

CLAUSE ONE: NAME

The Association shall be called The Social Democratic and Labour Party and hereinafter referred to as the 'Party'.

CLAUSE TWO: PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS

The objects of the Party shall be as follows:-

- 2.1 To organise and maintain in Northern Ireland a Socialist Party.
- 2.2 To promote the policies decided by the Party Conference.
- 2.3 To promote a united Ireland and unity among the people of Ireland through agreed and mandated political structures and institutions.
- 2.4 To contest elections in Northern Ireland with a view to securing the implementation of the following principles:
 - a) The creation of a society based on social justice and equality of opportunity and the promotion of economic development which combats social exclusion and poverty to achieve fairness for all.
 - b) The abolition of all forms of discrimination based upon religion, gender, age, disability, ethnic origin, class, political belief or sexual orientation and the promotion of equality for all.
 - c) The promotion of culture and arts with a special responsibility to cherish and develop all the diverse aspects of our national cultures.
 - d) The public ownership and democratic control of such essential industries and services as the common good requires.
 - e) The protection of the environment through sustainable development and the achievement of social and economic justice for all our people.
- 2.5 To work for the full participation of women in social, economic and public life on the basis of full equality.
- 2.6 To co-operate with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and other social and economic organisations in joint political or other action.
- 2.7 To co-operate with other Labour Parties and Social Democratic Parties through the Party of European Socialists and the Socialist International.
- 2.8 To work for unity and harmony among the peoples of Europe, to end divisions based upon religion, ethnic origin or perceived national identity and to promote a new international order of peace and justice throughout the world.
- 2.9 To combat corruption, exploitation, oppression and intimidation in all areas of society at home and abroad.

CLAUSE THREE: MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 Any person aged 16 and over who subscribes to the Principles and Objects of the Party (and) agrees to conform to its constitution may be accepted as a member of the Party. Persons resident in Northern Ireland who are already members of a constituent sister party of the Party of European Socialists may apply for and be accepted as members of the Party upon payment of the appropriate membership fees and subject to any conditions laid down by the Management Committee. An individual who is a member of another party which contests elections in Northern Ireland cannot be a member of the SDLP.
- 3.2 A full member may be accepted into membership by a branch of the Party in the constituency where he/she resides or for which he/she is registered as an elector. A member may also be accepted into central membership by the Management Committee of the Party on payment of the appropriate membership fee. Members are entitled to communicate with, and receive available services from, the Party in English and or Irish. Only individual members who are also members of a branch shall be:
 - a) entitled to be selected by a branch to be a delegate to a constituency council, district executive, the Annual General Meeting or at the Party Conference;
 - b) entitled to select candidates for District Council and Parliamentary elections.
- 3.3 Where there is no branch of the Party in the district electoral area in which a member resides, a member shall be entitled to join the branch nearest him/her within that constituency provided that no member shall be a member of more than one branch.
- 3.4 The Management Committee may suspend or expel from the Party, or otherwise discipline any member whose activities they consider injurious to the Party or inconsistent with its Principles and Objects or contravenes the Party's Code of Discipline.
- 3.5 A branch of the Party may refuse to accept into membership any person or suspend or otherwise discipline an existing member, but such persons may appeal to the Management Committee who may confirm, reverse or vary the decision.
- 3.6 Persons not normally residing in Northern Ireland who accept the Principles and Objects of the Party and agree to conform to this Constitution may be accepted by the Management Committee as Associate Members. The Management Committee may refuse the application of any person for Associate Membership and may expel any existing Associate Member if they consider its membership would be injurious to or inconsistent with the Principles and Objects of the Party. Each Associate Member shall pay to the Party Headquarters an annual membership fee as determined by Conference.
- 3.7 Annual subscriptions shall become due on the first day of January in each year and shall relate to that calendar year.

CLAUSE FOUR: BRANCH

- 4.1 A branch of the Party shall be formed in any ward or combination of wards with the approval of the Management Committee which shall, if necessary, define the functional area of the branch.
- 4.2 Each branch shall forward to Headquarters each year, the name, address, email address, date of birth and membership fee for each member and the branch affiliation fee.

