



# **The Social Democratic Party Constitution and Rule Book**

As approved by the SDP Annual Conference on the 21st of November 2020 and the National Coordinating Committee (NCC) on the 12th of August 2021.  
This Constitution and Rule Book supersedes all and every previous Constitution and Rule Book.

# **SDP Constitution**

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# **1 Name and Objectives**

- 1.1 The party shall be called the Social Democratic Party. It may be referred to as The Social Democrats, or as the SDP.
- 1.2 The purpose of the SDP is the support and advancement of the party's Statement of Principles, as detailed in Annex A.
- 1.3 The SDP shall carry out its purpose by seeking to secure the election of SDP Members of Parliament, Members of Regional Parliaments and Assemblies, Members of local authorities, and other elected public authorities and by such other means as may be thought appropriate.

# **2 Membership and Subscriptions**

- 2.1 Members of the SDP shall:
  - a) Be of age as per the Rules of Procedure,
  - b) Support the Statement of Principles (Annex A),
  - c) Not be a member of any other political party or similar organisation,
  - d) Not belong to or have previously belonged to or been associated with an organisation whose purpose is incompatible with the SDP, these being listed in the Party Rules of Procedure.
- 2.2 Members of the SDP shall pay a membership fee as detailed below (2.3) unless otherwise stipulated. Membership, its privileges and duties shall lapse if the fee is more than three months in arrears, unless otherwise stipulated.
- 2.3 Members of the SDP will pay a membership fee, such fee to be determined by the NCC from time to time. There shall be a single grade of membership and all members will enjoy equivalent general membership rights. Discounts in membership fees offered from time to time to the low paid, students, the elderly or any other distinct category shall not imply inferior membership rights.
- 2.4 Membership shall be subject to the approval of the National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC) who will adjudicate on any matter regarding the membership of any individual.
- 2.5 Members shall be entitled to be informed of relevant party news from time to time either in electronic format or by post as necessary.

- 2.6 The NCC will, if considered necessary, maintain a waiting list of membership applicants to facilitate a managed expansion of the party.

### **3 Election of Party Officers**

- 3.1 Where any role of Officer is unfulfilled either due to expulsion, retirement, resignation, EGM motion or constitutional change, then re-election or appointment (as appropriate) within 28 days is necessary. The Party Rulebook outlines the process for this. It is important that the integrity and functionality of the Party is maintained throughout.

### **4 Rules of Procedure**

- 4.1 The Party's Rules of Procedure may also be referred to as the Party Rulebook. The Party Rulebook stipulates codes of conduct which must be adhered to. Failure to adhere to the requirements of these two documents may result in disciplinary action taken by the party. The discipline procedure is outlined in the Party Rulebook.

### **5 Regional Parties**

- 5.1 The SDP allows members to form geographically-based Regional Parties for the purpose of regional and local political activity. The SDP defines "Regions" as the UK NUTS Level 1 regions: North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, Greater London, South East, South West, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. All Regional parties must apply to be formally ratified by the NCC whose decision in establishing and dissolving Regional Parties is final.
- 5.2 SDP's NI, Welsh and Scottish regions will have their own elected Leaders subject to NCC approval. Such Regional Parties will have devolved policies, subject to oversight and approval of the NCC.

### **6 All Member Meetings**

- 6.1 All Member Meetings are responsible for final decisions affecting the principles of the SDP.
- 6.2 At least one All Member Meeting will take place each year.

- 6.3 One All Member Meeting will be designated as the Annual Conference, and shall be held not fewer than 10 and no more than 13 calendar months following the previous Annual Conference.
- 6.4 Each All Member Meeting may be organised by the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) which will be set up and maintained by the NCC.
- 6.5 For each meeting members will receive a timetable of events, plus invitations to register and to submit motions and/or subjects for discussion. A notice of an All Member Meeting will be made at least 60 days prior to the planned date.
- 6.6 Decisions at All Member Meetings shall be by consensus or by simple majority voting (except for amendments to the Constitution or retraction of individual policy points as below).
- 6.7 As a democratic party, the wishes of the members are paramount. To this end, party members have the ability to retract individual policy points at an All Member Meeting. The procedure will require a tabled motion and then ratification by two third majority vote at the All Member Meeting. Motions must be received by the Chairperson at least 28 days prior to an All Member Meeting.

## **7 The Party Leader**

- 7.1 The Leader shall be elected by the process as set by the Party Rulebook.
- 7.2 The remit of the Leader will be set out in the Party Rulebook.
- 7.3 Each candidate for the position of Leader shall be a member of the SDP and shall be nominated in accordance with the procedure set out in the Party Rulebook.
- 7.4 Election of the Leader will be by post and all members will be eligible to vote so long as they meet the voting criteria as set out in the Party Rulebook.
- 7.5 The Leader will, as of right, have a place on the NCC.

- 7.6 The Leader will be responsible for directing the ethos of the party and, where the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson is unavailable, will Chair NCC meetings.

## **8 The Chairperson**

- 8.1 The Chairperson shall be elected by the process set out in the Party Rulebook which will also set out his/her remit.
- 8.2 The Chairperson will as of right have a place on the NCC.

## **9 The Party Secretary**

- 9.1 The Party Secretary shall be elected by the process set out in the Party Rulebook which will also set out his/her remit.
- 9.2 The Party Secretary will as of right have a place on the NCC.

