



SELECTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT CANDIDATES

Updated for the new rules - 2017

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BEFORE YOU START:

Checklist



Circulate the new selection rules to everyone involved in the process.



Contact all sitting councillors up for election - ask them to complete an application form if they wish to stand again.



Write to all members, supporters, previous councillors and candidates - asking them if they would like to be a councillor. Ensure all potential candidates complete an application form.



Ensure your membership records are up to date - you will need to contact members to attend a general meeting in stage 3.



If there is a ward/division that sits across constituency boundaries meet with officers from the constituencies and the area management team to decide a process.

At an Executive meeting of the Association:

- Appoint an Approval Committee (see below)
- Agree an emergency procedure
- If the council for which candidates are being selected is undergoing boundary changes - a percentage change figure should be agreed upon (see top tip page 6).
- Select a short-listing panel for each ward/division due to be selected.
- Appoint an Approval Committee. The Approval Committee must include:
 - The Conservative Group leader on the council for which candidates are being approved - this is a non-voting position. The leader can appoint a deputy.

- At least one other serving councillor from within the Association area - this can be from any principle tier of local government. A substitute councillor if you are selecting for all out elections in a single tier area (see below).

- The Association Chairman.

- The Association Deputy Chairman Political.

- Additional members the Executive decides.

Remember: The majority of the Approval Committee should be composed of individuals who are not councillors. A minimum of 5 members of the Approval Committee must attend each meeting - the Executive may wish to appoint more than 5 members to cover any absences.

Members of the Approval Committee cannot be applying for approval themselves unless the Association is selecting candidates for all out elections. If this is the case the individual on the Approval Committee representing serving councillors will also be seeking approval. Their approval should be undertaken by the committee with a substitute councillor.

Struggling for candidates? You might want to read Guide to finding Candidates available on Blueprint.



STAGE 1: THE APPROVED CANDIDATE LIST *Checklist*

The Approval Committee should interview each applicant.

For each applicant and interview:

- ✓ Has the individual completed an application form?
- ✓ Are there 5 or more committee members present?
- ✓ Are the majority of committee members non-councillors?
- ✓ Before the interview the Approval Committee should be provided with the candidate's application form - if available they can also consider any appraisal and/or attendance records from council meetings.
- ✓ All questions should be legal - see top tip.

The Approval Committee votes by secret ballot - without conferring at the end of the interview. A tied result is not a pass

Questions

The questions at interviews should be tailored to each interviewee, their experience and application form. The Approval Committee can decide before the interview commences who should ask what questions or whether any particular questions need to be asked. Topics which may be appropriate to cover include:

- Why they want to become a Conservative Councillor.
- What they would bring to the Group/Council.
- Previous and ongoing campaigns in the community/success on the council/ achievements for the ward or division.
- Campaign history and future campaign aims.

BEST PRACTICE



Forming a Council Wide Approval List

Where a council area covers a number of constituencies it is best to have a single Approval Committee. This ensures that:

- There is one standard across the council area.
- Candidates only apply for one list. Those who are not placed on one approved candidate list do not have the option of applying through another Association.
- Those on the approved list are eligible to apply for council-wide vacancies.

All constituencies in a council area should agree to contribute to a single Approval Committee. The Executive of each constituency should agree on the procedure. The Executive of each constituency should appoint their representatives to the Approval Committee.

TOP TIP Definition of “Legal Methods”

In all interviews the panel (or general meeting of members) can only use legal methods to question candidates. This means that questions shouldn't ask about an individual's religion, marital status, age, health, wellbeing or disability.

On the newly designed application forms

applicants can note any needs which need to be met at an interview - an Association should do all they can to ensure that these are met.

Our processes should be fair and open and welcome applications from all members. If you have any concerns do contact your local CCHQ field team member who can support you.



STAGE 2: SHORTLISTING



If the short-listing committee needs to they can ask applicants to attend an interview. Only individuals on the approved list proceed to stage 2

BEST PRACTICE



Advertising Vacancies

When ready the vacancy for ward/division should be advertised to everyone on the approved candidates list - the advert should include which (if any) sitting councillors are seeking reselection. You will need to contact approved sitting councillors with the vacancies in good time to get their responses.

The advertisement should be in writing (email is acceptable) and state a deadline for applications.

In a multi-member ward/division all vacancies should be advertised and selected together.

TOP TIP

Boundary Changes

If you are selecting candidates following a boundary change, the Executive Council must decide whether there are any sitting councillors for the newly created wards or divisions.

It is suggested that a formula is applied to determine this.
e.g. if a “new” ward encompasses a certain percentage of an “old” ward then the councillor

for the “old” ward can be considered as a sitting councillor (with an automatic right to be considered for that ward) where the executive determines the percentage.

Please note: this may lead to occasions where councillors from more than one “old” ward qualify as sitting councillors in a “new” ward.