The amount of the annual membership fee shall be determined at the Annual General Meeting of the Party. The formula for the branch annual affiliation fee shall be determined by the Management Committee.

- 4.3 Each branch shall hold an Annual General Meeting before March 31 at which it shall elect the following branch officers: chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and other officers as it deems necessary and transact any other relevant business. The registration date for members eligible to vote shall be December 31 of the previous year. In addition to the Annual General Meeting the branch shall also hold a minimum of three business meetings during the year.
- 4.4 Each branch shall have a minimum of 10 members. It shall promote and develop the policies of the Party, maintain an effective organisation, recruit members and work for full voter registration within its functional area and support Party candidates in elections.
- 4.5 Each branch shall nominate delegates, and when appropriate alternates, to district executive and constituency council.
- 4.6 Each branch shall also nominate delegates, submit motions and make nominations to the Annual General Meeting and to the Party Conference.
- 4.7 Each branch shall comply with model rules as determined by the Management Committee.
- 4.8 Each branch is required to forward annually to the Registered Treasurer, of their accounting unit, for each year a statement of the financial position of the branch in compliance with the Political Parties Elections and Referendum Act 2001.

CLAUSE FIVE: CONSTITUENCY COUNCIL

- 5.1 A constituency council shall be formed in each constituency. It shall consist of delegates from each branch of the Party in the constituency appointed according to the following scale:

Membership	No. of Representatives
10-30	2
31-60	3
61-90	4
91-120	5
121-150	6

and additional delegates in these proportions. Branch representation, at any time, shall be determined by the membership registered at Party Headquarters on December 31 of the previous year.

- 5.2 Each constituency council shall hold an Annual General Meeting before March 31 at which it will elect the following officers: chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, treasurer, youth organiser and other officers as it may deem necessary, and transact any other relevant business. The registration date for members eligible to vote shall be December 31 of the previous year. The Chairperson shall not be a publicly elected representative for the constituency. It shall, in addition, hold a minimum of three business meetings during the year.
- 5.3 The following shall be members of the constituency council ex-officio: -
- a) MPs and MLAs for the constituency who are members of the Party;
 - b) District Councillors who are members of the Party and who sit for district electoral areas which are wholly or partially within the boundaries of the constituency;
 - c) The Party's ratified candidates for the constituency;
 - d) Those members of the Management Committee who reside in the constituency.
- 5.4. The functions of a Constituency Council shall be as follows:
- a) To promote the policies of the Party in the constituency;
 - b) To co-ordinate the work of the branches in the constituency;
 - c) To organise new branches of the Party in the constituency, as approved by the Management Committee;
 - d) To create and maintain in the constituency an effective electoral organisation;
 - e) To ensure the effective delivery of the Party's campaign in Parliamentary and Assembly elections and set up election directorates as required;
 - f) To receive reports from MPs and/or MLAs on Parliamentary, Assembly, constituency activities and other political matters.
- 5.5 Where there is only one branch of the Party in a constituency, the branch shall perform the functions of a constituency council.
- 5.6 Each constituency council is required to forward for each year a statement of the financial position of the constituency council to the Registered Party Treasurer in compliance with the Political Parties Elections and Referendum Act 2001.

CLAUSE SIX: DISTRICT EXECUTIVE

6.1 A district executive of the Party shall be formed in each district council area. Its membership shall be constituted as follows:

- a) Delegates from each branch in the district council area according to the following scale:

Membership	No. of Representatives
10-30	2
31-60	3
61-90	4
91-120	5
121-150	6

and additional delegates in these proportions. Branch representation, at any time, shall be determined by the membership registered at Party Headquarters at December 31 of the previous year.

