

# Implementing One Member, One Vote: Next Steps

## **Introduction**

In October 2014, Conference agreed that the voting franchise should be extended from the current Conference Representatives system to all members of the Federal Party who had paid the relevant fee to attend conference (One Member, One Vote, or OMOV). The motion was also amended to express concern about the way in which these changes would be implemented. The full motion as passed can be found at Appendix 1 of this consultation.

Given the earlier decision of Conference, this consultation is concerned specifically with how the party should implement the motion as agreed. Other discussions are also taking place about the way the party works, but FE has decided, on this occasion, to concentrate specifically on how to successfully implement the motion as passed by Conference.

FE has also taken the decision, owing to the impending General Election, to not seek time on the Spring Conference agenda to implement internal party matters. FE will therefore be submitting constitutional and standing order amendments to autumn conference 2015 in Bournemouth. If they are approved by

conference, One Member, One Vote will come into force at Spring Conference 2016.

Opinions are invited on all aspects of the implementation of One Member, One Vote, as detailed below.

## **Background**

Last autumn, Conference agreed that all members of the Federal Party should be entitled, subject to the payment of the relevant registration fee, to both vote at Federal Conference and vote for and stand for election to those Federal Committees which include directly elected members.

Conference also regretted flaws in the constitutional and standing order amendments as proposed to autumn conference – flaws which ultimately led to the amendments being withdrawn prior to a vote.

Finally, Conference also called for several changes to party operation to be voted through prior to One Member, One Vote – including changes to election regulations and the operation and reporting procedures of Federal Committees.

As you will see below, FE, FCC, and drafters of the amendment to the original motion have been working to find solutions to the problems outlined by Conference.

We seek party members' opinions and suggestions to ensure that these issues are fully addressed before returning to conference.

## **Constitutional and Standing Order Amendments**

The following amendments have been drafted by a working group of FE and FCC members, and the drafters of the amendment to the motion to autumn conference 2014. The provisions made here do, we believe, address the flaws noted by the first part of the amendment (clauses (a) – (f)). However, we invite members to examine both these amendments and the Constitution as a whole to provide their opinion on these proposals.

A full copy of how an amended Constitution would look is available for information at:

[www.libdems.org.uk/spring\\_conference\\_2015](http://www.libdems.org.uk/spring_conference_2015)

If you are unable to make it in person to Liverpool, you can contact the working group directly at

[reform@libdems.org.uk](mailto:reform@libdems.org.uk)

### **TOPIC: CONSTITUTION**

**In 2.7 (a), delete 'representatives' and insert 'members,'**

Currently reads:

*“This Constitution may only be altered...by a two-thirds majority of representatives present and voting at the Federal Conference;”*

Will read:

*“This Constitution may only be altered...by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting at the Federal Conference;”*

### **TOPIC: MEMBERSHIP**

**In 3.2, delete ‘, but excluding the appointment of representatives to Federal Conference’**

Currently reads:

*“However, a State Party may, by its internal procedures, determine that eligibility of a member to vote in Local Party elections (including Parliamentary and local government selections, but excluding the appointment of representatives to Federal Conference) may be subject to a minimum requirement...”*

Will read:

*“However, a State Party may, by its internal procedures, determine that eligibility of a member to vote in Local Party elections (including Parliamentary and local government selections) may be subject to a minimum requirement...”*

### **TOPIC: LOCAL PARTIES**

**In 4.1(i) delete reference to Articles 6.2 and 6.3.**

**Delete 4.3 (b) and renumber accordingly.**

Currently reads:

*“Save as hereinafter provided, each Local Party in Great Britain shall contain one parliamentary constituency. The members in each of two or more adjacent parliamentary constituencies may agree to combine into a single Local Party, in which case the combined Local Party shall be deemed for all the purposes of this Constitution to be a Local Party, save that:...b) the combined Local Party shall be entitled to send to the Federal Conference the higher of: i) the number of representatives which each component constituency with 30 members or more would be entitled to send if it formed a separate Local Party: and ii) the number of representatives which that Local Party would be entitled to send if it comprised a single constituency.”*

