



Town Clerk: Chris Robson

Our ref: STC/EL/E1
Date: October 2020

Dear Applicant

Thank you for expressing an interest in the position of Councillor for Sandy Town Council. The enclosed Co-option pack contains information to assist you with your application.

The pack includes:

- Application form
- Co-option Policy
- Ward Map
- Information on the role of a Councillor

Applicants should note that as part of the voting procedure, it will be necessary for a formal proposal and secondment of your nomination to take place at a meeting of the Town Council to be held on Monday 9th November 2020 at 7.30pm

Please complete the Application form accordingly and return to:

**Sandy Town Council
Council Offices
10 Cambridge Road
Sandy
Bedfordshire
SG19 1JE**

Applications can also be emailed to clerk@sandytowncouncil.gov.uk. Applications should be returned no later than **5pm on Monday 2nd November 2020.**

Yours sincerely

Chris Robson

Chris Robson



SANDY TOWN COUNCIL
APPLICATION FOR CO-OPTION

Full Name	
Home address (in full)	
Telephone number	
Email address	
Ward I wish to be considered for (If more than 1 vacancy exists)	Fallowfield Ward

Please note, this application form will remain strictly confidential. It will be considered by existing Council Members ONLY. It will NOT be made available to the public.

Please provide some brief details about yourself



Please explain your interest in Sandy and why would you like to join the Town Council?

What skills or interests do you have that you think might benefit the Town Council?



NOTES:

Qualifications for being a local councillor:

You must be over 18 years old **AND**

1. Be an elector
2. Be a Commonwealth citizen (which includes being a British citizen) or a citizen of the European Union
3. For the whole of the twelve months before the date of the co-option either
Have resided in the locality or within three miles of it
or
Have occupied any premises or land as owner or tenant therein
or
Had your principal or only place of work there (such work need not be paid but must be substantial)

You are disqualified from being a local councillor if:

1. You hold any paid office, employment or other place of profit in the gift or disposal of Sandy Town Council, or any committee or sub-committee thereof
or
2. you are subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order
or
3. you have within five years before the co-option or since been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man of any offence and been sentenced to imprisonment (suspended or not) for not less than three months without the option of a fine
or
4. you are convicted of offences involving corrupt or illegal practices under Part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983
or
5. you have been convicted for the failure to register or declare disclosable interests under the Localism Act 2011 (England)

Please complete the following declaration:

I have read the conditions for becoming a Town Councillor and confirm that I am qualified to be considered for co-option.

Signed _____ Date _____



SO YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A TOWN COUNCILLOR!

No doubt, you will want to know what will be required of you?

Sandy Town Council is a non-political body made up of fifteen Members interested in serving their town.

1 from Beeston Ward, 5 from Ivel Ward, 6 from Pinnacle Ward and 3 from Fallowfield Ward.

There are at least 3 meetings to attend in every 6 weeks, all of them held on a Monday evening. Members usually sit on two standing committees as well as Full Council.

Development Scrutiny committee
Policy, Finance & Resources committee
Community Services & Environment committee
Plus
A full Council Meeting

In addition, there is a **Human Resources committee** on which 7 Members must sit.

A calendar of meetings for the year is approved each year in advance. Most meetings start at 7.30pm and usually finish between 9.00pm and 10.00pm, with the exception of the Development Scrutiny Committee which starts at 6:45pm and usually finishes at 7:30pm. Meetings usually take place in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy. However, during the COVID19 pandemic Council meetings take place remotely on the Zoom platform.

In addition to attending meetings, you will be asked to investigate residents' complaints, problems and difficulties and may be asked to attend daytime meetings with other Councils or contractors and additional Working Groups formed for a specific purpose.

The present Council will remain in Office until May 2023, unless a particular Member resigns earlier or is disqualified from Office for non-attendance at meetings or for any other reason.



WHAT DO YOU GET IN RETURN?

Often frustration and financially nothing!

You will however, have the satisfaction of showing a practical interest in your community, in helping to see it properly run, its expenditure sensibly controlled and the reward of knowing that you have assisted others.

What is a Councillor?

Councillors are elected to represent an individual geographical unit on the council, known as a ward. They are generally elected by the public every four years.

What do Councillors do?

Councillors have three main components to their work:

- decision making
- monitoring
- getting involved locally

Decision Making

Through meetings and attending committees with other elected members, councillors decide:

- which activities to support
- where money should be spent
- what services should be delivered
- what policies should be implemented

As well as attending meetings, councillors should be prepared to get involved in the meetings.



Monitoring

Councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services, by keeping an eye on how well things are working.

Getting Involved Locally

As local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their community and local organisations. These responsibilities and duties often depend on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available.

This may include:

- going to meetings of local organisations
- going to meetings of bodies affecting the wider community
- taking up issues on behalf of members of the public
- running a surgery for residents to bring up issues

Attending Council meetings is the best way to find out what happens. By law, ordinary people are allowed to be present at most council business but not participate unless the council agrees to this. Most councils have a public participation section on their agenda.

How Much Time Does it Take Up?

