



# RAUNDS TOWN COUNCIL

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## CO-OPTION PROCEDURE

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The Council must give public notice of a casual vacancy as soon as possible in accordance with section 232 of the Local Government Act 1972.

1.2 The Town Clerk shall duly publish 'a notice of vacancy' giving 14 days within which a by-election may be called.

1.3 Following expiry of the 14 days notice, East Northamptonshire Council will advise the Council if a by-election is to be held or if the vacancy is to be filled by co-option.

1.4 To ensure good decision making, meet its responsibilities under equality legislation and to provide a fair and transparent process, the following procedure has been adopted by Raunds Town Council.

### **2.0 The co-option process**

2.1 Where no by-election is called, the Council must meet and fill the vacancy within a reasonable period of time following expiry of the initial 14 day period. The only exception is where a by-election is not called and the vacancy occurs within 6 months of when the Councillor would retire, then the post may be left vacant.

2.2 The Town Clerk will advertise the vacancy for 4 weeks on the Council notice boards and website, applying for eligible candidates to come forward.

2.3 Applicants for co-option will be asked to:

- submit information about themselves, by way of completing an application form and submitting their personal statement (a copy of the application form is attached as Appendix A – section 1);
- confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor by certifying a copy of the eligibility criteria on the application form (Appendix A - section 2).

2.4 Copies of the applicant's statement and application form will be circulated to all Councillors, prior to the relevant full Council meeting where the co-option is to be considered. Documents may be tabled in respect of a late application. All such documents shall be treated as Private and Confidential.

2.5 Candidates will be given the opportunity to address the Council for no longer than two minutes in support of their application.

2.6 The press, public and candidates will be asked to leave the Council Chamber while the applications are discussed. Or where a meeting is being held virtually they will be placed in a virtual waiting room.

2.7 The press, public and candidates will then be re-admitted to the meeting prior to voting taking place.

2.8 All candidates will automatically be put forward to the vote

2.9 Voting will be in accordance with statutory requirements. A successful candidate must receive an **absolute majority**, i.e. receive more than 50% of the votes cast.

2.10 If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives an absolute majority over the rest of the candidates, the candidate with the least votes will fail and the remaining candidates voted on again. This process shall be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.

2.11 In accordance with Standing Orders, voting will be by show of hands or a signed ballot if requested. Where a meeting is being held virtually voting will be by use of the private chat function or other electronic means and the clerk will prepare a "how to guide" ahead of such instances.

2.12 If any member requests, a record will be made of the names of members and the way they voted or abstained.

2.13 In the case of an equality of votes, the matter will stand adjourned until the next Council meeting when the process will be repeated.

2.14 After the vote has been concluded, the Mayor will declare the successful candidate duly elected.

**Adopted April 2014**

**Amended December 2020, to be reviewed triennially.**