

## Response from Andy Shadrack

### First submission sent on 25 January 2015

As a political scientist, with dual Canadian and British citizenship, I wish to formally request that Ofcom reconsider its "Review of major political parties for elections taking place on 7 May 2015 Consultation" publication and reformulate its decision based on data that is readily available to it.

Ofcom's exclusion of the Green Party as a Major Party in England and Wales, and Scotland and Northern Ireland for the May 7, 2015 UK Parliamentary election is contrary to evidence provided in:

1. Annex 2, A2.2, Figure 3, the Green Party elected an MP in the 2010 General Election, whereas UKIP did not. If you are going to recognize, in your text, that UKIP elected 2 MPs in by-elections after the 2014 European election then you need to be even handed and recognize in the text of your report that the Green Party elected its first UK Parliamentary MP four years before UKIP. Currently the spread for UKIP MPs projected to be elected to the next 650-member UK Parliament, among various election predictors, ranges from 3 to 9, and that for the Green Party 0 to 2.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election,\\_2015#Seat\\_predictions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_general_election,_2015#Seat_predictions)

In the big scheme of things there appears to be little difference between the two parties' potential seat allocation in the next UK Parliament, and it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the English Green Party could equal the number of UKIP MPs elected. Polling carried out by Lord Ashcroft for Brighton Pavillon and Norwich South and a cross comparison of local election results in 2013 and 2014 for Bristol West indicates that the Green Party is in contention for at least three seats:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_in\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_constituencies,\\_2010%E2%80%9315](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_in_United_Kingdom_constituencies,_2010%E2%80%9315)

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/council-and-democracy/election-results>

Yet Ofcom provides no analysis of the likely number of seats UKIP and the Green Party could potentially obtain in England.

2. With regard A2.4, Figure 5, in the three by-elections since the 2014 European election, in Newark (June 5th), Clacton (October 9th) and Rochester and Strood (November 20th), the Green Party vote surpassed that of the Liberal Democrats. Why does Ofcom's report focus on a fear that polling data might be under-representing the Liberal Democrats? A review of voter support levels is as follows:

Newark 2010 - Liberal Democrats 20%, 2014 - 2.6% (decline in voter support 87%)

Clacton 2010 - Liberal Democrats 12.9%, 2014 - 1.3% (decline in voter support 89.9%)

Rochester and Strood 2010 - Liberal Democrats 16.3%, 2014 - .9% (decline in voter support 94.5%)

This data signifies that Liberal Democrat support has steeply declined since 2010 and could still be declining below support levels achieved in the 2014 European election.

In contrast the Green Party ran no candidate in Newark in 2010 but still beat the Liberal Democrats with 2.7% in the 2014 by-election. In Clacton in 2010 the Green Party obtained 1.2% and increased that to 1.9% in the 2014 by-election. In Rochester and Strood in 2010 the Green Party obtained 1.5% of the vote and 4.2% in the 2014 by-election - a 350% increase. It appears that Green Party support is steadily rising, and is above that of the Liberal Democrats' level. Yet Ofcom states:

*"...the Liberal Democrats have achieved significant past electoral support in previous General Elections and English local (and mayoral) elections. They have 56 MPs in Parliament and are part of the Coalition Government at UK...Current (69) opinion polls indicate lower levels of support when compared with the Conservative Party and Labour Party. However, we consider that all the relevant evidence taken together suggests that the Liberal Democrats should remain on the list of major parties;"*

Ofcom has willfully ignored the declining trendline of voter support for the Liberal Democrats in various local government elections, the 2014 European election, and UK Parliamentary by-elections. In Australia the centrist Democrats have almost disappeared, and in Germany the centrist Free Democrats are finding it harder to meet the electoral threshold. However Ofcom, like an ostrich, buries its head in the sand and pretends that all is well with Liberal Democrat support when it clearly is not.

In contrast current 2015 UK Parliamentary seat predictors indicate that the regional based SNP may push the Liberal Democrats out of third place. The probable range for the Liberal Democrats is between 29 to 18 seats - a decline of between nearly 50% to 66%, and in line with declines that have taken place in Scotland and the 2014 European elections:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election,\\_2015#Seat\\_predictions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_general_election,_2015#Seat_predictions)

3. According to A2.5, Figure 7, the Green Party has obtained more English local election seats than UKIP in every year except 2013, including apparently 2014 according to Ofcom. Again if Ofcom is going to talk about UKIP local government successes in its text, then it should evenhandedly examine those for the Green Party as well.

4. According to A2.7, Figure 9, the Green Party surpassed the vote obtained by the Liberal Democrats in England, Wales and Scotland, and obtained three times more seats in England than the Liberal Democrats in the 2014 European election. Why does Ofcom not acknowledge the near total loss of Liberal Democrat seats in the 2014 European election?:

Liberal Democrats 2010 - 13.7% and 11 seats, 2014 - 6.61% and 1 seat (a decline of 51.8% in voter support and a decline in seats of 91.7%, including the loss from a defecting Conservative).

