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# Local Government Selection Procedures

This briefing sets out the Co-operative Party process for selecting candidates to stand as Labour and Co-operative Party in local government elections. Approved February 2020.

## 1. Introduction

The Co-operative Party exists to support the election of candidates who 'support political action in pursuance of the Values and Principles of the Co-operative Movement'. We have a long tradition of working in local government, with hundreds of councillors in town halls across the country championing co-operative politics and helping build stronger communities.

In recent years, we have seen significant growth in the number of Co-operative Party councillors, which has helped raise our profile, delivered strong results on our modern-day slavery and food justice campaigns, and promoted local co-operative economies.

These guidelines set out the process whereby members of the Co-operative Party can be endorsed to stand as a Labour and Co-operative candidate for local government elections.

The Rule Book states that the object of party councils is 'to secure direct Co-operative representation on local bodies', and they have an important role in increasing the number of Co-operative Party candidates and councillors and growing our work in local government.

Party councils are responsible for endorsing Co-operative Party candidates using these selection guidelines but may delegate the power to select candidates to branches.

The decision to endorse candidates is normally devolved to a party council or branch's executive committee, or a smaller selections committee made up of officers such as the chair, vice-chair and secretary. The committee can make decisions by email and phone as well as at meetings, with the decisions submitted to the subsequent full party council meeting for formal adoption.

Party councils may deviate from these guidelines in certain situations, provided they don't contradict the Co-operative Party Rule Book and have been approved by the NEC.

## 2. Candidate eligibility

To be endorsed as a Co-operative Party candidate in local elections, candidates must meet all the following requirements:

- i. Have been a member of the Co-operative Party for at least nine months by the close of nominations and be up to date with their membership fees. (This may be waived in certain circumstances, for example for younger members or to encourage those who are under-represented within the Co-operative Party.)



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- ii. Be a member of a recognised co-operative society, as determined by the NEC. (This is a condition for membership of the Co-operative Party).
- iii. Have been selected by the Labour Party to stand in a specific ward. (Party councils may add endorsed prospective candidates to a local government panel, pending their selection by the Labour Party.)
- iv. Have applied to be a Co-operative Party candidate, either using the national application form, or through the party council's application process.
- v. Have agreed to the candidate declaration, stating that they will use the Labour and Co-operative description and logo on their campaign material and social media if endorsed.

### **3. Withholding endorsement**

These guidelines exist to ensure that the relevant rules and procedures are applied and that local selections are carried out in a fair and proportionate manner.

It's important to remember that all members declare themselves to be co-operators and agree to accept the rules and to promote the policy and values of the Co-operative Party.

Party councils should therefore start from the position that a Co-operative Party member who has been selected by the Labour Party, should be endorsed as a Labour and Co-operative candidate.

Endorsement should only be withheld under one of the limited circumstances set out below:

- i. Where the candidate doesn't meet one of the eligibility criteria set out above.
- ii. Where the party council believes endorsing a candidate may bring the Co-operative Party into disrepute.
- iii. Where there is evidence that the candidate has acted against the policy and values of the Co-operative Party.
- iv. Where the candidate is subject to Co-operative Party disciplinary procedures or has breached the Rule Book (for example standing against a Labour candidate).

### **4. Additional requirements**

- Some party councils continue to use local or older variations of the national guidelines. Although it is possible for party councils to adopt additional selection procedures, these must be submitted to Head Office for consultation and be approved by the NEC.
- In the past, some party councils have set an additional requirement that Co-operative Party candidates have had to be involved in their local branch and may have requirements around attending a minimum number of meetings.

Requiring attendance at branch meetings should no longer be used in endorsing Co-operative Party candidates as this has been found to discriminate against members



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with physical and/or mental disabilities and those with caring responsibilities, as well as members who do shift work or travel for education when branch meetings take place. It is also difficult to enforce as many branches meet infrequently, giving members fewer opportunities to attend.

- Under the National Agreement, the Co-operative Party is entitled to representation on every Labour Party Local Campaign Forum (LCF) or Local Government Committee (LGC). The LCF/LGC is responsible for setting the process for selecting Labour Party candidates in local government.

As the Co-operative Party's delegate helps agree these procedures, they are binding on all joint Labour and Co-operative candidates. Therefore, party councils should not seek to duplicate the Labour Party's process. That means that in most cases it should not be necessary to interview candidates that have been selected by the Labour Party, unless officers have specific concerns they want to raise with the candidate.

- Party councils may wish to organise a training session for Co-operative Party candidates to help explain what's involved in being a joint candidate and find out more about the policies and campaigns they can use as part of their election and when elected.

Party councils may instead wish to invite endorsed candidates to speak to members at a branch meeting about their campaign and how they plan to promote co-operative values and principles if elected.

Co-operative Party Head Office can help party councils, branches and candidates ahead of these types of meetings and all candidates should be strongly encouraged to attend, although they shouldn't be required if there is good reason for them being absent.

## **5. Multi-member wards**

If a candidate is standing in an election where there is more than one seat to be filled or in an 'all out' election, all candidates must use the same description on the ballot paper.

If all candidates are endorsed by the Co-operative Party, they must use the Labour and Co-operative Party description (or Scottish Labour and Co-operative Party or Labour and Co-operative Party / Llafur a'r Blaid Gydweithredol', as appropriate) on the ballot paper. If only some of the candidates have been endorsed by the Co-operative Party, then all candidates must use the Labour Party description.

However, regardless of what description is used on the ballot paper, all candidates who are endorsed by their party council will still be Labour and Co-operative Party candidates, and if elected will be Labour and Co-operative Party councillors. They can also use the joint logo on their literature, social media and other materials and receive support from the Co-operative Party.

## **6. Funding for Candidates**

Being endorsed as a Co-operative Party candidate under these procedures allows a candidate to stand as a Labour and Co-operative Party candidate. However, it's important to note that being a



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Co-operative Party candidate does not bring an automatic campaign donation from the party council, and many candidates will not receive a financial contribution to their campaign.

Party councils agree their own procedures for if and how they award funding in local elections – there is no requirement for them to provide any funding.

Party councils may decide to direct funding to certain candidates only, for example those in target wards, those who use mention the Co-operative Party on their literature and social media, candidates who have a particular focus on co-operative policies in their campaign, or those who have been particularly active in their local branch. They may instead wish to support the wider campaign, for example by jointly funding a local organiser.

The usual contribution is £50 per candidate, which is paid to the LCG/LGC or to the account of a relevant unit of the Labour Party. Campaign contributions should never be paid to the candidate.

## **7. Support from Head Office**

Co-operative Party Head Office is available to provide support and guidance to party councils, branches and labour groups about the selection process and preparing for your local elections.

We can also arrange for a member of staff to come to a local meeting to discuss way of supporting members to stand for election, making sure that co-operative policies form part of your manifesto, and engaging elected co-operative councillors in the work of your local party.

## **8. Further information**

For more information on these guidelines or to discuss amendments you would like to make please contact Shane Brogan ([s.brogan@party.coop](mailto:s.brogan@party.coop) or 020 7367 4159).

For more information about local government and helping us grow the number and activity of councillors in your area contact Emma Hoddinott ([e.hoddinott@party.coop](mailto:e.hoddinott@party.coop) or 073 9219 5170).

You can also find more information and guidance for candidates and local officers in our Local Government Hub at <https://party.coop/local>