## **10 The National Coordinating Committee (NCC)**

- 10.1 The National Co-Ordinating Committee (NCC) shall ensure the efficient day to day running of the SDP.
- 10.2 The NCC shall be elected by procedure as set out in the Party Rulebook.
- 10.3 The NCC shall ensure that candidates for a position on the NCC are members of the SDP.
- 10.4 The NCC shall arrange for the number on the NCC to be decided by the Annual Conference.
- 10.5 The NCC shall elect from its number such other officers and/or sub-committees it deems necessary.
- 10.6 The NCC shall assist the National Party Treasurer where necessary in connection with his/her responsibility to prepare annual accounts which will be presented to the Annual Conference for acceptance.
- 10.7 The NCC shall be responsible for the organisation of the All Member Meetings.

- 10.8 The NCC shall be responsible for approving policy documents from initiation to confirmation
- 10.9 The NCC shall be responsible for the circulation of relevant party news from time to time either in electronic format or by post as necessary
- 10.10 The NCC will by simple majority vote elect interim officers in the event that any sitting officer in the central party steps down or otherwise vacate their post.

## **11 Development and Change of this Constitution**

- 11.1 Amendments to this constitution can be put forward to the Annual Conference by the NCC, or by petition of 35% of the membership.
- 11.2 Amendments will be incorporated if they achieve a 2/3 majority at the Annual Conference.
- 11.3 The constitution will also be reviewed by the NCC annually. Any changes will be notified and filed with the Electoral Commission and it will be the responsibility of the Treasurer to do so.
- 11.4 In accordance with protocols detailed in the Party Rulebook a two third majority vote in favour at an EGM will result in the adoption of constitutional amendments. Strictly following the requirements as set out in the Party Rulebook, the tabling of an EGM requires petition of more than 20% of the membership from two or more regions.

# Annexes

## A Statement of Principles

1. The SDP is committed to a fully representative system of elections and openness of government.
2. The SDP seeks to eliminate poverty and promote greater equality.
3. The SDP is committed to strengthening Britain's economy by encouraging all forms of legitimate enterprise in the Cooperative, Mutual, Private and Public Sectors.
4. The SDP seeks to promote a social market economy to ensure a fair distribution of rewards and to meet social needs by public investment.
5. The SDP supports the greatest practical degree of decentralisation of decision making in all spheres of our national life.
6. The SDP is internationalist in outlook. We consider the nation state to be the upper limit of democracy. We support, assert and defend the United Kingdom's status as a fully independent, self-governing, sovereign nation state.
7. The SDP is concerned to improve the quality of the public and community services and to seeing that they are made responsive to people's needs and that those providing them are fully accountable.
8. The SDP is committed to the defence of human rights at home and abroad.
9. The SDP believes in a coherent and integrated approach to environmental protection at home and abroad and will seek to promote a responsible collective approach to global problems.
10. The SDP supports the concept of Britain playing a full and constructive role within the world community, and within organisations which are in harmony with our principles.



## **B Financial scheme**

### **Introduction**

1. This scheme sets out how the Social Democratic Party ('the party') will organise its financial affairs to comply with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 ('the Act').

### **Constitution**

2. A copy of the Social Democratic Party's constitution, setting out our structure and organisation, and how we take decisions about the management of the party, is attached to this scheme or has been provided separately to the Electoral Commission.

### **Accounting units**

3. The Social Democratic Party does not wish to register any separate accounting units with the Commission.

### **Organisations within the party**

4. For the purpose of compliance with the Act, the financial affairs of any local branches or affiliated organisations of the party, whether currently existing or to be established in future, will be wholly controlled by the party treasurer.

### **Financial year**

5. The party's financial year will run from 1 January to 31 December.

### **Role of the party treasurer**

- 5a. The registered treasurer of the Social Democratic Party is responsible for the whole party's compliance with the requirements of the Act.

### **Annual accounts**

6. The Social Democratic Party will submit our annual statement of accounts to the Commission by the required date, being 30 April of the year following the end of the financial year if both our expenditure and income are under £250,000 in that year, or 7 July of the year following the end of our financial year if either our expenditure or income exceeds

£250,000 in that year. We understand that if our income or expenditure exceeds £250,000 our accounts must be submitted with an auditor's certificate.

7. In order to comply with this requirement, Treasurer has:

- put in place arrangements for ensuring that annual statements of accounts for the party are prepared, approved, audited where necessary and submitted to the Commission by the prescribed deadline for each register the party is on
- put in place accounting processes capable of meeting the Act's accounting record keeping requirements and of any regulations made by the Commission about the format of statements of accounts

### **Donations and Loans (regulated transactions)**

8. The Social Democratic Party will report the donations and loans it receives each quarter to the Commission, for each of the registers it is registered on, within the following timescales:

- quarter 1 (1 January – 31 March) by 30 April of that year
- quarter 2 (1 April – 30 June) by 30 July of that year
- quarter 3 (1 July – 30 September) by 30 October of that year
- quarter 4 (1 October – 31 December) by 30 January of the following year

9. In order to comply with this requirement, the Treasurer will:

#### **For donations:**

- record information for all donations of more than £500, including:
  - amount or value of the donation
  - full name of donor
  - registered address of donor
  - company registration number (if applicable)
  - date on which the donation was received
  - date on which the donation was accepted or returned
  - information about the trust (if applicable)
- check the permissibility of any donations over £500 within 30 days of receipt
- ensure that impermissible or unidentifiable donations of more than £500 to the party are recorded as outlined above and returned to the sender or financial institution that transferred the money or, if that is not possible, surrendered to the Commission

- ensure that a submission of quarterly donation reports covering donations exceeding £7,500 (including aggregates of donations and regulated transactions) and any impermissible or anonymous donations of more than £500 is made to the Commission within the above timescales; submitting a nil return if there are no reportable donations
- provide weekly donation reports to the Commission during UK Parliamentary election campaigns if we are contesting the election