Quite often councillors say that their duties occupy them for about five hours a week. Obviously there are some councillors who spend more time than this - and some less, but in the main, being a town councillor is an enjoyable way of contributing to your community, and helping to make it a better place to live and work.

Am I Qualified?

You must be over 18 years old **AND**

1. Be an elector
2. Be a Commonwealth citizen (which includes being a British citizen) or a citizen of the European Union
3. For the whole of the twelve months before the date of the co-option either Have resided in the locality or within three miles of it



or

Have occupied any premises or land as owner or tenant therein

or

Had your principal or only place of work there (such work need not be paid but must be substantial)

You cannot stand for election if:

1. You hold any paid office, employment or other place of profit in the gift or disposal of Sandy Town Council, or any committee or sub-committee thereof
or
2. you are subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order
or
3. you have within five years before the co-option or since being convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man of any offence and been sentenced to imprisonment (suspended or not) for not less than three months without the option of a fine
or
4. you are convicted of offences involving corrupt or illegal practices under Part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983
or
5. you have been convicted for the failure to register or declare disclosable interests under the Localism Act 2011 (England)

Councillors can be automatically disqualified if they do not attend meetings for six consecutive months. To avoid this, councillors need to submit reasons for their non-attendance **and** their council has to accept and minute the reasons for non-attendance.

SANDY TOWN COUNCIL

CO-OPTION POLICY

Introduction

Although the process for co-option is not prescribed in Law, County & District Councils and Local Council Associations provide best practice advice and guidelines. It is especially important that all applicants be treated alike so that the arrangements are seen as open, fair and transparent.

Whenever the need for co-option arises, Sandy Town Council will seek and encourage applications from anyone in the Town who is eligible to stand as a Town Councillor. Councillors or parishioners can legally approach individuals to suggest that they might wish to consider putting their names forward for co-option.

The Town Council will advertise the vacancies in the local area via the Town Council noticeboards, the Town Council website, social media and a media release.

The co-option procedure will be reviewed every four years.

The co-option process to be employed by Sandy Town Council is as follows:

Co-option Policy

1. On receipt, of written confirmation, from the Electoral Services Office at Central Bedfordshire Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of Co-option, the Town Clerk will;
 - a. Advertise the vacancy for 4 weeks on the Council noticeboards, Council Website, Council Facebook page and via a press release.
 - b. Inform the Council that the Co-option Policy has been instigated.
2. The advertisement to co-opt will include:
 - a. the method by which applications can be made
 - b. the closing date for all applications
 - c. a contact point to obtain more information
 - d. show that further information is available electronically via the website, to include application forms, and information about the roles and responsibilities of the council.

3. Existing Members may point out the vacancies and the process to any qualifying candidate(s)
4. Any candidate(s) found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.
5. Eligibility of the candidate(s) will be confirmed by the Clerk.
6. All eligible candidates will be invited, by letter, to attend the next full Town Council meeting following the application deadline. If candidates are unable to attend, this meeting will not be rearranged. The co-option will still take place and voting on this vacancy will be subsequently based on this meeting and the candidate application form.
7. All Members will receive copies of candidate applications, along with the summons to attend the next full Town Council meeting following the application deadline. Candidate names will be displayed on the agenda of the meeting at which the co-option voting will occur. No other details apart from the candidates' names will be displayed. Candidate applications are strictly confidential.
8. An agenda item will be set aside for candidates to make a brief verbal presentation to members, outlining their relevant skills and experience. Each candidate will be allocated a maximum of three minutes. After presentations, members may ask candidates questions if considered necessary. These presentations and questions will be open to the public, but other candidates will be asked to step outside the meeting until they are due to present. During the temporary holding of virtual meetings, which have occurred as a result of Covid19, applicants will be placed in the meeting's 'waiting room' until it is their turn to present.
9. The Chair will then request those councillors present to nominate any or all of the candidates for co-option. As co-opting any person to the Town Council has to occur by resolution, candidates will require a proposer and seconder to progress to the voting stage.
10. The Chair will then place the names of nominated candidates in alphabetical order and proceed to vote.
11. When conducting a co-option process in a physical meeting the Town Council will appoint the co-opted member/s by voting according to Standing Orders. During the temporary holding of virtual meetings, which have occurred as a result of Covid19, voting on candidates will be conducted by a show of hands.

Applicants will be placed in the meeting 'waiting room' while voting is conducted.

