



Newark
TOWN COUNCIL

Councillor Co-Option Policy

March 2026

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Councillor Co-option Policy

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the procedure for co-opting a new member to the Town Council, ensuring compliance with legal requirements, fairness, and transparency. It governs both **casual vacancies** and **ordinary vacancies** and ensures a consistent, equitable approach to the co-option process.

2. Types of Vacancies

2.1 Casual Vacancies

A **casual vacancy** occurs when:

- A councillor resigns.
- A councillor dies.
- A councillor fails to attend meetings for six months without an accepted reason.
- A councillor becomes disqualified (e.g., bankruptcy, criminal conviction, holding a paid office under the council).

Once a casual vacancy is confirmed, the Clerk will notify **Newark and Sherwood District Council** in accordance with Section 232 of the **Local Government Act 1972**.

2.2 Election Process for Casual Vacancies

The process is as follows.

- Following notification, the Clerk will issue a **Notice of Casual Vacancy**. Electors have 21 days to request a by-election.
- If an election is called, a polling station is set up, and electors vote for the nominated candidates.
- If no election is called, the Town Council can proceed with co-option to fill the vacancy.

2.3 Co-Option Process

If no by-election is requested, the Town Council is permitted to co-opt a person to fill the casual vacancy. The Town Council will:

- Advertise the vacancy for 21 days.
- Accept **expressions of interest** from eligible candidates and encourage local residents to apply.

2.4 Ordinary Vacancies

An **ordinary vacancy** arises when there are fewer nominations than the available seats at the time of a scheduled election. The vacancy will be advertised within 35 days following the election, and co-option may occur thereafter.

3. Eligibility Criteria for Candidates

To be eligible for co-option, candidates must meet the following criteria under **Section 79** and **Sections 80-81** of the **Local Government Act 1972**:

- Be an elector for the parish or have resided, rented, or worked in the parish for at least 12 months.
- Has resided in the parish for the last twelve months or rented/tenanted land or other premises in the parish (in accordance with the Elections Act 2022),
- Has lived within three miles of the parish boundary.
- Not be disqualified for reasons such as holding a paid office under the council, being bankrupt, having a criminal conviction, or being disqualified under corrupt practices legislation.

Candidates who offer inducements or fail to meet the eligibility requirements will be disqualified.

There are certain disqualifications for election, of which the main ones are.

- Holding a paid office under the local authority
- Been declared bankrupt.
- Have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment longer than three months during the last five years.
- On the sex offenders register.
- Been disqualified under any enactment relating to corruption or legal practices.

4. Co-option Procedure

4.1 Advertisement of Vacancy

The Town Clerk will advertise the vacancy on council noticeboards, website, and other public platforms.

4.2 Submission of Applications

Interested candidates must submit:

- A completed **expression of interest form** (Appendix A).
- Confirmation of eligibility for the position (Appendix B).

4.3 Review of Applications

Applications will be processed as follows:

- Applications will be reviewed by the Council, and all documents will be circulated to Councillors **at least 3 days before the meeting** where the co-option will be considered.
- All documents will be treated as **Strictly Private and Confidential**.

4.4 Co-option Meeting

At the next Full Council meeting, candidates will:

- Be invited to present themselves to the Council and explain why they wish to become a councillor. This will include a **five-minute-long introduction at most** provided the candidate is willing to do so.
- The Council will discuss the candidates in an open session unless discussing personal attributes, in which case the public and candidates will be excluded.

4.5 Voting Procedure

- Each candidate will be proposed and seconded before a **vote by way of a secret ballot**.
- **Absolute Majority** (50% +1) of votes are required to co-opt a candidate. If no candidate achieves this, the candidate with the fewest votes will be eliminated, and the process will continue until one candidate secures an absolute majority.
- The Chair may use a **casting vote** in the event of a tie.

4.6 Notification of Co-Option

- The successful candidate will be **immediately** asked to sign the **Declaration of Acceptance of Office**.
- The Town Clerk will notify **Newark and Sherwood District Council** of the appointment.
- The co-opted member will complete the **Register of Interests** within 28 days and submit it to the Monitoring Officer.

5. Additional Conditions and Notes

- The Town Council may decide to readvertise the vacancy if **no suitable candidate** is found.
- Co-opted councillors are full members of the Town Council and will serve for the remainder of the term of office.
- Co-opted members will be expected to adhere to the **Code of Conduct**, **Standing Orders**, and **Financial Regulations** of the Council, which will be provided to them.

5.1 Training and Support

Co-opted councillors will be encouraged to undertake training via **NottALC (Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils)**, and training costs will be covered by the Town Council.

5.2 Confidentiality and Publicity

All discussions and voting during the co-option process will be transparent, though candidates' personal information will remain confidential.

The outcome of the co-option will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting, and unsuccessful candidates will not receive feedback on the deliberations, unless agreed by the Council.

6. Conclusion

This policy ensures that the co-option process is transparent, fair, and compliant with all relevant legislation. The Town Council is committed to fostering an inclusive environment that encourages active community participation and ensures a broad range of skills and perspectives on the Council.

Appendices

- **Appendix A:** Expression of Interest Form
- **Appendix B:** Eligibility Confirmation Form



APPENDIX A

Application for Co-Option

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

Full Name & Title	
Home Address	
Home Telephone	
Mobile Telephone	
Email Address	
Which Ward are you applying for?	
Is your application aligned with any political party? If so, please state.	

About You

Please provide the council with background information about yourself.

Reasons for applying.

Please provide the council with your reasons for wanting to become a Town Councillor.

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

	Proposer	Seconder
Name		
Address		
Signature		
Date		

Please return your completed application to the Town Clerk at Matthew.gleadell@newark.gov.uk. Your application will be considered at the next available council meeting.

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



APPENDIX B

Co-option Eligibility Form

<p>1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Newark Town Councillor you must be a British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union; and on the ‘relevant date’ (i.e. the day on which you are nominated or if there is a poll the day of the election) 18 years of age or over; and additionally able to meet one of the following qualifications set out below. Please tick which applies to you:</p>	
a) I am registered as a local government elector for the parish; or	
b) I have, during the whole of the twelve months preceding the date of my co-option, occupied as owner or tenant, land, or other premises in the parish; or	
c) My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in the parish; or	
d) I have, during the whole of twelve months, resided in the parish or within three miles of it	
<p>2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972, a person is disqualified from being elected as a Local Councillor or being a member of a Local Council if they:</p> <p>a) Hold any paid office or employment of the local council (other than the office of Chairman) or of a joint committee on which the Council is represented; or</p> <p>b) Is a person who has been adjudged bankrupt or has made a composition or arrangement with his/her creditors (but see below); or</p> <p>c) Has, within five years before the day of election, or since his/her election, been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man of any offence and has been sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for not less than three months without the option of a fine; or</p>	

d) Is on the Sex Offenders Register; or

e) Is otherwise disqualified under Part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983 for corrupt or illegal practices.

This disqualification for bankruptcy ceases in the following circumstances:

a) If the bankruptcy is annulled on the grounds that either the person ought not to have been adjudged bankrupt or that his/her debts have been fully discharged.

b) If the person is discharged with a certificate that the bankruptcy was caused by misfortune without misconduct on his/her part.

c) If the person is discharged without such a certificate.

In a) and b) above, the disqualification ceases on the date of the annulment and discharge, respectively.

In c), it ceases on the expiry of five years from the date of discharge.

DECLARATION

I hereby confirm that I am eligible for the vacancy of Newark Town Councillor, and the information given on this form is a true and accurate record.

Signature.....

Date.....

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