

NORTH FERRIBY PARISH COUNCIL



Co-Option Policy

1. Background

This policy outlines the process by which the Parish Council may fill a councillor vacancy through co-option, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972. The law does not prescribe all elements of the co-option process; however, the Council is committed to following a clear, fair, and transparent procedure.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy is intended for use by Council members and the public. It aims to ensure all candidates are treated fairly and that the co-option process is open and accessible. The policy applies whenever a vacancy arises that may be filled by co-option.

3. When a Vacancy Arises

A co-option vacancy arises when:

- A councillor resigns, dies, is disqualified, or fails to attend meetings for six months without an approved reason.
- A seat is left unfilled after an ordinary election.

Following notification to the local Electoral Authority and the publication of a Notice of Vacancy, if no by-election is called within 14 working days, the Council may proceed with co-option. A detailed flowchart of this process is contained in Appendix A.

4. Advertising the Co-option

Vacancies will be advertised publicly via:

- Parish Council noticeboards
- Parish website
- Social media or other local channels

The advertisement will include:

- Method of application (in writing to the Clerk)
- Closing date
- Contact information for queries (the Clerk)

5. Application and Eligibility Process

Candidates must:

- Submit a written application and complete an eligibility form
- Be at least 18 years old and meet one or more of the statutory eligibility criteria
- Not be disqualified under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972

Eligibility will be confirmed by the Clerk. All application documents will be treated as confidential.

To assist candidates Appendix B provides a guide to those criteria that the Parish Council would expect from parish councillors. This list is not exhaustive but provides candidates with some guidance on areas they may wish to include in their application forms.

Appendix C contains the Eligibility Form

Appendix D contains the Application Form

6. Council Discretion

The Parish Council is not obliged to co-opt to fill any vacancy. Even if the Council invites applications for co-option, it is not required to select any of the candidates who apply. Decisions will be made following an interview process

7. Interview Process

- 7.1. At the next meeting following the vacancy the Council will form an Appointments Committee consisting of at least three councillors (including the Chairman or Vice-Chairman).
- 7.2. The Committee will have delegated authority to review all application materials, conduct interviews, and select preferred candidates.
- 7.3. The Committee has the delegated power to make co-option decisions on behalf of the Council, including notifying successful candidates.
- 7.4. All eligible candidates will be invited to a short, informal interview with the Committee.
- 7.5. The Interviews will follow a standard process. Each candidate will be given an allotted time and will be asked to adhere to that time so there will be no overlap of candidates. Each candidate will have a maximum of five (5) minutes to introduce themselves to members, give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to join North Ferriby Parish Council. They will then be asked a standard set of questions to ensure consistency and fairness.
- 7.6. Interviews will be held in private to respect confidentiality. All Council members will be provided with the list of candidates to be interviewed.

- 7.7. Committee members will record interview scores for each candidate and following the interviews will discuss and decide which candidates they will recommend to Full Council to be co-opted.
- 7.8. The Clerk will email all Council members with the recommendation of the Appointments Committee asking if they are aware of any **material** reason why the recommended candidate should not progress to the next stage. Response required within 24 hours.
- 7.9. Following interview the Committee will write to each candidate with the outcome of the interview and invite those recommended for co-option to the next Full Council meeting to take up their position.
- 7.10. The Appointments Committee will write a formal report to Full Council, including details of the interview process, candidate summaries, and the Committee's final recommendations.

8. Approval of Appointments and Introduction

- At the next Full Council meeting, the recommendations of the Appointments Committee will be presented for formal approval. The Council will be asked to vote to Co-opt each candidate, and the candidate must receive an absolute majority of votes.
- Upon approval, the newly co-opted councillors will be invited to join the meeting and take their seat at the Council table.

9. After Appointment

Successful candidates:

- Must sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office before or at the next meeting
- Must complete a Register of Interests within 28 days
- May be appointed to committees immediately
- Will receive an induction pack and be encouraged to attend training

Appendices:

