

TEMPORARY PROCEDURES FOR SELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION IN MAY 2021

We are aware that many Associations are keen to progress with candidate selections, which have necessarily been stalled by the current restrictions on meetings. Having candidates in places as soon as possible will allow for an early resumption of effective campaigning once these restrictions are lifted.

These amended procedures have been designed to allow for approval meetings to take place virtually, meaning that an approved list of candidates can be created even where physical meetings cannot take place.

Any Association wishing to continue their selection process between 31st May 2020 and 1st September 2020 must use this process. Currently, it is only possible to advance selections as far as Stage 2 (Short-listing).

These procedures are designed to give all Associations the ability to progress up to stage 3 in the coming months, but a Stage 3 (Final Selection) process is not yet available.

We feel it is important that the key principle of Member involvement in selections, which is at the heart of the current stage 3 process, is not removed unnecessarily. In anticipation of changes to government guidelines over the summer which may allow for stage 3 to be conducted in a format closer to the original procedures than can currently be accomplished, we have delayed the publication of a stage 3 process.

Further guidance will be made available in September to reflect any changes in restrictions on social contact.

Please note: A copy of these procedures must be sent to all candidates seeking approval and any candidate currently on the approved list, noting that this process temporarily replaces the existing selection procedures.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

Appeals

- In these temporary procedures there is only one appeal body, the Area Management Executive.
- Appeal submissions must be made using the template form.

Stage 1

For virtual meetings the composition of the approvals panel remains unchanged (points 13-22). A minimum of five voting members are required at each interview and there must be a greater number of non-councillors voting.

All principles in place relating to the conduct of the meeting and of the committee members involved (rules 23-27) remain unchanged

Alterations:

- Virtual approval meetings will be conducted via Zoom and an independent administrator will convene the meeting and oversee the secret ballots. They will not be involved in the interview itself but will oversee the participation of the committee and candidates and ensure the integrity of the ballot.
- The meeting administrator will record the results of the vote for each candidate and whether they have been approved for inclusion on the candidates' list.
- Once all potential candidates have been interviewed (this may be over the course of several sessions) the results of each vote are revealed as 'approved' or 'not approved' by the administrator(s). These decisions are then notified to all candidates on the same day following the final approval panel meeting.
- Candidates then have a standard 14 days in which to submit an appeal to the AME.
- The relevant AME will hear any appeals received in one virtual meeting convened by an independent administrator as above.
- Once all appeals are concluded (including any approval interviews which are re-run as a result of an appeal) there is a final list of approved candidates.

Stage 2

- The Association may only move on to stage 2 once all candidate interviews have been conducted and any appeals resolved.
- All candidates on the list are notified of vacancies on the same day and have 14 days in which to respond, indicating the vacancies they wish to be considered for.
- All applicants for each vacancy progress to the stage 3 selection. There is no option to reduce the number of candidates or to give preference by advancing only sitting councillors.

Stage 3

Associations are not currently permitted to progress to stage 3 selections. Further guidance will be issued in due course taking in to consideration any alteration to current Government guidelines relating to social distancing.

TEMPORARY PROCEDURES FOR SELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION IN MAY 2021

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 a temporary amendment to the procedures issued in 2019. This amended procedure may be used between 31st May 2020 and 1st September 2020.
 - 4.1 These modified procedures may only be used in the selection of candidates for elections due to be contested in May 2021.
 - 4.2 Any candidate who was officially selected for a seat which should have been contested in May 2020 remains the candidate for that seat unless there are concerns which warrant their recall to the approvals committee or they withdraw from the process.
 - 4.3 Any candidate who underwent an approvals interview for the 2020 local elections remains on the approved candidates list and is not required to undergo a further approval interview, unless there are concerns which warrant their recall to the approvals committee or they withdraw from the process.
 - 4.4 Any candidate added to the approved list for the 2021 local elections before the cessation of physical meetings remains on the approved list, unless there are concerns which warrant their recall to the approvals committee or they withdraw from the process.
 - 4.5 Any prospective candidate not covered by points 4.3 and 4.4 must attend a virtual approval meeting to be placed on the approved list. There is no automatic admittance to the approved list for sitting councillors.
 - 4.6 Virtual approval interviews and the resulting decision carry the same weight as any previously conducted approval meetings.
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 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.

10.3 Emergency procedures established by the Association may not be used to select candidates during the period when these temporary procedures are in place (31st May 2020 – 1st September 2020).

