

SELECTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT CANDIDATES

1. This procedure is published under the powers of the Party Board under the Party Constitution Schedule 6 item 12:
2. “Power of the Board to determine the procedure by which Constituency Associations and other bodies select Candidates.
The Board may, through the Committee on Candidates, from time to time publish mandatory rules as to the procedure by which Constituency Associations and other bodies select Candidates for all or any public elections.”
3. The procedure is mandatory. **Not adhering to the rules can lead to appeals, the selections being re-run and the refusal of the Party Nominating Officer to give authorisation.**

INTRODUCTION

4. This procedure is the fourth version, produced following feedback from Party members during the 2015 Party Review. They were reviewed in November 2018.
5. The procedure has been based on the following principles:
 - 5.1 The process should be as simple, fair, open and as streamlined as possible.
 - 5.2 For a sitting councillor on the Approved List, preferential treatment in the process will be given in their current seat in stage two, but not automatic reselection. If a new council is being created, for example a new unitary, or if there have been major boundary changes (as decided by the Executive Council), for the purposes of these Rules, there are deemed to be no sitting councillors.
 - 5.3 Party members will be involved in the selection of the prospective candidate within their ward or division.
 - 5.4 All votes in the selection process must be by secret ballot.
6. The process is formed of three stages. Each stage is explained in detail below.
7. If a ward/division sits across Association boundaries both officer teams should meet to discuss how the selection will be undertaken at the earliest opportunity. The Area Management Executive (AME) will act as a facilitator in these meetings and will decide a process if a consensus cannot be achieved between Associations.
8. Where an Association is not meeting their minimum requirements the AME or Conservative Campaign Headquarters will work to assist.
9. Prior to taking part in the selection process each applicant must complete the Party’s mandatory application form (for new candidates) or re-approval form (for sitting councillors who wish to be selected). Applicants will be given a copy of these rules with their application form.
 - 9.1 A new form must be completed each time an application to the approved list is required.
 - 9.2 Associations must retain the form for four years.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

10. The Executive Council must agree a procedure to deal with the emergency selection of a candidate in cases where there is too little time before the close of nominations for the normal procedure to be used. This should be decided at the same time as the composition of the Approvals Committee.¹

10.1 This procedure can be used where a previously selected candidate drops out at the last minute or for a local government by-election.

10.2 Any procedure must include potential candidates being placed on the Approved Candidates List. Other steps are at the discretion of the Executive Council.

APPEALS

11. The only appeal possible regarding the process is on the grounds that the process was not carried out in accordance with these rules. Applicants may not appeal against a properly taken vote that they have lost.

11.1 Any appeal should be made, in writing, through the Association Chairman. Any appeal will be heard by the Executive council. Appeals must be made within 14 days. The Executive must meet within 28 days of receipt of the appeal.

11.2 If, on receipt of an appeal, the Chairman agrees that the process has not been followed properly it is not necessary for the Executive to hear the appeal and the process should be rerun, putting right the error.

11.3 If a member is dissatisfied with the decision of the Executive they may refer the matter to the AME within 14 days of the Executive meeting. The decision of the AME shall be final. The AME must meet within 42 days of the receipt of the appeal.

12. Members of the Executive Council who sit on the Approvals Committee are not allowed to act as part of the Executive in an appeal - if the appeal relates to stage 1. Members of the Executive Council who sit on stage 2 are not allowed to act as part of the Executive in an appeal- if the appeal relates to stage 2. Members of the ward/division who are involved in stage 3 are not allowed to act as part of the Executive in an appeal - if the appeal relates to stage 3.

STAGE ONE – THE APPROVED CANDIDATES’ LIST

13. It is the responsibility of the Executive Council of the Association (or Federation or MCA where relevant) to ensure that an approved list of potential candidates is always available for selection.

14. The Executive Council must delegate its authority for the approval of candidates to another body – an Approvals Committee. This will allow the Executive to act both in the later stages of the selection process where necessary and as an appeal body.

15. Members of the Executive Council who sit on the Approvals Committee are allowed to act as part of the Executive Committee in stage three.

¹ Suggestions of procedures can be found in “Selections of Local Government Candidates”

16. The Approvals Committee will include:

16.1 The Conservative Group Leader on the Council, for which candidates are being approved (or a deputy appointed by him/her) in an advisory, non-voting, position.

16.2 At least one other serving councillor from within the Association area. This may be one of the Association Officers and can be a councillor from any principal local government authority².

16.3 The Association Chairman.

16.4 Association Deputy Chairman Political.

16.5 Any additional members, not seeking approval themselves, that the Executive deems suitable, subject to Rules 17 and 19.

17. The majority of the Approvals Committee must be composed of individuals who are not councillors. For this rule 'councillor' refers to a member of a principal local authority³.

17.1 Where someone appointed to the Approval Committee under rule 16.3, 16.4, 16.5 is also a councillor, they will be counted as a councillor for the purposes of rule 17.

18. Members of the Approvals Committee can be drawn from the wider Association membership.

19. A minimum of five voting members of the Approvals Committee must attend each meeting.

20. Members wishing to apply for approval cannot sit on the Approvals Committee, notwithstanding those appointed under 16.3 and 16.4.

20.1 If the Association is selecting candidates for all-out elections the councillor fulfilling 16.2 may be seeking approval. If this occurs the Executive should appoint a different councillor to join the committee to undertake his/her approval.

20.2 If those appointed to the Approvals Committee under rule 16.3 or 16.4 are seeking approval they are not replaced during his/her approval. The Approval Committee is still subject to rules 17 and 19.