STAGE 3: FINAL SELECTION

Stage 3 allows the opportunity for members to choose their candidate

- ✓ Arrange a general meeting of members in the ward/division being selected.
- ✓ Ask an association officer to chair the meeting.
- ✓ Ensure there is an accurate list of qualifying members available.
- ✓ Note how many members attend the meeting.
- ✓ Prepare ballot papers for the first round - and spares for potential additional rounds.
- ✓ Best practice would be to invite each candidate to speak, followed by questions. Ensure that each candidate is offered the same amount of time. The candidates shouldn't listen to each other. Members should vote directly after the last candidate without discussion.
- ✓ Members have the same number of votes as vacancies being selected.
- ✓ If selecting for a single seat, or where the number of candidates is the same as the number of seats, to be selected a candidate must receive more than 50% of the vote. In multi-member wards/divisions, you should vote on each candidate in turn. If, in a multi member ward/division there is more candidates than seats the method outlined below should be used.
- ✓ If 15 or more members attend the meeting the Executive should be informed that the meeting has selected a candidate.
- ✓ If fewer than 15 members attend the Executive should be told the recommendation of the branch at the next meeting - the Executive shall take the final decision.

BEST PRACTICE



Selecting multi member wards

When selecting multi-member wards members have the same amount of votes as candidates.

Members can only cast one vote for each candidate. The candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated in each round.

Selecting multi-member wards can be more complex. Where there are more candidates than vacancies the following method should be used. It will require rounds of voting – but the method will ensure that the majority of members support the winning candidates.

All members must use all their possible votes in each round of voting.

Example 1

If 19 members attend the meeting and are selecting 3 candidates the total number of vote cast in each round will be 57.

In this example T. Shal is not automatically selected in round 1. The lowest is eliminated.

Candidate	Voting Round 1	Round 2	
J. Bloggs	5	Eliminated	
M. Smith	15	19	Selected
A. Doe	9	11	Selected
M. Bloggins	9	9	Eliminated
T. Shal	19	18	Selected
Total Votes	57	57	



Example 2

If 24 members attend the meeting and are selecting 2 candidates. The total number of votes cast in each round will be 48. In this example a fourth round vote is not held as the elimination of T. Shal leaves only two candidates.

Candidate	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	
J. Bloggs	10	12	18	Selected
M. Smith	14	14	16	Selected
A. Doe	8	8	Eliminated	Eliminated
M. Bloggins	6	Eliminated	Eliminated	Eliminated
T. Shal	10	14	14	Eliminated
Total Votes	48	48	48	

Example 3

If 20 members attend the meeting and are selecting 2 candidates. The total number of votes cast in each round will be 40.

In this example at the end of round 1 two candidates are eliminated as they have the same number of votes. At the end of round 2 the same situation occurs - the same method cannot be used as this reduces the list from 3 to 1 (and 2 candidates are being selected) the same cannot happen. Instead there is an additional vote as a run-off. As this is only choosing 1 candidate members only get 1 vote. Where a draw occurs again best practice is to invite the two candidates back to the meeting, one at a time, to speak to the members and answer any additional questions. In the situation that this ballot results in a tie a decision can be made by a flip of a coin.

Candidate	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	
J. Bloggs	6	Eliminated	Eliminated	Eliminated	
M. Smith	10	16	Selected	Selected	Selected
A. Doe	10	12	10	12	Selected
M. Bloggins	6	Eliminated	Eliminated	Eliminated	
T. Shal	8	12	10	8	
Total Votes	40	40	20	20	

TOP TIP

Appeals

Appeals can only be made because of a procedure not followed - no one can appeal because they are unhappy with the decision that is made.

Any appeal should be made within 14 days to the Chairman of the Association. This appeal should be in writing and specify which procedure wasn't followed. The appeal will be heard by the Executive Council of the Association - any Executive council member who was a part of the Approvals Committee

may not hear an appeal. The Chairman should investigate the process and prepare a report for the Executive. They can appoint someone to carry out the investigation if they wish.

If the individual making the appeal is unsatisfied with the decision of the Executive they may refer the matter to the Area Management Executive within 14 days of the Executive Council meeting. The Area Management Team will appoint a lead to look into the complaint. They will ensure this individual isn't conflicted by links to the Association, council or applicant.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



We have completed stage 1 can we switch to the new rules for stage 2?

No - you must complete the selection process under the old rules.



Do we have to interview everyone at Stage 1?

It would be best practice to - it is very hard to reject any application form without speaking to the applicant.



How do we know if someone is suitable for the Approved List?

The Approved List is a pool of potential candidates the membership can choose from. It should only contain individuals who would be good representatives of the Party- in a campaign and on a council. You should feel confident that you would be happy with them standing on a doorstep, in a council chamber or in front of a journalist representing the Association, Council and Party.



What role does the Group leader have in the Approval Committee if they can't vote and no discussion can be had once the applicant has left the room?

The Group leader can ask questions throughout the interview - they will know what they are looking for in an active member and the interview is an opportunity for them to raise those questions.



New information has come to light about someone on our approved list- what can we do?

It is perfectly acceptable for the Approvals Committee to ask someone on the Approved list back to be reinterviewed at a later date. Someone shouldn't be removed from the list without the chance to put their case forward.



We would like to work across the whole council area - it involves three Associations with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman from each it is already quite cumbersome. Can additional members be supported by all the Associations?

