

Policy and Procedure for the Co-option of Town Councillors

The purpose of the Co-option Policy is to ensure that there is compliance with legislation and continuity of procedures in the co-option of members to the Council.

1. Timetable to be agreed in advance of process commencing and will be publicly available.
2. Advertisement to be placed in Local Press and/or social media, as approved by Council, inviting applications from candidates for co-option who have an interest in the Town and its future development and who wish to represent the interests of the Town and its residents in the wider local government and other community arenas.
3. Co-option information packs will be made available to all candidates including the timetable for entire process.
4. Information Packs will advise candidates that information supplied in support of candidature is supplied in confidence and will be made available to Town Councillors on a confidential basis.
5. Applicants may only stand in any **one** ward.
6. If there is only one candidate for co-option, then that candidate will be automatically co-opted.
7. The Chief Officer will publish a list of candidates for co-option in each ward by Noon on the Wednesday following the deadline for the receipt of applications.
8. In advance of co-option meeting, details of candidates will be supplied to Town Councillors as soon as practicable after the publication of the list of candidates, but such information shall not to contain personal details.
9. Candidates for co-option will be expected to attend the co-option meeting of the Council but they shall not be obliged to make any presentation
10. Immediately prior to the Town Council 'Co-option' meeting, Town Councillors and candidates will meet for an informal discussion
11. All candidates will be offered the opportunity of making a written and/or verbal presentation to the Town Councillors at a meeting to be held for the purpose of selection candidates for co-option on to the Town Council. Such presentation should outline the characteristics, attributes and qualities which they would bring to Town Council affairs and highlight the reasons why the candidate feels he/she should be co-opted onto the Town Council

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12. Written presentations shall not exceed 500 Words.
13. Verbal presentations shall not exceed 5 minutes.
14. The order in which candidates for co-option are to appear before the Town Council will be drawn by lots
15. No questions may be asked of candidates except in relation to what has been presented by candidates.
16. Candidates will be offered the opportunity to ask questions of the Town Council.
17. No discussion on candidates by Town Councillors will be permitted prior to voting.
18. The Council will proceed to a vote, with each candidate being proposed and seconded by the councillors in attendance and a vote by show of hands. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.
19. After presentations by candidates, for a particular ward have been completed, voting shall take place for that ward only.
20. The result will be announced as provided for later in this procedure.
21. Subject to there being more than one candidate for co-option a candidate must receive a simple majority of the votes of members present and voting, For the purpose of this paragraph, abstentions, if any, shall be excluded from the calculation of the number of persons present and voting.
22. Where there are more than two persons applying for co-option to the Town Council for any one Ward and of the votes given there is not an absolute majority in favour of one person, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken, and so on until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person.
23. Where there are more than two vacancies to be filled for any ward, voting shall take place separately for each vacancy and the person to be co-opted for each vacancy shall be determined in accordance with paragraphs 21 and 22 above and of the votes given there is not an absolute majority in favour of one person, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken, and so on until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. If there is an equality of votes between candidates, then the person to be struck off the list will be determined by the drawing of lots and the person whose name is drawn will be treated as having received an extra vote.

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24. If, after the processes outlined in Paragraphs 22 and/or 23 above have been carried out and there is an equality of votes between the remaining two candidates for co-option, and the addition of an extra vote would be sufficient to meet the requirements of Paragraph 21 above, lots will be drawn in accordance with the usual election rules and the candidate whose name is drawn shall be deemed to have received an extra vote and will be co-opted onto the Town Council.

25. Results will be announced by the Town Mayor/Chairman at end of process for all wards.