selection.
- 7.12. 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. The Policy Committee shall comprise
 - (a) Three members elected by the Regional Conference representatives
 - (b) Two members appointed by the Regional Executive
 - (c) Three members elected principal councillor in an on-line secret ballot

(d) Two members elected by Parliamentarians.

8.1A The term of office for all elections under 8.1 shall be, for terms of office beginning on or after 1 January 2010, two calendar years.

8.2. The Policy Committee shall be directly 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 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) liaison with other regional parties on policy issues affecting the Region and such other regions;

(i) assisting Party Groups on principal local authorities with policy development by such Groups and liaison on policy issues between principal local authorities within the Region;

(j) stimulating and co-ordinating the policy making activities of Local Parties;

(k) encouraging the participation by members of the Regional Party in the development and making of Party Policy.

ARTICLE 9: Campaigns Committee

9.1 The Campaigns Committee shall comprise:

(a) Three members elected by the Regional Conference representatives

(b) Two members appointed by the Regional Executive

(c) One member elected by Parliamentarians.

9.2. 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;

(b) the undertaking of regional campaigns and the monitoring of the joint arrangements made by the relevant Local Parties for campaigning in elections to principal local authorities covering more than one Local Party;

(c) the management of Regional Election campaigns for the European Parliament and for referendum campaigns;

(d) the encouragement of Local Parties to co-ordinate campaigning for Parliamentary and local elections and between elections;

- (e) the promotion of the political image of the Party within the Region;
- (f) the appointment of a person to serve as Regional Media Co-ordinator and the management of the work of the Regional Media Co-ordinator;
- (g) providing and co-ordinating assistance to Local Parties for Parliamentary and local elections;
- (h) liaison in respect of these matters with appropriate Associated Organisations and Specified Associated Organisations.

ARTICLE 10: Conference Committee

- 10.1 The Conference Committee shall comprise
- (a) Four members elected by the Regional Conference representatives
 - (b) Two members appointed by the Regional Executive
 - (c) one member elected by and from the Policy Committee
 - (e) one member elected by and from the Executive of the Local Party within whose boundaries the next planned Conference is due to take place.
- 10.2 The Conference Committee shall be responsible for:
- (a) the organisation of the meetings of the Regional Conference (subject to Article 2.1);
 - (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) assisting the Secretary in maintaining a register of the voting members of Regional Conference; and
 - (e) promoting the Regional Conference and encouraging attendance at Regional Conference by members of the Regional Party.

ARTICLE 11: Development Committee

- 11.1 The Development Committee shall comprise
- (a) Three members elected by the Regional Conference representatives
 - (b) Two members appointed by the Regional Executive
 - (c) one member elected by and from the Campaigns Committee
- 11.2 The function of the Development Committee is to:
- (a) encourage local parties to increase membership
 - (b) to arrange for the training and personal development of European, Westminster and council candidates
 - (c) to arrange for the training of local party activists
 - (d) to arrange for the training of members of assessment panels and returning officers
 - (e) the appointment of a person to serve as Regional Training Co-ordinator and the management of the work of the Regional Training Co-ordinator;
 - (f) to encourage the development of trainers and the recruitment of new trainers
 - (g) to oversee, in liaison with the Regional Party Secretary, internal communications.

ARTICLE 12: Finance

- 12.1. The Region's accounting period shall be annual, ending on 31st December each year.
- 12.2. 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 the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.
- 12.3. The Treasurer shall ensure that no donation of over £200 is accepted except from a permissible donor and shall keep records and submit donation reports to the Management Committee and to Chief Executive of the Federal Party.
- 12.4. The Treasurer shall annually produce accounts, which shall be approved by the Management Committee and by the Regional Executive, and if required by the Political Parties, Elections & Referendums Act 2000 shall be subject to independent examination and submitted to the Electoral Commission.
- 12.5. The Treasurer shall submit the accounts of the Regional Party together with the report of the auditors to the Annual General Meeting.
- 12.6. A copy of the annual accounts shall be sent to the Treasurer of the Party in England and to the Chief Executive of the Federal Party.
- 12.7. 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 Officers who shall not come solely from members of any one family. The Regional Party may maintain further accounts for the deposit of money not required for the time being, requiring the same signatures.
- 12.8. The Management 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. The Regional Executive may, subject to compliance with the Data Protection Act, authorise the Management Committee or (if constituted) the Fundraising Subcommittee to use the list of members in the Region for fundraising purposes.

