



# **DRAFT**

## **Co-Option Policy**

Policy No.	Version	Author	Doc No.	PDF No.	Date Published	Review Due	Changes made & By who:
<b>TBC</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>CC</b>	<b>81580</b>		<b>8 Mar 2021</b>	<b>8 Mar 2025</b>	

**DRAFT to be considered at Full Council on 8 Mar 2021**

## **Salisbury City Council**

### **Co-Option Policy**

#### **Introduction**

1. Co-option is the process by which a parish council selects a new Councillor when vacancy exist on the Council that are not filled by an electoral process.
2. Although the process for co-option is not prescribed in law, the Society of Local Council Clerks and the National Association of Local Councils provide best practice advice and guidelines, and this has been considered in this policy.
3. It is especially important that all applicants be treated alike so that the arrangements are seen as open, fair and transparent.
4. The co-option process to be employed by Salisbury City Council is as follows:
5. Whenever the need for co-option arises, Salisbury City Council will seek and encourage applications from anyone in the City who is eligible to stand as a City Councillor.
6. Councillors or parishioners can legally approach individuals to suggest that they might wish to consider putting their names forward for co-option.
7. The City Council has resolved that it will advertise the vacancies in the local area via the City Council noticeboards, the City Council website and a media release.
8. The Co-option Policy will be reviewed every four years.

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9. The advertisement to co-opt will include:
  - 9.1. the method by which applications can be made
  - 9.2. the closing date for all applications
  - 9.3. a contact point to obtain more information
  - 9.4. show that further information is available electronically via the website, to include application forms, and information about the roles and responsibilities of the council.
10. Existing Members may point out the vacancies and the process to any qualifying candidate(s).
11. Any candidate(s) found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.
12. Eligibility of the candidate(s) will be confirmed by the Clerk.
13. All eligible candidates will be invited, by letter, to attend the next Full City Council meeting following the application deadline. If candidates are unable to attend, this meeting will not be rearranged. The co-option will still take place and voting on this vacancy will be subsequently based on this meeting and the candidate application form.
14. All members will receive copies of candidate applications, along with the summons to attend the next Full City Council meeting following the application deadline. Candidate names will be displayed on the agenda of the meeting at

which the co-option voting will occur. No other details apart from the candidates' names will be displayed. Candidate applications are strictly confidential.

15. An agenda item will be set aside for candidates to make a brief verbal presentation to members, outlining their relevant skills and experience. Each candidate will be allocated a maximum of three minutes. After presentations, members may ask candidates questions if considered necessary. These presentations and questions will be open to the public.
16. The Chair will then request those councillors present to nominate any or all of the candidates for co-option. As co-opting any person to the City Council has to occur by resolution, candidates will require a proposer and seconder to progress to the voting stage.
17. The Chair will then place the names of nominated candidates in alphabetical order and proceed to vote.
18. The Town Council will appoint the co-opted member/s by voting according to Standing Orders.
19. Only Town Councillors present at the meeting may vote upon a person to fill the vacancy. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled.
20. If a Candidate is a relative of a Councillor, that Councillor should declare a prejudicial interest and withdraw from the meeting.
21. A successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote by those Councillors present.
22. It follows that if there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and not one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again.
23. This process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.
24. The Chair has the casting vote.