**For loans (regulated transactions):**

- record information about all regulated transactions (loans, credit facilities, etc.) of more than £500, including:
    - value of benefit of the transaction
    - name of all authorised participants
    - registered addresses of participants
    - company registration number (if applicable)
    - nature of the transaction
    - date agreement entered
    - the terms of the transaction
  - ensure that the party does not enter into any regulated transactions over £500 with unauthorised participants
  - ensure that a submission of quarterly transaction reports covering transactions exceeding £7,500 (including aggregates of donations and regulated transactions) and any void transactions or transactions of more than £500 entered into with an unauthorised participant is made to the Commission within the prescribed timescales; submit a nil return if there are no reportable transactions
  - ensure weekly regulated transaction reports can be submitted during UK Parliamentary election periods if we are contesting the election
10. We understand that if we submit four consecutive quarterly nil donation returns, we will then be exempt from submitting further quarterly returns in respect of donations until we receive a reportable donation.
  11. We also understand that separate quarterly donation returns must be submitted if we appear on the Northern Ireland register of political parties.
  12. We understand that if the party has submitted four consecutive quarterly nil loans returns, we will then be exempt from submitting further quarterly returns until we enter into a reportable loan.

13. We also understand that separate quarterly loan returns must be submitted if we appear on the Northern Ireland register of political parties.

## **Campaign expenditure**

14. The party will submit a campaign expenditure return if we have candidates contesting a UK Parliamentary election, European election, Scottish Parliamentary election, National Assembly of Wales election, or Northern Ireland Assembly election. The campaign expenditure return will be submitted within three months of the date of the election if our expenditure is less than £250,000 or within six months of the date of the election if our expenditure exceeds £250,000. We note that if our expenditure during the campaign exceeds £250,000 our return must be submitted with an auditor's certificate.
15. In order to ensure compliance with the legislation, Treasurer will:
  - ensure that campaign expenditure and claims payments are duly authorised, received and paid on time and that all relevant receipts and invoices are kept
  - put in place budgeting and monitoring arrangements to ensure that campaign expenditure is within the statutory limits
  - ensure the compilation, auditing (if necessary) and timely submission to the Commission of a campaign expenditure return within the statutory deadlines

## **Referendums**

16. If the party participates in a referendum to which Part VII of the Act applies, the Social Democratic Party will develop and put in place arrangements for complying with the controls on referendum expenditure. We will do this by adapting our arrangements for the control of campaign expenditure.

## **Grants**

17. The Social Democratic Party will ensure that any grants from the Commission to the party are spent in accordance with the conditions of grant imposed by the Commission. We agree to cooperate with any associated audit requirements specified by the Commission.

## **Changes to registered details**

18. The Social Democratic Party will ensure that the party's details that are registered with the Commission are kept up to date. We will inform the Commission of any changes to registered officers within 14 days of the change and any other changes within 28 days.
19. We will ensure that our RP8 annual confirmation of registered details and £25 fee are submitted to the Commission with the annual statement of accounts by 30 April of the following year (if our expenditure or income is less than £250,000) or by 7 July of the following year (if our expenditure or income exceeds £250,000).
20. We note that failure to submit our RP8 annual confirmation of registered details within the prescribed timescale will result in our statutory removal from the register of political parties. We understand that this would mean that the party would no longer be able to field candidates at elections under the party name.

## **Penalties and offences**

21. The Social Democratic Party understands that the Commission may impose civil penalties on parties that fail to comply with their legal obligations, including failures to submit statutory returns on time. The party also understands that failure to comply with certain legal requirements of being a registered political party is a criminal offence.

## **Role of other party officers**

22. Should the appointment of the registered party treasurer terminate for any reason, then the registered party leader will, until a new treasurer is appointed, be treated as the party treasurer and will be responsible for ensuring that the party complies with its legal obligations.
23. Should the treasurer whose appointment is terminated also be party leader, then the nominating officer will, until a new treasurer is appointed, be treated as the party treasurer.
24. Should the treasurer whose appointment is terminated also be party leader and nominating officer, then the other registered officer will, until a new treasurer is appointed, be treated as the party treasurer.

## **Promoting compliance with the Act**

25. The Party will have processes in place to ensure compliance with its legal obligations. The registered treasurer will ensure that the registered leader and all other officers and members of the Social Democratic Party have sufficient knowledge of our financial obligations under the Act to ensure that the party as a whole complies with these obligations.

## **Amendments to the financial scheme**

26. The registered treasurer will ensure that any proposed amendments to this financial scheme are submitted to the Commission for approval.

# SDP Rule Book

As approved by the National Coordinating Committee (NCC) and by Party Conference on 21st November 2020, and amended by the NCC on the 12th August 2021, the 2nd February 2023, and the 6th July 2023.

This document is produced on an Error and Exclusions Excepted basis and must be read in conjunction with the Party Constitution. The NCC reserves the right to alter any aspect of these rules in the spirit of the Party Purpose should any errors be encountered. All members are deemed to have received and accepted these rules upon application to Party membership. Rules are made in accordance with the Party Constitution. This Rule Book supersedes all and every previous Constitution and Rule Book documents.