It is best practice to work across the council area - so it is great that you are considering this. To start the process meet together with the officers of all the Associations. Your area officer team can help act as mediators to help agree how this process will work. Any decisions made at this meeting will need to be agreed by each Association Executive.



If there are six applicants for a vacancy which rule (37 or 38) do we use?

It is up to the short - listing committee to decide; both options are open to them.



Do we have to use these rules for Parish and Town Councils?

Many Parish and Town councils are not political but where they are they are often well contested, supported by the local Party, and a base for future council candidates. Best practice would be to ensure a fair and open selection process like this one. However it is not mandatory. For every candidate the Party's nominating officer is supporting there should be an application form and a process which shows that they were agreed, at a local level, to be an appropriate candidate.



Our Association often doesn't have enough candidates for vacancies. Do we have to go through the whole process when we are persuading members to stand in "paper" seats where we won't win?

There is only a candidate selection when 1 or more people are interested in a vacancy. If you have wards or divisions where no one is interested in applying for selection then the Association will need to fill the slot in time for nominations. As a Party we always nominate in every vacancy to ensure that everyone, wherever they live, can use their vote to vote Conservative. If you find yourself in this situation anyone who is placed in to a vacancy needs to have completed an application form and be an approved candidate.



We don't have a huge number of members - how can we ensure that asking our membership doesn't become hard to organise and take lots of time?

The new rules require stage 3 to be undertaken by members. Where fewer than 15 members attend the meeting the Executive will take the view of the meeting as a recommendation. One way to reduce the number of meetings would be to hold membership meetings ahead of a scheduled Executive. This would allow recommendations to be passed on swiftly- and candidates called upon again if needed.

You could combine the membership meetings with other events - whether that be social, fundraising or campaigning.



Q. Lots of our councillors are also officers - if they have to sit on the approvals committee are they still counted as councillors?

Yes - you must ensure a majority of non-councillors. If a Chairman and Deputy Chairman are also councillors they will be counted as councillors when trying to achieve the non-cllr/cllr balance.

Q. We always ask if the potential candidate has anything in their past which might cause embarrassment to the Party. They often don't mention things which I know have occurred in the past.

The purpose of any Approvals Committee is the opportunity for the committee members to put any doubts to the candidate. If you believe there is something that could cause embarrassment ask a specific question about it. It may be that the candidate doesn't consider it an embarrassment - and so believes they are answering correctly! All questions have to be legal - see our advice on page 4.

Q. Can I be part of the process and stand for selection?

Anyone who is seeking selection will not be appointed to the Approval Committee. However where the elections are all-out the councillor sitting on the approval committee will need approving. In this situation there should be an additional councillor appointed to sit on the Approvals Committee for this interview alone.

If the Chairman/Deputy-Chairman of the Association is also seeking selection they will need to be approved by the committee - the committee interviewing them will still need to meet the criteria of having a majority non-councillors.

If you are seeking selection you cannot be part of stage 2 - the short listing committee.

Q. I am a sitting councillor can I be de-selected?

No one can ever be "de-selected" - this implies that you are a councillor for life. If on the approved list sitting councillors get a preference in stage 2 where they will be passed to stage 3. The Short Listing Committee can choose to pass just the sitting councillors through to the membership.

Q. I am an Area Officer can I be involved in the process in my home Association?

The new rules strengthen the role of the Area officer team in the selection process. However if you are an Area Officer and wish to get involved in the process then you should do. If there are any appeals you would be expected to stand aside and let your other area officers investigate. In some circumstances a neighbouring area may

be asked to support the appeal. If this situation occurs your CCHQ contact would be able to offer advice.

Q. In a multi-member ward, where 1 of the 2 sitting councillors wishes to stand again can the panel at stage 2 put the sitting Councillor through as unopposed and only have a stage three contest for the other seat?

If the sitting Councillor is on the approved candidates list the short-listing committee cannot remove them and they will pass to stage 3. However if there is only 1 sitting Councillor the short-listing committee will need to put other applicants through with them- there are two vacancies to fill. The selection will then be for a multi-member ward. This is no advantage for a sitting Councillor in stage 3.

Q. If being asked to readopt the sitting Councillors, do you vote on each one separately rather than as a block?

If only sitting Councillors have been passed to stage 3. E.g. 3 candidates for 3 seats each individual seat needs to be voted on. Each candidate needs to receive 50%+ of the vote in their contest. This same applies whenever the number of candidates is the same as the number of vacancies. The membership should vote to show they approve of the option presented to them.

Q. If you are a candidate can you vote in the members selection?

Yes - you can vote if you are a qualifying member of that ward/division. You can vote in all rounds (if it is a multi-member selection). Including after you are eliminated.

Q. I have been appointed to the Approval Panel. Looking at the application forms some applicants would be fine for a paper seat- do I put them on the list and hope they don't get selected for anywhere good?

No – everyone on the approved candidate list must be suitable to represent the Party as an elected Councillor. As a member of the Approval Committee you must ensure that anyone being approved is of a good standard- the members will vote in faith that all the eligible candidates would make good representative for their ward or division.