In contrast Green Parties of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland 2009 - 8.5% and 2 seats, 2014 - 7.6% and 3 seats (a decline in support of 10.6%, but an increase in

seats of 33%).

Why does Ofcom not acknowledge the fact that the Green Party in England went from 5th place, tied with the Scottish Nationalists and BNP with 2 seats in 2009, to fourth place and 3 seats in 2014? Meanwhile Ofcom does not acknowledge that the Liberal Democrats have declined from being the fourth largest country-wide party by representation to becoming sixth, sharing that spot with four other regional UK parties.

5. In Northern Ireland, Figure 10, the Green Party obtained more votes than the Conservatives but not UKIP, where neither Labour nor Liberal Democrats ran any candidates:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern\\_Ireland\\_%28European\\_Parliament\\_constituency%29#2014](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Ireland_%28European_Parliament_constituency%29#2014)

6. In the 2012 London elections, according to Figures 12 and 13, the Green Party exceeded the votes obtained by both the Liberal Democrats and UKIP in the mayoralty race, and exceeded the votes obtained by both the Liberal Democrats and UKIP in the top-up list - matching the Liberal Democrats in number of seats where UKIP obtained none.

Why does Ofcom not acknowledge the fact that the Green Party had more voter support in the London Assembly election than either the Liberal Democrats or UKIP?

Further, Ofcom completely fails to discuss the 2014 London Borough elections where the Liberal Democrats went from having 242 councillors on twenty of thirty-two councils in 2010 to 116 on fourteen in 2014. That is a 52.1% loss in council seats and a decline from having representation on 62.6% of councils to only 43.8%. In contrast UKIP now has 12 seats on three councils, having had none in 2010, and the Green Party has single seat representation on four - two of those, in Islington and Lewisham, representing the only elected opposition on council.

7. According to Figure 17, in 2011 the Green Party obtained 2 seats and 4.4% of the vote, as compared to the Liberal Democrats' 3 seats and 5.2% in the Scottish Assembly Election Regional Lists. Meanwhile UKIP obtained no seats. The Liberal Democrats also obtained two constituency seats, for a total of 5.

8. According to Figure 16, the Green Party obtained 8 seats in the 2012 Scottish Local Elections and UKIP none.

In 2007 the Liberal Democrats obtained 166 Scottish Council seats and 12.7% of the vote, but in the 2012 local elections that number of seats was reduced to 71 and voter support plummeted to 6.6% - a decline of 57% in seats and 52% in votes.

In contrast the Scottish Green Party obtained 8 seats and 2.2% support in 2007, but in 2012 increased that support to 14 councillors (not 8 as published by Ofcom) and 2.3% support:

<http://www.scottishelections.org.uk/scotland/l12/index.php>

Why does Ofcom refuse to acknowledge the electoral changes that are happening to the Liberal Democrats in Scotland?

9. According to Figure 18, in Northern Irish Local Elections the Green Party obtained 4 seats to the Conservatives', Liberal Democrats' and Labour's none, in which UKIP obtained three seats:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern\\_Ireland\\_local\\_elections,\\_2014#Results](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Ireland_local_elections,_2014#Results)

10. According to Figure 19, the Green Party has elected 1 representative to the Northern Ireland Assembly, whereas the Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats and UKIP have elected none.

By Ofcom's own published evidence it has been shown that the Green Party has elected representatives to the UK Parliament, Northern Irish and Scottish Assemblies, at a local government level in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland and London, and to the European Parliament from England. In particular Ofcom has failed to observe that in 2012 the Green Party matched the Liberal Democrats in number of London Assembly seats and then exceeded representation to the European Parliament from England by a factor of 3 in 2014. Thus in two significant England only elections, the Green Party has matched then come ahead of the Liberal Democrats in first 2012 and then 2014.

11. In A2.9 Ofcom makes the following statement:

*"We are not aware of any recent polls of support for the political parties in England only".*

At:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_in\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_constituencies,\\_2010%E2%80%9315#Amber\\_Valley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_in_United_Kingdom_constituencies,_2010%E2%80%9315#Amber_Valley)

...a review of Lord Ashcroft's and Survation/Unite individual constituency polling indicates a significant shift in Green and Liberal Democrat fortunes since the 2010 General Election, as evidenced by European, local election and by-election results since then.