**In 4.9, delete ‘A Local Party shall not while its rights are suspended be entitled to representation at the Federal Conference.’**

Currently reads:

*The rights of a Local Party under this Constitution may be suspended by the relevant State Party in accordance with its internal procedures (or, in the case of a Local Party outside Great Britain, by the Federal Executive), if it is not adhering to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, this (or its own) Constitution or if events have taken place or are about to take place which are or may be seriously detrimental to the Local Party or to the Party as a whole. A Local Party shall not*

*while its rights are suspended be entitled to representation at the Federal Conference.*

Will read:

*The rights of a Local Party under this Constitution may be suspended by the relevant State Party in accordance with its internal procedures (or, in the case of a Local Party outside Great Britain, by the Federal Executive), if it is not adhering to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, this (or its own) Constitution or if events have taken place or are about to take place which are or may be seriously detrimental to the Local Party or to the Party as a whole.*

#### **TOPIC: POLICY-MAKING**

**In 5.5 (b), delete ‘circulating consultation papers to, Federal Conference representatives’ and insert ‘making consultation papers available to members,’**

Currently reads:

*“In the course of developing policy the FPC shall: b) ensure consultation generally with, including circulating consultation papers to, Federal Conference representatives, State Parties, Regional Parties in England, Local Parties and Associated Organisations. Such consultations shall include responses to references under Article 5.7.”*

Will read:

*“In the course of developing policy the FPC shall: b) ensure consultation generally with, including making consultation papers available to members, State Parties,*

*Regional Parties in England, Local Parties and Associated Organisations. Such consultations shall include responses to references under Article 5.7.”*

**In 5.6, delete ‘members of the Federal Conference’ and insert ‘party members,’**

Currently reads

*“Policy motions and amendments (including emergency motions and amendments) may be submitted for debate by Federal Conference (in accordance with its Standing Orders) by the Federal Policy Committee, members of the Federal Conference, State Parties in accordance with their internal procedures, Regional Parties in England, Local Parties and Specified Associated Organisations.”*

Will read:

*“Policy motions and amendments (including emergency motions and amendments) may be submitted for debate by Federal Conference (in accordance with its Standing Orders) by the Federal Policy Committee, party members, State Parties in accordance with their internal procedures, Regional Parties in England, Local Parties and Specified Associated Organisations.”*

## **TOPIC: FEDERAL CONFERENCE**

**Delete 6.1(a) – (h) inclusive and insert immediately after ‘shall consist of’: ‘party members. Attendance at conference shall be subject to any requirements set out in the Standing Orders of the Conference.’**

Currently reads:

*The Conference shall consist of*

- (a) representatives of Local Parties (and the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and/or students as provided by Article 13.8);*
- (b) the Parliamentary Parties as defined by Article 9;*
- (c) Members of the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales in receipt of the party's whip;*
- (d) the Officers specified in Article 12;*
- (e) prospective parliamentary and European parliamentary candidates who shall continue as members of the Conference until the end of the calendar year in which they stood for election, unless a new prospective candidate is selected for the constituency;*
- (f) Elected Mayors who are members of the Party;*
- (g) Elected members of regional assemblies in receipt of the Party's whip; and*
- (h) Leaders of council groups of the Part on principal councils.*

Will read:

*The Federal Conference shall consist of party members and the Officers specified in Article 12.*

**Delete 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4 and re-number accordingly.**

*6.2 is a list of the number of conference representatives for different sized local parties.*

*6.3 is details of how conference representatives are elected.*



*6.4 is details of nominations of conference representative candidates*

**In 6.5, delete ‘and for all members who are not representatives to address other sessions of the Conference’**

Currently reads:

*The Standing Orders of the Conference shall provide for consultative sessions of the Conference at which any member of the Party may speak, and for members who are not representatives to address other sessions of the Conference, but such provisions shall not prejudice the right of the chair of a session to select speakers.*

Will read:

*The Standing Orders of the Conference shall provide for consultative sessions of the Conference at which any member of the Party may speak, but such provisions shall not prejudice the right of the chair of a session to select speakers.*

**In 6.6, delete ‘200 representatives entitled to attend Conference’ and insert ‘200 members, in not less than 20 local parties’** *(including, for this purpose, the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and students as provided by Article 13.8).*

