



Ryde Town Council Co-Option Policy

Adopted: 04 February 2025

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the procedure for filling casual vacancies on Ryde Town Council through co-option, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and associated regulations.

Co-option will only occur when following a casual vacancy an election has not been called or if a vacancy arises within 6 months of an ordinary election being scheduled.

If, after an ordinary election, the number of validly nominated candidates is fewer than the number of available seats on the Town Council, the Council will co-opt qualified persons to fill the remaining vacancies. Co-option must take place as soon as practicable after the election, and the council must follow a fair and transparent process.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the process of co-opting new councillors to fill casual vacancies within Ryde Town Council.

3. Eligibility

Candidates for co-option must meet the eligibility criteria for parish councillors as defined in the Local Government Act 1972.

To qualify, candidates must:

1. Be at least 18 years old.
2. Be a British citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of the European Union.
3. **Meet at least one of the following criteria:**
 - Be a registered elector within the parish.
 - Have occupied land or other premises as an owner or tenant within the parish for the past 12 months.

- Have their principal place of work within the parish for the past 12 months.
- Have lived within three miles (4.8 km) of the parish for the past 12 months.

Candidates must not be disqualified under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 or any other relevant legislation.

4. Co-Option Procedure

4.1 Notification of Vacancy

1. Following the notice of a casual vacancy, if no election is called within 14 working days, the council will advertise the vacancy for co-option.
2. A notice of co-option will be posted on the council's website, social media, noticeboards, and other appropriate platforms.
3. The notice will be displayed for a minimum of 10 calendar days.
4. If the vacancy occurs within 6 months of an Ordinary Election then the Council can vote to move directly to co-option.

4.2 Application Process

1. Interested candidates must complete a written application, including:
 - A brief personal statement.
 - Reasons for applying.
 - Details of relevant skills, experience, or qualifications.
 - Confirmation of eligibility.
2. The closing date for applications will be specified in the notice.

4.3 Assessment of Candidates

1. Applications will be circulated to all members of the Operations and Resources Management Group prior to the meeting at which the co-option decision will be made.
2. Candidates may be invited to attend the relevant council meeting to make a short statement and answer any questions from members.
3. The Operations and Resource Management Group will assess the candidates and make a recommendation to Full Council.

4.4 Decision Making

1. The council will consider recommendations in a public meeting, ensuring transparency.
2. A vote will be taken in accordance with the council's Standing Orders.

3. The successful candidate will be invited to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and will officially join the council.

5. Expectations of Co-Opted Councillors

Co-opted councillors are expected to:

1. Abide by the Code of Conduct for Councillors.
2. Commit to attending meetings and contributing effectively to council business.
3. Represent the interests of the community.
4. Work collaboratively with elected members and Council officers to deliver quality services for the town of Ryde.

6. Transparency and Fairness

Ryde Town Council is committed to ensuring that the co-option process is:

- Open and transparent.
- Free from discrimination or bias.
- Conducted in the best interests of the community.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years or sooner if required by changes in legislation or council procedures.