

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

CO-OPTION PROCEDURE

Introduction

This procedure may be instigated if there is an Ordinary or Casual Vacancy within the Town Council. For a casual vacancy, if no request for an election is received by Southend City Council by the date on the Notice of Vacancy, the Town Council will be advised that it may co-opt to the vacancy. Co-option is the process by which the Town Council selects a new Councillor and it is done as an agenda item within a Town Council meeting. Co-opted members are subject to the same eligibility process as elected Councillors.

The Town Council manages the process of co-option by itself and strives to demonstrate that it is fair and equitable by following the procedure set out below.

Procedure

1. Leigh-on-Sea Town Council invites/advertises interested candidates to write to the Town Clerk, by submitting information about themselves by way of completing a short application form and confirming their eligibility for the role of Town Councillor within the statutory rules. The application once received is then circulated to all Councillors with the Agenda ahead of the meeting at which a Town Councillor is to be co-opted.
2. At the meeting, the co-option process is carried out in public session with candidates invited to speak about themselves for a maximum of 3 minutes and why they wish to be a Town Councillor.
3. One candidate needs to receive an absolute majority of votes. There will be no private discussions between members prior to voting.
4. The Chair will then place the names of those nominated into alphabetical order and proceed to vote. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled. Voting will be by a show of hands unless Standing Order 3s is invoked or there are more than two candidates for the vacancy when a 'supplementary voting system' will apply.
5. A successful candidate must receive an absolute majority of those present and voting. At this stage, the successful candidate will be declared co-opted, asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and to join the meeting.
6. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy, members will be invited to vote using a 'supplementary voting system'. This means that on a ballot paper, members will be able to vote for a first and second choice candidate. All the first choices are then counted and if a candidate has an absolute majority, they are elected. If no candidate receives an absolute majority, the top two candidates continue to a second round and all other candidates are eliminated. The second-choice votes of everyone whose first choice has been eliminated are then counted. Any votes for the remaining candidates are then added to their first-round totals. Whichever candidate has the most votes after these second-preferences have been allocated is declared elected.

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7. If the situation occurs where there are three or more candidates, none with a majority after the first vote count and other candidates all have the least number of votes, the second-preference votes of the top candidate will be used to determine which of the other candidates goes through to become the other top candidate.
8. The successful candidate is a Councillor in their own right and is no different to any other member; co-option is a legitimate form of election as part of the election process.

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