## Sections

- A. EGM Mechanism
- B. Suspension from the Party
- C. The Proscribed List
- D. Standing Orders for the Conduct of Internal Party Meetings
- E. Digital Policy
- F. The Selection of Candidates for Public Office
- G. Membership Rules
- H. Appointment and Remit of Party Officers
- I. Election and Remit of Party Leader
- J. Composition of the National Coordinating Committee (NCC)
- K. Formation of Regional Parties
- L. The Young Social Democrats
- M. Party Policy

## **A EGM Mechanism**

- A1. The Party Secretary shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), giving members a minimum of 28 days' notice, if requested to do so by formal applications from 20% of the Party's members in good standing from at least two different regions. Upon receipt of the necessary valid formal applications, the Party Secretary shall call the EGM within 14 days.
- A2. For the purposes of petitioning an EGM, a member in good standing must have a fully paid-up membership and full voting rights having been a member for the minimum period agreed by the NCC.
- A3. Each formal application shall include a written statement, signed by the member verifying that the application is supported by him/her.
- A4. If the number of such formal applications fails to reach the required 20% of the Party's membership within 2 months of the receipt of the first valid application, the Party Secretary shall have deemed the application to have failed.
- A5. The Party Secretary shall call an EGM of the Party in the event of a motion of no confidence being passed in the Party Leader by the NCC.
- A6. A Party Leadership election shall be held in the event that a motion of no confidence in the Party Leader is passed by an EGM of the Party.
- A7. Where a motion of no confidence in the Party Leader is proposed, the Party Leader shall have the opportunity to address the EGM for up to 15 minutes. The speaking time may be extended by the Chairperson of the meeting.
- A8. The agenda for an EGM shall be restricted to the business for which it was called and matters arising.
- A9. An EGM will be deemed quorate if no less than 10% of the membership attends.
- A10. All paid-up Party members in good standing shall have voting rights at an EGM. Members shall be required to bring their Party membership cards to an EGM in order to have the opportunity to vote.
- A11. A two third majority vote is needed to carry an EGM motion.



- A12. Motions carried by an EGM of the Party shall be binding to the extent permitted by law and the Party's Constitution.
- A13. The amount of speaking time allotted for proponents and opponents of a motion at an EGM shall be equal.
- A14. An EGM of the Party shall normally be chaired by the Party Chairperson or his/her deputy.
- A15. If the business of the EGM concerns the Party Chairperson, or if the Party Chairperson is unable to attend, or if the Party Chairperson is considered by the NCC not to be impartial regarding the matters discussed, then the National Executive Committee may appoint another impartial senior member of the Party to chair the meeting.
- A16. Any motion essentially the same as one defeated at an EGM may not be brought before a further EGM unless:
- a. A period of no less than 3 years has passed, or
  - b. In the opinion of the Party Secretary, the facts of the matter have changed so substantially as to justify the motion being reconsidered.
- A17. Failure of members to strictly adhere to standing orders for Party Meetings may result in disciplinary proceedings taken by the Party.

## **B Suspension from the Party**

- B1. Members may be suspended or have their membership revoked if the NCC, having considered evidence, finds their conduct to conflict with this Rulebook or the Party Constitution.
- B2. Any member shall have the right of appeal to the NCC against suspension from Party activities. The decision of the NCC shall be final.
- B3. Suspension from Party activities shall entail suspension from:
- a. The use of SDP logos;
  - b. Attendance at party meetings;
  - c. Participation in campaign activities;
  - d. The use of websites to promote SDP;
  - e. Use of the SDP name in contact with the media, and
  - f. Any other activities as determined by the NCC.

- B4. Any member who invites a member of an organisation on the proscribed list to speak at a SDP meeting may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **C The Proscribed List**

- C1. Membership is not available to anyone who is or has previously been a member of the British National Party, the National Front, the UK First party, the English Defence League, the British Freedom Party, British People's Party, Britain First Party, National Action, Scottish Dawn, Patriotic Alternative, Generation Identity, National Liberal Party and British Democratic Party. The NCC reserves the right to add other parties or organisations to this proscribed list.
- C2. Any applications made from people who are or have been members of these organisations will be refused, and any subscriptions collected will be refunded. By making an application for membership, the applicant certifies that he is not and has never been a member of any of these parties.

## **D Standing Orders for the Conduct of Internal Party Meetings**

- D1. Model procedural rules are aimed at facilitating well-ordered Party meetings.
- D2. These model rules have the full authority of the NCC and form part of the rule book.
- D3. Meetings shall commence on an agreed day and at an agreed time.
- D4. Meetings shall not be held if a quorum is not present within 30 minutes of the appointed time.
- D5. Where an agenda providing an alternative timetable has not been circulated, meetings shall close within three hours from the notified starting time. A meeting may, however, be temporarily extended for a specified period with the support of two-thirds of the members present.
- D6. The quorum for a party meeting shall be the Chair of said meeting (or a temporary replacement Chair appointed by the Chair) plus two other party members entitled to attend the meeting provided that adequate

notice of the meeting has been provided to all members entitled to attend the meeting. The proceedings and resolutions of any quorate meeting shall not be held invalid simply through an accidental failure to give notice of the meeting to, or the non-receipt of such notice by, any person entitled to attend.

- D7. All members who are entitled to attend a particular meeting shall be invited and allowed to attend.
- D8. All members who are entitled to vote in a particular meeting shall be invited and allowed to attend and to vote accordingly.
- D9. Resolutions at meetings and committees shall be carried by simple majority. In the event of a tie the chairperson shall have the carrying vote.
- D10. Notice of all meetings shall be sent out by the secretary to all those entitled to attend at least seven days prior to the meeting. Such notice shall as far as possible include an indication of the business to be transacted at the meeting.
- D11. A record of attendance at meetings shall be kept and those attending may be required to show a credential and/ or proof of membership card to gain entry to the meeting room.
- D12. The elected chair of this body shall preside at all meetings, except where otherwise provided for in the rules of the Party unit.
- D13. In the absence of the chair the chair's deputy shall preside, and in the absence of both the secretary or other officer shall call on those present to elect a member to take the chair of the meeting.
- D14. Original motions for the Meetings, where appropriate, shall be accepted only from those entitled to attend and must be received by the secretary in writing not less than 14 days prior to the meeting for which they are intended.
- D15. Emergency motions and/or business may be accepted by the majority of the meeting on the recommendation of the chair who shall interpret the term 'emergency' in a bona fide manner.