Currently reads:

*“The Conference shall normally meet twice a year, for a week in the early autumn and a weekend in the early spring; additional meetings may be summoned upon*

*the requisition of the Federal Executive or the Federal Policy Committee or the Conference itself or 200 representatives entitled to attend the Conference. A meeting may be cancelled by the Federal Executive in exceptional circumstances.”*

Will read:

*“The Conference shall normally meet twice a year, for a week in the early autumn and a weekend in the early spring; additional meetings may be summoned upon the requisition of the Federal Executive or the Federal Policy Committee or the Conference itself or 200 members, in not less than 20 local parties (including, for this purpose, the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and students as provided by Article 13.8). A meeting may be cancelled by the Federal Executive in exceptional circumstances.”*

**TOPIC: PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES**

**In 11.5 (i) renumber reference to Article 4.3 as appropriate.**

**TOPIC: LEADER and OFFICERS**

**In 12.1, delete ‘representatives entitled to attend the Federal Conference’ and insert ‘members’**

Currently reads:

*A candidate for the office of President shall require the nomination of not less than 200 representatives entitled to attend the Federal Conference in not less than 20 Local Parties (including, for this purpose, the Specified*

*Associated Organisations representing youth and students as provided by Article 13.8).*

Will read:

*A candidate for the office of President shall require the nomination of not less than 200 members in not less than 20 Local Parties (including, for this purpose, the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and students as provided by Article 13.8).*

**TOPIC: ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS**

**In 13.8 delete reference to Article 6.2.**

**In 13.8, insert ‘and 12’ after ‘exercising the rights of the SAO under Articles 6, 10’.**

**TOPIC: STANDING ORDERS**

**Under Glossary of Terms, remove ‘Elected Representative’.**

Currently reads:

*“A person elected by a local party or an SAO to represent them at conference. This term does not include substitutes appointed to replace an elected representative at a particular meeting of conference. It does include elected representatives who have not registered for a particular meeting of conference.”*

**Under Glossary of Terms, delete ‘Non-voting member’**

Currently reads:

*“A party member who has paid the appropriate registration fee, but, because they are not an elected*

*representative, is not entitled to vote at conference. A non-voting member is, however, entitled to submit a speaker's card for any item on which voting members may submit a speaker's card."*

**Under 'Special Conference' in the Glossary of Terms, remove '200 conference representatives' and replace with '200 members, in not less than 20 local parties** (*including, for this purpose, The Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and students as provided by Article 13.8).*

Currently reads:

*An additional meeting of the conference requisitioned by the Federal Executive, Federal Policy Committee, conference itself or 200 conference representatives under the provisions of Article 6.6 of the Federal constitution.*

Will read:

*An additional meeting of the conference requisitioned by the Federal Executive, Federal Policy Committee, conference itself or 200 members, in not less than 20 local parties (including, for this purpose, the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and students as provided by Article 13.8), under the provisions of Article 6.6 of the Federal Constitution.*

**In Glossary of Terms, remove contents of 'Voting Member' and replace with:** *A member attending conference who has satisfied any requirements for*

*attendance and has paid the appropriate registration fee presently in force for party members and who is not a day visitor [or observer].*

Currently reads:

*“A person who is entitled to vote at conference. This term includes substitutes replacing conference representatives for a particular meeting of conference. It does not include conference representatives who have not paid any registration fee that may be in force nor does it include day visitors or observers who are not conference representatives.”*

Will read:*“A member attending conference who has satisfied any requirements for attendance and has paid the appropriate registration fee presently in force for party members and who is not a day visitor [or observer].”*

**In 1.3 (b) and (d), delete '10 conference representatives' and insert '10 party members'.**

Currently reads:

*“b. Business motions (including amendments and emergency business motions and amendments), constitutional amendments and secondary constitutional amendments, standing order amendments and secondary standing order amendments may be submitted by the Federal Executive, Federal Policy Committee, state parties, regional parties in England, local parties, Specified*

