

Report of the Holistic Review Commission — A New Recipe for Success

Introduction

The Holistic Review Commission was set up by Conference in Autumn 2017 with [motion D01](#) (p. 37). You can read more about how the Commission was appointed, who is on it, and the key steps of our work in Appendix 1.

Executive summary

This executive summary forms a set of actions to be taken after conference, directing the way forward after this report has been debated and adopted with amendments (if any).

Conference directs that all members should be consulted on changes to the party's structures by means of a referendum along the lines of **motion D01** agreed at Autumn 2017 Conference. The referendum should be completed before the end of 2018.

The referendum question should be as follows:

Do you support the following package of changes to the Green Party's governance, as recommended by the Holistic Review in its Report to Conference? Answer: Yes / No

Conference will remain the supreme body of the Green Party. An Autumn Conference will be held each year as now, but that will make a decision about what form, if any, a Spring Conference will take in the following year. This might include regional conferences or virtual gatherings. Enhanced remote access and secure online voting at Conference for all members (whether they physically attend conference or not) will be introduced, with a pilot at the Spring 2019 Conference to ensure the implementation will be as inclusive as possible.

The **Philosophical Basis** will remain as the foundational guide for the party, and arrangements for any changes to it as now.

The **Standing Orders Committee** will also remain in its current form.

Between conferences, all necessary decisions about strategy and activity will be overseen by a **Council**, comprising 45 members:

- 18 representatives from the regions of England (2 from each) and 2 representatives from the nation of Wales (as currently on the Green Party Regional Council (GPRC))
- Five representatives of the Young Greens
- Five representatives from formally constituted Affiliated Groups within the GPEW who represent marginalised communities, including the current liberation groups
- Five representatives of elected Councillors
- 10 directly elected members

Regional and Affiliated Groups membership may be varied by the Council as recommended by the Holistic Review report.

The Council will take on the current responsibilities of the Equality and Diversity Committee, Conferences Committee, the Policy Development Committee, International Committee, Campaigns Committee and the Green World Editorial Board.

It will work primarily through time-limited Task and Finish Groups to fulfil tasks as required to cover its responsibilities.

Decisions about political activities will be made by a **Political Executive (PEX)** which would meet at least weekly, normally by electronic means, comprising:

- One representative of our MPs / Peers
- One representative of our MEPs (while-ever their role continues or should it be reinstated)
- One of the Co-Leaders / the Leader
- One of the Deputy Leaders / the Deputy Leader
- The Leader of the Wales Green Party
- One representative of AGC
- The Chair or one of the Co-Chairs of Council
- Four members elected directly by the membership

The Political Executive will be chaired by the Leader of the Party.

Oversight of the staff and the party's legal responsibilities will lie with a **Board**, which will also carry the legal limited liability once such a structure is introduced (as already agreed). Its membership will consist of:

- An elected chair and treasurer
- Five members appointed by the council after an open application process.

The **Disciplinary Committee** and **Disputes Resolution Committee** will remain in their current forms.

Policy will be made as now by Conference, with the **Policies for a Sustainable Society** to be published on the members' website and the Council responsible for the overseeing of the content of **manifestos and policy outlines** placed on the public-facing website.

Should the proposal for constitutional change in the referendum question be supported by the required two-thirds of participating members, Conference directs that the party employ an appropriated qualified lawyer to draw up a new constitution for the Green Party, substantially maintaining all aspects of the current constitution not covered by the referendum proposal, but taking into account also the recommendations of the Holistic Review accepted by conference in the report in section A of this agenda.

That proposed new constitution should be put to a delayed Spring 2019 conference (to be held after the local elections in May 2019 but at the latest before the end of June) for adoption. The formal proceedings of this conference should allow significant time periods for discussion and adoption of the constitution, with elections completed before Autumn 2019 conference.

The process will be overseen by a Transition Team, comprising 3 members of the Holistic Review Commission (chosen by that group from members who chose to put themselves forward), 2 members of GPEX and 2 members of GPRC, selected by the respective bodies. Members of the Transition Team will

agree not to stand for any of the bodies the new constitution creates for two years after their institution. The Transition Team will facilitate opportunities for members to ask questions and debate the proposals, and receive information about them, during the referendum.

It will also oversee the delivery of the recommendations of the Holistic Review included in the Section A report in this agenda that have been agreed by Conference, reporting on progress at the Spring Conference in 2019.

This is a Task and Finish group that will wind up once the new bodies are in place, with a final report to the Autumn 2019 conference indicate which areas of the Holistic Review report recommendations it regards as being delivered, and which it is handing over to the Council. The Council should continue to report on those to each conference in the following year.

[END OF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY]

A New Recipe for Success

The Holistic Review Commission was set up to ensure that the Green Party of England and Wales (GPEW) would 'become a dynamic party fit for the 21st century'. We recognised that the GPEW had enormous strengths and has had significant success in the face of obstacles outside of our control. Our proposals build on these strengths to move the party forwards within the current political environment and to be ready for any future changes. This report sets out the thinking that had led us to our conclusions and recommendations and is taken from the tremendous amount of material we have gathered from hundreds of conversations, emails, surveys, workshops and online discussions.

The political strategy 2018-2022 adopted by conference in Spring 2018 provides essential context for our work and our proposals.

We recognise and applaud much work that is ongoing within the party at all levels. Some of this we refer to explicitly, but we have been unable to reference it all. It does not mean that it is not valued or not important.

We have clearly heard from many members at all levels within the GPEW that there is a need for **active empowerment of members**. GPEW members and many supporters and voters value above many other things that the party is governed by the membership; that members make policy and drive the work that the party does. But we have also heard that this needs to be re-embedded in the context of a world of digital media, a much larger party and a rapidly changing political context.

***You said:** "Our structures are so unclear that they are really an obstacle to what we want. We are collectively passionate about doing politics differently, not just talking the talk but walking the walk, but it is still based on a structure for a small party where everyone knew each other."*

With that in mind, we celebrate the culture of the GPEW as one of **servant leadership**. By that we mean that power flows from the members to those charged with specific jobs within the party to serve members and ensure that we can do the real work: bringing the world back to one-planet living, making our society a better place for all, working against inequality and discrimination and for justice. That is what we have to do to implement the vision expressed in our philosophical basis at all the levels of government by being elected and serving our constituents and through pushing the political balance in our direction.

