

Constitution of the South East England Liberal Democrats

Approved by a Special General Meeting of the South East England Liberal Democrats on 20th October 2021.

ARTICLE 1: NATURE AND OBJECTS

- 1.1 The name of the Regional Party shall be "The S E England Liberal Democrats".
- 1.2 The area of the Region shall be Counties of Kent, Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex; and the Unitary Authorities of Brighton & Hove and Medway.
- 1.3 The Regional Party is the successor to the Home Counties (South) Region of the Liberal Party and Regional Unit 9 of the Social Democratic Party.
- 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; Police and Crime Commissioners; and members of 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 In furtherance of its objects the Regional Party shall exercise the powers and fulfil the duties conferred upon Regional Parties by the Party Constitutions 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.
- 1.6 In this constitution:
 - a) "Local Parties" means those bodies as defined in Article 4 of The Federal Constitution.
 - b) "The Regional Party" means the body governed by this constitution;
 - c) "The Region" means the area of Kent, Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex; and the Unitary Authorities of Brighton & Hove and Medway;
 - d) "The Party" means the Liberal Democrats;
 - e) "The Party in England" means the Liberal Democrats in England;
 - f) "The Party Constitutions" means The Federal Constitution of the Liberal Democrats and The Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England;
 - g) "Principal Local Authority" means a County Council, District Council, Borough Council, or Unitary Authority Council.
 - h) "Recognised Council Group" means a Council Group of a Principal Local Authority which has been recognised in accordance with the procedures set out in Article 8 of The Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England;
 - i) All terms defined in the Party Constitutions shall have the same meaning in this Constitution.

ARTICLE 2: THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

- 2.1 Regional Conference shall be held not less than once in each year. Subject to the provisions of this Constitution and of the Party Constitutions, 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.

- 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 make policy on issues which relate exclusively to the Region;
 - c) to discuss and express its views upon other policy issues on a consultative basis; and
 - d) to submit motions and amendments including proposals to amend the Party Constitutions 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;
 - c) appoint for the current financial year
 - i) Auditors if required by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000
 - ii) Or a person or persons to produce an independent report on the accounts for the next Annual General Meeting;
 - d) every second year conclude the election of the Executive Officers of the Regional Party, the Ordinary Members of the Regional Executive, and Regional Candidates Committee for the following two calendar years;
 - e) every second year conclude the election of representatives to the English Council and such other bodies as the Regional Conference may specify.
- 2.4 The Regional Conference shall 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 each Conference to be given to members of the Regional Party.
- 2.5 All members of the Regional Party who attend the Regional Conference shall be voting members of Regional Conference.
- 2.6 All members of the Regional Party shall be encouraged to attend the Regional Conference, and shall be entitled to speak at the Regional Conference subject to such restrictions as may be appropriate.
- 2.7 Motions for the Regional Conference may be submitted by not less than five members of the Regional Party, a Local Party, a Specified Associated Organisation, a Recognised Council Group within the region or by the Regional Executive.
- 2.8 Special meetings of the Regional Conference may be summoned on the requisition of:
- a) the Regional Executive;
 - b) 10 Local Parties within the Region; or
 - c) 50 Regional members.

The requisition must specify the business to be conducted, and no other business shall be taken at the meeting.

- 2.9 The Regional Executive may postpone any meeting of the Regional Conference and AGM 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 of the Regional Party;
 - b) the Vice-Chair and Chair of the Local Party Committee of the Regional Party as set out in Article 6;
 - c) the Vice-Chair with responsibility for the Members of the Regional Party;
 - d) the Vice-Chair and Chair of the Candidates Committee
 - e) the Treasurer;
 - f) the Secretary; and
 - g) the Diversity Officer
- 3.2 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 only 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.
- 3.3 A Vice-Chair of the Regional Party shall deputise for the Chair when required and when chairing the Regional Executive shall have only a casting vote and shall exercise such other functions as may be prescribed by the Regional Executive.
- 3.4 The Vice-Chair LPC and Chair of the Local Party Committee shall have the responsibilities as set out in Article 6.
- 3.5 The Vice-Chair (Membership) shall be responsible for encouraging Members and Supporters to offer their talents to the Party at an appropriate level and ensure that they are supported; to ensure delivery of appropriate services and communications to Members and Supporters. Support to Local party Membership and Development Officers shall be provided to assist in the management of the wider membership network.
- 3.6 The Vice-Chair and Chair of the Regional Candidates Committee shall, together with the Regional Candidates Committee, be responsible for the exercise under the Party Constitutions of the Region's functions in connection with the approval and selection of Parliamentary Candidates and candidates for Police and Crime Commissioner elections and shall be the Region's member on the English Candidates Committee.
- 3.7 The Secretary shall be responsible for arranging the meetings of the Regional Executive and keeping minutes and for the Region's communications with Local Parties and other bodies within the Party as may be required.
- 3.8 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 (PPERA), and shall present the annual accounts and outline budget to the Annual General Meeting. The Treasurer shall make the necessary PERA returns to the Liberal Democrat HQ.