Accordingly, Lord Ashcroft's polling informs that the Green Party will likely retain Brighton-Pavillion and come second to Labour in the currently held Liberal Democrat seat of Norwich South. This polling further informs that the Green Party might come third ahead of UKIP and the Liberal Democrats in Hove, fourth ahead of the Liberal Democrats in Lancaster-Fleetwood, third ahead of the Conservatives and UKIP in Manchester-Withington, fourth ahead of the Liberal Democrats in Plymouth Sutton-Devonport, and tie for third ahead of the Liberal Democrats in Stroud. A review of 2014 local and European Election results for 2014 would appear to confirm Lord Ashcroft's polling data trends as follows:

### **Norwich**

2014 Local Government Election: Labour 36%, Green 30.3%, Conservative 16.4%, Liberal Democrat 9.9% and UKIP 7.2%, with 21 seats Labour, 15 Green, and 3 Liberal Democrat:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwich\\_City\\_Council\\_election,\\_2014#Election\\_result](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwich_City_Council_election,_2014#Election_result)

2014 European Election: Labour 29.4%, Green 23.8%, UKIP 20.8%, Conservative 14.4%, Liberal Democrat 7.3% and Other 4.3%:

<http://www.norwich.gov.uk/YourCouncil/CouncillorsDemocracyAndElections/Elections/pages/ElectionServices.aspx>

(see PDF)

## **Lancaster**

2014 Local Government By-Elections: Green 37%, Labour 35%, Conservative 21.7%, Liberal Democrat 3.8% and other 2.4%, with both council seats going to Green:

<http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/news/2014/may/election-results/>

2014 European Election: UKIP 26.6%, Labour 24.7%, Conservative 24.65%, Green 14.8%, Other 4.9% and Liberal Democrat 4.3%:

<http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/elections-and-voting/elections-2014/>

(see pdf)

## **Manchester**

2014 Local Government Election: Labour 57.7%, Green 12.6% (coming second in 15 of 32 wards), Liberal Democrats 12%, Conservative 7.9%, UKIP 7.5% and Other 2.3%:

[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/362/elections\\_and\\_voting/4658/previous\\_election\\_results/3](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/362/elections_and_voting/4658/previous_election_results/3)

2014 European Election: Labour 51.4%, UKIP 16%, Green 12.4%, Conservative 8.2%, Liberal Democrat 6.9% and Other 5.1%

## **Stroud**

2014 Local Government Election: Conservative 36.8%, Labour 29.4%, Green 17.8%, UKIP 11.4%, Liberal Democrats 4.2% and Other .4%, with 22 seats for Conservative, 20 Labour, 6 Green, 3 Liberal Democrat and no UKIP.

<http://gloucesternewscentre.co.uk/live-results-local-elections-2014-stroud/>

2014 European Election: Conservative 30.1%, UKIP 24.5%, Labour 18.6%, Green 17.1%, Liberal Democrat 6.5% and Other 3.2%

<http://www.poole.gov.uk/your-council/elections-and-voting/european-parliamentary-elections-2014/>

(See PDF)

## **Plymouth**

2014 Local Government Election: Conservative 31.5%, Labour 30.9%, UKIP 30%, Green 4.1%, Other 2.6% and Liberal Democrat 1%

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/councilanddemocracy/elections/pcelections/pcelectionresults/pcelectionresults2014.htm>

2014 European Election: UKIP 37%, Conservative 23.5%, Labour 23.2%, Green 7.7%, Liberal Democrat 4.4% and Other 4.2%

<http://www.poole.gov.uk/your-council/elections-and-voting/european-parliamentary-elections-2014/>

## **Brighton and Hove\***

2014 European Election: Labour 26.9%. Green 24.5%, Conservative 20.6%. UKIP 18.7%, Liberal Democrat 5.3% and Other 3.9%

<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/council-democracy/voting-and-elections/EuropeanParliamentaryElections/default.aspx>

\*Brighton and Hove Local Government is split into three constituencies: Brighton Pavilion held by a Green MP, Brighton-Kemptown: Conservative, and Hove: Conservative.

As indicated above, results from the 2014 European and local election verify Lord Ashcroft's poll findings. This same Wikipedia site has also published sub-national survey results undertaken in England, Scotland and Wales by Lord Ashcroft, ICM, Ipsos-Mori and Comres in England, plus You Gov, Survation and Panelbase in Scotland:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election)

Accordingly, the statement made by OfcomIn at A2.9:

*"We are not aware of any recent polls of support for the political parties in England only"*

...though it may be a correct assessment of Ofcom's capability to do research and analysis, it is basically false to state that sub-national polling data does not exist for England:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#England)

Clearly polling data does exist at a sub-national England-only level and at a constituency England-only level. However Ofcom has simply failed to find and use it.

What is learned from this polling data is that, of 7 polls conducted in England between December 5th and January 18th, the Green Party averaged 7.86% and is statistically within the margin of error with the Liberal Democrats who averaged 9%. This is similar to the polling that occurred before the European Election in 2014 where voting results saw the Green Party surpass the Liberal Democrats in 9 of 11 English regions, and obtain a seat in London and the South West, whereas the Liberal Democrat representatives lost in all regions of the UK except South East England.

Again, Ofcom has failed to acknowledge that the juxtaposition of the Liberal Democrat and Green parties changed with the 2014 European election results in England, Scotland and Wales, and has continued to do so, as shown by the by-election results in Newark, Clacton, and Rochester and Strood.