*Associated Organisations and 10 conference representatives.”*

*“d. Policy motions (including amendments, emergency policy motions and amendments) may be submitted by the Federal Policy Committee, state parties, regional parties in England, local parties, Specified Associated Organisations and 10 conference representatives.”*

Will read:

*“b. Business motions (including amendments and emergency business motions and amendments), constitutional amendments and secondary constitutional amendments, standing order amendments and secondary standing order amendments may be submitted by the Federal Executive, Federal Policy Committee, state parties, regional parties in England, local parties, Specified Associated Organisations and 10 party members.”*

*“d. Policy motions (including amendments, emergency policy motions and amendments) may be submitted by the Federal Policy Committee, state parties, regional parties in England, local parties, Specified Associated Organisations and 10 party members.”*

**In 1.3(f), remove ‘voting’ and replace with ‘party’.**

Currently reads:

*“1.3(f) Proposals for topical issue discussions may be submitted by any voting member.”*

Will read:

*“1.3(f) Proposals for topical issue discussions may be submitted by any party member.”*

**In 1.4 delete ‘conference representatives’ and replace with ‘party members’**

Currently reads:

*1.4 “All motions and amendments must be submitted to the Committee. They must be typed clearly and accompanied by the name, address and telephone number(s) of a person authorised to agree to their being composited or redrafted. Motions submitted by conference representatives must be accompanied by all their signatures, names and addresses.”*

Will read:

*1.4 “All motions and amendments must be submitted to the Committee. They must be typed clearly and accompanied by the name, address and telephone number(s) of a person authorised to agree to their being composited or redrafted. Motions submitted by party members must be accompanied by all their signatures, names and addresses.”*

**In 1.6, replace ‘notified to conference representatives’ with ‘publicised to party members’ and add after ‘newspaper’ ‘/magazine and website’.**

Currently reads:

*1.6 “All dates specified under Standing Order 1.5 shall be notified to conference representatives and bodies*

*entitled to submit motions. Publication in the party newspaper may be treated as notice for this purpose.”*

Will read:

*1.6 “All dates specified under Standing Order 1.5 shall be publicised to party members and bodies entitled to submit motions. Publication in the party newspaper/magazine and website may be treated as publication for this purpose.”*

**In 3.1, replace ‘conference representative’ with ‘party member’**

Currently reads:

*3.1 “The Committee shall draw up the Agenda and shall decide which of the motions duly submitted shall be included in it. The Committee may allocate time for one or more policy or business motions to be selected by ballot. Copies of motions not selected shall be available for inspection and will be supplied to any conference representative on payment of a copying charge and postage.”*

Will read:

*3.1 “The Committee shall draw up the Agenda and shall decide which of the motions duly submitted shall be included in it. The Committee may allocate time for one or more policy or business motions to be selected by ballot. Copies of motions not selected shall be available for inspection and will be supplied to any party member on payment of a copying charge and postage.”*



**In 3.2, EITHER delete 3.2 in its entirety, and renumber accordingly.**

**OR Delete “or included in a ballot to allow conference representatives to determine an order of priority for allocating time.”**

Currently reads:

*3.2 “Save as detailed below in Standing Order 4.3, all proposed amendments to the constitution or standing orders must be either selected for debate or included in a ballot to allow conference representatives to determine an order of priority for allocating time.”*

**In 4.5, replace ‘Representatives attending Conference’ with ‘voting members’.**

Currently reads:

*4.5 “All emergency motions, except those rejected under Standing Order 4.4, must be placed either on the agenda for debate or in a ballot for selection by Conference. The Committee may hold separate ballots to select which of a range of emergency policy motions and which of a range of emergency business motions to debate. If one or more ballots is held the Committee shall circulate the text of all balloted motions to the Representatives attending Conference as soon as practicable and shall specify a closing time for the ballot. Following the counting of any ballots the Committee shall decide how many motions shall be debated in the time available.”*

Will read:

4.5 *“All emergency motions, except those rejected under Standing Order 4.4, must be placed either on the agenda for debate or in a ballot for selection by Conference. The Committee may hold separate ballots to select which of a range of emergency policy motions and which of a range of emergency business motions to debate. If one or more ballots is held the Committee shall circulate the text of all balloted motions to the voting members as soon as practicable and shall specify a closing time for the ballot. Following the counting of any ballots the Committee shall decide how many motions shall be debated in the time available.”*

