



Young
Greens

2018

YOUNG GREENS

HOLISTIC REVIEW

IMPACT REPORT

YOUNG GREENS EXECUTIVE

Holistic Review Impact Report

Young Greens Executive Committee

Members of the Green Party are being asked to vote in an internal referendum on a package of reforms to our internal processes. Voting closes on the 29th of December 2018 at midnight. To be approved it will require at least a two-thirds majority vote from a minimum of 15% of party members voting (often known as a quoracy). A party group known as the Holistic Review Commission, brought into existence at Autumn Conference in 2017, wrote this package of reforms, and it was approved to go to a referendum of party members at Autumn Conference in 2018.

Report Summary

These reforms have the potential to impact the membership of the Young Greens and the organisation itself, and we have written this report to detail this impact. We have concluded that the potential for severe and negative impacts on the Young Greens is high.

We urge all Young Greens to vote 'No' to the proposed reforms.

Members have until 29th of December 2018 at midnight to vote at <https://ballot.greenparty.org.uk> where members can sign in with their Green Party membership details. Members should contact ero@greenparty.org.uk if they are having any issues voting or would like to report any other concerns.

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What are the proposals?

To read about the proposals in full detail including the Commission's motivations for these proposals, please read their full report¹ on the proposals.

Under the proposed reforms, the Green Party Executive (GPEx) and the Green Party Regional Council (GPRC) would be replaced with three bodies: a 45 member 'Council', a smaller 'Political Executive' made up of elected officials and several directly elected members, and a 'Board' appointed by members of the Council. The constitutional requirement to have a Spring Conference would be removed, instead, Autumn Conference will decide what kind of event to hold in the following Spring, if any. Enhanced remote access and online voting would be introduced to conference processes too. Our 'Policies for a Sustainable Society'² document, compiled by conference and accessible by anyone, would be moved to the members-only forum.

The Council will operate with smaller 'Task and Finish' groups created to fulfil a specific task. There are five reserved places for Young Greens on the Council (11%), but it is not specified how these places will be filled. There are also ten directly elected members of the Council (22%), which the Young Greens may consider standing an elected and/or appointed slate for. This council will oversee "all necessary decisions about strategy and activity".

The Political Executive contains representatives of our elected officials, our bi-national leadership team and the Wales Green Party Leader. It also contains the Chair of the Council and four directly elected members (36%), which the Young Greens may consider standing an elected and/or appointed slate for. There are no reserved spaces for Young Greens. The Political Executive will make "decisions about political activities".

A new 'Board' will oversee legal responsibilities and the party's staff, containing an elected Chair and treasurer, and five members appointed by the Council.

¹ Holistic Review Commission Final Report

<http://greenholisticreview.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/HRReportAsAmended-1.pdf>

² Policies for a Sustainable Society <https://policy.greenparty.org.uk/>

What is the impact on the Young Greens?

The Holistic Review Referendum proposals are a massive overhaul to our internal structures as the Green Party of England and Wales. This chapter will focus on the impact they have on members of the Young Greens and the organisation itself.

Impact Summary

- These proposals could reduce the Young Greens' annual income by between 25% and 33%, threatening priority expenditures including 30 under 30 and Convention
- There will be fewer opportunities for members to pass policy
- The proposed reforms remove the Young Greens' vote from the Political Executive
- Youth and student issues might be sidelined while the party focuses on other issues
- Young Greens will only be represented on the Council
- The proposals question our commitment to European cooperation and to the European Green Party and the Federation of Young European Greens
- Young Greens on the Council may be required to serve different/longer terms than other Young Greens position-holders and may not be elected or appointed by Young Greens

The proposals remove the requirement to hold Spring Conference which is one of two main annual Young Greens money-making events with donations, merchandise sales and the Young Greens Quiz and Raffle. Despite 2017 Spring Conference being under-attended due to severe weather, it made over 20% of our annual income. In a regular year, these proposals could **reduce our annual income by between 25% and 33%**. We cannot afford this. Therefore these proposals **threaten priority expenditures including 30 under 30 and Convention**.