Yet in footnote 97 Ofcom states:

*"From 1 June 2014 onwards the Polling Observatory model was adjusted due to concerns that: Liberal Democrat support was being underestimated"*

In contrast it is observed that the Liberal Democrats averaged 7.9% in the last 17 polls prior to the 2014 European election, and subsequently attained 6.9% voter support on election day:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_Parliament\\_election,\\_2014\\_%28United\\_Kingdom%29#2014](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Parliament_election,_2014_%28United_Kingdom%29#2014)

The data from polling results versus actual votes at the 2014 European election clearly indicate that Liberal Democrat polling support was overestimated, not underestimated. Ofcom's stated concern is therefore not borne out by observable social scientific data and thus becomes a wholly conjectural and biased statement that does not belong in a supposedly neutral government agency publication.

In terms of Scotland, six polls undertaken between December 9th and January 19th show that the Liberal Democrats are estimated to have support of between 3% to 7%, averaging 4.67%, and the Green Party 1% to 4%, averaging 3% . Again both parties are within the margin of error for a statistical tie. Likewise for Wales, between September 8th and December 3rd, the Liberal Democrats are found to be between 5% to 6% in three polls, while the Green Party ranges from 2% to 5%. Once more this is within the margin of error for a statistical tie.

The decision by Ofcom to publish Figures 21 and 22 is another example of this public body's appalling statistical sloppiness, and the statement at A2.11 becomes incomprehensible when one can find the following opinion poll data sets for the Green Party for the years 2010 through 2015 as follows:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#2015](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#2015)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#2014](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#2014)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#2013](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#2013)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#2012](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#2012)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#2011](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#2011)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#2010](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#2010)

In terms of data collection and available analysis, Ofcom's awareness of the material is clearly lacking compared to what the most cursory of observers can find using the Internet.

In relation to Question 1 a)

It is reprehensible that Ofcom, a supposedly neutral appointed government body, would publish and use Figures 21 and 22, and it is appalling that Ofcom would make the statement at A2.11

*"In carrying out our review, Ofcom noted that the various Great Britain-wide opinion polls typically included support for the Green Party in the 'Others' category."*

How does Ofcom explain that data on the Green Party is readily available for the period 2010 to 2015, along with an explanation for the methodology used on the same web page?

In 2010 Opinium and Harris appear to be the only pollsters not publishing separate data for the Green Party. In 2011, of over 343 polls found published on the above Wikipedia site, only 11, conducted by TNS-BMRB and Angus Reid, consistently appear to categorize the Green Party with Other. Thus, as early as 2011, 96.8% of polling data available to Ofcom was able to determine Green Party data separately.

In 2012 TNS-BMRB switched, after its May 5-7th survey, to making Green Party data available, while You Gov had only one poll September 30th/October 1st that categorized the Green Party with Other. In 2013 Lord Ashcroft had one poll May 31st/June 2nd that did not make Green Party data available. In 2014 TNS-BMRB had two polls that did not show Green Party data: July 15th/17th and June 10th/12th. Of 29 polls published so far in 2015, only six by Populous, Ipsos-Mori and Opinium show a statistically significant gap in favour of the Liberal Democrats. The rest, by You Gov, Lord Ashcroft, Ipsos-Mori and Populous, show a statistical tie. In 15 polls the Green Party was either ahead or tied with the Liberal Democrats:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#Poll\\_results](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#Poll_results)



In relation to question 1 b)

There is clearly significant electoral results evidence (London, European elections and three most recent by-elections) and recent polling data to support the Green Party being given the same Major Party status as the Liberal Democrats in England, and some evidence from the European election results and recent polling data to place the Liberal Democrats and Green Party at par in Wales and Scotland:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#Wales)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#Scotland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#Scotland)

In relation to question 2 a)

The Liberal Democrats obtained 20.1% support and 3 seats in Wales in the 2010 UK Parliamentary election, but only 3.95% support and no seats in the 2014 European election. In the 2011 Welsh Assembly elections, the Liberal Democrats lost 2 of 3 constituency seats and 28.4% voter support in the constituencies, and 31.6% support in the Regional top-up vote, but gained a seat. To call the Liberal Democrats in Wales a Major Party is at best dubious, and if the current polling is accurate then they should not have a higher status than the Green Party who had a larger share of the vote in the 2014 European election:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#Wales)

In the 2010 UK Parliament election, the Liberal Democrats obtained 11 seats and came fourth with 18.9% support of the voters in Scotland. However a year later the Party lost 9 of 11 constituency seats and 51% of its voter support in the Scottish Assembly elections. It further lost half of its Regional top-up seats and 54% of its voter support in the same election. Overall the Liberal Democrats lost 70.5% of their seats. In 2014 the Liberal Democrats lost 100% of their seats and 38.2% of their voter support in the European election in Scotland.

In contrast, Scottish Green Party voter support increased by 8% in the 2011 Scottish Assembly elections and the Party retained 100% of its seats. In the 2014 European election, voter support increased by 11% and surpassed the number of votes garnered by the Liberal Democrats. Further, recent polling data indicates that the Liberal Democrats and Scottish Green Party are potentially at par in voter support:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#Scotland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#Scotland)

If the Liberal Democrats are going to retain their Major Party status in Scotland after suffering such major seat losses and voter support declines in the Scottish Assembly, in local government and in the 2014 European election, then the Scottish Green Party should

be ranked at the same level.

