

Rothwell Town Council

Co-option Policy

Rothwell Town Council Procedure for the co-option of a new Councillor

This Policy is based on NALC Legal Topic Note 8 - Good practice for the selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils.

Town Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person onto the Town Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met (The vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered electors have requested an election by a deadline date specified by the Returning Officer at Kettering Borough Council).

Although seeking 'expressions of interest' is not a legal requirement, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more candidates.

Whenever the need for co-option arises, Rothwell Town Council will:

Consider advertising the vacancy to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone in the Town who is eligible to stand as a Town Councillor. All potential candidates will be invited to put their request for consideration in writing, using an application form agreed by the Council with the following additional information: -

- a. reason for wishing to be Councillor;
- b. previous Community/Council work; and
- c. other skills they can bring to the Council

If there is only one candidate for one vacancy the candidate is automatically co-opted to the Town Council. If there is more than one candidate applications will be circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting at which a Town Councillor is to be co-opted. Candidates will be invited to attend a short interview at a meeting of the Council.

At the next Town Council meeting:

- a. The Clerk will confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor pursuant to s.79 Local Government Act 1972 and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s.80.
- b. Candidates will be invited to say something about themselves and Councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates. Each candidate will be allocated a maximum of three minutes.
- c. In a closed session of the Town Council, without the public present, Councillors will consider the candidates and, following discussion, the public will be invited back into the meeting before the voting takes place.
- d. Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders by a show of hands. Councillors will vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option, utilising the 'person specification' criteria agreed by the Council and any personal statements requested from and provided by candidates. An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39). The applicant

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with the least number of votes cast will be deleted and the vote taken repeatedly until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies.

- e. Councillors will vote to select the order in which acceptable candidates (decided by the vote at d. above) should be approached to offer co-option on this occasion.
- f. The Clerk will approach and offer co-option to candidate(s) after the meeting in the order of priority determined by the vote at d. above. If the first choice does not accept the post then the second is to be approached and so on until the ranking list is exhausted.
- g. If the co-option position is filled, the appointment will be formally ratified at the next Town Council meeting.
- h. The Clerk will notify Electoral Services at North Northamptonshire Council of the new Councillor appointment(s), and initiate 'acceptance of office' paperwork and 'registration of interests' on the Town Council website.
- i. If no one accepts the vacant post(s), the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified or until the next election.

Guidance Notes

Eligibility- To be qualified to be elected as a Town Councillor

- To be qualified to be elected a member of the Town Council you must be 18 years of age or over at the date of your nomination,
- A British or Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a citizen of another Member State of the European Community, and either:
 1. Be a registered local government elector for the Parish both on the day you are nominated and election Day. You can check this by contacting the Electoral Services Unit at Kettering Borough Council
 2. You must have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the Parish during the whole of the twelve months before the day you are nominated and election Day;
 3. Your principal or only place of work in the twelve months before the day you are nominated and election day has been in the Parish
 4. You must have lived in the Town or within 4.8 kilometers (3 miles), during the whole of the twelve months before the day you are nominated and election day.

Who cannot be a candidate?

- Certain people are disqualified from being elected. You cannot be a candidate if you:
 - hold a paid office under the Parish authority or a politically restricted post (as defined in Part I of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989).
- You have been adjudged bankrupt or made a composition or arrangement with creditors
- You have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence) without the option of a fine, during the five years before Election Day; You have been disqualified under part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983 or under the Audit Commission Act 1998.

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O-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

COMPTENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Personal Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community • Forward thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can bring a new skill, expertise, or key local knowledge to the Town Council.
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to listen constructively • A good team player • Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects • Solid interest in local matters • Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community • Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others views and accept majority decisions • Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly • Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff • Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other parish councils, principal authorities, charities) • Ability and willingness to undertake induction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body • Experience of working with voluntary and or local community groups • Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish councils or local authorities • Experience of delivering presentations

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	training and other relevant training	
Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time and events in the evening and at weekends.	

Adopted by Town Council on 18th May 2021

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