

Selection of candidates for Local Government Elections

The Lincoln Conservative Association needs to select candidates for the City Council Elections to be held on 6th May 2010. At this election we will be defending **five seats**, attempting to win **two seats** in Wards where we were successful last time and, in the remaining **four Wards**, attempting to improve on our performance last time when we came within 100 votes of winning two of them. It is possible that the **General Election** will take place on the same day, or earlier, in 2009 even, or within a month of the date.

This procedure has been written to provide a guide to the selection process and makes reference to, and follows, the recently issued guidelines published by the Party but making specific reference to the situation in the Lincoln Parliamentary constituency.

The Party Rules are being amended to make the selection of local government candidates clearer. The Party Board has approved standard application forms for all potential candidates to complete as the first stage of the selection process. These forms contain a standard set of questions allowing the Association to ascertain whether the candidate meets the eligibility requirements, is prepared to accept the terms of candidacy and has disclosed any other pertinent information.

It is now required that ALL candidates complete the 'Council Candidate Application Form'. Sitting councillors looking to be re-selected must complete the 'Re-approval Application Form'

INTRODUCTION

The right choice of candidate can make a considerable difference to the prospects of the Party for winning a seat. It is important that a candidate chosen to represent the Party is most suited to the seat and that he or she is seen to be the choice of the Party membership. It is also important that the Party has had the opportunity to discover if a potential candidate has any 'skeletons in the cupboard' before he or she is selected.

The guidelines are based on the following principles:

- For someone wishing to be selected for the first time the process should be as simple, fair, open and as streamlined as possible.
- For a sitting Councillor, preferential treatment in the process will be given in their current seat, but not automatic selection.
- Branches will have a reasonable degree of autonomy in their choice of potential candidate.
- Party members will have a reasonable amount of involvement in the selection of the prospective candidate within their Ward.

The process breaks down into three distinct stages;

1. Stage 1 – the Candidates List
2. Stage 2 – Branch Committee vetting, and procedure where there is no Branch
3. Stage 3 – Members' choice

STAGE 1 – THE CANDIDATES LIST

It is the responsibility of the Executive Council of the Association to ensure that an approved list of potential candidates is available for selection.

The Executive Council is advised to delegate its authority for the approval of candidates to another body – An Approvals Committee.

- It is recommended where an Association covers an entire Council area that it sets up a Committee to approve candidates.
- It is recommended that the Approval Committee includes the Conservative Group Leader on the Council and at least one other serving Councillor in addition to the Association Chairman and Association Deputy Chairman Political. (Anyone wishing to be considered for selection would not have a vote, or a substitute should be used, to avoid any accusations of cronyism)
- The Approval Committee will receive all completed application forms and from these advise the existing Branches of potential candidates who have expressed an interest in standing in that Ward.
- The Approval Committee shall hold interviews with all applicants who have not previously been selected by the Association as candidates, with all Councillors seeking re-selection, and may hold interviews with any other potential candidates.
- It is recommended that the Approval Committee set up a procedure to deal with the emergency approval of potential candidates in cases where there is too little time before the close of nominations for the normal procedure to be used. (This should only be necessary where a previously selected candidate drops out at the last minute , or where a candidate has just been found for a difficult seat)

STAGE 2 – BRANCH COMMITTEE VETTING, AND PROCEDURE WHERE THERE IS NO BRANCH

A Wards where there is an existing Branch

When a Branch wishes to select a prospective Council candidate it should ask the Executive Council approvals committee to inform those on the approved list that it is starting the selection process

- The Branch Committee should consider those who have applied and submit suitable candidates to the Branch membership to take the final decision.
- It is recommended that the Branch Committee submits at least one more name to the Branch membership than there are vacancies.
- It is acceptable for the Branch Committee to submit to the Branch membership for approval only the existing sitting councillor/s for the Ward being selected.
- It is recommended that existing sitting Councillors for the Ward of the Council being selected on the approved list have an automatic right to be considered by the Branch committee.

B Wards where there is no existing Branch

In the absence of a Branch the process of selection will be undertaken by a Selection Committee appointed by the Approval Committee.

- In Wards where there is an existing sitting Councillor he or she has an automatic right to be considered for re-selection by the Selection Committee, but not automatic selection.

- In Wards where there are existing Councillors not seeking re-election these shall be asked to give their opinions on the various potential candidates on the approved list and their suitability for being a candidate for that Ward.
- Where there are more potential candidates than available positions the Selection Committee may hold interviews with all the candidates, at which representatives from Wards that do not have a Branch may be invited to attend.
- Where two or more potential candidates have expressed a preference for a particular Ward, the selection committee may hold interviews with these candidates. At this meeting representatives from that Ward may be invited to attend.

STAGE 3 – MEMBERS’ CHOICE

It is important that the members of the Branch feel they have taken part in the selection of their prospective candidate. This will involve inviting members to a general meeting of the Branch to either approve a single candidate, or choose between two or more candidates, in which case the following guidelines should be followed.

- Only those members who qualify to vote under the Rules of the Conservative Party may take part in any selection or vote.
- Only those members who live within the electoral area for which the candidate is being selected may take part.
- It is recommended that at a General Meeting the potential candidates address the meeting and answer questions individually
- Potential candidates have the same voting rights as other candidates, if they qualify as members of that Ward.

For Wards where there is no Branch the selections made by the Selection Committee shall be recommended to the members of the Executive Council and advised to the membership at the Annual General Meeting which is required to be held before the end of March each year.

TIMETABLE FOR THE 2010 LINCOLN CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

This procedure is to be presented to the Executive Council at the meeting on Friday 4th September 2009 for approval, in particular the appointment of an Approval Committee.

Following approval Branches and the membership will be advised that the process of selection of potential candidates has started and those interested in standing will be invited to apply for a ‘Council Candidate Application Form’.

Existing sitting councillors will be sent the ‘Re-approval Application Form’.

Completed Application forms are to be returned to the Association’s registered address ‘1A Farrier Road, Lincoln LN6 3RU’ before the end of October 2009.

The Approval Committee will meet during November 2009 to consider the applications received and to decide on the timetable for the next steps.

Our target is to have candidates selected for all Wards before the end of 2009.