In relation to question 2c):

The Green Party has three times as many seats in the European Parliament as the Liberal Democrats, having beaten them for number of votes in England, Scotland and Wales in that same election. They are now at statistical par in polling for the UK Parliamentary election and have also obtained more votes than the Liberal Democrats in three recent English UK Parliamentary by-elections. Clearly the Green Party should be granted the same status as the Liberal Democrats, and it is noted that The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian and YouTube have now invited the Green Party to join the Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats and UKIP in a five party debate.

In Canada the registered political parties have to file annual reports with the federal election regulator, and in this regard it is understood that the English and Welsh Green Party doubled its membership in 2014. Has Ofcom checked the relative membership size of the Liberal Democrats, UKIP and the Green Party, particularly in relation to the Conservatives and Labour?

In relation to Question 2d):

As much as one might disagree with UKIP's policies and values, the decision to make them a Major Party in England is correct but not without the Green Party being given the same status. How UKIP can be given a lesser status in Scotland than the Liberal Democrats when they obtained a seat in the 2014 European election and continue to poll above them questions the logic of Ofcom decision making. Either the Liberal Democrats are downgraded in Scotland, or UKIP and the Scottish Green Party should be upgraded, since UKIP, the Liberal Democrats and the Scottish Green Party are all currently polling at roughly the same level.

In relation to Question 3):

The proposed wording in 3.7 gives Ofcom too much discretionary power, when simply specifying a certain number of working days for a written response to a decision would do perfectly well instead.

In terms of A1.5, is Ofcom proposing that UKIP and the Green Party be granted the same number of PEBs as the BNP and English Democrats in England, and BNP, English Democrats and Christians UK-wide? And that BNP and the Christians be granted similar PEBs in Wales, and the Christians and TUSC (now TUSAC) be granted the same in Scotland?

In conclusion one is reminded of the comments of a BC Supreme Court Justice who, after reading the evidence upon which he had previously granted a Crown Prosecutor an injunction, stated:

"I am not saying that you set out to deceive me, but the truth is that I have been deceived."

That is how it feels when reading your "Review of major political parties for elections taking place on 7 May 2015 Consultation" publication. Just as the Supreme Court Justice dismissed his own injunction because it was granted upon false information, so should Ofcom's publication be reconsidered as it has reached erroneous conclusions based on compilation of false data analysis.

A cross comparison analysis of the rise in support for the German and Australian Green Parties indicates that, as voter support reaches 8% to 10%, the dynamics of that support can actually reach between one in ten and one in five in some regions and communities within a country. Further, support among 18-24 year olds starts to trend at 1 in 4. This is clearly the case in England where the number of elected Green Party councillors appears to be steadily increasing, especially in urban communities with post secondary institutions.

In the 2014 European election for example, the Green Party came second or third in numerous local government areas as follows:

Brighton and Hove 24.5% ahead of Conservative, UKIP and Liberal Democrat  
Norwich 23.9% ahead of Conservative, UKIP and Liberal Democrat  
Oxford 21.1% ahead of Conservative, UKIP, and Liberal Democrat  
Cambridge 19.9% ahead of Conservative and UKIP  
Bristol 19.3% ahead of Conservative and Liberal Democrat  
London, Hackney 17.5% ahead of Conservative, UKIP and Liberal Democrat  
South Hams (Devon) 17.2% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
Scilly Isles 16.4% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
Bath & North East Somerset 16.3% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
London Islington 15.5% ahead of Conservative, UKIP and Liberal Democrat  
London, Haringey 15.1% ahead of Conservative, UKIP and Liberal Democrat  
London, Lambeth 15.1% ahead of Conservative, UKIP and Liberal Democrat  
London, Lewisham 14.3% ahead of Conservative, UKIP and Liberal Democrat  
London, Camden 14% ahead of Conservative, UKIP and Liberal Democrat  
London, Southwark 13.2% ahead of Conservative, UKIP and Liberal Democrat  
Mid Suffolk 13.1% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
Mid Devon 12.9% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
West Dorset 12.5% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
Manchester 12.4% ahead of Conservative and Liberal Democrat  
Sheffield 12.2% ahead of Conservative and Liberal Democrat  
East Devon 12.1% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
Teignbridge 11.9% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
Isle of White 10.9% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
Waverley 10.6% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
London, Tower Hamlets 10.4% ahead of UKIP and Liberal Democrat  
Liverpool 10.3% ahead of Conservative and Liberal Democrat  
Chichester 10% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
North Dorset 10% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
Chiltern 9.4% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
East Hampshire 9.1% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
Wealden 9.1% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat  
Horsham 8.9% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat

New Forest 8.2% ahead of Labour and Liberal Democrat

Beyond the obvious decline for Liberal Democrats, it would appear that the Green Party has gained significant support in a number of cities and areas around England, a fact that Ofcom never acknowledges in their publication. For Ofcom it would appear that Green Party voter support has remained nearly static, when clearly it has not.

