



Ashington Town Council - Co-option Procedure

Confirmation of Co-option

- 1) On confirmation from Electoral Services that a casual vacancy must be filled by co-option, the Clerk will seek the Council's agreement to the Co-option Procedure at the earliest opportunity (*if this has not already been agreed in the Council term*).
- 2) The Clerk will advertise there is a vacancy with the reason for it and confirm there is to be a co-option.
- 3) The advertisement will state the rules for eligibility as set out in Local Government Act 1970, sections 78 and 80.
- 4) There will be a deadline for responses, of not less than 14 days, taking into consideration the next possible Full Council meeting when the co-option is to be made.
- 5) Prospective candidates must complete a Co-option Eligibility Form, supplied by the Clerk.
- 6) Eligible prospective candidates will be invited to prepare a short statement explaining the reasons they want to become a Town Councillor. This will be read out at the meeting when the co-option is on the agenda.

At the meeting

- 7) Choosing a public representative is expected to be a public and transparent affair. Therefore, co-options should not be considered in confidential session.
- 8) At the Council meeting when the co-option takes place, a statement from each candidate will be read out to the meeting and/or candidates can decide to address the council for up to 3 minutes.
- 9) When all candidates have been declared the Chair shall seek proposers and seconders for each nomination (whether or not they have spoken). Candidate's names will be taken in alphabetical order, and following being proposed and seconded, the vote will follow.
- 10) The voting process will follow standing order 12(a) below. In order to be co-opted onto the Council, the candidate must receive an absolute majority of the vote of those present and voting
- 11) It follows that if there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps should be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder should then be put to the vote again; this process should, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.
- 12) If there is more than one vacancy and the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies, all the vacancies may be filled by a single composite resolution, but if the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, each vacancy should be filled by a separate vote or series of votes.
- 13) After the vote has been taken, the Chair should declare the candidate who received the highest number of votes duly elected.



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- 14) The person elected must sign a declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Town Council or the Proper Officer, prior to taking part in a meeting.
- 15) The Clerk shall be responsible for reviewing this policy annually to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

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.