- b) Members of the Management Committee and members of the Assembly/Parliamentary Group resident in or representing all or part of the district council area;
 - c) Members of the district council who are members of the Party.
- 6.2 Each district executive shall hold an Annual General Meeting before March 31 at which it shall elect the following officers: chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, treasurer, youth organiser and other officers as it may deem necessary and transact any other relevant business. The registration date for members eligible to vote shall be December 31 of the previous year. The chairperson shall not be a publicly elected representative for the council area. It shall in addition, hold a minimum of four business meetings during the year, one of which must be held in advance of the council’s annual general meeting.

6.3 The functions of a district executive shall be as follows:

- a) To assist and support the Party’s councillors on the district council and other public bodies;
- b) To oversee the council group’s nominations for the positions of mayor/chair and deputy mayor/deputy chair.
- c) To provide a means of communication between the Party’s councillors and the branches;
- d) To receive reports from the council group and councillors on their constituency and council activities;
- e) To ensure effective delivery of the Party’s campaign in local government elections;

- f) To make suggestions to the Management Committee on contesting elections, the number of candidates and the ratification of candidates;
 - g) To receive advice and instructions from the Management Committee on preparations for elections, conduct of campaigns and on nominations for positions within the district council;
 - i) Each district executive is required to forward for each year a statement of the financial position of the district executive to the Registered Party Treasurer in compliance with the Political Parties Elections and Referendum Act 2000.
- 6.4 Where there is only one branch of the party in the district council area the branch shall perform the functions of a district executive.
- 6.5 In circumstances where a councillor or the district executive has a grievance it shall be referred to the Management Committee.

CLAUSE SEVEN: THE PARTY CONFERENCE

- 7.1 The Party Conference shall be the supreme governing authority in the Party. It exercises direction and control of the policy, organisation and administrative affairs of the Party. It shall be the duty of each member and section of the Party to promote the policies decided by the Party Conference.
- 7.2 The Conference shall be held each year on a date to be determined by the Management Committee.
- 7.3 A Special Conference will be held if the Management Committee so decides or if at least ten branches so request the Management Committee.
- 7.4 The Conference shall be constituted as follows:
- a) Delegates appointed by each branch in accordance with the following scale:

Membership	No. of Delegates
10-20	2
21-30	3
31-40	4
41-50	5
51-60	6
61-70	7
71-80	8
81-90	9
91-100	10
101-110	11
111-120	12
121-130	13
131-140	14
141-150	15

and additional delegates in these proportions. Delegate entitlement shall be determined by Party membership registered at Party Headquarters on the 31 December of the previous year;

- b) Members of the Management Committee;
 - c) The Honorary President;
 - d) Members of the Assembly Parliamentary Group and Members of the Association of SDLP Councillors;
 - e) Two members selected by SDLP Youth;
 - f) Two members selected by the SDLP Women;
 - g) Two members selected by SDLP LGBT+;
 - h) Two members from each of the Support Groups.
- 7.5 Each delegate attending the Conference shall have one vote.
- 7.6 Party members who are not delegates have the right to attend and speak at the Conference but will not have voting rights.
- 7.7 Only branches (other than new branches) which have paid the appropriate membership fees and branch affiliation fees to Headquarters by December 31 of the previous year shall be entitled to send delegates to the Conference. Delegate entitlement for new branches formed after 31 December will be determined by the Management Committee.
- 7.8 Each delegate attending the Conference must be a fully paid-up member of the Party, which, for public representatives, includes the payment of the appropriate levy as determined by the Management Committee.
- 7.9 Motions for the Conference and amendments to motions may be submitted by the Management Committee, the Party Council, the Assembly/Parliamentary Group, branches, the Association of SDLP Councillors, the SDLP Groups and the Support Groups.
- 7.10 Motions shall be received by the Standing Orders Committee not less than seven weeks before the Conference. The preliminary agenda shall be circulated to branches not less than six weeks before the Conference. Amendments to motions shall be submitted to the Standing Orders Committee and the names and addresses of delegates nominated to the Conference shall be received by the Management Committee not less than four weeks before the Conference. The Conference Agenda, credentials and other documents shall be circulated to those entitled to attend the Conference not less than one week before Conference. Emergency motions may be submitted with the consent of the Conference.