- 3.9 The Diversity Officer shall be responsible for promoting best practice in achieving diversity throughout the Regional Party and to ensure that diversity is always appropriately considered in making decisions at Regional Executive meetings.

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) a President if appointed by the Regional Executive.
 - b) the Officers of the Regional Party;
 - c) 10 Ordinary Members;
 - d) 1 member elected by the elected representatives of the Affiliated Organisation for Youth and Students;
 - e) one representative for each of the counties Kent, Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex (the County Steering Groups) from a group formed with approval of the regional executive to co-ordinate activity in each county. For the purpose of this clause Local Parties in Unitary Council areas will be entitled to membership of the group in the county in which they are located and Brighton and Hove will be considered to be part of East Sussex;
 - f) up to 4 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 underrepresented 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.
- 4.3 A President can be nominated by the Officers for approval by the Executive Committee. The tenure of office of the President shall be determined by the Executive Committee. For the avoidance of doubt the President is not an elected Officer
- 4.4 The Officers and the Ordinary Members shall be elected every two years by the members at the Annual General Meeting.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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. All contested elections under this constitution shall be by secret ballot by the Single Transferable Vote method in accordance with election rules made under the Party Constitution. Any votes cast for candidates already elected to office shall be transferred to the voter's subsequent preferences.
- 4.7 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 31st December of 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.

- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 The Regional Executive shall meet at least 5 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.
- 4.11 A special meeting of the Regional Executive shall be convened by the Secretary at the request of the Chair and one other Officer of the Regional Party acting jointly or one-third of the members of the Regional Executive, to deal with the business specified in the notice of requisition.
- 4.12 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.
- 4.13 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.
- 4.14 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
- 4.15 The Regional Executive may appoint and dismiss employees of the Regional Party.

- 4.16 The Regional Executive shall appoint a member of the Regional Party who is eligible to be a member of the Federal Appeals Panel for England 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.
- 4.17 The Regional Executive may also appoint any of its members to undertake a specific responsibility.

ARTICLE 5: COMMITTEES OF THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE

- 5.1 The Regional Executive shall establish such sub-committees 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, sub-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.
- 5.2 The Regional Executive shall appoint a chair (who shall be a member of the Regional Executive) and the members of all sub-committees of the Regional Executive. All members of all 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.
- 5.3 The Regional Executive may appoint a person to serve as Regional Training Co-Ordinator and shall manage the work of the Regional Training Co-Ordinator.

ARTICLE 6: LOCAL PARTIES COMMITTEE

- 6.1. There shall be a Local Parties Committee of the Regional Party which shall comprise:
- a) Chair of the Committee who shall be the Vice-Chair with responsibility for the LPC of the Regional Party
 - b) The Chair of the Regional Party
 - c) The Treasurer of the Regional Party
 - d) The Secretary of the Regional Party
 - e) and not more than 11 other members appointed by the Regional Executive.

The other 11 members need not be members of the Regional Executive

- 6.2 The Local Parties' Committee of the Regional Party shall exercise the Region's powers and duties under the Party Constitutions in relation to the adherence of Local Parties to the Party Constitutions and to their own respective constitutions, and the compliance of such constitutions and any proposed amendments with the requirements of the Party Constitutions, 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 Constitutions;
- c) investigating the affairs of any Local Party in consultation with the Regional Executive (or if the matter is urgent with the Regional Chair or Vice Chair and another Regional Officer) 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 Constitutions;
- 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) recommending to the Regional Executive 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 recommending to the Regional Executive whether the requirements for the recognition of Council groups shall apply to all or any parish or town councils in the Region.

6.3 Where there appears to be any conflict affecting a Local Party or a Council Group, the Local Parties 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.

6.4 For the purposes of any such investigation, the Local Parties' 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 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 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.

6.5 For the purposes of any investigation of the affairs of a Recognised Council Group, the Local Parties' 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.

- 6.6 The Local Parties 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).
- 6.7 The Regional Party may suspend a Local Party if the Local Parties Committee 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 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 the Local Parties Committee which shall forthwith report the action it has taken to the Regional Executive.
- 6.8 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. The Local Parties Committee may direct that the suspension shall take effect pending the appeal.
- 6.9 The Regional Party may de-recognise a formerly recognised Council Group if the Local Parties Committee is satisfied;
 - 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.

- 6.10 The Regional Party, through the Local Parties Committee, shall have the following powers and responsibilities with regard to any area 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 ensure, in consultation with local members, that a prospective candidate is in place for any Parliamentary Election, unless the Local Parties 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.
- 6.11 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.
- 6.12 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.
- 6.13 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.
- 6.14 The Local Parties 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 Local Parties Committee on matters delegated by this Constitution to the Local Parties Committee.
- 6.15 The Local Parties Committee minutes shall remain confidential and only made available to the Regional Executive or appropriate higher bodies if required

ARTICLE 7: PARLIAMENTARY, MAYORAL AND PCC CANDIDATES

- 7.1 There shall be a Candidates Committee of the Regional Party which shall comprise the Chair of the Regional Candidates Committee (who shall be an Officer of the Region elected in accordance with Articles 3 and 4 of this Constitution) and 6 other members elected by the Regional Conference. The Regional Candidates Committee may co-opt up to 2 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 years, at least one member who is an approved Parliamentary Candidates assessor and at least one member who is an accredited returning officer for parliamentary selections.
- 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, Mayoral and PCC 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 PCC and Mayoral elections and in any event shall exercise all the functions of the Regional Party relating to the approval of Parliamentary, PCC and Mayoral candidates.

