Frank Ward
Assistant General Secretary
TSSA, 2nd Floor
17 Devonshire Square
London EC2M 4SQ
email: wardf@tssa.org.uk
helpdesk: 0800 328 2673 (freephone)
www.tssa.org.uk

Circular 31/19 | 25 March 2019
Circulation to: Branches, SOGs and EC

ANNUAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE ITEM 57 – TSSA DEMOCRACY

The EC motion for Item 57, TSSA Democracy, is as follows:

That this Conference endorses the EC Report and instructs the EC to progress the appropriate actions	1 2

The report is attached.

Amendments (not more than one for each branch or SOG) may be submitted on the attached form, addressed to Pam Collins at the above address before **03 May 2019**. Please email a copy of the amendment text to support services@tssa.org.uk and soc@tssa.org.uk.

Item 57 EC REPORT – TSSA DEMOCRACY

1. INTRODUCTION	1
Following an inconclusive survey of branches, started at the end of 2017,	2
Annual Conference in 2018 agreed the EC's report on TSSA democracy (Item	3
E7) which called for the establishment of a working party consisting of	4
activists and supported by paid staff. The Working Party was asked to:	5
• Consider the proposals put forward by the EC alongside the various	6
responses received;	7
• Instigate whatever further consultation they deem necessary before	8
producing their recommendations.	9
• The proposals from the Working Party will then form the basis of a report	10
to Conference in 2019	11
• If agreed, this would subsequently be followed by a Special Delegate	12
Conference later that year to consider and agree any necessary rule or	13
guidance note changes that the EC would seek to apply where possible	14
from 1st January 2020 and would be endorsed at the outset of the 2020	15
Conference for authority.	16
This report reflects the discussions and conclusions reached by the TSSA	17
Democracy Working Party which has met on several occasions. At the end of	18
the report are four broad recommendations which at their heart are	19
aspirational and intended to improve TSSA's democracy.	20
2. TSSA DEMOCRACY WORKING PARTY'S INITIAL VIEWS	21
At the initial meeting we had a broad ranging discussion that not only looked	22
at responses to the 2017 branch survey but then went on to highlight issues	23
about:	24
• the lack of participation in TSSA elections (eg, to the EC);	25
• branches' role in democracy and the need for greater participation;	26
• online participation and the use of new and mobile technology;	27
• Conference participation by members and reps;	28
• reps having a role in TSSA democracy and the potential use of sector	29
meetings;	30
3. TSSA DEMOCRACY WORKING PARTY'S SECOND MEETING	31
In the subsequent meeting, discussion continued on three broad areas:	32
• Structure of Conference	33
• Involving TSSA reps in the union's democracy	34

• Divisional Councils	35
3.1 Structure of Conference:	36
Issue: The nature of the bureaucracy is restrictive and hinders participation:	37
• There is nothing in the Rule Book or Guidance Notes about how branches should engage with members in terms of Conference motions or the nomination of delegates. Only those who are familiar with the process know how it works and have access to it.	38 39 40 41
• Instead, there is a need to explain how the process works to encourage participation:	42 43
- how a member can produce a motion, submit it, the provision of templates, etc;	44 45
- how a member can put their name forward to be a delegate;	46
- how they can participate at a branch meeting deciding on motions and appointing delegates	47 48
On all of these things, there should be better guidance on the TSSA website.	49
Branches should also be obliged to;	50
- seek motions from members;	51
- publicise when they will be making decisions about which ones to adopt, and who will be the delegate(s).	52 53
These processes could be done via the website.	54
• Any changes need to recognise the ability of branches to be able to mandate delegates.	55 56
Issue: The time between submission of motions and when they are considered by Conference:	57 58
• Problem with length of time between consideration and submission of the branch motion and it actually being debated by Conference which can take six months! By that time, the issue may have been resolved, have changed or no longer be relevant because of a change in circumstances;	59 60 61 62
Issue: TSSA democracy created for an earlier age:	63
• Recognition that the TSSA system was created when most members worked for a single employer (British Rail) and at a time when national bargaining meant decisions at Conference could change union policy. That system is now obsolete and means that Conference has little relevance for staff reps in their workplace or company. Instead, there should be the opportunity for reps to be able to take issues to Conference and for it to be able to demonstrate its support for industrial matters as well as set policy around collective matters in specific companies or across sectors;	64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71