CLAUSE EIGHT: GENERAL MEETINGS

- 8.1 An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held in the period from September to December each year. There shall not be more than 15 months between AGMs.
- 8.2 The AGM shall:
- a) Receive and consider reports from:
 - i. the Party Leader;
 - ii. the Management Committee;
 - iii. the Party Treasurer;
 - iv. the International Secretary;
 - v. the Assembly/Parliamentary Group;
 - vi. the Association of SDLP Councillors;
 - vii. the SDLP Groups;
 - viii. the Support Groups.
 - b) Appoint the auditors of the Party's accounts;
 - c) Consider motions which propose amendments to this Constitution;
 - d) Consider motions in respect of the organisation of the Party;
 - e) Any other business, as specified by the Management Committee in the notice of the meeting.
- 8.3 The Party Officers shall each be elected at the Annual General Meeting by secret ballot using the Single Transferable Vote. The Party Officers are: chairperson, vice-chairperson, international secretary and treasurer.
- 8.4 The Annual General Meeting shall elect five members to serve on the Management Committee by secret ballot using the Single Transferable Vote.
- 8.5 Candidates for Party Office and Management Committee shall be nominated by branches. The Management Committee shall be informed in writing of such nominations and receive the written consent of the candidates at least seven weeks before the date of the Annual General Meeting. The names of the candidates shall be circulated along with the preliminary agenda.
- 8.6 A Special General Meeting (SGM) shall be called either by resolution of the Management Committee or by the Management Committee at the written request of 10 branches, stating the purpose of the meeting. 28 days notice must be given for a SGM and the SGM will have authority to discuss only those items of business in the notice of meeting. If it is intended to consider amendments to this Constitution at a SGM, the notice period, procedures and timescales in the next paragraph shall apply.
- 8.7 Those entitled to attend, and vote at, General Meetings, and the procedures and timescales for submitting motions, shall be the same as the provisions in respect of the Party Conference, as set out in Clause 7 of this constitution.

CLAUSE NINE: STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

- 9.1 A Standing Orders Committee of five members shall be elected by delegates at each Annual General Meeting. The election shall be by secret ballot using the Single Transferable Vote. Members shall be nominated by branches. The Management Committee shall be informed in writing of such nominations and receive written consent of the candidates. A member of the Management Committee and a member of the Assembly/ Parliamentary Group will also serve on the Standing Orders Committee. The Committee shall be chaired by the member appointed by the Management Committee. If there are fewer than two of each gender on the Standing Orders Committee, elected at the Party's Annual General Meeting, the Management Committee shall co-opt additional members to ensure gender balance.
- 9.2 The purpose of the Standing Orders Committee is to submit a report to Conference and the Annual General Meeting on the agenda and rules for debate and to oversee the elections at the Annual General Meeting.

CLAUSE TEN: THE PARTY COUNCIL

- 10.1 The Party Council shall consist of: The Management Committee, two representatives from the Assembly Parliamentary Group, one councillor from each council group, one nominee from each district executive, one nominee from each constituency council, two representatives from each of the party groups and one representative from the support groups set up by the Management Committee. Party members who are not delegates have the right to attend and speak at the Party Council but will not have voting rights.
- 10.2 The Management Committee will convene meetings of the Party Council at least twice per year and will set the agenda. The Chairperson or in their absence the Vice Chairperson will chair Party Council.
- 10.3 The Party Council shall be a forum for party-wide political discussion within the Party between conferences. It shall receive reports from each standing committee, the Association of SDLP Councillors, the Assembly Parliamentary Group, SDLP Women, SDLP Youth and SDLP LGBT+, review performance and consider developments in party policy since the previous Party Conference/Annual General Meeting.