20.3 If the Group Leader is seeking approval a deputy should sit on the Approvals Committee.

21. It is strongly recommended that where an Association shares a council, it shall set up a joint committee with all relevant Associations to create a common list for the whole council area. This would enable a candidate to be approved for all vacancies in a council area without having to attend a multitude of approval meetings. It would also create a common standard for the council.

22. The Approvals Committee must be provided with the candidates' application form. If available, they may also consider any appraisal records from an applicant's current term as a councillor and attendance records from council meetings.

² Principal Local Authority refers to District, Borough, Unitary, County, Metropolitan, District and London Borough Councils.

³ Principal Local Authority refers to District, Borough, Unitary, County, Metropolitan, District and London Borough Councils.

23. The final decision regarding an applicant's inclusion on the list can only be made by secret ballot of those members of the Approvals Committee present and voting.
24. No questions or doubts about the suitability of an applicant can be discussed by the Approvals Committee without the applicant being given the opportunity to respond.
25. No discussions about the suitability of an applicant can take place between the Committee members after the applicant has left the room following an interview before the ballot has taken place. Each member of the Approvals Committee must make their own decision without influence from the other members.
26. To be placed on the Approved Candidate List an individual needs the support of the majority of those voting. A drawn vote will not be considered a pass.
27. No one should attempt to offer reasons or speculate as to why a candidate has been unsuccessful.

STAGE TWO – SHORT-LISTING

28. As and when the Association needs and is ready the Executive Council shall advertise vacancies to all individuals on the Approved Candidates list. Only those on the Approved Candidates list can progress to stage 2.
29. The vacancies will be listed with an indication of which councillor(s) wish to be reselected for their existing seats.
 - 29.1 Only sitting councillors who have been placed on the Approved Candidates list can progress.
30. In a ward/division with more than one vacancy the vacancies must be advertised and selected together.
31. Once the applications are received they are reviewed by the short-listing panel. The panel make decisions about how many applicants to pass to stage three.
 - 31.1 The Executive Council should decide whether the short-listing panel consists of the Association Deputy Chairman Political and 3 Branch members or the Approvals Committee as constituted in stage 1.
 - 31.2 The Executive Council should make this decision for each ward or division being selected.
 - 31.3 Where the ward or division covers multiple branches the short-listing panel should consist of members from all branches.
32. If there are six or fewer applicants the panel must put forward either (1) just the sitting councillors or (2) all applicants.
33. If there are seven or more applicants, the panel may put forward (1) just the sitting councillors or (2) all applicants, or (3) the panel may reduce the list to not fewer than six. They may not remove the sitting councillor(s).

STAGE 3 – FINAL SELECTION

34. The Executive retains the right to select candidates in this stage but the Executive must consult the views of members.

35. Voting in stage three shall be by secret ballot at both the General Meeting of members and the Executive Council. Proxy voting is not allowed.
36. All qualifying members in the ward/divisions being selected must be invited to the General Meeting to choose their preferred candidate(s).
- 36.1 Where the number of members voting at the meeting is less than 15 the vote shall be considered a recommendation and the final decision undertaken by the Executive.
37. It is necessary for the successful applicant to achieve over 50% of the votes cast, excluding abstentions⁴.
- 37.1 If this is not achieved in the first round, the applicant with the fewest votes is eliminated and the meeting proceeds to a further ballot. This process continues until an overall majority for one applicant is achieved.
- 37.2 At the end of each stage it should be announced who is eliminated.
- 37.3 The number of votes received for each candidate must not be announced to the meeting.
- 37.4 Following any stage of a count, the applicants must be informed of the result and given the opportunity to ask for a recount before any announcement is made to the meeting.
38. If only one candidate is put forward, a vote needs to be held to confirm them as the candidate. An individual needs more than 50% of the votes cast in favour of their candidacy. If the individual does not receive more than 50% of the vote the vacancy must be re-advertised to those on the approved list.
39. At the meeting of members the following rules apply:
- 39.1 Only those members who qualify to vote under the Rules of the Conservative Party may take part in any selection.
- 39.2 Only those qualifying members who live within the ward/division for which the candidate is being selected may take part.
- 39.3 At the meeting the candidates should be invited to address the meeting and answer questions individually.
- 39.4 Candidates have the same voting rights at this meeting as any other qualified member in the ward of division, but are not allowed in the room to hear other candidates.
- 39.5 Anyone arriving to a selection meeting after the first candidate has commenced speaking may listen but may not vote.
- 39.6 The meeting must be chaired by an Association officer.
- 39.7 Those invited to attend shall have not less than 14 days notice of the meeting.

⁴ For guidance on selecting multi-member wards please use read "Selection of Local Government Candidates" – available from Campaign Toolkit, the CCA or your member of CCHQ field staff.

40. If a meeting of the Executive is selecting the candidate the following rules apply:

40.1 The recommendation of members must be announced to the Executive at the beginning of the meeting. The Executive should vote on whether to accept this recommendation. In multi-member wards candidates are announced individually.

40.2 If the recommendation is rejected the candidates must be invited to address the meeting and answer questions individually.

40.3 Only members who are full voting members of a properly constituted Executive, as per the Association rules, may vote in the selection.

40.4 Candidates who are also a voting member of the Executive have the same voting rights at this meeting as any other member, but are not allowed in the room to hear the other candidates.

40.5 Anyone arriving late to a selection meeting may listen but may not vote.

41. If the membership makes the selection, with a meeting attended by 15 or more members, there is no requirement for the Executive to ratify the decision. The Executive should not reverse a properly taken decision.

Victoria Carslake January 2019