

Policy and Procedure for Co-Option

1. Introduction

Co-option is the process whereby a Council, having advertised a vacancy for a Parish Councillor and there having been insufficient electors requiring a formal election, can themselves decide who, perhaps among a number, they wish to join them as a Councillor. There is no difference between co-opted or elected Councillors in respect of their duties and responsibilities.

2. The Legislation

Any vacancy which is to be filled by co-option must be advertised (on the noticeboard or website) and the procedure for selection “should be transparent and made known in advance to all candidates who apply”.

If there is more than one candidate then the appointment must be made by voting in public. A successful candidate **MUST** have received the absolute majority of those present and voting (LGA 1972 sch 12 para 39). It follows therefore that if there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no-one at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must be put to the vote again.

If there is more than one vacancy and the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies then the vacancies may be filled by a single composite resolution but if the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, each vacancy must be filled by a separate vote or series of votes.

3. Draft Procedure for Co-option

- a) As soon as the Clerk has notice that the requisite number of electors have failed to request and election (or in the event of insufficient candidates being elected at an ordinary election) a notice inviting persons interested in being co-opted shall be placed on the website and noticeboard.
- b) Persons expressing interest will be invited to provide a maximum of A4 text with a short biography, what their sphere of local interest is, and what skills they may bring to the Council.
- c) All those submitting their text will be invited to the next meeting of the Full Council and asked to give a short (maximum 5 minutes) talk about themselves to the Council.
- d) The Council will then vote, in accordance with the manner prescribed in law, on whether to co-opt an individual to fill the vacancy. The Council is not bound to appoint a candidate even if they are the only one.

- e) The newly-co-opted Councillor will sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office and then, if there is more than one vacancy, the Council (which includes the co-optee) votes again.
- f) The Clerk formally writes to all the unsuccessful candidates.