CLAUSE ELEVEN: THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- 11.1 There shall be a Management Committee which shall have authority over all party matters in between Party Conferences and Annual General Meetings except those specifically allocated to others elsewhere in this Constitution. The Management Committee will appoint Standing Committees as it sees necessary to develop election planning and organisation and other committees as it sees fit. The Management Committee will direct and co-ordinate the work of the Party's Standing Committees. The Management Committee will ratify all decisions of the Standing Committees; those committees will only have autonomy of action when it is specifically granted by the Management Committee.
- 11.2 Membership of the Management Committee shall comprise: the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chief Whip, the Party Officers, five members elected at the Annual General

Meeting and two members nominated by the Party Leader. If there is a gender imbalance amongst the members of the Management Committee, including the Party Officers, elected by Conference, the Management Committee shall co-opt additional members to ensure gender equality.

- 11.3 The Management Committee shall present written reports to the Annual General Meeting and Party Conference.
- 11.4 The Management Committee will be chaired by the Party Chairperson or in their absence, the Vice-Chairperson.
- 11.5 The Management Committee shall devise rules governing grievance and discipline, including the establishment of a Rules and Discipline Committee to ensure party discipline. The Party Leader will appoint a Chairperson to the Committee who will be responsible for putting into operation the party's grievance and discipline procedures. The Chairperson of the Rules and Discipline Committee will be drawn from the Management Committee. Overall rules will be tabled for ratification by the Annual General Meeting and any subsequent working changes developed shall be tabled for subsequent ratification.
- 11.6 The Management Committee is the final point of appeal in relation to all internal disputes.
- 11.7 The Management Committee shall have responsibility for interpreting the Party Constitution.
- 11.8 The Management Committee shall meet monthly or additionally as required by the Party Leader.
- 11.9 The Management Committee shall have power either itself or by authorising the Party Officers on its behalf to:
 - a) buy freehold or leasehold land and to erect buildings thereupon and/or freehold or leasehold premises and to borrow money on the security thereof;
 - b) appoint trustees or a company to hold on behalf of this Party any land and property so acquired;
 - c) define the powers of any trustees or company so appointed and to lay down the manner in which such power shall be exercised;
 - d) sell freehold or leasehold land or other property;
 - e) grant or take a lease;
 - f) (i) To buy, hold or dispose of, in anyway whatsoever or borrow on the security of, any property both real or personal of whatsoever nature or kind or wheresoever situated and to appoint, if necessary, such trustees or company to facilitate such dealings;

(ii) To define the powers of any trustees or company so appointed in (f) (i) and to lay down the manner in which such power shall be exercised.

11.10 The Management Committee will appoint the Nominating Officer for Elections as required under the Political Parties Elections and Referendum Act 2000.

11.11 The Management Committee shall have power to delegate tasks and functions.

CLAUSE TWELVE: STANDING COMMITTEES

12.1 There shall be two Standing Committees namely: The Organisation Committee and the Election Planning Committee.

12.2 Election Planning Committee and Organisation Committee

- a) The Election Planning Committee and the Organisation Committee shall each consist of four members from the Management Committee and one member appointed by the Party Leader. At least two of the four members selected from the Management Committee shall have been elected at the Annual General Meeting. Each committee will be chaired by a member from the Management Committee. The Management Committee and/or Party Leader may co-opt members to the Election Planning Committee and Organisation Committee.
- b) The Management Committee will define the roles and responsibilities for each committee as set up.

CLAUSE THIRTEEN: FINANCE

13.1. The financial year for all organs of the SDLP will be January to December each year.

13.2 The Party Treasurer will also act as the Registered Treasurer of the SDLP in order to comply with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

13.3 The Registered Party Treasurer will be responsible for the whole party's compliance with the Party's Financial Scheme as submitted to the Electoral Commission and outlined in Appendix 1.

13.4 The Party Treasurer will present an income and expenditure report to the Management Committee on a monthly basis.

CLAUSE FOURTEEN: ASSEMBLY/PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

14.1 The Assembly/Parliamentary Group shall consist of Members of the Legislative Assembly, Members of Parliament, Members of Oireachtas na hEireann and Members of the European Parliament who are members of the party.