12. Only Town Councillors present at the meeting may vote upon a person to fill the vacancy. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled.
13. If a Candidate is a relative of a Councillor, that Councillor should declare a prejudicial interest and withdraw from the meeting.
14. A successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote by those Councillors present.
15. It follows that if there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and not one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again.
16. This process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.
17. The Chair has the casting vote.
18. If there is more than one vacancy and the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies, all the vacancies may be filled by a single composite resolution, but if the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies each vacancy must be filled by a separate vote or series of votes.
19. The Council is not obliged to fill all vacancies, but must take steps to advertise for further co-options or hold an election to fill vacancies.
20. Successfully co-opted candidates become Councillors in their own right, with immediate effect, and are no different to any other member once their Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form has been signed.
21. At a physical meeting the co-opted members will be asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office to agree to be bound by the Local Government Code of Conduct. This will then be signed and dated by the Clerk and they may then take their seat at Council and will be appointed to a committee and as a representative to local organisations. If Co-option is conducted at a virtual meeting of the Council, the co-opted Member will be invited to stay in the meeting, but may not take their seat with the Council until the

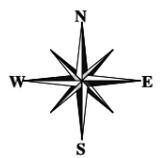
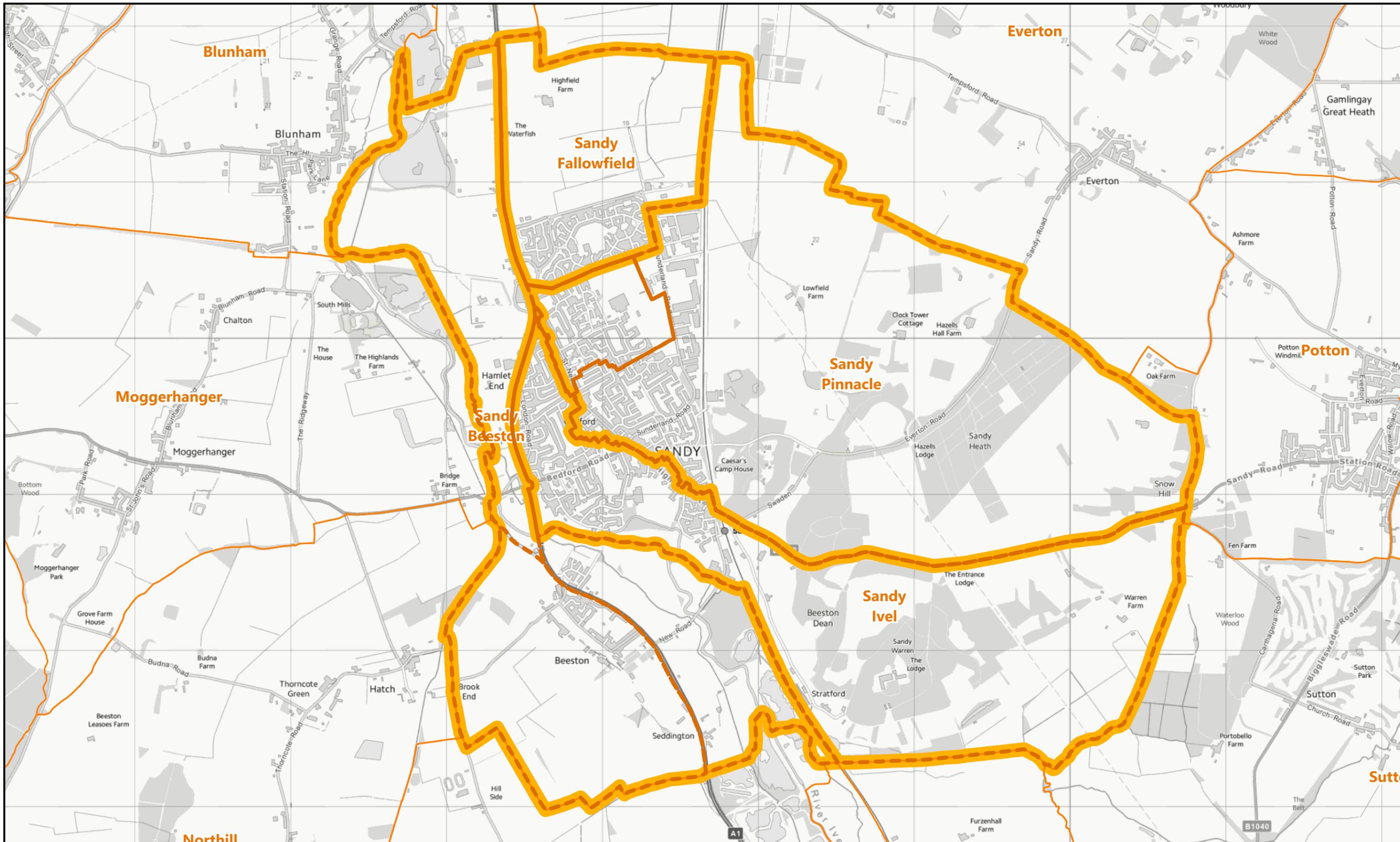
Declaration of Acceptance is signed and dated by both the co-opted Member and the Clerk.

22. Any application can be considered in the candidate(s) absence, but if successful, members would need to agree for him/her to sign the Declaration of Office either before or at the next meeting.
23. As soon as practicable following their co-option, members will be invited to attend an Induction and Training session with the Town Clerk.

This Policy will be reviewed in six months from the date of its adoption, or at a time when Government COVID19 guidelines change to allow the holding of physical Council meetings.

Reviewed and Approved: 28 September 2020





Date: 01 May 2019

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Sandy

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 Central Bedfordshire Council.

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