• Despite the previous point, the current mechanism does enable a fair debate and is an opportunity to participate for those who understand it.	72 73
The role of Standing Orders Committee:	74
• Recognition that maintenance of the SOC's independence is vital;	75
• However, timings at Conference should be re-considered by slowing down the first day – eg, SOC meeting with delegates should take place in the weeks before Conference with its processes done online. By slowing down, there may be an opportunity for a new delegates seminar;	76 77 78 79
Procedures at Conference:	80
• The use of fluent debates and less formality as a way to encourage participation. This could be through the use of topic debates where motions are grouped together, debated and then individually voted upon. A summary of the position would then be written up;	81 82 83 84
• Less formality should also be utilised via discussion style Q&As prior to a debate;	85 86
• Aspiration for a paperless Conference;	87
• Use of technology to enable participation (eg, iPads/tablets) – and ability for it to be updated constantly. Process required to be able to do this.	88 89
3.2 Involving TSSA reps in the union's democracy:	90
Issue: There is a hole in TSSA's democracy which needs to be plugged by involving reps and activists.	91 92
• Whilst some Conference delegates also hold a position as a staff rep (eg, industrial, health and safety, learning, equality, etc), there is no formal mechanism that allows reps to attend in that capacity.	93 94 95
• Industrial issues should be on Conference's agenda. Reps should have rights at Conference and issues should be considered at Conference rather than only at branch meetings;	96 97 98
• Involving reps would give an opportunity for TSSA to back contemporary matters whether at a company level or across a sector. It would also mean that reps can be expressly involved in the union's policy formation and decisions about campaign in the areas that concern them.	99 100 101 102
How to involve reps?	103
• Reps should be divided into Sectors (eg, TOC, Infrastructure, etc) to determine industrial issues for Conference and through this model have a role in Conference which would then determine the policy/campaign to deal with the concern;	104 105 106 107
• In the month before Conference, motions regarding industrial issues should be submitted in order to give TSSA backing for contemporary	108 109

matters. Matters could be company specific or across the Sector to determine/influence a national response;	110 / 111
• There could be one motion per Sector	112
• There would be a separate reps' debate like a staff side to determine the final version of industrial motions to be taken to Conference. To secure rep participation, consideration would be given to the use of technology (eg, Skype);	113 / 114 / 115 / 116
• Industrial motions from reps would be debated at Conference but, like the TUC's Equality Conference approach where motions are presented to Congress, they could not be amended;	117 / 118 / 119
• Consideration should also be given to enlarging the Executive Committee with 4 or 5 additional positions based on rep sectors;	120 / 121
• Process would be reviewed after two years.	122

3.3 Divisional Councils — 123

It is generally recognised that a number of Divisional Councils (DC) are facing problems in terms of maintaining and developing a functioning branch structure which underpins TSSA's democracy. A consequence of the gradual closure of branches is that that this situation is likely to worsen as areas covered by branches grow ever larger. DC's should be able to choose between the successful Irish model where Conference delegates are nominated by the Divisional Council or retaining an organisation whereby branches in the DC area send delegates. — 124 / 125 / 126 / 127 / 128 / 129 / 130 / 131

Changes to the Rule Book and Guidance Notes would be required to enable other DCs to pursue this model (eg, around selection of delegates and motions). — 132 / 133 / 134

4. Proposals — 135

Following on from the above considerations, the proposes that the Working Party should continue its work and produce a report for a Special Delegate Conference later in 2019 including suggested rule changes and revisions to guidance Notes. This report should address the following: — 136 / 137 / 138 / 139

Democracy 1: — 140
- Issue: Access by members to become the branch Conference delegate(s) and/or to propose motions to Conference. — 141 / 142
- Proposal: — 143
  1. Review the process for nominations and submission of motions to include through the TSSA website; — 144 / 145
  2. However, the branch would retain the same status as now regarding decisions about delegates and motions in its name; — 146 / 147

• Review to include consideration of potential changes to the Rule Book and Guidance Notes around:	148 149
1. Changes to timescales associated with Conference delegates and submission of motions to allow for member participation via website;	150 151
2. Reinforcing the democracy provisions for branches.	152

Democracy 2:
- Issue: Enabling topic debates
- Proposal:
  1. Branch/SOG motions would be submitted as now;
  2. SOC would decides on subject areas in which to group motions.
  3. All motions would be asked to cooperate and composite via group discussions;
  4. SOC would facilitate changes;
  5. SOC business would be moved from Conference;
  6. Voting on each motion would be after the topic debate;
  7. Electronic voting could be used – it would also provide accountability.

Democracy 3:
- Issue: Rep participation at Conference through Sectors.
- Proposal:

Bring forward changes to the Rule Book and Guidance Notes that would:
  1. Define Sectors in terms of groups covered (eg, Infrastructure, Operations, etc) and rights and responsibilities under Rule Book and Guidance Notes (akin to SOGs)
  2. Determine procedure for Sectoral Conferences where main issues would be chosen by consensus in month prior to Annual Conference (could be based on TSSA's Network Rail's Sector Conference);
  3. Propose number of reps from each Sector who can attend Conference
  4. Introduce additional EC members based on sectors;

Democracy 4:
- Issue: To enable Divisional Councils to exercise option to adopt Irish organisation model for Conference participation.
- Proposal:

EC to propose amendments to Rule Book and Guidance Notes to enable DCs to seek EC agreement to convert to Irish model. Criteria to be set ensure democratic participation in TSSA Conference.

Line numbers: 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182

.

This form must be signed by the Chair and Correspondence Secretary of the Branch. (In the absence of the Branch Chair and Correspondence Secretary, the form must be signed by two Branch Officers)

Name of Branch   …………………………......…….……......Branch

Number/SOG   …….....................

AMENDMENT TO ITEM 57 FOR 2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE AGENDA

NOT MORE THAN <u>ONE AMENDMENT TO ITEM 57</u> MAY BE SENT BY ANY BRANCH or SOG

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

Chair .... **Date of Branch meeting**...................
              Sign name   Print name

Correspondence Secretary ....
                                   Sign name   Print Name

THIS FORM MUST REACH HEAD OFFICE NOT LATER THAN 03rd of May 2019