14.2 The Assembly/Parliamentary Group shall have the power to make and amend its own rules and Standing Orders consistent with the Party Constitution.

14.3 The Assembly/Parliamentary Group shall provide written reports to the Party Conference, the Annual General Meeting and the Party Council.

CLAUSE FIFTEEN: LEADER, DEPUTY LEADER AND CHIEF WHIP

- 15.1. There shall be a Leader and Deputy Leader of the Party. The Leader and Deputy Leader shall each be separately elected at the Annual General Meeting by means of secret ballot, using the Single Transferable Vote.
- 15.2. Members of the Party, registered by headquarters as paid up members at the registration date shall be entitled to vote for the Leader and Deputy leader. The result of the ballot will be announced at the Annual General Meeting. Members aged 18 and over must be on the electoral register as determined by the electoral register published by the Electoral Office not more than three months prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting. The registration date for members eligible to vote shall be December 31st of the previous year save for new members registered at party headquarters in the calendar year in which the election is held. All new members must also have been registered at party headquarters for a minimum of six months prior to the date of the election. Members eligible to vote shall be paid up members of the party at the date of the election.
- 15.3. The Management Committee will draw up the procedures to be used for the election of a Leader and Deputy Leader, including a schedule and arrangements for postal voting. Such procedures and arrangements will be reviewed by the Management Committee on an annual basis and tabled for ratification at the Annual General Meeting.
- 15.4. Candidates for the position of Leader and Deputy Leader must be members of the Assembly/Parliamentary Group and must be nominated by at least five branches of the Party, such nominations to be forwarded at least seven weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- 15.5. In the event of a casual vacancy, between Annual General Meetings, for the position of Leader, the Deputy Leader shall act as Leader until a Special General Meeting convened by the Management Committee takes place. In the event of a vacancy occurring for Deputy Leader the members of the Assembly/Parliamentary Group and the Management Committee shall elect an Acting Deputy Leader, using the Single Transferable Vote, from the members of the Assembly Parliamentary Group until the next Annual General Meeting.
- 15.6. There will be a Leader's Office. Through this office the Leader will exercise responsibility for the political development and management of the Party. The Leader's Office will operate from Party Headquarters.
- 15.7. The Leader will appoint Policy Spokespersons and the Chief Whip.
- 15.8. The Leader will prepare reports for the Management Committee, the Party Council, the Annual General Meeting and the Party Conference.
- 15.9. The Leader (or whomever the Leader may from time-to-time designate) will be the Nominating Officer in the Assembly.
- 15.10. The Leader or Deputy Leader shall report to the Assembly/Parliamentary Group.

15.11 The Deputy Leader shall assist, support and deputise for the Leader in promoting the Party and its values.

15.12 The Chief Whip shall be responsible for ensuring discipline and promoting good performance by all the party's representatives and candidates. The Chief Whip may also make recommendations on other disciplinary matters in the party.

CLAUSE SIXTEEN: HONORARY PRESIDENT

16.1. The Management Committee may, in recognition of outstanding service to the Party, appoint an Honorary President for a period of three years.

CLAUSE SEVENTEEN: ASSOCIATION OF SDLP COUNCILLORS

17.1 The Association shall consist of all SDLP district councillors.

17.2 The Association shall have the power to make and amend its own rules and Standing Orders consistent with this Constitution. These rules should address attendance at meetings, commitment to the party organisation at local level and participation in the development of the party at all levels. Members of the Association are bound by the conditions of the nomination pledge signed by the candidates. Quality of adherence will influence ratification of nomination for re-selection.

17.3 The Association of SDLP Councillors shall report to the Party Council, the Annual General Meeting and Party Conference.

17.4 The Association shall hold an Annual General Meeting before March 31 at which it shall elect the following officers: chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and Executive Committee.

17.5 Councillors shall report to branch/branches within the DEA which they represent and to the local district executive.

CLAUSE EIGHTEEN: SDLP GROUPS

18.1 The Annual General Meeting shall have the authority to establish groups of the Party in addition to SDLP Women, SDLP Youth and SDLP LGBT+.