You said [re: the local party chair, from a member]:

“You are the glue of the party. If you weren’t around I don’t know if the party would exist.”

We are in a fast-changing environment with many urgent challenges. As a political party, we must be **agile and effective**. We need to be able to engage over the long and short-term (anticipating and responding quickly to events), and we must have decision-making structures that can enable us to do this while maintaining member engagement and empowerment. We need to make sure that people can contribute without being overloaded and suffering burnout.

You said: *“We don’t know who makes decisions about what... We put it out to all. Then they squabble. We don’t know who to take as final.”*

We’ve aimed to outline a future in which the structure of the organisation can **adapt** naturally and quickly to changing circumstances, be they social, political or technical, and for change identified as essential or beneficial to occur without undue effort or delays.

We have heard from many of you that there is a deep concern about some aspects of the culture of the GPEW. There is a lack of trust at some levels; the tone sometimes adopted on the members’ forum (and elsewhere) is problematic. We need to have structures and decision-making processes that counter that culture and build on trust. In part, that can be achieved by ensuring that **leadership is seen as service not power** and that this is reflected in the approach to how that service is organised.

You said: *“Accountability isn’t the same as proving that someone or another body is wrong.”*

You said: *“Democracy isn’t the same as checking everything all the time.”*

We have divided our recommendations into three categories:

1. **What we need to decide now.** Specific recommendations which we consider should be acted on immediately and which will lead to constitutional changes.
2. **What we want to see happen.** Areas where work is necessary (and maybe already happening), where we have recommendations that are not likely to lead to constitutional change, but which nevertheless will promote important changes, and which we recommend should be taken forward by others. Some of these may need to be picked up by a Transition Team.
3. **What still needs to be addressed.** Other issues that need to be tackled but were either beyond our remit or we couldn’t tackle within the timescale available:

The motion we will put forward to Conference separately to this report will include all the recommendations in 1 and some in 2.

1. What We Need to Decide Now

Governance Bodies

You said: *"When you get someone elected, that's when a local party takes off".*

You said: *"People buy into a campaign... that's what gets them involved."*

By the very nature of the work we have done, and because we know that our decision-making structures are important, we recognise that we have to start here. Governance isn't the core of what the Green Party of England and Wales (or any organisation) is about. It is the toolbox we need to make a success of our endeavours. It is the back-room stuff that is necessary but should be as lightly constructed as possible to ensure it is not a block to the work we need to do. We all need to take responsibility for doing it at times (a bit like the washing up!). **It is a service.** We do it to free up others to go and win elections, sit in Councils, Assemblies and Parliaments, and from there change the politics that govern; change them for the planet and for the common good. That's why we joined a political party.

We, therefore, started from the premise that governance should be member-directed, light, nimble, accessible, transparent and open to anyone who wants to lend their skills, experience, time, and creativity – for a time – to do these jobs.

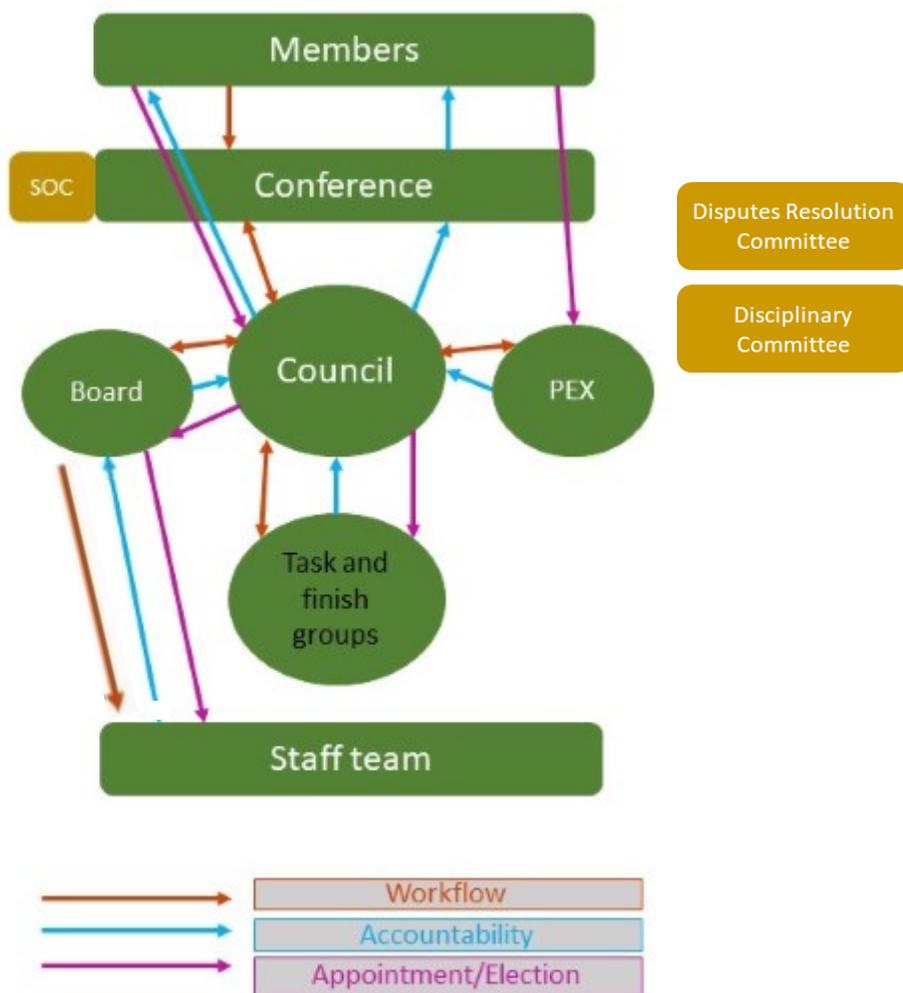
Members drive our party, so they appear at the top of the structure.

