

Green Party announces details of independent investigation



Green Party

1 September 2018

The Green Party has announced the details of an independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding Aimee Challenor's father being able to act as her election agent while facing charges for serious sexual assault against a minor.

The party has instructed Verita to lead the investigation, and has published the terms of reference [1].

A Green Party spokesperson said:

"The Green Party of England and Wales has today formally instructed Verita to lead the independent investigation into the circumstances which allowed David Challenor to act as an election agent for his daughter while facing serious sexual assault charges against a minor.

"Verita are one of the country's leading independent consultancies, specialising in carrying out objective investigations of complex and often sensitive issues in a thorough and progressive manner. We are confident they are the right choice to help us ask the difficult questions needed.

"The investigation – which is entirely independent – will start immediately and is expected to conclude in November.

"The Green Party takes its safeguarding responsibilities and duties of care extremely seriously. The investigation will identify the facts as well as where failures occurred so that the party can learn any lessons needed and take the appropriate and necessary action.

"The terms of reference for the investigation are publicly available. The Green Party will not be commenting any further on the investigation while it is active."

Notes:

1.

Independent investigation into the Green Party's actions following the allegations and charges brought against David Challenor: Terms of reference

The client

This investigation has been commissioned by the Acting Chair of the Green Party Executive (GPEX), the co-chairs of the Green Party Regional Council (GPRC), and the leadership team of GPEW.

Purpose of the investigation

David Challenor was charged by Police with serious sexual offences in November 2016. He was convicted in August 2018. In May 2017 and in May 2018 he acted as election agent for his daughter Aimee Challenor.

The purpose of the investigation is to examine the Party's response to the allegations and charges brought against David Challenor. The investigation will be completed in two stages. The aims of the inquiry are to:

Stage one

1. Establish a chronology of events from November 2016
2. Establish what actions, if any, were taken by members of the Party or staff to ensure that David Challenor's appointment as election agent was made in accordance with Party policy and procedures
3. Establish what actions, if any, were taken by members of the Party or staff to make colleagues aware of the substance of the allegations and/or charges against David Challenor
4. Establish which members of the Party or staff, if any, were made aware of these allegations and/or charges
5. Establish what actions, if any, were taken by members of the Party- voluntary officers or staff- after they became aware of this information
6. Establish to what extent action, if any, was taken to ensure appropriate safeguarding was maintained in the light of this information
7. Report on any other issues that arise that are relevant to the terms of reference

Stage two

8. Consider whether any form of disciplinary action should be considered against any member of the Party or staff
9. Consider whether any changes should be made to Party policies and procedures to strengthen them in the light of these events, and make any relevant recommendations
10. Consider whether any new policies or procedures need to be developed and implemented by the Party, and make any relevant recommendations

11. Summary report

Approach

The investigation will not form part of any disciplinary process that the Party may undertake, but the contents of the report may be used by the Party to inform any such process. The investigation team will carry out its work by reviewing relevant documents and, where the team considers it necessary, interviewing relevant Party staff, members, and voluntary officers in private. All the interviews will remain confidential, and the content of the transcripts will not be available to the client. The team will follow established good practice in the conduct of the work, for example by offering interviewees the opportunity to be accompanied and to comment on and amend the transcript of their interview.

Timetable

The inquiry will get underway immediately. The aim is to deliver the final report by mid-November and the date will be agreed once the scope and timetabling of the work are clear.

The report

The inquiry team will produce, for the client, a written report on its findings and recommendations for further action.

Publication

It is expected that the recommendations of the report will be published in some form. The client will decide (in consultation with Verita) the precise form of publication.

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