**In 6.2, delete ‘If the person who is excluded is a voting member of conference, their local party or SAO shall be contacted immediately and invited to appoint a substitute for the remainder of the conference.’**

Currently reads:

*“Any person excluded from conference by a decision of the Chief Steward shall have the right of appeal to the Committee at the next of its regular meetings. The exclusion shall remain in force pending the appeal. If the person who is excluded is a voting member of conference, their local party or SAO shall be contacted immediately and invited to appoint a substitute for the remainder of the conference.”*

Will read:

*“Any person excluded from conference by a decision of the Chief Steward shall have the right of appeal to the Committee at the next of its regular meetings. The exclusion shall remain in force pending the appeal.”*

**Delete 8.5 in its entirety and replace with ‘All voting members may speak at a full session of conference. Additionally, the Committee may invite any person to address the conference as a guest. Neither such provision shall prejudice the right of the chair of a session to select speakers.’**

Currently reads:

*“Only voting or non-voting members may speak at a full session of conference, save that other persons may speak in the following circumstances:...”*

Will read:

*“All voting members may speak at a full session of conference. Additionally, the Committee may invite any person to address the conference as a guest. Neither such provision shall prejudice the right of the chair of a session to select speakers.”*

**In 8.7, delete ‘and non-voting’**

Currently reads:

*“Voting and non-voting members wishing to speak in any debate shall submit a speaker’s card...”*

Will read:

*“Voting members wishing to speak in any debate shall submit a speaker’s card...”*

**Amend 11.2 title to ‘Reference back (moved by a voting member)**

Currently reads:

*“Reference back (moved by a conference representative)”*

Will read:

*“Reference back (moved by a voting member)”*

**In 14.1, remove both instances of ‘directly elected by conference’ and replace with ‘directly elected by party members’.**

Currently reads:

*“At its first meeting after a new election the Committee shall elect a Chair, who must be a member of the Committee directly elected by conference, and at least one Vice Chair, who must be members of the Committee either directly elected by conference or elected by one of the State Parties.”*

Will read:

*“At its first meeting after a new election the Committee shall elect a Chair, who must be a member of the Committee directly elected by party members, and at least one Vice Chair, who must be members of the Committee either directly elected by party members or elected by one of the State Parties.”*

**Reforms Outlined by Conference**

The motion from autumn conference outlined a number of other requirements before constitutional and standing order amendments can be approved to implement OMOV. Some initial thoughts and suggestions are included below, and there will be time available in the consultation session at conference to discuss how we go about implementing these requirements.

**i) A newly drafted set of constitutional and standing order amendments and election regulations that accurately and comprehensively cover the changes required for implementing this principle.**

- Constitutional and Standing Order Amendments are included above and are open for debate at the consultation session. They have been sourced from the existing motion, the amendment to the motion submitted by FE, the concerns raised in the amendment to the motion, and a re-reading of the Constitution and appendices.
- Election Regulations have not been fully considered at this point, and the group welcomes input from party members on potential changes that they believe would improve internal party democracy.

**ii) Amendments to the party constitution requiring the Federal Conference Committee, the Federal Executive, the Federal Finance and Administration Committee, the Federal Policy Committee and the International Relations Committee each to produce a written report after each full meeting of the committee, with the report to be made available to all party members via the party's website or such other electronic means as the Chief Executive shall decide is practical.**

- Ideally, this should be implemented via the Constitution in the same way that reports to Conference are codified.
- The group suggests that a constitutional amendment goes further than suggested here and encapsulates the established sub-committees of all Federal Committees – including those of FCC and other sub-committees (as distinct from working groups) of FE
- The amendment would be added in as a new 6.11 (in the existing numbering) (FCC), 7.3 (FPC), and 8.3 (FE)
- Suggested wording of this amendment: “The Chair(s) of the (Federal Conference Committee/Federal Policy Committee/Federal Executive and its established sub-committees with delegated responsibility shall, within 14 days of each committee meeting, make

available to party members a written report on the proceedings of the meeting in a manner deemed practical by the Federal Chief Executive.”

