



COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION POLICY

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This Councillor Co-option was adopted by the council at its meeting held on 20th May 2025.

1. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the procedure for co-opting eligible candidates to fill casual vacancies on the Town Council, ensuring a fair, transparent and democratic process in accordance with relevant legislation.

Co-option is permitted in two circumstances:

- ✓ When a casual vacancy arises (due to resignation, death, or disqualification of a councillor) and no election has been called. In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Section 87(2), if a valid request for an election is not received by the Returning Officer from ten electors within fourteen working days of the public notice of vacancy, the Town Council must fill the vacancy by co-option.
- ✓ When a vacancy remains unfilled following an ordinary election where insufficient nominations were received. Under the Representation of the People Act 1985, Section 21, if a Town Council remains inquorate after an ordinary election due to insufficient nominations, the District Council may make temporary appointments until the next election, but where the Council is quorate, remaining vacancies must be filled by co-option within 35 working days of the election date.

In both instances, the co-option process outlined in this document shall apply.

2. PRE-SELECTION PROCESS

2.1 Confirmation and Advertisement

Upon confirmation from Electoral Services that a casual vacancy must be filled by co-option, the Executive Officer will seek the Council's agreement to this Co-option Procedure as an agenda item.

The Executive Officer will advertise the vacancy, clearly stating:

- The reason for the vacancy
- Confirmation that it will be filled by co-option
- The eligibility criteria as set out in Local Government Act 1970, sections 78 and 80
- The application deadline, which shall be not less than 14 days from advertisement

2.2 Application Requirements

Prospective candidates must complete a Co-option Eligibility Form provided by the Executive Officer.

Eligible candidates will be invited to prepare a short statement explaining their motivation for becoming a Town Councillor, which will be read at the meeting when co-option is considered.

3. SELECTION PROCESS

3.1 Meeting Procedure

Co-option shall be conducted in public session to ensure transparency in the selection of public representatives.

At the Council meeting:

- Each candidate's statement will be read aloud, and/or
- Candidates may address the Council for up to 3 minutes

Following all declarations, the Chair shall seek proposers and seconders for each nomination in alphabetical order of candidates' surnames.

3.2 Voting Process

Voting shall proceed in accordance with Standing Order 8a.

For a candidate to be co-opted onto the Council, they must receive an absolute majority of votes from those present and voting.

If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no candidate receives a majority of votes:

- The candidate with the least votes will be eliminated
- The remaining candidates will proceed to another vote
- This process shall be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained

For multiple vacancies:

- If the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies, all vacancies may be filled by a single composite resolution
- If candidates exceed vacancies, each vacancy shall be filled by a separate vote or series of votes

The Chair shall declare the candidate(s) with the highest number of votes duly elected.

3.3 Post-Selection Requirements

The elected person(s) must sign a declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Town Council or the Proper Officer before participating in any meeting.

4. POLICY REVIEW

The Executive Officer shall be responsible for reviewing this policy annually to ensure it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice. Any changes are presented for agreement to Council.

APPENDIX A: EXTRACT FROM STANDING ORDERS

Standing Order 8a: Voting on Appointments

Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. Any tie may be settled by the Chairman's casting vote.