Conference - as now - derives its authority from the membership as a whole. All other governance bodies, tasks, roles, and authority derive from Conference. **Conference is accountable** to members, who give work to Conference in the form of proposals that form its agenda.

We recommend a representative body – **the Council** – which we propose be made up of 45 members in the first instance, that acts on behalf of the membership and Conference between conferences.

We recommend that working to that Council, a **Political Executive**, should link more firmly with our political representatives and provide day-to-day reactions on issues as needed.

A **Board** should deal with our legal and financial imperatives and carry the legal liability for the party.



These three bodies should form the core of the governance service to the GPEW. They should be covered by a protocol on expected behaviour (e.g. declaration of interests) which can be based on the Charity Commission recommendations for trustees.

You said: [staff] *“Working for the Green Party is an uphill struggle... It can feel that you are being managed by committees, conference, staff... many places to have influence... Often the GPEX member will have less experience than the staff member.”*

General Proposals applicable to all three bodies

We recommend that all governance bodies should have regard to the principle of inclusion and should take action to embed it within their processes.

While we recognise and value hugely the investment made by members to serve on governance bodies, we need to address members’ concern around the perceived culture of power and the lack of trust. There should be lines of accountability that are clear to members and not clouded by insufficient separation of roles occupied by members of the same household or family unit. **We recommend** that a protocol to cover these issues should be developed by the Transition Team.

We recommend that a quorum for all bodies shall be 50% +1.

We recommend that all bodies provide minutes of their meetings, appropriately redacted for confidentiality. They should record decisions and should appear on the members' website within an appropriate timescale:

- Council — within 2 weeks of meeting
- Political Executive — within 3 days of meeting
- Board — within 2 weeks of meeting

As is currently widely practiced within the party, we recommend that job-shares be allowed for any of these roles, except the ones that are not currently job-shared. Members of job-shares will share whatever roles, responsibilities, privileges, and powers that come with their role. The process for deciding allowances for roles, if any, will also not change.

The Council

Role and Authority

The Council will derive its authority from Conference and refer back to Conference on matters that are not delegated unless they are urgent. Effectively, it will follow all activities of the GPEW between conferences, taking forward delegated initiatives and specific responsibilities. Its first annual meeting should be after the Spring 2019 Conference.

It will be responsible for the overall strategy of the GPEW and identify areas that need attention in this context. It will recommend to the membership through Conference a clear plan for the future activities of the party.

We recommend that the Council appoints the Board via an open application process from all members.

The Council should receive regular reports from the Board and the Political Executive and from any other bodies established to oversee specific areas of work.

We recommend that the Council should be able to approve (without Conference ratification) interim policy decisions within the framework of our philosophical basis, that it is responsible for reviewing (but not editing), from time to time, communications to members.

The Council should also take the lead in maintaining our relationship with Green parties internationally, within the British Isles, within Europe and globally. This will include appointing delegates to international Green conferences in an open application process.

You said: *“Although we say that we aim for consensus we do an awful lot of voting which is confrontational.”*

The Council should meet at least 4 times a year but more often if required. Meetings may be online if the council decides.

Composition

- 18 representatives from the regions of England (2 from each) and 2 from the nation of Wales (as currently on the Green Party Regional Council (GPRC))
- Five representatives of the Young Greens
- Five representatives from formally constituted Affiliated Groups within the GPEW who represent marginalised communities, including the current liberation groups
- Five representatives of elected Councillors (A Councillor losing their Local Authority role should serve out their term on the Council)

- 10 directly elected members

There will be no co-options to Council, to ensure that the Council membership is fully democratic.

We recommend that the Council elect its Chair / Deputy Chair or Co-Chairs.

The Council would have 45 members in the first instance, based on current requirements. We foresee that it might grow and it will be for Conference to review the size and allocation of seats.

Terms

To achieve continuity, **we recommend** that after a transition period, members of the Council serve 3-year terms, replaced in thirds. Members should be able to serve a maximum of two terms consecutively.

To meet our aspiration for **equality and diversity**, self-organised groups of people from marginalised communities are encouraged to make an application for representation on the Council. These groups must have a constitution that is compatible with the GPEW philosophical basis and core values and must have a minimum number of members. It should be Council's responsibility to receive applications from such communities and to approve them. We recommend positive action for people with disabilities, as we're allowed to do this legally.

The organised groups of marginalised communities should be reviewed by the Council from time to time to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria and should be referred to the Conference at least 5-yearly.

Such groups as recognised at the time when this proposed structure goes live should have a place on the council, subject to review by the Council once it is constituted.

The Political Executive (PEX)

You said: *"When the news goes so quickly we need a limited number of people for election strategy.*

Elect people and let them get on with it. Experts need to be real experts."

For some years the party has struggled to respond quickly to political events, changing and hostile situations. And it has been difficult to develop a clear strategy for elections and campaigns, especially when these happen without warning. This has led to decisions being taken without opportunity for full consultation and accountability. **We therefore recommend a Political Executive** that should meet weekly or as frequently as necessary and practicable, but at a minimum of once a month, normally online.

Composition

We recommend that the Political Executive (PEX) is composed of:

- One representative of our MEPs (while their role continues)
- One representative of our MPs/Peers
- One of the Co-Leaders/the Leader
- One of the Deputy Leaders/the Deputy Leader
- The Leader of the Wales Green Party
- One representative of AGC
- The Chair or one of the Co-Chairs of Council
- Four members elected directly by the membership

The Political Executive will be chaired by the leader or one of the co-leaders. The CEO and other senior members of staff as appropriate will attend in a non-voting capacity.

Where more than one person qualifies as a representative of one of the groups above, the group should elect a representative. The composition of the Political Executive should be reviewed following significant constitutional change (such as Brexit) or a large increase in elected politicians.

Term

We recommend that after a transition period, the term of office is 3 years with elections in halves. These terms do not necessarily apply to elected politicians as that depends on external factors.