In Canada some pollsters have taken to charting political party support in terms of them being a voter's second choice in order to accurately assess a particular party's growth potential. In this instance a study of Ekos polling data undertaken by Simon Fraser University during the 2011 federal election found that between June 2010 and late April 2011 the Green Party as a second choice ranged from a low of 11% to a high of 20%, consistently matching and eventually outstripping the governing Conservatives for second choice support:

<http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/polls.html>

In Scotland voter support for the Liberal Democrats sank to 6.6% in the 2012 local government elections and only rose to 7.1% in the 2014 European elections, and in fact in three Scottish-only elections since the 2010 UK Parliamentary election, the Liberal Democrats have lost 70.5%, 57% and 100% of their seats respectively in Scotland. In contrast, Scottish Green Party support has either held steady or increased slightly and is now on a par with the Liberal Democrats.

As mentioned previously Ofcom has observed that the Liberal Democrats currently hold 56 seats in the UK House of Commons and are in a coalition government with the Conservatives, apparently forgetting that between 2010 and 2015 the Liberal Democrats' UK-wide voter support in the European Parliament declined from 12 seats to 1. That is a 91.7% decline in seats.

If the Scottish Nationalists are a Major Party in Scotland with 2 seats in the European Parliament, and the Welsh Nationalists a Major Party in Wales with 1, why is the Green Party not a Major Party in England when it has 3 seats to the Liberal Democrats' 1? Further, if Ofcom is going to take into account the relationship between the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives in Westminster, why is it not taking similar account of the relationships that exist between the Scottish Nationalists and the Scottish Green Party in the Scottish Assembly, and between the Scottish and Welsh Nationalists and the Green Party representatives in the European Parliament?

While Ofcom cites growing support for UKIP at a Local Government level in England, a review of data reveals that as of 2014 each Major Party held council seats as follows:

Conservative 44.7%  
Labour 34%  
Liberal Democrat 11.7%  
UKIP 2%  
Green .9%

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political\\_make-up\\_of\\_local\\_councils\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom#Representation\\_by\\_party\\_in\\_Great\\_Britain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_make-up_of_local_councils_in_the_United_Kingdom#Representation_by_party_in_Great_Britain)

Calculations for the 2014 Local Government election in England indicate that the Labour Party elected 50.9% of the candidates nominated, the Conservatives 32.9%, Liberal Democrats 14.7%, Independents, Resident Associations and other parties 10.2%, UKIP 7.6% and the Green Party 2.2%. Currently, in preparation for the 2015 UK Parliamentary election, the Green Party has nominated candidates in 86% of the seats in South West and South East England and is aiming for 75% overall in England.

In 2014 the Liberal Democrats lost 13% of their council seats and now only fully control 6 councils in England or the UK as a whole. In contrast the Green Party has lead government in Brighton and Hove since 2010 and has participated, like the Liberal Democrats, in a number of governments among the 32 councils where no party has overall control. It is believed that UKIP has yet to participate in any local governments. Clearly UKIP's overall status in England at a local government level is no more than on par with the Green Party.

According to the seven most recent English-only polls, support for Conservative and Labour has declined from 67.7% in 2010 to 64.3% today:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#England)

The 35.7% of voters who are rejecting Labour and Conservative as an option, or the potentially one in four 18-24 year olds trying to determine if the Green Party is their first or second choice in the 2015 UK Parliamentary election, are having their their voting choices restricted by Ofcom. To determine that the Liberal Democrats should continue to be a Major Party when their electoral fortunes are so obviously in decline, and that UKIP has become a Major Party without declaring that the Green Party should now have the same status, shows a terrible bias by a supposedly neutral public body.

In effect Ofcom is directing the media to ensure that the more than one in three (35.7%) English voters only consider the Liberal Democrats or UKIP as an alternative to the Conservatives and Labour. This is tantamount to Ofcom pre-selecting the outcome of the 2015 UK Parliamentary election in England before it has actually occurred. Such manipulation of the evolving democratic process by Ofcom, especially given the pre-election fluidity of the situation, is both an abuse of power and wholly undemocratic.

Clearly Ofcom has not considered a scenario in which both Conservative and Labour dissident voters drift back from their European election support of UKIP, while the transfer of support to the Green Party from the Liberal Democrats remains, as appears to be the case when cross comparing 2014 European and local government results. Whereas UKIP obtained 26.6% support in the UK-wide 2014 European election, the last 30 UK polls in 2015 show their support averaging 15.6%. This appears to be closer to the 17% support they obtained in the 2014 Local Government elections, which itself was down from 22% in 2013:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#2015](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#2015)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Kingdom\\_local\\_elections%2C\\_2014](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_local_elections%2C_2014)

Has Ofcom forgotten that, under first-past-the-post, in the 1989 European election in England and Scotland and Wales the Green Party came third with 14.9% support, but won no seats:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_Parliament\\_election,\\_1989\\_%28United\\_Kingdom%29#England.2C\\_Scotland\\_and\\_Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Parliament_election,_1989_%28United_Kingdom%29#England.2C_Scotland_and_Wales)

It is therefore not beyond the realm of possibility that UKIP could gain no seats at the 2015 UK parliamentary election. In contrast Green and Liberal Democrat support remains within the margin of error for the European election result, or slightly higher. In this instance, once again, Ofcom's decision gives a decided advantage to the Liberal Democrats and UKIP over the Green Party.

