ENGLAND AND WALES REGIONAL COMMITTEE

STANDING ORDERS

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1. Introduction

1.1 These Standing Orders are designed as a highway code for existing and prospective members of the England and Wales Regional Committee and for the staff responsible for supporting that Committee’s various activities. They have been prepared with a relatively light touch. The text was agreed by the Regional Committee in …… and accepted by STEP’s Constitution Committee in ……..

1.2 The provisions set out in this document are not exhaustive: additions and other amendments will be for the Regional Committee to propose and STEP Worldwide to agree (see clause 13 below).

1.3 The chairman or deputy chairman of the Regional Committee and its sub-committees may use the term ‘chair’ or ‘chairperson’ if that is their individual preference.

1.4 This document should be read in conjunction with:
The Branch Manual
The Branch Regulations
The Guidelines for Regional Elections

2. **Status**

The Regional Committee is a committee of STEP Council, which sets (and may amend) the Committee’s remit. It is answerable to Council.

3. **Remit**

3.1 The Regional Committee is responsible, under the authority of Council, for overseeing and co-ordinating the strategic direction of STEP activity in England and Wales. It has financial authority over the devolved budget for the region. It puts an operational plan to Council in the spring of each year, to cover the following 12-24 months.

3.2 The Branch Manual (clause 1.10.3) lists the various types of activity with which Regional Committees will normally be concerned:

(i) Reports from branches concerning their activities, financial position and membership.

(ii) Issues raised by branches with significance for more than one branch or with policy implications.

(iii) Conferences, seminars and other programmes which may be organised nationally and involve more than one branch.

(iv) Development of a regional website.

(v) Production of material for the STEP Journal.

(vi) Co-ordination of advertising in the newsletter, and a career service for STEP members.

(vii) Distribution of information produced by branch programmes to other branches for consideration by them in designing future programmes and for publishing on the website.

(viii) Technical matters of regional significance such as taxation.

(ix) Promotion of the STEP organisation on a regional basis, by various methods including possibly advertising and endorsements of professional publications (see guideline on endorsements) and through the media.

(x) Design and administration of the Experienced Practitioner, Qualified Practitioner (Thesis), and Examination routes to entry. This could include awarding regional prizes to Diploma and QP students.

(xi) Support for student members and full members post-qualification.

(xii) Maintaining national mailing lists, in support of the branches.
(xiii) Interacting with other bodies and organisations which are organised on a national basis.
(xiv) Assisting branches with financial support and other matters.
(xv) Representing members’ interests on a regional basis to STEP Council.

Many of the above functions will be carried out by sub-committees (as provided for in clause 12).

3.3 Relations with branches will be nurtured in a variety of ways, and not least through the appointment of a branch ambassador. A role description shall be prepared by the chairman for the holder of this post and shown to the Regional Committee. Prospective visits to branches – whether by Regional Committee members, other Members of the Society, or staff – should where appropriate be notified to the branch ambassador (for the purposes of co-ordination), as should any significant points arising in the course of such visits.

3.4 The annual finance cycle will typically adopt the following pattern:

- chairman and treasurer to prepare the budget in consultation with relevant STEP managers
- Council agrees the budget
- throughout the year, chairman and treasurer to monitor expenditure and to agree with relevant STEP managers any necessary adjustments to the budget
- regular financial reports to the Management and Finance Committee and Council, as part of STEP Worldwide’s management accounts
- annual audit, as part of STEP Worldwide’s annual accounts

3.5 Clauses 1.10.4-10 of the Branch Manual illustrate the types of expenditure that regions may incur and detail five principal ways in which they may access funding:

- conferences and programmes
- sponsorship
- advertising
- endorsements
- contributions from branches

4. **Composition**

4.1 STEP England and Wales is composed of 23 branches in 6 constituencies, as follows:
East
Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire
Cambridge
Essex
Kent
Norwich and Norfolk
Suffolk and North Essex

London
City of London
London Central

North-East
East Midlands
North-East and Cumbria
Yorkshire

North-West
Birmingham
Liverpool
Manchester

South
Bournemouth
Central Southern
Surrey
Sussex

Wales and West
Bristol
Gloucestershire and Wiltshire
Thames Valley
Wales
West of England

4.2 All constituencies except London, and each of the two London branches, shall elect two members affiliated to them to be members of the Regional Committee, one of them to serve on Council. The Regional Committee will therefore comprise fourteen elected members.

4.3 The Regional Committee may co-opt a maximum of three further members, on the basis of function rather than geography. A role description shall be prepared by the chairman for each co-optee and shown to the Regional
Committee. Co-options shall be renewable every twelve months, following review after the annual elections.

4.4 The members of the Regional Committee should so far as possible reflect the balance of professions within the STEP Membership in England and Wales. They should ideally have had previous experience on a branch committee.