ARTICLE 13: Elections

- 13.1. All contested elections under the provisions of this constitution shall be by secret postal ballot and by the Single Transferable Vote method in accordance with election rules made under the Party Constitution.
- 13.2. The following elections to external bodies shall be reserved for Regional Conference representatives:
 - (a) English Council
 - (b) ELDR or its successor bodies.All other elections of Regional Party representatives to external bodies shall be made by the Regional Executive.
- 13.3. Where any posts are to be elected by Regional Conference representatives, the elections shall take place at the time of the Annual General Meeting in accordance with rules agreed and published by the Regional Executive.
- 13.4. Whenever three or more persons are being elected. 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.

ARTICLE 14: County Co-ordinating Committees

- 14.1. The Regional Conference may authorise the setting up of County Co-ordinating Committees covering each of the Counties of the Region, as listed in Article 1.2. The objects of a County Co-ordinating Committee shall be to further the objects of the Region in its County, (including any Unitary Authorities within its traditional county boundary). The Committee shall be subject to the ultimate authority of the Regional Party.
- 14.2. A County Co-ordinating Committee 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 Committee. A County Co-ordinating Committee shall not incur any debts for which the Regional Party shall be responsible. A County Co-ordinating Committee may, subject to compliance with any directions of the Regional Executive, and subject to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and the fundraising and data protection policies of the Party, raise funds for its own activities.
- 14.3 Each County Co-ordinating Committee 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 and Ordinary Members of the 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 of Local Parties within the County;
 - (d) The names and addresses of the Officers to be notified to, and minutes of General and Committee Meetings to be supplied to the Regional Secretary.

The constitution of any County Co-ordinating Committee must comply with this Constitution and with the Party Constitution and the adoption and any amendment to the constitution of any Committee shall be subject to the approval of the Management Committee.

- 14.4. The administrative arrangements for a County Co-ordinating Committee shall include:
- (a) The Officers of every County Co-ordinating Committee shall include a Treasurer. The Committee's accounting period shall be the same as that of the Regional Party;
 - (b) The Committee 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 the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000;
 - (c) The Committee Treasurer shall ensure that no donation of over £200 is accepted except from a permissible donor and shall keep records and submit donations reports to the Treasurer of the Regional Party;
 - (d) The Committee Treasurer shall annually produce accounts which shall be approved by the Committee and shall be sent to the Treasurer of the Regional Party by a date to be specified by the Treasurer of the Regional Party;
 - (e) The Committee Treasurer shall submit the accounts of the Committee together with an independent report to the Annual General Meeting.
 - (f) The Committee shall maintain one or more bank or other appropriate accounts in the name of the Committee for which the mandate for withdrawal shall require the signature of at least two Officers who shall not come solely from members of any one family. The Committee may maintain further accounts for the deposit of money not required for the time being, requiring the same signatures.
- 14.5. A County Co-ordinating Committee may dissolve itself by a two thirds majority at a General Meeting or be dissolved or suspended by the Regional Executive on the grounds that:
- (a) It is no longer functioning or able to hold such a meeting
 - (b) There have been serious irregularities in the conduct of the affairs of the Committee;
 - (c) The affairs of the Committee have not been conducted in compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and with its Constitution this Constitution and the Party Constitution;
 - (d) The affairs of the Committee are being conducted in a manner contrary to the interests of the Party as a whole.

- 14.6 If a County Co-ordinating Committee is dissolved or suspended, any member of the Committee may request the English Council Executive to conduct an investigation. The Regional Party shall not dissolve a Committee until the Committee has been given an opportunity to hold its own General Meeting.
- 14.7. The funds of a County Co-ordinating Committee shall, upon dissolution, be applied in paying its debts, and any surplus shall be added to the funds of the Regional Party.

ARTICLE 15: Amendment and Interpretation

- 15.1. 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. Amendments to the area of the Region shall be made in accordance with the Constitution of the Party in England. No amendment shall be made which conflicts with the Party Constitution. Motions for amendment shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Regional Conference in time for circulation with the notice convening the meeting.
- 15.2 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.