These groups shall be created, if there is a demand, to address the issues highlighted in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act as groups which need a focus for equality of opportunity. They shall be created by self-identifying members of minority groups or oppressed groups.

18.2 SDLP Groups will determine their own constitutions and will develop programmes of activity consistent with the Party Constitution.

18.3 SDLP Groups shall hold their Annual General Meetings before March 31 at which they shall elect the following officers: chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer and other officers as they deem necessary.

18.4 Membership of SDLP Women, SDLP Youth and SDLP LGBT+ shall be as follows:

- a) A full member of the Party under the age of 30 shall be entitled to membership of SDLP Youth.
- b) A full member of the Party who self-identifies as a Woman shall be entitled to membership of SDLP Women.
- c) A full member of the Party who self-identifies as a member of the LGBT+ Community shall be entitled to membership of SDLP LGBT+

18.5 Members can sign up to membership of the Party Groups upon payment of their annual membership fee.

CLAUSE NINETEEN: SUPPORT GROUPS

- 19.1 The Management Committee will have the power to establish support groups for the party outside of Northern Ireland.
- 19.2 Membership of these groups will be open to Associate members and branch members residing and/or working outside Northern Ireland.
- 19.3 The support groups will promote the activities and policies of the SDLP and where appropriate, act as a conduit with other political parties in the jurisdiction where they have been established.
- 19.4 The support groups will also help to raise funds for the SDLP as permitted under the Political Parties Election and Referendum Act 2000.
- 19.5 Each support group shall hold an Annual General meeting before March 31 at which it shall elect the following officers, who must be members or Associate members of the SDLP: chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer and other officers as it deems necessary.
- 19.6 Each support group shall each make an annual written report to the Party Council on their activities.
- 19.7 Members of Support Group will be entitled to attend and speak at the Annual General Meeting and the Party Conference.

CLAUSE TWENTY: INTEREST GROUPS

- 20.1 The Management Committee will have the power to establish interest groups for the party for members that share a common goal, interest or campaigning issue.
- 20.2 Members can sign up to membership of the Party Interest Groups upon payment of their annual membership fee.
- 20.3 Each interest group shall each make an annual written report to the Party Council on their activities.

CLAUSE TWENTY-ONE: SELECTION AND RATIFICATION OF CANDIDATES

21.1 A prospective candidate must be a member of the Party.

Parliamentary/Assembly Elections

21.2 The Party's candidates for any election based on parliamentary constituencies, other than the European constituency, shall be selected at a Selection Convention called for that purpose.

21.3 The selection convention shall be organised by the Management Committee which shall determine the procedures to be followed for the selection of candidates in each respective constituency following consultation with the constituency council. The Committee shall appoint the chairperson of the selection convention, who shall not be from the constituency, and other officials as required.

21.4 The selection convention shall consist of branch members of the party, aged 16 or over, registered by headquarters as paid up members living within the constituency. Members aged 18 and over must be on the electoral register for the constituency as determined by the electoral register published by the Electoral Office not more than three months prior to the date of the selection convention. The registration date for members eligible to vote shall be December 31st of the previous year save for new members registered at party headquarters in the calendar year in which the selection convention is held. All new members must also have been registered at party headquarters for a minimum of six months prior to the date of the selection convention. Members eligible to vote shall be paid up members of the party at the date of the selection convention. For a Parliamentary or Assembly Selection Convention to be valid at least 20 members must be in attendance and voting. In the event that a selection convention is inquorate, the Management Committee will select a candidate or candidates.

21.5 Candidates must be proposed and seconded in writing by members of the party living in the constituency.

21.6 The Management Committee, not less than one week, before the date of the selection convention, shall forward names of candidates to each member of the party registered by headquarters as paid up members living within the constituency on the registration date. The registration date shall be December 31 of the previous year. A list of members eligible to attend and vote at the selection convention shall be forwarded to the constituency council secretary in advance of the selection convention.