Role

The Political Executive will be principally outward-facing and dealing with politics. The new structure aims to link GPEW more firmly and formally with elected politicians and ensure that the people who are doing the job are well supported, that there are clear lines of communication on key issues, especially in cases where decisions have to be made quickly. The Political Executive should have the power to make interim policy decisions within the framework of our philosophical basis. This can be approved by Council and does not require Conference ratification. Conference can review them at a later stage.

The Board

We recommend a Board which would meet at least 6 times a year but more often if required.

Role

The Board should ensure that GPEW meets the legal and financial requirements of political parties, including the contractual obligations for its staff.

The recent growth of the Party has created new demands for oversight of the management of staff and financial resources and legal compliance. This needs technical skills and experience in areas such as electoral law, human resources and risk management. GPEX is currently struggling to provide this oversight of the CEO and national office while also contributing to strategy, planning and the development of the party.

Composition

- Chair of the Board
- The Treasurer of the GPEW
- 5 members, appointed by Council via an open application process from all members

Why have we recommended that the board is appointed, rather than elected?

We have based this on experience from the Quakers and other groups. We want to encourage the members who prefer to quietly get on with the job and serve the party, particularly for the board. There are many members who would not put themselves forward for election, but would be happy to serve on the board if chosen. These are often the members who have exactly the kind of skills we need for the management of the organisation.

We want to encourage more people to come forward, and use an open and transparent recruitment process to get the right people for these important roles.

We recognise that this way of selecting people is challenging — it was difficult for some of us to get our heads around this at first. On reflection, we think this is a fair and equal way to do this.

We have also recommended this process for the Disciplinary Panel and Conflict Resolution Panel.

Term

Subject to transition arrangements, **we recommend** that members of the Board serve 3-year terms (with a maximum of 2 consecutive terms), appointed in halves.

You said: *“Newer people who may have real talent and new insights to bring to the table don’t get a proper chance because they’re not well-known”.*

The GPEW has already decided to move to a formal structure with limited liability and the members of the Board would carry the limited legal liability. Our proposals are based on the assumptions that this decision will be implemented in parallel to the recommendations implemented from the Holistic Review.

The Chair of the Board would line manage the Chief Executive who in turn would manage the staff. Staff should be empowered to do the things they are employed to do, and there should be no duplication of effort or line management. The Board will be responsible for ensuring a well-resourced staff team who enjoy the appropriate support, training, and terms and conditions our values demand. Staff management should be the responsibility of the CEO.

To ensure inclusive financial management, the Board will make regular reports to the Council and to the membership (via the members’ website, via reports to conference and through other means) on the financial health of the party, range and success of fundraising and the support provided to local parties through capitation and other targeted funding support. The Board will review the capitation process and levels every three years and propose any changes to Conference.

The roles of Chair and Treasurer are legally required and specialist and cannot be substituted by staff. There will be a Secretary who will be a member of staff. Other members of the board will bring in a range of technical skills, experiences and characteristics, and will not hold specific portfolios.

The Board may occasionally establish Task and Finish Groups for specific tasks.

Staff Support to the Governance Bodies

We recommend a Clerk is employed to support the governance bodies. This will involve managing the flow of papers, ensuring that there are appropriate minutes of all meetings, ensuring that relevant senior staff members are available to report and advise on matters within their portfolio competence and to ensure that the governance bodies act in line with legal and constitutional requirements.

We recommend that appropriate staff attend governance bodies as required but in a non-voting capacity.

Other Groups and Committees

We recommend that specific tasks that may arise from time to time should be carried out by Task and Finish Groups drawn from members, with a clear remit and reporting deadline.

To remain agile, Task and Finish Groups should not exceed 11 members.

We have heard that there is a great deal of enthusiasm from members to volunteer their time, experience and skills, at all levels of the party. Much of this enthusiasm currently gets used up in committees, but members have told us they want to help more directly. **We recommend extending our use of the snowflake model** beyond organising at local party level, so that staff can work with a group of volunteers to get more done. This builds on the work of our more successful committees at the moment. Using the snowflake model allows for the work to be coordinated by staff, rather than duplicating or confusing the work of staff.

We recommend that the Council immediately set up a Task and Finish Group to examine the best way to continue the work and aims of **International Committee**, acknowledging that there is a continual cycle of meetings and interactions that need to be managed and organised.

Standing Orders Committee (SOC)

The work SOC does is essential within the current framework. For the time being, **we do not recommend** any change to SOC, which will remain accountable to Conference as a committee. In the longer term, we envisage that our recommended changes along with a new constitution will reduce the need for rulings on constitutional matters and in the future, the role of SOC (and who should fulfil that role) will need to be reviewed. **We recommend** that the Transition Team takes this forward.

Equality and Diversity

The legitimate interests of all people are of equal value. The Green Party rejects all forms of discrimination whether based on race, colour, sex, religion, national origin, social origin or any other prejudice. We accept the need for social institutions to protect the interests of the powerless against the powerful. (Philosophical Basis, PB 303.)

As a political party, we start from a firm commitment to equality and diversity. We recognise the legal requirements put on us as a political party and as an employer in terms of equality and diversity, but we intend to go much further than the mere legal requirements of a society which still falls well short of our aspirations in this regard.

The Equality and Diversity Committee, the Equality and Diversity Coordinator on Green Party Executive (GPEX), and the CEO have done significant work already to ensure Green Party compliance, and that the Green Party is a safe place to work.

We had intended to recommend a permanent Equality and Diversity Advisory Committee to provide a lens on all work undertaken by the main governance groups, but we think that within the new structure, a Task and Finish Group would be the most appropriate way to ensure Equality and Diversity are embedded in the GPEW.

We therefore recommend an Equality and Diversity Task and Finish Group, which should be established **as a sub-group of the Council** and will bring back to Council recommendations that will bring the GPEW approach to Equality and Diversity to the cutting edge of good practice in this area. The Group should be skills-based and should be appointed by Council in an open and transparent way. It is essential that the Group has representation by individuals from marginalised communities. **We recommend** that the Task Force should have a maximum of 11 members, in line with other Task and Finish Groups.

