

## English Regional Co-operative Parties Consultation

Regions and sections exist to facilitate several administrative and development activities and reflect the regions recognised by government. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, this role is carried out by the Scottish and NI Party Councils respectively. In Wales, these powers rest with the Welsh Council. In each of these cases special arrangements are in place so the following proposals relate mainly to the eight English regions.

There are currently two different models in operations within in England: in three areas, the regional level has been merged with the party council, resulting in a two-tier structure (London, North East & North Cumbria, and Yorkshire & the Humber). In the other five regions, a three-tier structure is in place with between three and five party councils in each region and each party council pays an affiliation fee based on their size.

The activity and engagement with these regional parties varies across the country. One of the reasons for low activity is the lack of a clear articulation of their role or value, especially as these regions no longer have any formal role in local government.

However, the regions remain a necessary tier in the local party structure to support party administration in a number of areas, including:

- Providing a forum for the relevant NEC members to be held to account, while also receiving feedback and input from the parties they represent;
- Supporting the development of constituent party councils through quality regional events that train and engage members;
- Engaging with the wider co-operative movement, including with societies who operate across one or more regions;
- Engaging with the Regional Labour Party, including the regional board and regional conference.

### Recommendations

Although these regions no longer have a formal role in local government they remain a necessary tier in the local party structure for the reasons identified above. However, there should be changes to their purpose and how they function, including:

- They should have a key focus on developing local members and officers. They should do this through organising an annual or biannual conference or day/weekend school for members in the region.

## the co-operative party

- Regions may decide that party councils should organise the regional conference in turn, avoiding the need for regional officers to do so.
- The requirement for three meetings per year should be repealed and instead be encouraged to meet only when necessary and by conference call by default.
- There should be further discussion with NEC members as to how they wish to liaise with local parties within their region.
- Initial exploration as to how society representatives engaging at a regional level may function, in addition to an increased link with regional co-op councils.
- Review of regional affiliation fees to see if these are still appropriate and what level they should be in future years.
- The region should arrange for a stall and a fringe event to be held at each regional Labour Party Conference and coordinate the selection of delegates to attend and any motions submitted.

### Responses

Any responses to this consultation should be sent to [support@party.coop](mailto:support@party.coop) by Monday 21 November 2016.

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