- D16. No motion shall be discussed at a meeting until it has been moved and seconded. Where a motion has been submitted by a Party unit or organisation it must be moved by a delegate from that Party unit or organisation.
- D17. Speakers shall address the chair and shall only speak once on any motion except by permission of the chair, providing that the mover of a motion or an amendment may reply to the discussion without introducing new matter for debate; such reply shall close the discussion. No speaker shall be allowed more than five minutes, unless agreed by the meeting to be 'further heard' for a specified period.
- D18. Amendments to any motion may be moved and seconded from the floor of the meeting but shall be handed to the secretary in writing. Amendments shall be taken in order with one amendment being disposed of before another is moved. If an amendment is carried, the amended resolution becomes a motion to which further amendments may be moved.
- D19. Voting shall be by show of hands except where the constitution of the Party provides for a ballot. In the event of there being a tie of votes the chair shall exercise a casting vote.
- D20. In the event of a tie on a secret paper ballot the chair shall not have a casting vote. Where appropriate, the ballot shall be retaken and in the event of a continual tie lots may be drawn.
- D21. Party meetings and events shall be conducted in a friendly and orderly manner and organised in such a way as to maximise participation from members.
- D22. Any member acting in an unruly or disruptive manner, in contravention of the standing orders, may be removed from the meeting by action of the chair. The chair shall put such a motion to the meeting, which to be carried shall require the support of two-thirds of those present and voting.
- D23. No alteration to the above rules shall be effective until it has received the approval of the appropriate officer of the NCC.

## **E Digital Policy**

- E1. This section shall outline the rules governing the use of party digital communications tools, such as webpages, social media platforms, and email. This section applies to members, officials, branch officers, election candidates, elected representatives, assistants to elected representatives, and candidates.

### **Platform Ownership and Delegation**

- E2. The party is the ultimate and sole owner of all online platforms that purport to represent the SDP as an institution – such as webpages, social media accounts, and blogs.
- E3. The Party Communications Director must have either administrative privileges or up-to-date login credentials for all SDP online platforms.
- E4. Individual party members may be granted delegated control over an SDP online platform. This can be done by the Party Communications Director on the instruction of a relevant line manager (such as a Regional Chair for a Regional account, or the Party Secretary or Chairman for a national account).
- E5. Delegated control over an SDP online platform can be revoked at any time by the Party Communications Director after consultation and approval from both the Leader and the Chair of the Party.
- E6. The revocation of delegated access can be appealed. The NCC will then decide whether to uphold or reject the appeal via a simple majority vote among its members.
- E7. The personal pages of all candidates or elected officials are to be registered with the Party Communications Director.

### **Proper Use of Digital Resources**

- E8. SDP digital resources – such as online platforms or email accounts – are to be used exclusively for party business. Examples of party business include organising, campaigning, recruitment, networking, or fundraising.

- E9. Members are not permitted to use the party brand, online platforms, or digital resources for activities that are unrelated to party business.
- E10. Members are not permitted to use the party brand, online platforms, or digital resources for personal gain or to damage the party's reputation.
- E11. Party officials should use proper email addresses with a @sdp.org.uk domain name, which they may request from the Party Communications Director.
- E12. Regional branches and officials should ideally use a "firstname.lastname" format for their email addresses, if they are not using an "@sdp.org.uk" email.
- E13. If possible, regional branches should attempt to purchase appropriate domain names, and use these domain names for email addresses for officers. Example best practice domains include "@sdp-northwest.org.uk" or "@sdpwales.org.uk".

### **Online Code of Conduct**

- E14. The remainder of this section concerns how party members should conduct themselves online – this includes platforms such as email or social media. In the enforcement of this policy, party officials shall be held to a higher standard than the ordinary membership.
- E15. Members are to avoid making defamatory, obscene, abusive, or illegal statements online.
- E16. Members are to avoid posting any information regarding the SDP that is confidential, secret, or likely to bring the party into disrepute.
- E17. Members are to ensure all SDP content they share is accurate, appropriate and will not bring the party into disrepute.
- E18. Those providing commentary as party members, officials, candidates, or representatives are to endeavour to speak in a professional and considered manner.
- E19. Official SDP social media accounts should only respond to critics with information about the party's position or references. Such accounts should not engage critics in arguments or attempt to "defend" the party

via substantive argument. Members, officials, and candidates are encouraged to follow this recommendation.

- E20. Members should always seek to issue feedback or complaints regarding the party privately, rather than via a public forum.
- E21. Complaints from members should be handled via private channels such as phone, email or private messaging. Public complaints from members should never be responded to in a public forum.
- E22. Those responding to feedback, enquiries, or complaints from party members or the public should do so in a courteous and professional manner.

## **F The Selection of Candidates for Public Office**

- F1. SDP Members seeking selection must be valid members of the SDP at the time selection is sought and at the time of the election concerned.
- F2. Selected candidates must fully abide by the party Rule Book.
- F3. The party will select candidates on merit, free from prejudice.
- F4. All selections will be decided on a “one member one vote” (OMOV) eliminating ballot, defined as follows:

Electors will cast a single vote for their chosen candidate. If no candidate is supported by an overall majority of votes, then the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and a further round of voting occurs. This process is repeated for as many rounds as necessary until one candidate has a majority.

- F5. Any member who has been convicted of electoral fraud shall be ineligible for selection as an SDP candidate.
- F6. Selected candidates must take account of adopted party policy.
- F7. Selected candidates will accept the highest standards of probity in respect of all campaigning and community engagement.