21.7 The candidate(s) will be elected by secret ballot using the Single Transferable Vote system.

21.8 The candidate(s) for election to the European Parliament shall be selected by secret ballot, using the Single Transferable Vote System, at a Special Conference to be decided by the Management Committee prior to the quinquennial elections to the European Parliament. Candidates for election must be members of the Party as of December 31 the previous year. Candidates must be proposed and seconded in writing by members of the Party and submitted to the Management Committee no

less than seven weeks before the date of Conference. In the event of a casual vacancy in the European Parliamentary constituency or in the candidacy for election a special Conference shall be convened by the Elections and Organisation Committee for the purpose of selecting a candidate and nominations for selection shall adhere to such a timetable as may be determined by the Management Committee.

District Council Elections

- 21.9 Candidates for District Council Elections in each district electoral area shall be selected at a General Meeting of branch members, aged 16 or over, residing in the district electoral area, on the registration date, called for that purpose. Members aged 18 and over must also be registered as an elector within the DEA as determined by the electoral register published by the Electoral Office not more than three months prior to the date of the selection convention. Such selection meetings shall be organised by the appropriate district executive with the approval of the Management Committee. The registration date for members eligible to vote shall be December 31st of the previous year save for new members registered at party headquarters in the calendar year in which the selection convention is held. All new members must also have been registered at Party Headquarters for a minimum of six months prior to the date of the selection convention. Members eligible to vote shall be paid up members of the party at the date of the selection convention. For a district council selection convention to be valid in any DEA at least 10 qualified members must be in attendance and voting. In the event that a selection convention is inquorate, the Management Committee will select a candidate or candidates. Each district executive must take all practical steps to ensure a gender balance if there are two or more candidates. The Management Committee shall draw up candidate selection criteria.
- 21.10 Names of candidates for each district electoral area must be forwarded to the relevant district executive not less than two weeks before the date of the selection convention. Candidates must be proposed and seconded in writing by party members resident within that district electoral area.
- 21.11 The Management Committee shall have power to make decisions on the contesting of elections, the number of candidates, the calling and if necessary the re-calling of selection conventions and the ratification of candidates. The Committee will draw up candidate selection criteria for all elections which may be tabled for subsequent ratification by the Annual General Meeting.
- 21.12 The Party Leader, in consultation with the Management Committee, shall have the power to add candidates to the official party ticket in any election.

CLAUSE TWENTY-TWO: AMENDMENT

- 22.1 This Constitution shall come into force immediately following the conclusion of the Special Conference held on 26 November 2016 and the Constitution of the Social Democratic and Labour Party adopted at the Special Conference held on 6 November 2004 (hereinafter referred to as 'the previous Constitution') hereby stands repealed.
- 22.2 Notwithstanding Section 1 of this Clause:
- a) The political party registered in Northern Ireland as the Social Democratic and Labour Party will continue in being under this Constitution as it did under the previous Constitution for the time being;
 - b) The Executive Committee, the Standing Committees, the Central Council and the Standing Orders Committee shall continue to exist with their powers, functions and duties as under the previous Constitution until the next Annual General Meeting of the Party (to be called by the Executive Committee as if that body were the Management Committee under this Constitution), at which point elections shall be held to the new bodies established to replace them in accordance with this Constitution;
 - c) The persons holding the positions outlined in Subsection (b) above shall likewise continue to hold their positions until those positions stand abolished in accordance with Subsection (b) above, at which point all of their terms shall be deemed to have concluded;
 - d) The positions and bodies of the Party (apart from those outlined in Subsection (b) above) which existed and were elected under the previous Constitution and which continue to exist under this Constitution shall continue to exist with their powers, functions and duties as under the previous Constitution until the next election thereof held in accordance with this Constitution;
 - e) The persons holding the positions outlined in Subsection (d) above shall likewise continue to hold their positions until the next election thereof held in accordance with this Constitution.
- 22.3 This Clause shall be deemed to stand repealed from 31 December 2017.



CONSTITUTION

Adopted at a Special Conference on Saturday, 26 November 2016

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