It will be required to report within 1 year of being set up and will be disbanded once GPEW is fully legally compliant for staff, candidates and volunteers and is an inclusive, welcoming space for all members and staff and there are processes for applying positive action for candidates where appropriate.

We recommend that this should be completed within 2 years of the Task and Finish Group being set up.

Once the Task and Finish Group has completed its work, Equality and Diversity must remain a key focus of the Council. It must be taken into account in all decisions and discussions. Building on current work, equality and diversity must be embedded in all guidance and training for staff, candidates, and members. There should be a regular review of strategy through the lens of inclusion and respect. Work that will be undertaken to draft a new constitution must pay particular attention to equality and diversity.

Disciplinary Matters and Dispute Resolution

Disciplinary Committee and Disputes Resolution Committee should remain in their current form.

Disciplinary Committee's role has been extensively and recently reviewed through the update to the Standing Orders for Party Discipline at Spring Conference 2018. It is too early to see what improvements need to be made from there and there is no procedure set out in the review for this document (which is separate to the constitution) to be revised following the ballot. Disciplinary Committee will continue to put in place planned training.

Suspensions pending investigation by Disciplinary Committee will still be handled by GPRC and appeals to Disciplinary Committee decisions will still be handled by the GPRC Appeals Subcommittee. In the event of GPRC being replaced by a successor governance body, suspensions and appeals will be handled by that successor and a subcommittee of that successor respectively.

Disciplinary Committee will be encouraged to produce guidance on how to submit a complaint and how the disciplinary process works as an easy to read alternative to the Standing Orders for Party Discipline.

Limited Liability

Conference has already taken the decision to move to a Limited Liability structure. Our proposals and recommendations assume that this will be implemented in parallel to our recommendations. **We recommend** that this is done by a set of constitutional documents brought to Spring 2019 conference for approval.

As already agreed, the necessary constitutional documents are to be drawn up by suitably qualified lawyers. **We recommend** that this is done under the guidance of the Transition Team and the CEO.

Transition Team

If the referendum of members (see Motion) adopts our recommendations, there will be much work to be done to plan and implement changes.

We recommend that a Transition Team is formed. It should be composed of 3 members of the Holistic Review Commission, 2 members of GPEX and 2 members of GPRC. This is a Task and Finish group.

We recommend that members of the Transition Team are expected to recuse themselves from holding office on any of the new governance bodies for two years after they are created.

Conference — digital inclusion

A key value of the GPEW is inclusion and democracy. Although Conference is the supreme decision-making forum, members tell us that some of them are excluded for various reasons.

You said: *Conference is wonderful and awful in equal measure. That's not the fault of organiser. She has to work to structures set years ago. Conference has barely changed.*

In the member survey, 76% said that there should be a live stream of plenary sessions at Conference, with 3% against and 21% undecided. The proportion supporting online voting at Conference was also 76%, with

7% against and 18% undecided. **We therefore recommend we move towards online voting for all members whether they physically attend conference or not.**

We know that not all members are online at home, so we recommend that local parties organise meetings in their own area to bring members together to discuss what's happening at conference through the live streaming, and so members can support one another with using the technology. This would provide an opportunity for local parties to engage with conference decision-making as it happens.

Full online voting at conference will have resource and technology implications, and setting this up will have a steep learning curve. **We recommend** that indicative online voting should be piloted at Spring Conference 2019, and then rolled out as soon as practicably possible. **We further recommend** that the Spring Conference slots are used to experiment with different ways of engaging and empowering members to participate more effectively.

We have heard from many people who found Conference valuable and enjoyable, particularly for training and for networking. We also heard many suggestions about not having a partywide spring conference. **We recommend** that the constitutional requirement for a Spring Conference is removed. This would leave it up to each Autumn Conference (which is and will continue to be constitutionally required) to decide whether a Spring Conference is needed and in what format it should be held.

We recommend that any future Spring Conferences or alternative large-scale party events arranged for the Spring take place after local elections. **We recommend** that the Spring Conference in 2019 is deferred until after the local elections that year to allow the necessary work to bring forward the draft constitutional documents to implement the proposed changes.

Making better use of our website

The new members website will provide a useful platform to further transparency and feedback and underpin digital democracy, but we have heard very clearly that some members find the tone and culture of some of the forums off-putting. Also, some of the technology is clunky. However, we should encourage the use of our own GPEW online platforms over Facebook and other commercial social media.

We recommend that discussion forums on the new members website (which is being worked on currently) should be moderated to ensure the culture of debate respects GPEW values. Online discussions could be enhanced through live workshops using technology such as Zoom.

We recommend that a regular online Q&A session be held with members and the governance bodies.

Technology also provides the opportunity for Council and the Political Executive to survey members on matters of urgent concern, not in terms of a binding vote but taking the temperature of the party on an urgent and important issue. Providing that the technology allows this at reasonable cost, local and regional parties and the AGC should have access to this form of 'temperature taking' within their respective membership.

This should not replace member surveys which should continue separately.

We recommend that a mechanism for an internal petition system (similar to 38 Degrees or Greenpeace, for example) should be developed.

Appendix 2 gives a more detailed picture of the emerging debate about online democracy within GPEW.

Regional reorganisation

There was much support from members for the current regional structure, although a few suggested that the current regions weren't ideal. **We recommend** no change to the current regions. However, to accommodate any future changes to regions in England and Wales, **we recommend** the process for determining representation on the Council is a matter for the Council. But **we recommend** that any change in how regions are organised should be driven from the ground up, so that parties should decide how to organise themselves into groupings if they decide on change, rather than having any new structures imposed on them.

2. What We Want to See Happen

This section covers issues where work is already going on, work that is important and needs to be furthered, but which are likely not to require constitutional change. They are nonetheless critical in moving forward to becoming nimble, agile and effective as a growing party.

Training and Capacity Building

Members have told us that best use is not being made of their skills and time. They have also told us that work often falls on a small group of people who may suffer burnout. Training is therefore critical to welfare, morale, development, our recruitment and retention of staff and volunteers. We have also heard of amazing work being done in local parties, and regions, but that this knowledge is not being fully shared across our party as a whole.

