



# LANGSTONE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## Councillor Co-option Policy

### **Introduction**

Co-option of a Community Councillor can occur when:-

1. Insufficient Candidates stand for election at a normal election; or
2. A casual vacancy has arisen on the Council, and no poll (election) has been called (see below).

A casual vacancy can occur when:

- A councillor fails to make their declaration of acceptance of office at/by the proper time;
- A councillor resigns;
- A councillor dies;
- A councillor becomes disqualified; or
- A councillor fails for six (6) months to attend Council meetings or meetings of a relevant Committee.

LCC must notify Newport City Council (NCC) of a Casual Vacancy and advertise the vacancy, giving the electors an opportunity to request an election. An election is triggered when ten (10) electors write to NCC to request an election within the 14-day window.

### **Confirmation of Co-Option**

On receipt, of written confirmation, from the Electoral Services Office of NCC, that insufficient requests for an election had been received, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option, the Clerk will:

- Advertise the vacancy for 3-weeks on the Council website and notice boards and Social Media.
- Advise LCC that the Co-option Policy has been instigated.

### **Eligibility of Candidates**

LCC is able to consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that they:

- are a British citizen, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights **and**:
- are a registered elector for the Langstone or Llanmartin wards; or
- have resided in the Langstone or Llanmartin wards for the past 12 months or rented/tenanted land or other premises in the wards;
- have a principal place of work in Langstone or Llanmartin wards; or
- live within 3 miles of the ward boundaries.



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There are certain disqualifications for being co-opted (or elected) as a councillor, of which the main ones are ([see Local Government Act 1972](#)):

- Holding a paid office under the local authority;
- Bankruptcy;
- Having been sentenced to a term of imprisonment (suspended or not) of not less than three (3) months, without the option of fine during previous 5 years: and
- Being disqualified under the enactment relating to corrupt or illegal practices.

Candidates found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.

### **Applications**

Members may point out the vacancies and the process to any qualifying candidate(s).

Although there is no Statutory Requirement to do so, candidates will be requested to:

- Submit information about themselves, by way of completing a short application form.
- Confirm their eligibility for the position of Community Councillor within the statutory rules.

The form and declaration are available on the [LCC website Policy page](#) and should be returned to the clerk (preferably by e-mail) by the deadline set in the Co-option invite.

Following receipt of the candidates' applications, the next suitable Council meeting (which could be an Ordinary Meeting or a special convened Co-Option meeting) will have an agenda item "To receive applications for the office of Community Councillor and to Co-opt a candidate(s) to fill existing vacancy(s)"

Copies of the candidates' applications will be circulated to all Councillors as they are received by the Clerk (and at least 3 clear days prior to the meeting of full Council) when the Co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and all Councillors as Strictly Private & Confidential.

Candidates will be sent the full agenda of the meeting at which they are to be considered for appointment, together with a copy of the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations of LCC. Candidates will also be informed of the Co-option meeting process and that they will be invited to speak about their application at the meeting.



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## Co-option Meeting

The process will involve

Step	Duration (mins)	Candidate Present	Public Present
Candidate Interview	10-15	YES	NO
Initial assessment by Cllr (per candidate)	5	NO	NO
Discussion (if needed with multiple candidates)	5-10	NO	NO
Personal statement to Council /Public	2/ candidate	YES (all)	YES
Vote for Co-option (secret ballot)	N/A	YES	YES

For a candidate to be elected to LCC, it will be necessary to secure an absolute majority of votes cast i.e. 50% + 1 of the votes available at the meeting.

The votes will be collected by the Clerk and checked to see if an absolute majority has been achieved. If there are more than two candidates and there is no candidate with an overall majority in the first round, the candidate with the least number of votes will drop out of the process. Further rounds of voting will then take place with the process repeated until a candidate has an absolute majority. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting has a casting vote.

After the vote has been concluded, the Chairman will declare the successful candidate duly elected and after signing their declaration of acceptance of office, may take their seat immediately.

The Clerk will notify Electoral Services of the new Cllr Appointment.

If insufficient candidates come forward for co-option, the process should continue, whereby the vacancies are again advertised