

A13 A call for Edinburgh Greens to democratize our budget

Proposer: Mariusz Cebulski (Edinburgh Green Party)

Motion text

- 1 This motion instructs the Edinburgh Green Party to trial a Members Participatory
- 2 Budget, where part of the branches yearly budget would be spent on projects
- 3 decided on by a vote of all the parties members.

Reason

Edinburgh Branch constitution enforces the existence of a cash reserve which would cover between one and two year of operating costs, in recent years the cash reserves far exceed this requirement. While financial prudence is a virtue, a large cash reserve is not gaining us new members and voters and doesn't spread our Green message. This motion aims to change our culture and make us braver in making financial decisions.

Supporters

Damian Sefton

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

Proposer: Rob Gowans

Motion text

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

Minimum base of actions for sub-branches

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

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

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

Removal of distinction between local teams and sub-branches

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

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

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

Financial autonomy of sub-branches

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

It is proposed this is achieved by creating a line for each sub-branch in the 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

A15 Branch structure review - changes to the Constitution

Proposer: Rob Gowans

Motion text

- 1 In the Constitution:
- 2 Amend section 3.3 to read: “One Branch officer must be nominated to process
- 3 membership changes, updates and services. To this end the nominated Branch
- 4 officer will liaise with Sub-Branches and the SGP Executive as required.”

Reason

This removes the references to Local Teams in the branch constitution, to reflect the outcome of the structure review.

Supporters

Megan McHaney

A16 Branch structure review - changes to the Standing Orders

Proposer: Rob Gowans

Motion text

- 1 In the Standing Orders:
- 2 Delete references to 'Local Teams' in 2.2.5 and 2.2.8
- 3 Delete section 3 (Local Teams)
- 4 Amend section 4.2 (Sub-Branches Formation and dissolution) to read:
 - 5 "4.2.1. The formation and dissolution of a Sub-Branch shall be agreed by a
 - 6 simple majority of those present and voting at a quorate and properly convened
 - 7 Branch AGM or EGM.
 - 8 "4.2.2. If a Sub-Branch is no longer able to meet these standing orders, it can
 - 9 agree with a neighbouring Sub-Branch to merge with that Sub-Branch."
- 10 Delete section 4.3.1
- 11 Amend section 4.3.2 to read: "Sub-Branch office bearers shall inform Scottish
- 12 Green Party members living within the Sub-Branch area of the meetings of the
- 13 Sub-Branch.", and move to end of section 4.7 (Office Bearers)
- 14 Amend section 4.3.5 to read: "Sub-Branches shall be represented on the Branch
- 15 Committee sub-group responsible for Sub-Branch and membership support."
- 16 Amend section 4.3.6 to read: "The representative on the Branch Committee sub-
- 17 group can be any member of the Sub-Branch, and shall be selected at a Sub-Branch
- 18 meeting."
- 19 Delete section 4.3.7
- 20 Amend section 4.7.1 to read: "Sub-Branches are encouraged to elect office
- 21 bearers, but are not required to do so. If the Sub-Branch elects Co-Convenors,
- 22 at least one of them must be a woman."
- 23 Amend section 4.8.1 to read: "Sub-Branches will be allocated a proportion of
- 24 branch funds. The specific proportion will be determined by the Branch
- 25 Committee."
- 26 Amend section 4.8.5 to read: "Sub-Branches will operate to a budget agreed with
- 27 the Branch Committee. This may include a proportion of branch funds or
- 28 fundraising income related to Sub-Branch members.
- 29 After section 4.8.5, insert:
 - 30 "4.8.6. One Sub-Branch office bearer must take responsibility for liaising with
 - 31 the Branch Committee over financial matters. Sub-branches without elected office
 - 32 bearers will not be entitled to control their budget."

Reason

This motion makes changes to the branch Standing Orders to implement the outcomes of the structure review, in particular removing the distinction between Local Teams and Sub-branches

Supporters

Megan McHaney

A17 Creating additional opportunities for members to engage with the Councillor group

Proposer: Edinburgh Greens Cllr group

Motion text

- 1 Agrees that the Branch Committee and Councillor group will consider how, between
- 2 them, they can facilitate additional opportunities for members to engage with
- 3 the work of the Councillor group, and to discuss how the Councillor group can be
- 4 more open and transparent with regard to their working, beyond current reporting
- 5 requirements. This might involve Councillors hosting regular sessions to discuss
- 6 policy / manifesto topics with interested members, or “open” sessions in the
- 7 City Chambers for people to visit Councillors and learn more about their work,
- 8 publicised by the Branch Committee.

Reason

One of the pillars of Green politics is “radical democracy” and this is reflected through our grassroots organising, and “bottom up” lines of accountability / responsibility which are in place between the branch and elected representatives.

Whilst there are some processes in place to make Councillors available and open to the branch – for example, regular reporting and attendance at branch events / committee meetings - there have been ongoing conversations this year between Councillors and the branch committee about how to further strengthen opportunities for members to engage with Councillor activity. Whilst the basics have been captured and reinforced by the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Councillor group and Branch Committee, there may still be more we can do to further democratize the activity of the Councillor group.

In line with the above, at the Edinburgh Greens Councillor group AGM on 19th June it was agreed that the Co-Conveners of the Councillor group would submit a motion on behalf of the whole Councillor group to make a commitment to the branch to explore further opportunities to be more open, engaged and involved with the membership. This motion does this.

A18 Democratic Oversight of Manifesto Progress

Proposer: Alys Mumford (Edinburgh Green Councillor Group)

Motion text

- 1 This motion instructs the Edinburgh Branch to help convene a short-life working
- 2 group of members to meet with the Green Councillor Group between May 2024 and
- 3 May 2025 to monitor and evaluate manifesto progress. The Councillor Group has
- 4 committed to facilitate this process if the branch approves this motion.
- 5 Additionally, Edinburgh Branch should approach other Lothian branches and MSP to
- 6 discuss the possibility of replicating this process for Holyrood manifesto
- 7 progress and priorities.

Reason

Green Councillors and MSPs are elected on a manifesto which has been written by and for our members and it is only right that members be involved in the monitoring of our manifestos. Additionally, it is not always possible to achieve all manifesto pledges after an election, and members should have the opportunity to be involved in working with elected members on strategic decision-making about prioritisation of manifesto pledges.

The Edinburgh Green Councillor Group believe this is best achieved through a small group of branch members meeting with elected representatives at the halfway point of any elected term (for example, 2 and a half years in to a Council term), and should be used for Green Councillors, MSPs, and any other levels of elected democracy which may apply.

Supporters

Ben Parker (Edinburgh Green Councillor Group)