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Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL

Chair

Committee on Standards in Public Life

1 Horse Guards Road

London SW1A 2HQ

 **26th October 2020**

Dear Lord Evans,

Thank you for your letter of 16 September requesting an update on the steps the Green Party is taking to contribute to the elimination of intimidatory behaviour in politics.

We take the issue of intimidation very seriously. Intimidatory behaviour undermines our democracy and particularly inhibits the political participation of those, such as women, non-white people, disabled people, LGBTIQA+ people and immigrants, who are already underrepresented in public life.

The Green Party is committed to doing all it can to tackle this pernicious phenomenon, both through our own actions and through co-operation with other political parties. I am very grateful for the Committee’s leadership and guidance in this effort.

I am pleased to be able to report that we have made progress on all ten of the Committee’s recommendations, and have further work underway to build on that progress. Details of the Green Party’s actions to fulfil each recommendation are included in the attached annex.

Please let me know if you require any further information, or if I can be of assistance in any way.

Yours sincerely,

**Amelia Womack**

Deputy Leader

Green Party of England and Wales

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| **Recommendation** | **Timeframe** | **Green Party actions** |
| 1Those in positions of leadership within political parties must set an appropriate tone during election campaigns, and make clear that any intimidatory behaviour is unacceptable. They should challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. | Immediately | The Co-Leaders and Deputy Leader of the Green Party very deliberately set a positive tone for the General Election campaign in 2019, and commit to doing so again in the upcoming local elections and all subsequent campaigns.We politely spoke to other parties where there was questionable behaviour and were able to take feedback where it related to any of our campaigners. The leadership commits to challenging any intimidatory behaviour that may arise in the future. |
| 2Political parties must proactively work together to tackle the issue of intimidation in public life. | Immediately | Our deputy leader, Amelia Womack, has been on the committee challenging intimidation in public life since 2017 and is committed to building those relationships. She also works with a women's group where she works with MP’s from all parties to call out misogyny in public life. |
| 3Political parties should set clear expectations about the behaviour expected of their members, both offline and online through a code of conduct for members which specifically prohibits any intimidatory behaviour. Parties should ensure that members are familiar with the code. The consequences of any breach of the code should be clear and unambiguous. | Within one year | We are able to report that we have a Code of Conduct and that it has been updated.The policy that mostly closely meets this objective is the following section of the CoC:*3 Representing the Party**In order to preserve the reputation of the party, members must: [...]**3.5 Maintain civilised standards of conduct towards others such as political opponents when**acting in a Party capacity.**Regarding consequences, the Code says only that**1.3 [...] A serious breach of this code could lead to disciplinary action.*The code has been actively promoted by the leadership to party members including through a party conference speech. |
| 4Political parties must ensure that party members who breach the party’s code of conduct by engaging intimidation are consistently and appropriately disciplined in a timely manner. | Immediately | The Green Party adopted a revised Standing Orders for Party Discipline in 2019 to improve the disciplinary process and ensure any breaches of party rules will be dealt with effectively, fairly and timeously. |
| 5Political parties must collect data on the number of complaints against members for engaging in intimidatory behaviour, and the outcome of any disciplinary processes which result from these complaints. | Within one year | The Green Party maintains a thorough record of complaints and their outcomes. Work is proceeding on a more sophisticated database to manage these records and facilitate quantitative analysis of that data. |
| 6Leaders of political parties should always call out intimidatory behaviour, even when it is perpetrated by those in the party’s fringes. Fringe group leaders and spokespeople should immediately denounce any intimidatory behaviour on the part of their members or supporters. | Immediately | The Co-Leaders and Deputy Leader commit to dealing swiftly with intimidatory behaviour, and in particular to publicly repudiating any intimidation perpetrated by a person who speaks for, or claims to speak for, the Green Party or any part thereof. |
| 7The political parties must work together to develop a joint code of conduct on intimidatory behaviour during election campaigns by December 2018. The code should be jointly enforced by the political parties. | Joint code should be drawn up within one year – it should be enforced beginning at the next general election. | Amelia has met with the Jo Cox Foundation to share our position on the potential joint code of conduct. She has also shared with relevant sections of the party for information.She continues to work with CSPL.We would welcome working with other parties to draw up a shared code |
| 8Political parties must take steps to provide support for all candidates, including through networks, training, and support and resources. In particular, the parties should develop these support mechanisms for female, BAME, and LGBT candidates who are more likely to be targeted as subjects of intimidation. | Before the next general election (progress should be made well before the next fixed general election date of 2022.) | The Green Party’s training programmes work on a regional and national basis. Some regional parties have set the standard of supporting diverse candidates with networking groups and training, which is being expanded out through the party. This support works to encourage women to stand and provide a group where they can feed back any issues they may be having as a result of the campaign. We have taken action to support candidates who have experienced intimidation.We have a national campaign training that analyses diversity to support diverse teams. We also have provided ring fenced money during General Elections to remove the barriers to diverse candidates standing.Greens of Colour also have ring fenced money to help support BAME candidates. |
| 9Political parties must offer more support and training to candidates on their use of social media. This training should include: managing social media profiles, block and mute features, reporting content, and recognising when behaviour should be reported directly to the police. | At the next general election (progress should be made well before the next fixed general election date of 2022.) | Extensive training for candidates, including on matters of online and offline safety, will be embedded in the Green Party’s operational strategy for the next General Election. In addition, guidance on these matters will be included in a new social media policy, which is under development. |