- 7.4 Any applicant to the Region whose application is refused may request to be reassessed and/or may appeal under the Party Constitutions.
- 7.5 The Candidates Committee shall maintain a list of approved Parliamentary PCC and Mayoral candidates. 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, PCC or Mayoral elections subject to the appeal procedure set out in the Party Constitutions. 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, PCC and Mayoral 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.
- 7.8 The Candidates Committee shall prepare for approval by the Regional Executive rules for the approval and selection of candidates for the PCC and Mayoral elections. 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.
- 7.9 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, returning officers or prospective Parliamentary, PCC or Mayoral elections; and for encouraging both men and women, 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: FINANCE

- 8.1 The Region's accounting period shall be annual, ending on 31st December each year.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 The Treasurer shall ensure that no donation of over £500 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.

- 8.4 The Treasurer shall annually produce accounts, which shall be approved by the Regional Executive, and if required by the Political Parties, Elections & Referendums Act 2000 shall be audited and submitted to the Electoral Commission.
- 8.5 The Treasurer shall submit the accounts of the Regional Party together with an independent report to the Annual General Meeting.
- 8.6 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.
- 8.7 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 (except as regards amounts not exceeding £500 or such other amount as may be determined from time to time by the Regional Executive) 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. The Regional Party may take advantage of electronic banking facilities if they are provided by its bankers as long as appropriate safeguards are put in place by the Regional Executive Committee to agree expenditure and cash movements both at Regional Executive meetings and by a minimum of two officers in between meetings in advance of such expenditure or movements taking place. Approvals given between meetings shall be by email or other electronic signature processes. Where such action is taken between meetings it will be reported back to the next Regional Executive meeting.
- 8.8 The Executive Committee shall make arrangements in accordance with the Party's fundraising 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 and Council Groups in the Region. The Regional Executive may, subject to compliance with the Data Protection Act, authorise use of the list of members in the Region for fundraising purposes.
- 8.9 No expenditure may be incurred on behalf of the Regional Party other than with or under the authority of the Treasurer; and any person incurring such expenditure shall be personally liable.

ARTICLE 9: ELECTIONS

- 9.1 All contested elections under the provisions of this constitution shall be by secret ballot and by the Single Transferable Vote method in accordance with election rules made under the Party Constitutions.
- 9.2 The elections of Officers, Ordinary Members of the Regional Executive, members of the Regional Candidates Committee, and the members of the English Council and representatives on other bodies to be elected by the Regional Conference shall conclude at the Annual General Meeting. An appointed Returning Officer shall invite nominations in the notice convening the Meeting, with a closing date 14 days before the date of the Meeting. Ballot papers and manifestos for contested roles shall be distributed to all members by email or post as

appropriate at least 7 days before the Meeting. The ballot papers shall be returned and counted prior to the Annual General Meeting, and shall be declared at the AGM.

- 9.3 Nominations for election must be either in writing, signed by a proposer and seconder (who must be members of the Regional Party) and countersigned by the candidate or by electronic means from the candidate, proposers and seconders.
- 9.4 The Regional Executive shall appoint some disinterested person to receive nominations and act as Returning Officer. The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the preparation and distribution of ballot papers, their receipt and counting on return, and the declaration of the results.
- 9.5 An unsuccessful candidate who alleges that there has been or may have been an irregularity in the election may within one week after the declaration of the result appeal to the Appeals Panel for England. Subject to any order made on such an appeal, no irregularity shall invalidate an election.

ARTICLE 10 COUNTY STEERING GROUPS

- 10.1 The Regional Executive may authorise the setting up of County Steering Groups (CSGs) covering defined areas of the Region. The objects of a CSGs 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.
- 10.2 All Chairs, or their representative of Local Parties within the area of any CSG 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.
- 10.3 A CSG shall not be entitled to require a subscription from its members and shall not hold its own bank account, but the Regional Executive may agree to remit part of its income to a Group based upon a clear justification from the CSG and authorisation by the Regional Executive. A CSG shall not incur any debts for which the Regional Party shall be responsible. A CSG 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. Any such funds shall be ring-fenced within the Regional accounts.
- 10.4 Each CSG shall be governed by Terms of Reference which shall provide for:
 - a) Rules for appointment of Chair and Members of the Group;
 - b) Rules for the calling and conduct of meetings;
 - c) The names and addresses of the Members be notified to, and minutes of Meetings to be supplied to the Regional Secretary.

The terms of reference of the CSGs must comply with this Constitution and with the Party Constitution and the adoption and any amendment to the Terms of Reference of any Group shall be subject to the approval of the Regional Executive.

ARTICLE 11: AMENDMENT AND INTERPRETATION

- 11.1 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 Constitutions. Motions for amendment shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Regional Conference in time for circulation with the notice convening the meeting.
- 11.2 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.