Ofcom has clearly not taken into account how wrong it got the 2014 European election outcome, in which it retained the Liberal Democrats' Major Party status even though they were later relegated to a minor regional party in England only. In contrast the Green Party expanded their representation to three English regions and surpassed the support obtained by the Liberal Democrats in six more. If the Liberal Democrats are going to remain a Major Party in England, Scotland and Wales, the Green Party should join them, based on all the current data available.

All of which is respectively submitted,

Andy Shadrack

Andy Shadrack taught Political Science in British Columbia from 1989 to 2005, and served as an elected local government official from 2005 to 2014, while also serving as President of the Association of Kootenay-Boundary Local Governments and a member of the Executive of the Union of BC Municipalities during part of that time. He has been a member of the British Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party of British Columbia and Canada, and is currently a member of the British Columbia and Canadian Green Parties.

### **Second submission sent on 1 February 2015**

Further to my response to Ofcom's decision not to include the Green Party as a Major Party in the 2015 May 7th election, but maintain the Liberal Democrats and add UKIP as a Major Party, I am now in a position to add further analysis about that decision based on a review of January 2015 polling data.

Of 41 polls published on Wikipedia for January 2015, the Liberal Democrats averaged 7.3%, which if it were to hold true on election day would mean a 68.3% loss of votes across the UK since 2010.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#2015](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#2015)

Six polls conducted in England during January gave the Liberal Democrats an average of 7.7%, which would mean a 68.2% loss of votes in England:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#England)

[http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election\\_results\\_in\\_England](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010_United_Kingdom_general_election_results_in_England)

An additional 5 polls, 3 for Scotland and 2 for Wales, indicate that the Liberal Democrats are in danger of losing 75.1% of their voter support in Scotland and likely all 14 seats in Scotland and Wales given that they will have lost 67.7% of their support their too.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#Scotland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#Scotland)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#Wales)

The one London poll confirms that nothing has changed for the Liberal Democrats since the 2014 European election results and that they could have extreme difficulty even holding on to seats like Sutton and Cheam given that they will have lost 68.1% of their 2010 voter support.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#London)

Further, these same series of polls indicate that UKIP has lost 42.8% of its European election support UK-wide, 44.4% in England, is now polling below the Liberal Democrats in Scotland, and while above Plaid Cymru in Wales it has lost 47.5% there too.

In contrast the Green Party is polling an average of .6% behind the Liberal Democrats UK-wide, 1.1% above its 2014 European election result in England, below the Liberal Democrats and UKIP in Scotland, ahead of the Liberal Democrats in Wales, and much closer to UKIP in London and on par with its European and 2012 London Assembly election results.

Further, primary election results in Queensland from January 31, 2015 clearly show that the Green Party starts to become a contender at around the 8% voter support threshold in some regional variant urban seats:

Mount Coot-tha 3rd 22.3% (+1.6%)

Noosa 2nd 22% (+6.5%)

South Brisbane 21.6% (+3.5%)

Brisbane Central 3rd 18.2% (+2.9%)

Indooroopilly 3rd 18.3% (-.2%)

<http://results.ecq.qld.gov.au/elections/state/State2015/results/summary.html#5>

Clearly, given the current polling configurations, and based on the 2014 European and local government election results for the Green Party, they are just as likely to obtain seats in the 2015 UK Parliamentary election as UKIP and the Liberal Democrats. In fact, given that membership in the English and Welsh Green Party has now surpassed that for the Liberal Democrats and UKIP, and given that the Green Party set a target for candidates in 75% of the English seats and has already surpassed that in at least three English regions, it is now not beyond the realm of possibility that the Green Party could match the Liberal Democrats and/or UKIP for number of seats obtained in the general election.

They now likely have the person power, candidates and a significant amount more money to go head to toe with UKIP and the Liberal Democrats on the ground in the constituencies. Claims by pundits that the Liberal Democrats will retain 19 to 28 seats, when one poll had them at 5% (at the end of January), running fifth equal with the Scottish National Party, seem incredulous to me when they only managed to retain one seat in the 2014 European election.

More to the point, it is now likely that some 2 million UK citizens are getting ready to vote Green on May 7th, 2015 - more or less the same number that are preparing to vote Liberal Democrat and roughly half the number that might vote for UKIP. As I said previously, I agree with Ofcom's decision to make UKIP a Major Party in England but cannot for the life of me understand why the Liberal Democrats are retaining that status in Scotland and Wales, and even England, if UKIP and the Green Parties are not being offered the same status as the Liberal Democrats.