Our recommendations to create a "learning organisation" aim to build capacity by using existing teams and resources, capturing knowledge about skills and considering how best to use them, including best use organisational knowledge. Training should be embedded as part of the culture of the GPEW and we recommend that this is a priority for resources.

We have heard wonderful feedback on the difference the Field Organisers have made. **We recommend** the expansion of the Field Organiser role to identify, share and roll out best practice across the GPEW. But training and knowledge sharing should not just be the responsibility of the Field Organisers.

We recommend that volunteer Training Champions are recruited from the membership to form a network across and at all levels of the GPEW. These Training Champions would be responsible for sharing knowledge of what works with other areas of the party, getting it onto paper or video so it can be used by others to accelerate our successes.

Priority should also be given to:

- An induction programme for new members. This could be on-line, but good practice should be rolled out on a personal welcome to new members
- Knowledge sharing through the website, so any member can find out how to do an activity by going to the website and finding a guide there. And any member can upload a video or document setting out how they do particular activities, to share with others.
- All training has an element which focuses on how you can share that knowledge with someone else in the party
- Extending the existing mentoring and buddying schemes, especially building on the success of the Young Greens
- Learning from other Green and Green-minded organisations and businesses both in the UK and internationally
- Relevant media training for relevant staff and members, including social media

We heard much positive feedback from training programmes that are already running. Campaign School, 30 under 30, Generation Green are examples of this. One of the key benefits of such schemes is the creation of learning communities whose experience can bring the culture of being a learning organisation into the party as a whole.

Training and opportunities to share skills amongst members across the countries has to be at the heart of what we do. Many of the members we spoke to stressed how much they had benefitted from training and support from other members and staff and wanted to see this extended as much as possible, and were happy to share the expertise they had developed. It will be crucial to develop this area as much as possible.

In particular, we recommend that training and skill sharing should be for members at different stages of their involvement in the party, from first joining, to first volunteering, through to becoming active in the party or defending a seat. Training, mentoring, skill sharing needs to be conceived as something we provide for all our members throughout the many journeys they make through the party. In this way, the whole party gains and keeps the experience and skills we need for the big job we have taken on, and we are making a firm commitment to supporting one another throughout our journey.

Local Parties

Structure and autonomy

Local parties are the backbone of the GPEW. Most members will have contact at that level although we recognise that this is not universally so and that there is a need for scope for members to organise in different ways through interest groups, campaign groups, support groups or other models which suit their needs.

However, local parties - **in line with current practice and the current constitution** - should be free to organise themselves and operate as they see fit.

We have heard that for some members it is not appropriate to be part of the local party where they live. Members who are unbranched but have their geographical address within a Party's area should be highlighted to the Local Party. **We recommend** that members should be made aware of the possibility of unbranching from their 'local party' and/or being instead a member of another party (for example where they work rather than live).

We discussed the question of limited liability of local parties. For many local parties that will not be an issue. But some of the larger ones will want to consider this at some point. **We recommend** that this is addressed by the lawyers who will draft the memorandum and articles of association for GPEW to achieve limited liability.

We heard from many members that the issue of capitation is important to them and that the difficulty in predicting when they are going to be paid and how much that payment will amount to makes planning difficult. The process needs to be regularly reviewed by the Council (every 3 years) and made more timely and transparent. It should cover the whole of GPEW.

Winning elections at local level

We have heard different views on the degree of encouragement that should be given to local parties to develop strategic plans that include use of, and adherence to Target to Win (TTW). There was some discussion around the appropriateness of elements of TTW in certain circumstances. Questions were raised about how applicable it was to rural parties, to parties in small market towns and so. We heard that there are several versions of TTW in circulation and that it is not always easy to know which one is most up to date.

We recommend

- Identifying why some parties have not used TTW and learning from this
- Encouraging local parties to buddy, to learn from each other's experience
- Making the TTW manual available online to help with version control and accessibility
- That the development of the new members website provides opportunities for more interaction between local parties
- Offering local parties and other groups decision trees as a framework for making sometimes difficult and urgent decisions
- Consider the addition of more resources to prepare updated versions.

Policy Development

In our discussions, many members have told us that they are proud of our policies and the philosophical basis. And that you value our policy development processes, especially that these are led by and decided on by members. Our recommendations for increasing the number of members who can vote at conference by bringing in online voting for conference decisions, increasing the opportunities for members to be directly involved in volunteer groups and Task and Finish Groups will improve this member led process further.

You said [of the PSS]: *"It's like an oil tanker which is hard to manoeuvre. And it is over-engineered on specific issues."*

Many members have also said that the detailed Policies for a Sustainable Society (PSS) intended to create a direction of travel for a destination sometimes decades into the future can be unhelpful in the public domain. In part, this is because the media use it to catch us out on fine detail and a tone written for a different time; and because at least some of it is out of date. And, especially for our elected representatives on local authorities, much of the PSS focuses on national/UK-wide policy matters and not on the political decisions made by local authorities.

The method of storing and publicising Records of Policy Statements is also unclear, and items written for a specific circumstance can remain in the public domain long after the situation has changed. **We recommend that these be removed from the public website two years after they were passed** and on to the members site as an archive and continuing guide where relevant.

We want to keep the ongoing debate and guidance of members through conference on the direction we are heading, in the form of the PSS. But we need to be able to present to the public a selected number of immediate actions and policies in a more understandable style for the needs of different kinds of election campaign. All of this should be in accord with the directions and spirit of the PSS.

You said: *"The manifesto should be 10 external facing key points that are relevant to the election in question".*

We further recommend that the Political Executive put in place a process for producing succinct briefing papers to better represent all key areas of policy which have already been agreed by members at conference. These would be on the public-facing website. The Political Executive would determine the strategic order of priority of the production of these and to review drafts and agree them, perhaps using the polls of members we recommend in the online engagement section. Identifying individuals/Task and Finish Groups who will do the work will be a matter for Council. This process needs staff support, which is now at least partly in place, but could be further expanded.

We recommend that once this is complete, a process of regular review of all policy chapters within the PSS is set up on a rolling programme at intervals of between 5 and 10 years. This programme should be developed by Council and put to Conference for agreement. This and other new additions to the PSS would need to be presented and debated in member-only sessions of conference.

