

A14 Branch structure review - agree changes and identify sub-branches

Proposer: Rob Gowans

Motion text

1 To note the outcomes of a branch structure review, conducted by the Branch
2 Committee, in consultation with local teams and sub-branches:

3 Minimum base of actions for sub-branches

4 While the branch will continue to provide support with activities like
5 canvassing training, guidance on how to contact new members and other support
6 and guidance, sub-branches will play a key role in local delivery of branch
7 activities. The following are suggested minimum expectations for the role of
8 sub-branches. These should be considered as guidance, rather than rules, and
9 there is a degree of flexibility about how sub-branches should operate.

- 10 • Membership - keeping track of members and welcoming new members.
- 11 • Campaigns - delivery of materials, planning delivery routes, know how to
12 organise and deliver a canvassing event
- 13 • Communications - help spread work about councillors and MSPs, attend
14 events to increase visibility

15 Currently, sub-branches are required to hold an AGM and elect at least three
16 office bearers. It is proposed to loosen this requirement, so that sub-branches
17 are encouraged to elect office bearers, but are not required to do so.

18 Removal of distinction between local teams and sub-branches

19 Currently the branch has two separate types of local group – local teams and
20 sub-branches. Whilst this distinction was helpful when local teams were being
21 encouraged to form for the first time, now the system has been in place for
22 eight years with an established set of teams, the distinction is no longer as
23 useful. It also creates an additional layer of complexity to our structure, and
24 many members are unclear or confused about the practical difference between
25 them, or what they mean.

26 It is proposed to remove the distinction, and have one type of local group –
27 sub-branches. All existing local teams (or any future amalgamation of existing
28 local teams, should they decide to merge) should be considered as sub-branches.

29 The branch standing orders and constitution should be amended to reflect this,
30 by removing the local teams function and making appropriate amendments to the
31 sub-branches section to reflect the proposals in this document. Two further
32 motions are proposed to the AGM to accomplish this.

33 Financial autonomy of sub-branches

34 The branch constitution provides for sub-branches to have some financial
35 autonomy, but this has largely not been put into practice.

36 It is proposed this is achieved by creating a line for each sub-branch in the
37 branch budget that they would have discretion on how to spend (e.g. for room

38 hire for meetings). Expenses and costs would be paid by the branch Treasurer.
39 The specific amounts of each sub-branch's budget will be decided by the next
40 committee.

41 It should be noted that the national party constitution does not allow sub-
42 branches to have separate bank accounts.

43 Mergers of some existing local teams

44 A number of wards have consistently struggled to establish a local team, despite
45 numerous efforts over a number of years. This is often linked to having smaller
46 numbers of members.

47 It is proposed to facilitate mergers between some wards in this position with
48 neighbouring local teams (to form sub-branches) with the aim of ensuring active
49 sub-branches in every part of the branch area, who are capable of carrying out
50 the minimum base of actions above. Following discussions, the following line up
51 has been agreed with local teams and sub-branches.

52 Sub-branches in Edinburgh and West Lothian

53 To agree that the following are the sub-branches in the branch area:

- 54 • West Lothian (all wards in West Lothian council area)
- 55 • West Edinburgh (Corstorphine/Murrayfield; Drum Brae/Gyle; Almond)
- 56 • North Edinburgh and Leith (Leith; Leith Walk; Forth)
- 57 • City Centre and Inverleith (City Centre; Inverleith)
- 58 • South West Edinburgh (Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart; Sighthill/Gorgie)
- 59 • South Edinburgh (Morningside; Colinton/Fairmilehead)
- 60 • South East Edinburgh (Southside/Newington; Liberton/Gilmerton)
- 61 • Portobello/Craigmillar
- 62 • Craigentinny/Duddingston

63 To agree that Pentland Hills can be added to one of the sub-branches following
64 further consultation with local members, without requiring a further motion to a
65 General Meeting.

66 To agree that the names of the sub-branches can be changed by agreement with
67 sub-branch members, without requiring a further motion to a General Meeting.

Reason

The branch committee, in consultation with local teams and sub-branches have conducted a review of the branch structure. This motion is to agree the changes, and agree the sub-branches in the branch area.

Supporters

Megan McHaney