

## Full Council

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<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Co-Option</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>4 March 2025</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Mandy Sturdy, Town Clerk Lizzie Fuller, Committee Services &amp; Processes Officer</b>

### Action Required

1. To consider the three applications received for the Councillor Vacancy.
2. To co-opt a Councillor for the Thame South Ward, to serve for the remaining term of office, until May 2027.

### Background

3. Following the passing of Helena Fickling and no by-election being triggered, a vacancy arose in the South Ward.
4. Applications were open from 9 January 2025 to 24 February 2025.
5. Four applications were received for the Councillor Vacancy, however one subsequently withdrew leaving three applications for consideration (Appendixes A – C). **These documents contain personal information and should not be shared externally.**
6. The council is now asked to consider the applications received. The chosen candidate must receive a clear majority of votes. A guidance note for co-option at a Council Meeting is attached (Appendix D).
7. Each candidate has been invited to introduce themselves and, for consistency, has been sent 3 questions in advance which they will have 5 minutes to answer:
  - a. What capacity do you have to be a Town Councillor?
  - b. What do you think is the biggest challenge facing Thame and the Town Council?
  - c. What is the best thing about Thame?

These are the same questions asked to the co-option candidates in June 2023 and April 2024. Councillors may wish to ask additional questions at the meeting.

### Voting

8. From an administrative point of view, given that there is more than 1 application, it would be preferable to take the vote by ballot (this must be requested by a Member and a resolved by the Council). Members should be aware that any vote, including a ballot, is subject to a recorded vote if requested by a member<sup>1</sup>, therefore the Town Clerk and Committee Services & Processes Officer will keep a record of the voting.

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<sup>1</sup> Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, Paragraph 13(2)

9. A candidate must receive a majority vote in order to be co-opted. For example, if all 15 Councillors are present, a candidate needs to receive at least 8 votes. For example, if the vote fell 7-5-3, then the candidate scoring 3 would be removed and the process would be repeated until one candidate reached 8 votes.

### **Risk Assessment**

10. It is important that the Town Council addresses any shortfalls in its membership, so it is fully able to represent its community.

### **Legal Powers:**

- Local Government Act S89
- The Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006

### **Recommendation**

#### ***It is recommended...***

- i) ***To co-opt a Councillor for the South Ward, to serve for the remaining term of office, until May 2027.***