

## **Selection of candidates for Local Government Elections in 2012**

The Lincoln Conservative Association needs to select candidates for the Local Government Elections to be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012. This will involve the **seven seats** currently held together with **four seats** in Wards not currently held. To merely retain the seven seats we currently hold will mean that Labour continue in control for a further two years; thus we must win two of the seats that are currently held by others, three Labour and one LibDem, to regain control of Lincoln City Council.

In 2009 the Party provided guidelines for the selection process, and these were adapted for the situation in Lincoln for the 2011 election. In the absence of any revising instructions or guidelines similar procedures will be followed for the 2012 election, but taking into account the existence of the Local Government Committee recently approved by the Executive Council..

The Party Rules are intended 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 required that ALL Sitting councillors looking to be re-selected must complete the 'Re-approval Application Form' and new candidates complete the 'Council Candidate 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 potential candidates have any 'skeletons in the cupboard' before they are 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 four distinct stages;

1. Stage 1 – The Candidates List
2. Stage 2 – Branch Committee vetting
3. Stage 3 – Procedure where there is no Branch
4. Stage 4 – Branch 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.

As required by Clause 15.1.1 of LCA Constitution and Rules the Executive Council established, at its meeting on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2011, a Candidate Selection Committee.

- The membership of the Committee for the 2012 City Election was confirmed as the Chairman of the Association P Sunderland, A Bradley, R Hills, Mrs J Lane and E Strengiel.
- The 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 Committee **shall** hold interviews with all applicants who have not previously been selected by the Association as candidates, and **may** hold interviews with any other potential candidates, including sitting Councillors seeking re-selection, and previously selected candidates.
- The Committee will have 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**

**Wards where there is an existing active (i.e holds events and raises funds) Branch.**

When a Branch wishes to select a prospective Council candidate it should ask the Executive Council Approval 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 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.
- If a Ward Branch does not formally advise the Executive Council Approval Committee that it wishes to select a candidate the Association will select a candidate in accordance with the procedure for Wards without a Branch.

### **STAGE 3 – PROCEDURE WHERE THERE IS NO WARD BRANCH**

#### **Wards where there is no existing Branch**

In the absence of a Branch the process of selection will be undertaken by the Selection Committee as agreed by the Executive Council.

- 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 may 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 will be invited to attend.
- Following such a meeting the Selection Committee will recommend to the members of the Executive Council the selected candidates for each of the Wards without Branches. The choice of the Selection Committee shall be advised to the membership by email and/or letter, and confirmed at the Annual General Meeting which is required to be held before the end of March each year.

### **STAGE 4 – BRANCH MEMBERS' CHOICE**

#### **Wards with Branches**

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. The Rules of the Party state that for all General Meetings of the Branch the quorum shall not be less than five.

- 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.
- A Ward Branch selecting its own candidate must comply with these procedures in order for the prospective candidate to be formally approved by the Association.

## **TIMETABLE FOR THE 2012 ELECTIONS**

The Local Government Committee and the Selection Committee were approved by the Executive Council at the meeting on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2011 and the process of selection thereby set in motion.

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'. This advice will be sent out to members by email and announced on the website. The form may be downloaded from the Association web site [www.lincolnconservatives.co.uk](http://www.lincolnconservatives.co.uk)

Sitting councillors whose seats are up for election will be sent the 'Re-approval Application Form' unless it has been indicated that they will not be seeking re-election.

Completed Application forms are to be returned to the Association's registered address '1A Farrier Road, Lincoln LN6 3RU' by the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2011.

The Selection Committee will meet during August 2011 to consider the applications received, to carry out interviews, and to decide on the timetable for the next steps, including dates for further meetings.

Our target is to have candidates selected for all Wards before the end of August 2011.