- F8. Selected candidates must abide fully to any Candidate's Code of Conduct issued by the National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC). Failure to do so will warrant the removal of the party's nomination at the discretion of the NCC.
- F9. Any dispute concerning the non-selection or non-endorsement of nominees as prospective candidates for local government, devolved assemblies, the London Assembly or for the Westminster parliament shall be referred to the NCC. The NCC's resolution shall be final.
- F10. The NCC has the authority to modify these rules if required by electoral or other relevant law.

### **Selection of Local Government Candidates**

- F11. Selection of local government candidates shall be undertaken by Regional Parties where they exist in accordance with the guidelines in this section. Where Regional Parties do not exist the National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC) will be responsible for selection.
- F12. Members wishing to be nominated as candidates shall apply to the relevant Regional Party or, in the absence of such, the NCC.
- F13. Nominees for selection must fulfil the criteria to stand as a prospective local government candidate according to the rules of the election concerned.
- F14. All paid-up SDP members resident in the geographical Regional Party in which the relevant election is taking place can participate in the process of shortlisting and voting to select local government candidates. Selection shall be by an OMOV eliminating ballot.

### **Selection of Candidates for the Devolved Institutions**

- F15. The Scotland and Wales Regional Parties shall, where possible, issue timetables and guidelines for the selection of candidates for the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly. Where Regional Parties do not exist the NCC will be responsible for selection.
- F16. Members wishing to be nominated as candidates shall apply to the relevant Regional Party or, in the absence of such, the NCC.



- F17. Nominees for selection must fulfil the criteria to stand as a prospective Devolved Institution candidate according to the rules of the election concerned.
- F18. All paid-up SDP members resident in the geographical Regional Party region in which the relevant election is taking place can participate in the process of shortlisting and voting to select local government candidates. Selection shall be by an OMOV eliminating ballot.

### **Selection of Candidates for the Greater London Authority**

- F19. The London Regional Party shall, where possible, issue timetables and guidelines for the selection of candidates the Greater London Authority/ London Assembly.
- F20. All paid-up SDP members resident in the London Regional Party can participate in the process of shortlisting and voting to select local government candidates. Selection shall be by an OMOV eliminating ballot.
- F21. Where a London Regional Party does not exist the NCC will be responsible for selection.

### **Selection of Westminster Parliamentary Candidates**

- F22. The NCC shall, where possible, issue timetables and guidelines for the selection of candidates for elections to the Westminster Parliament.
- F23. The Scotland, Wales and English Regional Party's Executive Committees will be responsible for administering the selection of Westminster Parliamentary Candidates. Where Regional Parties do not exist the NCC will be responsible for selection.
- F24. Members wishing to be nominated as candidates shall apply to the relevant Regional Party or, in the absence of such, the NCC.
- F25. Nominees for selection must fulfil the criteria to stand as a prospective parliamentary candidate according to the rules of the election concerned.

- F26. All paid-up SDP members resident in the region and the electoral area where the relevant election is taking place can participate in the process of shortlisting and voting to select parliamentary candidates. Selection shall be by an OMOV eliminating ballot comprising all eligible individual members.
- F27. Candidates for Westminster Parliamentary by-elections shall be selected by NCC. Selection shall be by an OMOV eliminating ballot comprising all eligible committee members. The NCC reserves the right to select no candidate if none of the potential nominees are deemed suitable.
- F28. The selection of a parliamentary candidate shall not be regarded as completed until the name of the member selected has been placed before a meeting of the NCC and her or his selection has been endorsed. Until such endorsement has been received the member shall not be introduced to the public as a prospective candidate.
- F29. Any dispute concerning the selection of candidates shall be reported to the NCC which will adjudicate. The NCC's decision on that report shall be final and binding on all parties for all purposes.

## **G Membership Rules**

- G1. Persons shall be at least 16 years old to be eligible for membership of the party.
- G2. Members of the SDP will pay a membership fee, such fee to be determined by the NCC from time to time.
- G3. There shall be a single grade of membership and all members will enjoy equivalent general membership rights. Discounts in membership fees offered from time to time to the low paid, students, the elderly or any other distinct category shall not imply inferior membership rights.
- G4. Members must be subjects/residents of The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland or citizens of Eire or other persons legally resident in The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- G5. UK citizens living abroad are eligible to be members. In terms of participation in candidate selection and other matters, overseas members may, if they wish, nominate one UK parliamentary

constituency of their choice as the entity in which they can participate in candidate selection.

- G6. Membership is not available to anyone who is or has previously been a member of any party or organisation on the Proscribed List in Part C of the Rule Book.
- G7. All members shall accept the constitution and principles of the SDP.
- G8. Members must act in the best interests of the party at all times. The determination of whether members have acted in the best interests of the party is at the discretion of the NCC.
- G9. Any suspension from the party due to breach of party rules shall take place in accordance with Part B of the Rule Book.
- G10. New members are not entitled to vote until 6 months has elapsed after their application is approved.
- G11. All new membership applications must be received and processed by the Party Secretary. All Membership applications must be made using either the SDP's official online membership portal or a current official SDP membership form.
- G12. All new membership applications are subject to Chapter 2 of the Constitution.
- G13. As per Article 2.2 of the constitution, members pay a membership fee. Membership, its privileges and duties shall lapse if the fee is more than three months in arrears. Members can re-join the party up to 6 months in arrears and regain all full member status.

## **H Appointment and Remit of Party Officers**

- H1. The party shall have three principal party officers, namely the Party Chairperson, Party Secretary and Party Treasurer. Such posts shall be filled by appointment by the NCC.
- H2. The remit of the Party Chairperson is to convene, chair and preside over the NCC and to chair the AGM.