This programme of review will be done by Task and Finish Groups established by Council on the basis of encouraging open applications from members. It will be a significant, ongoing, piece of work that will empower many members to get involved, and will build on the work being done by the Policy Development Committee at the moment.

Specific Task and Finish Groups will be set up to develop new areas of policy, and to update and flesh out existing policies. These will be very similar to the current policy working groups and will continue their work. Any member can put together a group to work on an area of policy, and the new member site will encourage and facilitate this, especially to make this process transparent and open to all. Much expertise has developed within the party on how to do this effectively, and this knowledge needs to be shared more with other members. See our recommendations on Capacity Building to find out more about this.

All new policy and changes to policy are still subject to agreement at Conference, as we do now. None of this changes anything about the ability of members to put forward policy motions for the PSS to conference in the same way as now, except that they would not be published to the media/general public before conference, although of course they could be publicised as individual decisions if conference backs them.

We recommend that AGC is consulted on all policy matters that have a bearing on local government. Developing policy, and effectively communicating that policy to the public in a way which excites them and convinces them to support the Green Party and vote for us is a crucial part of our work as a party. And doing this in a way which respects that other people in the party have different opinions, engaging members in that process and drawing on the expertise, experience and skills of our members can be challenging at times.

In our recommendations we have tried to balance the different elements of democratically made policy which will help to make us a credible choice for voters. There is further work to do to strengthen our policy development processes. These proposals should be seen as a starting point only. In the future, other ways of involving members in developing policy will evolve.

Affiliated Common Interest Groups

We want to encourage existing and new Common Interest groups that cross the boundaries of the geographical structure of the party, for example, self-organised groups of people sharing specific characteristics or background, groups of Greens in professional fields, campaign groups etc. We especially want to encourage these groups to come together to work on specific campaigns, share expertise and build communities within the party. **We recommend that the new members website facilitates this.**

Leader of the Wales Green Party

The workload of the Leader of the Wales Green Party is significant and growing, especially in light of our proposal for that post to have a place on the Political Executive. The person holding this post needs to have the freedom to devote sufficient time to it. That freedom comes from having financial support. **We recommend** that financial resources are made available to provide an allowance for this post in line with the allowance for the Deputy Leader(s).

3. What still needs to be addressed

Introduction

We were set up as the *Holistic* Review Commission and we have taken a very broad approach. But we also had only a relatively short time (9 months) to do the work and a huge task of talking to members, hearing from members through surveys and workshops, and researching other organisations from whom we can learn.

We heard from you about a very broad range of issues and we recognised early on that we couldn't address them all or offer solutions to everything at this stage. But we also concluded that this wouldn't even be very helpful. Some things logically can only be done once some of the proposed changes have been implemented. And there are some things that can and should be done but at a later stage. And finally, there are things where we did not achieve clarity in terms of what we heard from members because views differ widely, and we highlight some of these issues here as matters to be tackled.

We see ourselves as a Task and Finish Group and want to demonstrate that we avoided mission-creep. So we do not recommend that any of these issues should be taken forward by the Holistic Review Commission, which will be disbanded at Conference in Autumn 2018.

We see that the place for tackling these will be, initially, with the Transition Team with a time-frame is of 12 to 18 months. Anything beyond that will need to be on the to-do list of Council that will have to set up mechanisms - mainly in the form of Task and Finish Groups - to address the issues.

The rest of this section of the report will set out these issues that as we have identified for further work.

Culture

One of the things we heard from many members is that the culture of the GPEW is not as inclusive, not as co-operative, not as respectful as we might expect or hope (starting with rightfully high expectations). This is shown in many different areas of party work but maybe most tangibly on the policy discussion forums on the members website. We hope that some of our recommendation will address this.

However, in addition, at local level it is essential that we are open and welcoming to new members and include them in existing friendship circles. We recognise the value that Affiliated Groups can add and, given that by their nature, they are not based along geographical lines, **recommend** that a way of reaching out to them at the local level is found.

As a party we have been criticised for not engaging with the business community, despite having positive policies on SMEs and action by our elected representatives to support these enterprises. **We recommend** that a way of reaching out more widely to SMEs and larger businesses is found.

Code of Conduct

We have seen the way other political parties have encountered serious issues in dealing with breaches of proper conduct (such as bullying, safeguarding issues, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia) and that these issues are essential in terms of the public perception of political parties.

We recommend that as a matter of urgency, Council undertakes a review of existing approaches on conduct and proposes any actions needed to Conference within 12 months of the Council being established.

Spokespeople

We have heard much about the value of having spokespeople on different policy issues; we have also heard of the significant expertise and experience many of our members have in specific areas which the GPEW could draw on. We have, however, not heard clear messages of how this should be organised and resourced. **We recommend** that this is addressed in the near future by a Task and Finish Group set up to do this (we are aware that there is a committee working on this).

Our recommendation is that we should have a team of spokespeople who are able to speak on the full range of government activities and policy areas. And that this is supported by members who are willing to provide experience and knowledge in order to enable the GPEW to be more proactive and more agile in response to the political issues of the day.

Once such a network is established, it should be accountable to the Political Executive.

Cooperation across these islands

There are now strong Green parties in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and also in Ireland, but currently no formal, regular structure by which we can collectively coordinate and cooperate. In a future time when there are Green MPs in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, but even well before this point, we need to establish formal mechanisms to work together. Informal mechanisms are now in place, but they are heavily dependent on personal relationships.

Operation of a Green parliamentary group

There is currently no agreed structure for Green MPs and peers to work as a parliamentary group. The Scottish Green Party have considerable experience and formula for achieving this, and the Council should as a matter of some urgency look to adopting these with amendments as appropriate for our circumstances.

Appendix 1 — Background and key stages of work of the Commission

After conference in the Autumn of 2017, an email went out to all members of the GPEW asking for applications for co-chair or members of the Commission. The Chairs were appointed by GPEX and GPRC on the basis of interviews; other members of the Commission were appointed on the basis of interviews by members of GPEX/GPRC and the co-chairs.

