

Report to: Council

Report Ref: C1918
Meeting Date: 4th November 2019
Agenda Item: 14
Prepared By: Town Clerk



Subject: Council Co-Option Process

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In June, following an insufficient number of candidates standing in the ordinary elections, the council undertook its first co-option for a number of years.

A member has requested that the council's co-option process be reviewed.

1.2 ABOUT CO-OPTION

When a member vacates office¹ during their term, a casual vacancy arises. The council is required to give public notice of the vacancy and the electorate of the ward have opportunity to request a by-election. If no by-election is requested, Cheshire East Council will confirm that the council may fill the vacancy through co-option.

Co-option also arises following an election in which an insufficient number of candidates stand. In accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1985 the council may co-opt any person to fill the vacancy remaining unfilled or, if 35 days have elapsed since the date of the election, Cheshire East Council may order an election to fill the vacancy.

There is no statutory process for co-option, other than that the co-opted member must meet the requirement to stand for office in election. However, the National Association of Local Councils has issued guidance² which recommends that:

- a) Public notice of co-option be given to promote transparency and attract candidates
- b) Councils invite formal applications from candidates

1.3 2019 CO-OPTION PROCESS

The vacancy was advertised in the Knutsford Guardian, in the council noticeboard and online on the Town Council website and social media. The vacancy was advertised for one month, from 16th April to 20th May with a deadline of 20th May for applications. An application form was made available via

¹ e.g. resignation, death, disqualification or failure to attend meetings.

² Legal Briefing L15-08



The application form sought confirmation of the candidates' eligibility to stand and sought to tease sufficient information for elected members to be able to determine a the most appropriate candidate. The questions were set to encourage candidates to properly consider why they wished to be a councillor, e.g. asking what they wished to achieve and why they wish to represent that ward.

The candidates were invited to attend the decision meeting to make a short statement and take questions from members.

2.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

Council should consider whether any changes are required to the council's co-option process.



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APPENDIX A: Co-Option Application Form

Knutsford Town Council

Town Clerk: Adam Keppel-Green

Council Offices, Toft Road, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 6TA

01565 653929 www.knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

townclerk@knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk



Application for Co-Option

Data Protection Act

Information from this form will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. This form is divided into three sections:

- The GREEN section of this form will form part of a public agenda for the Town Council meeting.
- The BLUE section of this form will be used for administrative purposes at the Council Office and summarised in the public agenda for the Town Council meeting to confirm your name and eligibility.
- The RED section of this form will be shared with councillors

Should you have any concern about the information required, please contact the Town Clerk.

Contact Information

Title:		Full Name:	
Address:			
Telephone:		Date of Birth:	
Mobile:		Email Address:	

Qualification for Co-Option

Do you confirm that you are at least 18 years of age and either a British Citizen, eligible Commonwealth Citizen or citizen of a member state of the European Union.

	Yes	No
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Please confirm which of the following apply (tick all that apply)

You are a registered local government elector for Knutsford	
You have occupied as owner/tenant land or other premises within Knutsford during the the whole of the past 12 months	
Your main or only place of work during the past 12 months has been in Knutsford	



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You have lived in Knutsford or within three miles of it during the whole of the past 12 months	
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Please confirm if any of the following apply (tick all that apply)	
You are subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order	
You have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including suspended sentences) without the option of a fine, during the previous five years	
You have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 for corrupt or illegal election practices within the previous five years	
You have been disqualified from standing for election following a decision of the First-Tier Tribunal	

Committees

If you are co-opted, which committees would you like to serve on? <i>Please see the council's Standing Orders for the terms of reference for the committees.</i>	
Assets and Operations	
Environment	
Events	
Finance	
Personnel	
Planning	

What are your main areas of interest which are relevant to the Town Council

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Please set out what skills, experience and knowledge you feel you will bring to the council

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What you would like to achieve as a councillor?

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Why do you want to serve as a councillor for Over Ward from 2019 to 2023

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Please set out any further information you feel that supports your application to be a councillor for Over Ward

Examples: Your career or current job, involvement with community organisations,

Are you putting yourself forward for co-option as a member of a Political Party? If so, please specify.



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