As plenary time at Autumn Conference will be spent deciding what form Spring Conference will take less time will be spent deciding policy at Autumn conference, and potentially no time at all at Spring Conference. **There will be fewer opportunities for members to pass policy**.

Therefore it will be difficult to undo the changes made as part of these proposals.

The proposed Political Executive is analogous to an existing subcommittee of the Green Party Executive known as 'Political Committee', which the Young Greens Co-Chairs share a vote on due to their seat on the Green Party Executive. **The proposed reforms remove the Young Greens' vote on the Political Executive.** This might mean youth and student issues are sidelined while the party focuses on other issues, which we will have no recourse to prevent.

Our vote on Political Committee and Executive Committee has been vital to the Young Greens securing things we now take for granted, including Green Party loans to fund Young Greens activities, a full-time member of staff, recognition of our co-chairs as official party Youth spokespeople, and Young Greens donations during membership sign up. It has been vital for day-to-day cooperation between our Executive and the Green Party Executive. Results of this include Green Party supporting our campaigns and Young Greens pushing the party to maintain a presence at Young Greens backed protests, including the People's Vote march.

This decision is also against European Green Party (EGP) policy which states that member parties must "Encourage having at least one seat for a representative from the youth-wing in every board in the mother party"³. This is a policy that the Green Party of England and Wales voted for in 2017. There are also potential breaches of EGP gender balancing policy. Our membership of EGP, and the Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG), connects us to a Europe-wide movement and provides opportunities to train and network, and to learn from activists across Europe. However, these proposals take us in a direction of travel opposite to that of our European neighbours and is against the spirit of our European strategy. **The proposals question our commitment to European cooperation and to EGP and FYEG.**

We would maintain a presence on the proposed 'Council' but it is hard to see how effective this body will be as it contains 45 members. **Young Greens will only be represented on the Council which some consider as too-large-to-succeed** with real decisions being made in bodies with less democratic oversight. It is unclear how these members will be elected or appointed. Young Greens on the Council may be required to serve different/longer terms than other Young Greens position-holders and may not be elected or appointed by Young Greens.

³ Renewing and rejuvenating the Greens
<https://europeangreens.eu/content/renewing-and-rejuvenating-greens>

Our Recommendation

We recommend that all Young Greens vote 'No' in Holistic Review Referendum.

We regret that we must encourage Young Greens to vote No. Young Greens worked hard to pass amendments to the proposals at Conference to avoid this, which were severely opposed by members of the commission, but most of these did not pass. We successfully removed the proposed ban on job-shares, and retained Disciplinary Committee. But despite our hard work to avoid this, all the above-mentioned issues remain in the proposals.

We are saddened that the commission appears to have ignored Young Greens who were consulted as part of the process. We stressed the importance of protecting many of the things mentioned in this report and it is unfortunate that the efforts of our members in engaging in this process do not seem to be reflected in the proposals. Other members who were consulted have reported a belief that the proposals do not seem justified by the comments of those consulted but represent the personal wishes of the members of the commission.

We are concerned about reports that Young Greens on the commission were not listened to. During the drafting of these proposals, many of our concerns were raised by Young Greens on the commission. It especially concerns us that a Young Green felt forced to leave the commission due to the behaviour of other members. Commission members are also reported to have referred to Young Greens on the commission as “junior members”. All should reject this ageism in the party and we condemn this behaviour.

We recognise that hard work has gone into these proposals and that many of the proposals are sensible and non-controversial. We know that if the party is to reach its goals over the next decade, we must become a far more lean and nimble political machine than we are. We understand that internal factional lobbying is not common or often well regarded within our party. This is not a decision we take lightly. But these proposals represent a severe threat to the work and effectiveness of the Young Greens and we feel compelled to take this unprecedented step to urge Young Greens to vote No to the proposed changes.