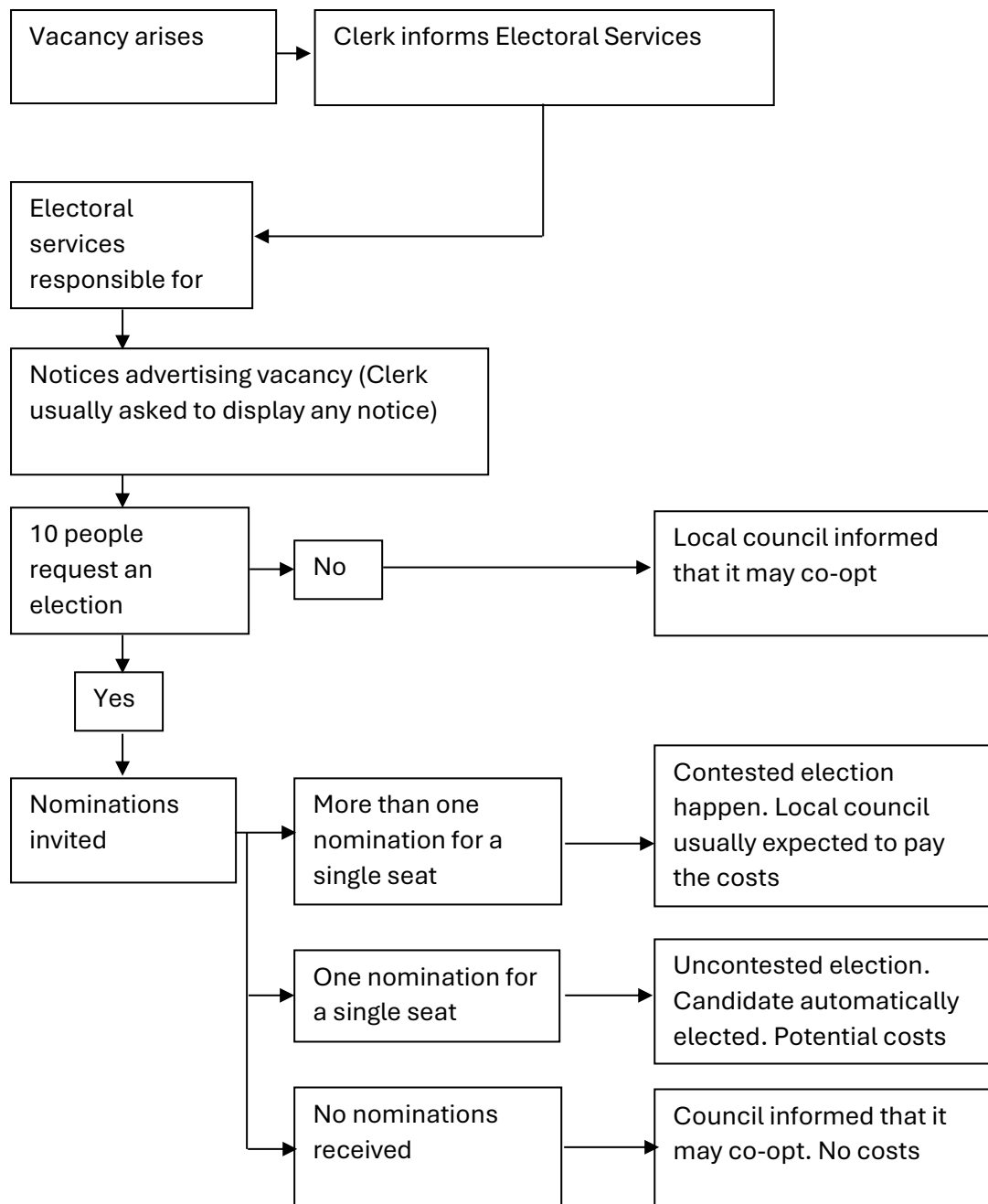
- Appendix A: Casual Vacancy flow chart
- Appendix B: Co-option Criteria
- Appendix C: Eligibility Form
- Appendix D: Application Form

Date of Adoption: 28 April 2025

Minute Number: PC 24-179.1

Review Due: May 2028

Appendix A: Casual vacancy flow chart



If a vacancy occurs within six months of the next scheduled election, the Council is not required to fill it.

Appendix B: Co-option Criteria

Competency	Essential	Desirable
Personal Attributes	Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community. Forward thinking	Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	Solid interest in local matters	Experience of working in another public body or not for profit organisation
	Ability to listen constructively. A good team player	Experience of working with voluntary and/or local community/interest groups
	Ability to pick up and move forward with a variety of projects	Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish councils or local authorities
	Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community. Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff	Experience of delivering presentations
	Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others' views and accept majority decisions.	
	Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly.	
	Experience in using IT e.g. email & internet	
Circumstances	Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time and events in the evening and at weekends.	

Appendix C: Co-Option Eligibility Form

In order to be eligible for co-option as a North Ferriby Parish Councillor you must satisfy certain criteria. You must satisfy a. and b. below and at least one of the options c. to f.

- a) Are you a British subject, citizen of the Commonwealth or citizen of the European Union? YES/NO
- b) On the 'relevant date' (i.e., the day on which you are nominated or if there is a poll the day of the election) are you 18 years of age or over? YES/NO
- c) I am registered as a local government elector for the Parish of North Ferriby YES/NO
- d) 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 of North Ferriby YES/NO
- e) My principal or only place of work has, during the whole twelve months preceding my co-option, been in the Parish of North Ferriby YES/NO
- f) I have during the whole of twelve months preceding my co-option lived in the Parish of North Ferriby or within 3 miles of it. YES/NO

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 specific criteria are not met:

- a) Are you an employee of North Ferriby Parish Council? YES/NO
- b) Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order? YES/NO
- c) Have you within the last five years been convicted of an offence in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man which resulted in a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of three months or more without the option of a fine; YES/NO
- d) Are you disqualified by order of a court from being a member of a local authority? YES/NO
- e) Are you subject to any relevant notification requirements or a relevant order in relation to a sexual offence (as set out in the Local Government (Disqualification) Act 2022)? YES/NO

Use of Personal Information

North Ferriby Parish Council will use the information provided on this form to assess your eligibility to be a Parish Councillor.

Declaration & Consent

I..... hereby confirm that I am eligible for the vacancy of North Ferriby Parish Councillor and that the information given on this form is true and correct.

Signature..... Date.....

Name.....

Appendix D: North Ferriby Parish Council Co-Option Application Form

Section 1

Name:
Address:
Telephone Number:
Email Address:
Are you 18 or over? Yes / No

Section 2 – Personal Background.

Please explain why you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor and what experience and skills you can bring to North Ferriby Parish Council. (Use additional paper if required)

Section 3

Is there any other information you would like to provide in support of your application?

Use of Personal Information

North Ferriby Parish Council will use your information, including that which you provide on this application form, to assess your suitability to be a Parish Councillor.

Declaration & Consent

I have read the section entitled 'Use of Personal Information' and by signing this form I consent to the use and disclosure of my information included in this application form and confirm I wish to be nominated for the position of North Ferriby Parish Councillor and intend to serve as Councillor if co-opted.

I declare the information given on this form to be true and correct.

SIGNED.....

NAME.....

DATE.....

Please complete this application form and the eligibility form by [date] and return via email or post to the Clerk.