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 An appeal must be made to the AME within 14 days of a decision being notified. The decision of the AME shall be final. The AME must meet within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal.²

11.2 Any appeal to the AME must be submitted using the standard appeal template form.

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

² Contact details for the relevant AME may be obtained by contacting your Voluntary Party Manager (please see list in Appendix A). An appeal submission form can be found in Appendix B.

STAGE ONE – THE APPROVED CANDIDATES’ LIST

12. 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.
13. The Executive Council must delegate its authority for the approval of candidates to another body – an Approvals Committee.³
14. Members of the Executive Council who sit on the Approvals Committee are allowed to act as part of the Executive Committee in stage three.
15. The Approvals Committee will include:
 - 15.1 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.
 - 15.2 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 authority⁴.
 - 15.3 The Association Chairman.
 - 15.4 Association Deputy Chairman Political.
 - 15.5 Any additional members, not seeking approval themselves, that the Executive deems suitable, subject to Rules 17 and 19.
 - 15.6 An independent meeting administrator to convene the meeting and oversee the online ballot, in a non-voting capacity.⁵
16. 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 authority⁶.
 - 16.1 Where someone appointed to the Approval Committee under rule 15.3, 15.4, 15.5 is also a councillor, they will be counted as a councillor for the purposes of rule 16.
17. Members of the Approvals Committee can be drawn from the wider Association membership.
18. A minimum of five voting members of the Approvals Committee must attend each meeting.

³ If the Executive Council had not yet delegated such authority prior to 1st April 2020, please refer to the guidance note on conducting virtual Executive Council meetings.

⁴ Principal Local Authority refers to District, Borough, Unitary, County, Metropolitan, District and London Borough Councils.

⁵ The independent meeting administrator must be a person approved by your Voluntary Party Manager. Contact details for Voluntary Party Managers are listed in Appendix A. For more information on how the administrator will conduct the meeting, please refer to the guidance notes on Stage 1 selection meetings via Zoom.

⁶ Principal Local Authority refers to District, Borough, Unitary, County, Metropolitan, District and London Borough Councils.

19. Members wishing to apply for approval cannot sit on the Approvals Committee, notwithstanding those appointed under 15.3 and 15.4.

19.1 If the Association is selecting candidates for all-out elections the councillor fulfilling 15.2 may be seeking approval. If this occurs the Executive should appoint a different councillor to join the committee to undertake his/her approval.

19.2 If those appointed to the Approvals Committee under rule 15.3 or 15.4 are seeking approval they are not replaced during his/her approval. The Approval Committee is still subject to rules 16 and 18.

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

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. 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.

22.1 A record of decisions will be retained by the meeting administrator and supplied to the Association when all candidate interviews are concluded.

22.2 The decisions of the approval panel will be communicated to candidates on an agreed date. Candidates then have 14 days to submit an appeal to the AME.

23. 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.

24. No discussions about the suitability of an applicant can take place between the Committee members after the applicant has left the video conference 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.

25. 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.

26. No one should attempt to offer reasons or speculate as to why a candidate has been unsuccessful.

STAGE TWO – SHORT-LISTING

27. Following the conclusion of all candidate interviews and any appeal hearings by the AME 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.

28. The vacancies will be listed with an indication of which councillor(s) wish to be reselected for their existing seats.

28.1 Only sitting councillors who have been placed on the Approved Candidates list can progress.

29. In a ward/division with more than one vacancy the vacancies must be advertised and selected together.

30. Candidates must indicate within 14 days which vacancies they wish to be considered for.

31. All applicants pass to stage three.

STAGE 3 – FINAL SELECTION

Associations may not conduct any stage 3 selection meetings at this time. Further procedural guidance will be issued in due course to allow Associations to progress applicants to final selection.

Rachel Oldham June 2020

APPENDIX A

CCHQ Voluntary Party Managers

North East, North West and Yorkshire – Jas Singh Jasbir.Singh@Conservatives.com

East Midlands and Eastern Region – Mark Roberts Mark.Roberts@Conservatives.com

West Midlands and South West – Carys Parry Carys.Parry@Conservatives.com

South East – Edward Norman Edward.Norman@Conservatives.com

Head of the Voluntary Party – Ian Sanderson Ian.Sanderson@Conservatives.com

APPENDIX B

Name:	
Association:	
Date of Appeal:	

Appeals against non-approval may only be made on the grounds that the procedure was not carried out in accordance with the rules. Please indicate below which procedural rule(s) (Temporary Procedures May 2021) were not followed giving reference numbers:
In what way did the Association and/or Approvals Committee fail to adhere to this rule(s)?
Do you wish to provide any further comment in support of your appeal? Please ensure that this is relevant to the breach in procedure.