



KEYNSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Councillor Co-option Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the procedure to ensure there is compliance with legislation and continuity of procedures in the co-option of members to Keynsham Town Council. The Co-option procedure is entirely managed by Keynsham Town Council and this policy will ensure that a fair and equitable process is carried out.

2. Co-option

The Co-option of a Parish Councillor occurs when: -

1. Insufficient Candidates stand for election at a normal election; or
2. A Casual Vacancy has arisen on the Council and no poll (by-election) has been called.

A Casual Vacancy occurs when:

- A Councillor fails to make his Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the proper time.
- A Councillor resigns.
- A Councillor dies.
- A Councillor becomes disqualified; or
- A Councillor fails for six (6) months to attend any meetings of a Council Committee or Subcommittee or to attend as a representative of the Council a meeting of an outside body.

Keynsham Town Council must notify Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) of a Casual Vacancy following which the statutory process will then be followed:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk>

If ten residents do not request a ballot within fourteen days of the vacancy notice being posted, as advised by the District Council, Keynsham Town Council is able to co-opt to fill the vacancies.

3. Confirmation of Co-option

On receipt, of written confirmation, from the Electoral Services Office B&NES Council, the Casual Vacancy can be filled by means of Co-option, the Town Clerk will:

- Advertise the vacancy for four-weeks on the Council notice boards and website
- Advise Keynsham Town Council that the Co-option Policy has been instigated

Keynsham Town Council is not obliged to fill any vacancy. Even if the Council invites applications for co-option, it is not obliged to select anyone from the candidates who apply. However, it is not desirable that electors in a ward be left partially or fully underrepresented for a significant length of time. Neither does it contribute to effective and efficient working of the Council if there are insufficient Councillors to share the workload; equitably; to provide a broad cross-section of skills and interests; or to achieve meeting quorums without difficulty.

Councillors elected by co-option are full members of Keynsham Town Council.

4. Eligibility of Candidates

Keynsham Town Council is able to consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that they qualify under the Electoral Commission Criteria as per the following link and eligibility form attached.

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parishand-community-council-elections-england>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

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

5. 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 (Appendix A)
- Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules

A dedicated Full Council meeting will be arranged to allow for each candidate to give a presentation.

Copies of the candidate's applications will be circulated to all Councillor's by the Clerk at least 3 clear days prior to the meeting, when the Co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and all Councillors as Strictly Private and Confidential.

Candidates will be sent a 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 Keynsham Town Council. Candidates will also be informed that they will be invited to speak about their application at the meeting.

6. At the Town Council Meeting

At the Town Council meeting, where the co-option will take place, candidates will be given up to five-minutes to introduce themselves to Members, give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a Member of Keynsham Town Council.

Candidates will be asked to leave the room whilst other candidates give their presentation.

The meeting will be held in open session, however, in order to allow discussion on the merits of each candidate, the meeting will be moved into closed session without prejudice.

The public meeting will be re-opened, and Councillors will proceed to consider whether any of the candidates should be nominated to fill any of the vacancies.

Any candidates considered suitable should be nominated/seconded and then voted upon. Each candidate should receive an absolute majority (50%+1 of the votes available in the meeting) in order to be successfully co-opted.

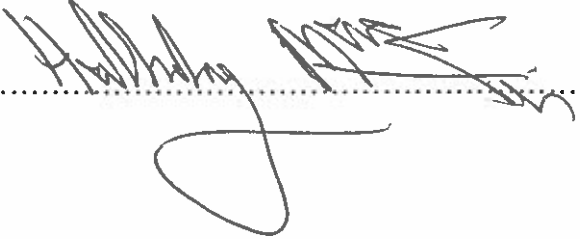
After the vote has been concluded for all of the vacancies to be filled at the meeting, the Chairman will declare the successful candidate(s) duly elected and ask them to sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office accordingly.

The Town Clerk will notify Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment. The successful candidate(s) must complete the 'Registration of Interests' within 28 days of being elected. The form should be handed to the Town Clerk for adding to the website and the Monitoring Officer will be notified that this has happened.

Date Adopted: 25th July 2023

Review Date: July 2025

Signed.......... Town Clerk

Signed..........Chair of Town Council

KEYNSNAM TOWN COUNCIL

APPENDIX A

Application for Co-option

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Town Councillor. Please provide the below information to assist the Town Council in making their decision.

Full Name & Title

Home Address.....

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.....Post Code.....

Home Telephone

Mobile Telephone

Email Address

Which Ward are you applying for? North/South/West (Please circle)

About You

Please provide the Town Council with some background information about yourself.

Reasons for applying - Please provide the Council with your reasons for wanting to become a Town Councillor

Signature

.....

Your application also requires signatures of 2 registered electors (known as a proposer and seconder) from the parish area:

Proposer

Name.....

Address.....

.....Post Code.....

Signature.....

Secunder

Name

Address

.....Post Code

Signature

Please return your completed application to the Town Clerk of the Council- 15 – 17 Temple Street, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 1HF. Your application will be considered at the next available Town Council meeting, where a vote will be held to decide whether the Council agrees to co-opt you on to Keynsham Town Council.

Data Protection Act: The information provided on this application will remain Private and Confidential.

Co-option Eligibility Form

DECLARATION

I..... hereby confirm that I am eligible for the vacancy of Keynsham Town Councillor, in accordance with the Electoral Commission Criteria, the Electoral Commission Criteria (<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/parish-and-community-council-elections-england>), and that the information given on this form is a true and accurate record.

Signature.....

Date.....

Keynsham Town Council is duty bound to treat this information as strictly confidential.