- H3. The remit of the Party Secretary is to be responsible for matters relating to membership, party legal compliance, internal communications, record keeping and, together with the Party Chairperson, general party organisation.
- H4. The remit of the Party Treasurer is to preside over the accounts and other financial matters, to comply with legal requirements as they relate to financial matters as set out in the annex to the Party Constitution and to prepare and submit annual accounts.
- H5. In the event that the post of any party officer is uncontested the existing incumbent shall remain in place and if there is no incumbent the NCC shall have the power to appoint an officer on an interim basis.
- H6. No individual is to hold more than one position on the NCC, unless no one else can be found to fill a position or a position needs to be filled in an emergency basis. The Chairs of the Regional Parties or the YSD should not hold another position on NCC unless there are no other candidates or there is an emergency.

## **I Election and Remit of the Party Leader**

- I1. The remit of Party Leader shall be to direct the ethos of the party and, where appropriate, to lead and assist in political campaigns and to act as spokesperson.
- I2. Elections for Party Leader must be carried out fairly and transparently.
- I3. The position of Party Leader will be filled via the process set out below.
- I4. The NCC will invite nominations from party members and will provide a Nomination Form to any member requesting them.
- I5. All party members shall be eligible to stand for Party Leader but such candidates require their nomination to be supported by 10 party members - such support to be indicated by signatures, membership numbers and addresses on the Nomination Form. Members are not permitted to nominate more than one candidate per leadership election.
- I6. Once candidates have been nominated all party members will be balloted.

17. The Returning Officer will be the existing Party Secretary or, if such a post is vacant, a suitable person nominated by the NCC.
18. The Returning Officer will appoint an additional party member to act as an Independent Observer to oversee and verify the ballot.
19. A suitable election timetable and relevant procedures must be published and sent to all party members by the Returning Officer.
110. Each candidate will be entitled to submit a statement not exceeding 500 words together with a photograph which will be made available to members to enable them to assess each candidate.
111. Selection shall be by an OMOV eliminating ballot comprising all eligible individual members.
112. The results of the vote shall be published by the NCC in a timely manner.
113. Any member can request a new leadership ballot at any time by submitting a letter of request signed by 100 party members. On receipt of such a valid letter of request the NCC will contact all members and invite nominations and will provide a Nomination Form to any member requesting them. The election process outlined in I5 - I12 will then be initiated.
114. The Party Leader shall remain in post for 48 months or until they resign, such resignation being immediately effective on written notification by letter or electronic means to the Party Secretary and/or Party Chairperson. Coinciding with the end of a leadership period the NCC shall facilitate a leadership election under the procedures outlined in K5 - K12 above. If no new valid nominations for Party Leader are received the existing Party Leader may be considered as having been elected unopposed and therefore commence a further full term in office i.e. 48 months. At the discretion of the NCC, the term of the Party Leader may be extended for no longer than 3 months to enable the efficient conduct of party business.
115. If, for whatever reason, the post of Party Leader becomes vacant the NCC may at their discretion appoint a suitable party member to serve as Party Leader on an interim basis until it is deemed timely for a ballot under the procedures outlined in K5 - K12 above to be facilitated.

- I16. The Party Leader may appoint a Deputy Party Leader subject to the approval of the NCC. The role of the Deputy Party Leader is to assist the Party Leader solely in the functions set out in I1 above. Termination of the role of Deputy Party Leader is at the discretion of either the Party Leader or the NCC at any time.

## **J Composition of the National Coordinating Committee (NCC)**

- J1. The National Coordinating Committee (NCC) shall comprise up to 18 but not less than 3 party members.
- J2. At all times the Party Leader, Deputy Party Leader, Party Chairperson, Party Secretary and Party Treasurer shall automatically be members of the NCC.
- J3. The Party Chairperson shall be chair of the NCC.
- J4. Every formally constituted Regional Party shall have the right to have a delegate with full voting rights on the NCC. The default position is that the Regional Party chairperson would be the delegate. The Chairperson may nominate other members of the regional committee to serve as a proxy to represent the region on the NCC if the need arises to cover for absences due to sickness, holidays and other similar eventualities.
- J5. The election of a vice chair of the NCC shall, from time to time, be decided by the NCC itself if required.

## **K Formation of Regional Parties**

- K1. The SDP allows members to form geographically based Regional Parties for the purpose of regional and local political activity. The SDP defines "Regions" as the UK NUTS Level 1 regions: North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, Greater London, South East, South West, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- K2. All Regional Parties must apply to be formally ratified by the NCC whose decision in establishing and dissolving Regional Parties is final.

- K3. Each Regional Party must have a Committee composed of an elected Chairperson, an elected Secretary and a Treasurer. Other posts and sub-committees may be created where necessary and appropriate by the elected Committee.
- K4. Regional Interim Organisers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that all members within their designated area are given a minimum of 10 days' notice in writing to attend a meeting where Regional Officers must be voted onto a Regional Committee in a fair and transparent way.
- K5. All members must be given opportunity to present themselves as prospective Regional Officers and/or vote for Regional Officers in the region in which they live. Equal time to present must be allocated to members standing as Party Officers at a specifically designated member meeting.
- K6. OMOV will be used to select a Chairperson and Secretary for Regional Parties.
- K7. When an open, fair and democratic process has been executed to elect a Regional committee, that elected committee may then apply for NCC ratification of their Regional committee using official paperwork provided by the Party Secretary.
- K8. Applications for NCC Ratification of Regional Parties must clearly stipulate the prospective party's geographic territory.
- K9. Following receipt of the application for approval the NCC will either approve the establishment of the Regional Party, grant such under a time limit, refuse such or request further information.
- K10. The NCC shall make the determination in K9 above within three months of receipt of the request to establish said Regional Party.
- K11. The NCC reserves the right to dissolve any existing Regional Party found to be in breach of party rules.
- K12. The financial year of all Regional Parties shall be co-terminus with the national party.