In alphabetical order, the members of the Commission were (please note that some had to withdraw for personal reasons and others were co-opted from among the original applicants to provide the Commission with the number of people required to do the work):

Julia Chanteray - Co-Chair	Brighton and Hove
James Humphreys - Co-Chair	Haringey
Natalie Bennett	Sheffield
Hannah Clare (Jobshare with Kirsty Jones)	
Peter Frings (withdrew)	
Anne Gayfer (co-opted)	South Lincolnshire
Paul Hannam (co-opted)	
Gulnar Hasnain (Jobshare with Liz Kitchen)	
Kirsty Jones (Jobshare with Hannah Clare)	Nottingham
Liz Kitchen (Jobshare with Gulnar Hasnain)	Lambeth
Mary Anne McFarlane	South Devon
Judy Maciejowska	West Devon
Liz O'Neill	Trafford
Foyez Syed (withdrew)	
Kieran Turner	Calderdale
Martina Weitsch	York

The process of our work included the following key stages:

- Initial scoping
- Initial interviews with around 100 members of the party including activists, less active members, local chairs, elected councillors, members of liberation groups, Young Greens, lapsed members, staff members, leadership, key activists at national level. These were open question interviews and were intended to help us identify the key issues we need to address.
- We established a website, a Facebook group (for party members only) and used both of these to communicate with members who wanted to engage with the emerging discussion
- A number of workshops at a GP Wales, Regional Party and other events
- A joint meeting with GPRC/GPEX representatives
- Have Your Say - online exercise to engage more members directly in this open ended, initial identification of key issues (over 900 responses)
- A survey open to members with specific questions relating to emerging suggestions and options (over 1200 responses)
- Online workshops for members to discuss some of the emerging suggestions and options
- A detailed examination (including interviews) with European and global Green Parties to see what we could learn from them

The Commission has held 4 face to face meetings; 2 were single day meetings; and 2 were 2-day meetings.

We had weekly team meetings online to ensure that we were all working towards a shared goal.

In parallel with this consultation and listening work, we began to extract key issues and possible solutions / proposals / suggestions, which is what has led to the report you have before you today.

Appendix 2 — Conference and Online Democracy

The Review heard from many people who found Conference valuable and enjoyable, particularly for training and for networking. But the review heard from many more who thought Conference was remote or irrelevant, or who felt excluded because they did not have the time, money or mobility to attend. For a party that rightly prides itself on its democratic foundations, this is a cause for concern.

Many members are used to participating online in democratic institutions such as mutuals and cooperatives; and members already vote online to choose the party's national leaders. They have also used platforms such as Avaaz and 38 Degrees to set these organisations' agenda and express their political views.

Online voting gives rise to some concerns. The prime of these is that online voting implies a lower level of engagement than attending Conference; that online votes do not therefore have the same democratic 'weight'; and that online votes can be 'harvested' by one or other side in a debate by asking fellow members to vote according to a guide or crib sheet, without engaging with the issues. However, the Party is founded on the principle of one member one vote; yet many members are currently disenfranchised for a host of reasons, from caring commitments to disabilities; and 'harvesting' of votes can occur under the current system (through proxies or in online voting for leadership roles).

The "Have Your Say" consultation showed a very strong and spontaneous call for members to be able to participate in the party's democratic processes digitally. This included:

- Following Conference debates via a live video stream;
- Voting on Conference motions online;
- More online debates, forums and workshops, including a much more welcoming space for open discussion;
- Being surveyed from time to time to help the leadership understand better their priorities or reactions to political or other events;
- Similar facilities for use by regional and local parties.

In the member survey, 76% said that there should be a live stream of plenary sessions at Conference, with 3% against and 21% undecided. The proportion supporting online voting at Conference was also 76%, with 7% against and 18% undecided.

There is clearly a very strong mandate for introducing online voting to Conference. It will strengthen party democracy and inclusion, and ought to strengthen Conference as well. Currently a large section of the Party is distanced from Conference, and the more who see its work through streamed debates, and who participate online, the more they may want to participate in person. There will also be scope to use Conference streaming and online voting as a focus for discussion in the run-up to Conference. Local parties and regions could run events linked to Conference, where members can follow proceedings, debate the issues and then cast their vote. Such events would also help those members without online access to participate.

The Commission is **recommending** that the party adopt the principle that members should be able to follow debates and vote on motions at Conference remotely. This would be linked to a revamped members' website and to additional tools for online engagement, including e-workshops; and tools to encourage members to follow debates and inform themselves of the issues before voting.

The Commission is also **recommending** a pilot of online access and voting at the Spring 2019 Conference.

The one aspect of digital democracy that is more problematic is online voting on issues between Conferences. Conference itself has a 'democratic infrastructure': notably the Standing Orders Committee to manage the process of developing an agenda. Voting between Conferences gives rise to issues such as:

- Who decides on the questions to be put to the membership?
- Who writes the questions or decides on the contextual information, so ensuring that the process is fair?
- How can the Party avoid voter fatigue, in which participation tails off because of too many surveys, making the results less representative?
- What happens if a vote is at odds with agreed Party policy or a question recently decided by Conference?

Despite these legitimate concerns, the Party has an opportunity to involve the membership in a radical new way and put genuine member democracy at the heart of everything we do, not only at Conference but throughout the political year. The crux is to ensure that in-year voting does not encroach on the role of Conference. It should instead be used as a barometer for engaging the membership on the issues of the day, helping the leadership and the national governing bodies to be fully in tune with the wider party, and improving the way the party works.

The Review is therefore **recommending** the establishment of a regular survey of members, carried out not more than six times in any one year, and not during the run-up to autumn Conference (including the duration of internal election campaigns). These surveys will provide space for the leadership (in its widest sense) to seek the views of members on issues of the day, including priorities; for the professional staff of the party to research satisfaction with party systems and processes; and for other parts of the party, including Affiliated Organisations and working groups mandated by Conference, to seek views on their areas of work. The surveys will be advisory, and the results of each survey will be published in full to ensure transparency.