**iii) A new confidentiality policy for attendees at federal committee meetings which significantly relaxes the current de facto situation while protecting necessary confidentiality over personnel decisions and information that would advantage our political opponents if made public and which writes the confidentiality policy into the party’s constitution, and**

**iv) A new process for members of a federal committee to request that a public vote be recorded on any decision, with the terms of the vote and the voting record for each committee member.**

- Discussions on confidentiality and recorded votes have centred around the idea of having a constitutional amendment which focuses on the broad brushstrokes of the principles upon which standing orders of committees are based – these principles are entirely open to debate
- As part of this body of work, and based upon these principles, this group would propose working with existing committees to put together ‘skeleton standing orders’ – which lay out details of committee operation and aspects

such as declarations of interest. Certain aspects would be fixed and could not be amended by individual committees. These skeleton standing orders would be publicly available (most likely on the party website)

- Each committee would then tailor the skeleton standing orders to their own operation – for example, to reflect the discursive nature of FPC versus meetings of FCC where agendas are decided.

**v) One of a range of options tabled to amend the Federal Committee Election regulations to allow more campaigning by candidates and to require any online voting system to prompt voters to first view candidates' manifestos before being able to vote.**

- Election Regulations are required to be discussed by FE after a round of elections. This will take place after May, in the summer of 2015.
- Changes to election regulations have not, therefore, been discussed in full, and thoughts on this requirement are welcomed



## **Appendix 1: Motion as passed by Conference, Autumn 2014**

Conference notes that currently, voting at conference is confined to a limited number of members including MPs, Peers, Prospective UK and European Parliamentary Candidates, Elected Mayors, Leaders of Principal Councils and those who have been elected as Conference Representatives by Local Parties, the number of Representatives being determined by the size of the Local Party.

Conference believes that all members of the Federal Party should be entitled, subject to the payment of the relevant registration fee, to:

1. Vote at Federal conference.
2. Vote for and stand for election to those Federal Committees which include directly elected members.

Conference, however, regrets the multiple flaws in the proposed constitutional and standing order amendments proposed to this conference, and the inclusion of new measures not previously consulted on, including (but not limited to):

- a) Ambiguous or confusing wording in the amendments to Articles 2.7, 7.2 and 8.1.

- b) The failure to amend Article 6.10(h), on the Federal Conference Committee.
- c) The abolition of the requirement for those calling for a special conference to come from 20 different local parties, making it possible for one local party on its own to call a special conference in many cases.
- d) A new and uncosted requirement for policy consultation papers to be sent to every party member, whether or not the party has a working email address for them.
- e) The failure to amend conference standing orders 1.3(b), 1.4, 1.6, 3.1, 3.2 and 4.5, all of which would retain references to conference representatives despite other amendments abolishing them.
- f) The failure to propose any amendments to committee election regulations.

Conference also believes that any expansion of the electorate must be accompanied by other reforms to improve the flow of information on the activity of party committees and their elected members to the newly increased electorate. Conference therefore agrees in principle to expanding the rights of members as set out above, but subject first to federal conference voting through:

- i) A newly drafted set of constitutional and standing order amendments and election regulations that

accurately and comprehensively cover the changes required for implementing this principle.

ii) Amendments to the party constitution requiring the Federal Conference Committee, the Federal Executive, the Federal Finance and Administration Committee, the Federal Policy Committee and the International Relations Committee each to produce a written report after each full meeting of the committee, with the report to be made available to all party members via the party's website or such other electronic means as the Chief Executive shall decide is practical.

iii) A new confidentiality policy for attendees at federal committee meetings which significantly relaxes the current de facto situation while protecting necessary confidentiality over personnel decisions and information that would advantage our political opponents if made public and which writes the confidentiality policy into the party's constitution.

iv) A new process for members of a federal committee to request that a public vote be recorded on any decision, with the terms of the vote and the voting record for each committee member.

v) One of a range of options tabled to amend the Federal Committee Election regulations to allow more campaigning by candidates and to require any online voting system to prompt voters to first view candidates' manifestos before being able to vote.