- K13. The NCC and/or the national Party Treasurer shall have the right to request and shall be provided with any and all financial information relating to Regional Parties. Failure to comply with this within the deadlines stipulated by the National Party Treasurer or NCC will result in the dissolution of the relevant Regional Party.
- K14. All Regional Parties must be established as independent accounting units with their own bank account (minimum 2 account signatories) within 6 months of being ratified by the NCC.
- K15. A fully constituted regional party shall have a delegate on the NCC.
- K16. By default the regional party chairman would be the delegate. The Chairman may nominate other members of the regional committee to serve as a proxy to represent the region on the NCC if the need arises to cover for absences due to sickness, holidays and other similar eventualities.
- K17. The Standing Orders in relation to meetings set out in Part D of the Party Rule Book shall apply to all meetings of Regional Parties.
- K18. All relevant provisions of the Party Rule Book shall apply to Regional Parties.
- K19. Each Regional Party committee can appoint a coordinator for any Principal Council division - or combination of divisions - within its region to facilitate the party's political and organisational activities within that division but always under that committee's direction. The period of such an appointment will be one year and will require annual renewal by said Regional Party committee.

## **L The Young Social Democrats**

- L1. The SDP allows members to form an age-based entity called the Young Social Democrats (YSD) for the purpose of political activity. The YSD can include any member of the SDP over the age of 16 but under the age of 30 years.
- L2. The YSD must apply to be formally ratified by the NCC whose decision in establishing and dissolving the YSD is final.



- L3. The YSD must have a Committee composed of an elected Chairperson, an elected Secretary and a Treasurer. Other posts and sub-committees may be created where necessary and appropriate by the elected Committee.
- L4. YSD Interim Organisers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that all members within their designation are given a minimum of 10 days notice in writing to attend a meeting where YSD Officers must be voted onto a YSD Committee in a fair and transparent way.
- L5. All YSD members must be given the opportunity to present themselves as prospective YSD Officers and/or vote for YSD Officers. Equal time to present must be allocated to members standing as YSD Officers at a specifically designated member meeting.
- L6. OMOV will be used to select a Chairperson and Secretary for the YSD.
- L7. When an open, fair and democratic process has been executed to elect a YSD committee, that elected committee may then apply for NCC ratification of the YSD using official paperwork provided by the Party Secretary.
- L8. Following receipt of the application for approval, the NCC will either approve the establishment of the YSD, grant such under a time limit, refuse such or request further information.
- L9. The NCC shall make the determination in L2 above within three months of receipt of the request to establish the YSD.
- L10. The NCC reserves the right to dissolve the YSD if found to be in breach of party rules.
- L11. The financial year of the YSD shall be co-terminus with the national party.
- L12. The NCC and/or the national Party Treasurer shall have the right to request and shall be provided with any and all financial information relating to the YSD. Failure to comply with this within the deadlines stipulated by the National Party Treasurer or NCC will result in the dissolution of the YSD.

- L13. When fully constituted the YSD shall have a delegate on the NCC.
- L14. By default, the YSD will be represented in the NCC by its Chair. The Chair may nominate other members of its Committee to serve as a proxy to represent the YSD on the NCC if the need arises to cover for absences due to sickness, holidays and other similar eventualities.
- L15. The Standing Orders in relation to meetings set out in part D of the Party Rule Book shall apply to all meetings of the YSD.
- L16. All relevant provisions of the Party Rule Book shall apply to the YSD.

## **M. Party Policy**

- M1. Party policy is approved in two ways. First, by the National Coordinating Committee (NCC). Secondly, by resolution at the AGM.
- M2. The NCC shall appoint a Head of Policy at its discretion for an unfixed term of office. The Head of Policy shall be a member of the SDP. The prime remit of the Head of Policy is to coordinate policy research and to prepare and draft party policy for subsequent approval by the NCC.
- M3. A Policy Governing Board (PGB) will be established comprising the Party Leader, Party Chairperson and the Head of Policy. The PGB will schedule policy reviews and provide broad political steering to the policy development process.
- M4. A Policy Secretariat (PS) will be established to assist the Head of Policy. The PS will be chaired by the Head of Policy and will comprise SDP members who will engage in research, member consultation and the development of party policy. Composition of the PS will be decided by the PGB, but should have representation from the home nations and the Young Social Democrats when there are the individuals to take up the positions.
- M5. Contact details of the PS should be published on the official SDP website and made known to members periodically via newsletters.
- M6. The Head of Policy shall host quarterly online update meetings open to all SDP members to update them on policy formulation and to accept policy suggestions.

- M7. The basic SDP policy making process will comprise four stages. First, SDP members are advised via newsletter of policy topics under review and are invited to submit contributions and suggestions to the Head of Policy. Second, the Head of Policy with the assistance of the PS will produce draft policy on these topics and submit it to the NCC. Third, Regional Chairs will consult their members on the draft policy and report back to the Head of Policy within three weeks. Fourth, policy is either approved, amended or rejected at subsequent NCC meetings or within one week of the NCC meeting via email vote by NCC members.
- M8. The second policy making process will take place via a resolution at the AGM. Members will submit their policy suggestions to the Party Chairperson. The PGB will consider the proposals from members and decide which ones go forward to the AGM. In the case where sufficient number of proposals of quality are submitted the PGB may consult the NCC to decide on the final submissions.
- M9. The Party Leader is at liberty to publish ad hoc statements on behalf of the SDP via press release or other media platforms in relation to topical political events.