4.5 Individual members shall identify alternates from their constituency, following consultation with the branch chairmen in that constituency, and notify the secretariat.

5. **Officers**

5.1 The members of the Regional Committee shall elect a chairman, one or two deputy chairmen and a treasurer from amongst their number.

5.2 The chairman shall serve as deputy chairman in the year preceding and the year following his or her tenure as chairman.

5.3 The Regional Committee may from time to time decide to appoint other officers, to cover functions such as external relations, membership (including student membership), member relations, programmes or technical matters (see Branch Manual, clause 1.10.2).

5.4 The chairman shall have observer status at meetings of Council (if he or she is not a full member of that body), and shall be responsible for ensuring the provision of appropriate reports to Council on activities within England and Wales.

5.5 All officers should familiarise themselves with the Code of Best Practice for Regional and Branch Officers.

6. **Secretariat**

STEP Worldwide will ensure that the necessary director-level and secretarial support is provided to the Regional Committee. This support will include:

- making any necessary practical arrangements for the meetings of the Regional Committee and sub-committees and for other events
- preparing agendas and Minutes (in collaboration with the chairman)
- monitoring follow-up actions
- providing relevant financial information
- running Regional Committee elections, and maintaining records in relation to those elections and to terms of office
- maintaining records in relation to branch officers’ terms of office
- maintaining attendance records
- ensuring effective communications with branches

7. **Elections**

It shall be for the secretariat to organise the proper conduct of elections. The timetable will need to accommodate the following:

- Inform all Regional Council members of the vacancies and timetable
- Request for nominations
- Receipt of nominations
- Circulation of ballot forms (if vacancies are contested)
- Receipt of ballot forms (if vacancies are contested)
- Publication of results

Candidates for re-election shall be subject to the same process as those standing for the first time.

8. **Terms of office**

8.1 Officers and members of the Regional Committee shall normally take up their appointments at the end of STEP’s AGM. It is open to the Regional Committee to agree a different date.

8.2 The term of office on the Regional Committee of those members who also serve on Council shall be co-terminous with their Council membership, and subject to any necessary re-elections. The term of office of the non-Council members shall mirror that of the Council members elected by their respective regions or London branches.

8.3 The chairman may serve for a maximum of two terms of up to two years each.

9. **Casual vacancies**

It shall be for the Regional Committee to decide whether and when to fill casual vacancies that may arise amongst the elected or co-opted officers and members, following the established processes for such appointments. One option will be to co-opt the identified alternate until the next round of elections.
10. **Meetings**

10.1 The frequency and location of its meetings shall be for the Regional Committee itself to determine. The normal pattern will be for quarterly meetings, some in London and some elsewhere.

10.2 The quorum shall be five members or a third of the membership, whichever is the higher. Votes shall be passed by a simple majority of members present. In both cases members attending by telephone shall be counted in.

10.3 It is a condition of agreeing to stand for election to the Regional Committee that a member will normally be able to attend its meetings.

When this is not possible the identified alternate may attend instead.

Three consecutive absences from the Regional Committee’s meetings shall lead to a review (led by the chairman) of the individual’s continuing membership.

10.4 The Chief Executive of STEP and other members of the STEP Worldwide staff may attend the meetings of the Regional Committee, with speaking rights. Other observers may attend part or all of any meeting at the invitation of the chairman. Branch officers should be particularly encouraged to consider attending.

10.5 A typical agenda for the Regional Committee’s meetings will consist of the following items:

- Minutes and matters arising
- Updates
  - STEP Worldwide business plan
  - E&W operational plan
  - Finance report
  - Marketing and membership
  - Conferences and events
  - Education
  - Public policy, media and communications
  - E&W committees
  - Special Interest Groups
  - STEP Worldwide committees
- Branch issues
- Student issues
As many as possible of the agenda papers should be circulated a week before the meeting.

11. **Events**

Events organised by the Regional Committee may include:

- branch chairmen’s assembly
- training days (e.g. ‘how to run a successful branch’, a press awareness day, or an event for branch programme secretaries)

12. **Sub-committees**

12.1 The Regional Committee may establish and close sub-committees. Terms of reference for such groups shall be prepared on behalf of the Regional Committee; these shall spell out appropriate reporting requirements. Sub-committee chairmen may or may not be members of the Regional Committee. All members shall be appointed by the Regional Committee.

12.2 The following sub-committees are currently in existence:

- AML taskforce
- Conference committee
- Probate and estates committee
- Technical committee

Special interest groups, and sub-committees for matters such as the preparation of budgets and the development of business plans, may also be established from time to time.

13. **Amendment**

Once agreed by the Regional Committee, any proposals for amendments to these Standing Orders should be sent to STEP’s Head of Governance, who has responsibility for ensuring that all such proposals are referred for consideration by the appropriate body within STEP.