What, I ask Ofcom to explain, is so special about the 2 million voters still planning to vote Liberal Democrat, that they have a right to see their leader debate the leaders of the Conservative and Labour parties that the 2 million voters planning to vote Green do not have? Further, some pollsters are now indicating that more Green Party voters, 74%, are "*most likely to vote*" than Liberal Democrats, 71%. Clearly there is something terribly wrong and biased about the Ofcom decision and it seems obvious that the response of the general voting public who are now joining the Green Party agrees with the foregoing analysis.

Ofcom needs to rectify the decision it made, lest it lose all credibility with the general public it was set up to serve, and declare the English and Welsh Green and Scottish Green Parties Major Parties for the 2015 May 7th General election.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andy Shadrack

### **Third submission sent on 4 February 2015**

Late breaking information from Lord Ashcroft's poll of 14 Labour and Liberal Democrat held seats in Scotland compels me to add further information to my previous submissions. In my last submission it was stated that it appeared that the Liberal Democrats had lost 75.1% of



their support in Scotland. Lord Ashcroft's poll of the 14 seats has determined that the loss, at least in high pro-independence areas, is around 88%. This conforms to the values found in the Newark, Clacton, and Rochester and Strood by-elections, where the Liberal Democrats lost 87%, 89.9% and 94.5% of their 2010 general election support.

<http://lordashcrofcpolls.com/2015/02/scottish-battleground/>

Please note that the PDF file "**14 Labour - SNP seats - Full tables**" found electoral support as follows:

Green 4%  
UKIP 4%  
Liberal Democrat 2%

This is in line with the most recent You Gov poll for Scotland as follows:

Liberal Democrat 4%  
UKIP 4%  
Green 3%

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion\\_polling\\_for\\_the\\_2015\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election#Scotland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2015_United_Kingdom_general_election#Scotland)

As someone who sat on the Advisory Committee of Political Parties to the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada from late 2003 to early 2006, it is noted that there is ongoing concern about the lack of youth involvement in electoral politics.

In this regard it is noted that a cross comparison of Lord Ashcroft and You Gov polling finds that among youth, age 18-24, the Green Party comes third ahead of the Conservatives in Scotland, and among 25-34 year olds Lord Ashcroft also finds Green and Conservative tied for support. Noting that youth as young as 16-17 were motivated to vote in the Scottish Referendum, and for the first time since the UK general election in 1974 overall turnout exceeded 80%, Ofcom needs to ask itself whether it wants to promote youth engagement in electoral politics or suppress it?

Again across the UK, in general, polling has determined that the Green Party is 2nd ahead of the Conservatives, 23% to 20%, among 18-24 year olds, fourth behind UKIP, 11% to 13%, among 25-34 year olds, but third ahead of UKIP among 35-44 year olds. The only age category where Liberal Democrats are scoring above the Green Party is among the 65+. On December 21st the South West England Green Party reported that it had reached 5,000 members, and then at the end of January that they had reached 8,500. That's a 70% increase in a little over a month, where 1 in 5 are also reputed to be youth voters.

The continued decision by Ofcom to exclude the Green Party from Major Party status in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will have the effect of suppressing the youth vote. Why would youth want to participate in an electoral process that forces them to follow leaders of political parties that they do not significantly support, while the leader of the party they do support is excluded from the leaders' debates.

Typically citizens and voters, especially youth, do not take part in political processes that do not reflect their vision and values. Again Ofcom needs to decide if it wants to defend a perceived status quo ante, hence:

*"...the Liberal Democrats have achieved significant past electoral support in previous General Elections and English local (and mayoral) elections. They have 56 MPs in Parliament and are part of the Coalition Government at UK...Current (69) opinion polls indicate lower levels of support when compared with the Conservative Party and Labour Party. However, we consider that all the relevant evidence taken together suggests that the Liberal Democrats should remain on the list of major parties;"*

Or does Ofcom wish to expand its vision to include the interests of all current youth and potentially future long term voters? Is Ofcom simply an anachronism of an earlier time, in which case the agency should be abolished and save the taxpayers some money. Or does Ofcom have a role to play in regulating a changing broadcast future? Continuing to deny the Green Party access to broadcast and debating time with leaders of the other Major Parties would tend to suggest that Ofcom has served its purpose and needs to be abolished as it no longer is capable of reviewing the realities of the current political situation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andy Shadrack

PS: I thought I would also provide statistics from two most Canadian elections in British Columbia and New Brunswick where voting is under the FPTP electoral system:

2013 BC:

Green Party 3rd overall 8.2% - 1 seat

Oak Bay-Gordon Head 1st 40.43%

Victoria - Beacon Hill 2nd 33.8%

Saanich North and the Islands NDP (Labour) 33.7%, Liberal (conservative/liberal) 32.8% and Green 32.1%

Victoria - Swan Lake 2nd 23.2%

Esquimalt - Royal Roads 3rd 21.7%

Nelson-Creston 3rd 21%

Cowichan Valley 3rd 19.2%

2014 New Brunswick:

Green Party 4th overall 6.6% - 1 seat

Fredericton South 1st 30.7%