

Narrative report of findings for Chairman and Vice-Chairman Election protocol

1. Manchester City Council
2. Birmingham City Council
3. Coventry City Council
4. Wolverhampton City Council
5. Cheshire East Council
6. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
7. Chester West and Chester Council

1. Manchester City Council

As with the precedent for other councils researched, the Manchester City Council Constitution states “5.2 The Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor will be elected annually at the Annual Meeting of the Council.”

However, the Constitution additionally states:

“Without prejudice to 5.2 above, the Leaders of the political groups represented on the Council may agree a protocol for determining which political group will provide the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor in future years.”

This suggests the possibility of an agreed political rotation system, whereby the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor are selected from different political groups in turn.

Action taken: The Democratic Services department at Manchester City Council has been contacted via email, enquiring as to whether such a protocol has been agreed, in the past or present, and the details of this protocol.

Source: http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/4030/the_constitution

2. Birmingham City Council

As with the precedent for all other councils researched, the Birmingham City Council Constitution states “The Lord Mayor will be elected annually by the Council.”

However, in respect of the Deputy Lord Mayoralty, the Constitution additionally states:

“Should a Member, due to take up the Deputy Lord Mayoralty, fail to be re-elected to the City Council, or an incumbent is unable to complete his or her term, owing to ill health or similar disposition, the Party Group of the outgoing Deputy Lord Mayor will be asked to make an alternative nomination. This will be the last Member of their Group to hold the position of Deputy Lord Mayor prior to the outgoing Deputy.”

“Should that Member be unwilling to take up the Office, previous Lord Mayors of that Party will be approached, in reverse chronological order, until a Member willing to take on the role can be found”

“Should the Party Group be unable to put forward an alternative name by this process, the Office shall then be offered to the previous Deputy Lord Mayor, regardless of their Party affiliation. If that individual is unwilling to assume the role, the previous Lord Mayors will be approached, again in reverse chronological order, until a Member, regardless of Party affiliation, willing to take on the role can be found.”

These are interesting approaches to the selection of candidates based on party lines, and though here applying to conditions of re-election or failure to take up the Deputy Lord Mayoralty post, could be used as inspiration for initial elections of a Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

Source: <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/constitution>

3. Coventry City Council

As with the precedent for other councils researched, the Coventry City Council Constitution states “The Lord Mayor is a Councillor who is elected as Lord Mayor by the Council at its annual meeting” and “The Deputy Lord Mayor will also be elected at the annual meeting of the Council.”

However, the Constitution additionally states:

“2.5.1.1 The office of Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor will be offered by the Leader of the Council to the Councillor who has the longest service and has not previously held the office. If that Councillor declines that offer, then it is offered to the next person in order of length of service. Any Councillor who declines the offer may take up the offer in subsequent years.”

This statement therefore offers a seniority approach, which could be applied to the election process at Epping Forest District Council.

<http://moderngov.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s10250/Part%202.pdf>

4. **Wolverhampton City Council**

As with the precedent for other councils researched, the Wolverhampton City Council Constitution states “The Mayor will be elected...at the Annual Council meeting.”

However, the Constitution contains a unique approach to the position of Deputy Mayor:

“The Deputy Mayor will be appointed at the Annual Council meeting. The methodology for the rotation of the office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor is contained in Appendix 2 to this Constitution.”

Appendix 2: METHODOLOGY FOR ROTATING THE OFFICE OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

The Annual Meeting of the Council in May each year will elect a Mayor and appoint a Deputy Mayor from different political groups so as to ensure a dignified rotation of these offices between Senior Councillors. For the first Municipal year of this protocol (commencing at the Annual Meeting on 23 May 2001) the Deputy Mayor was

selected from Category B. For all succeeding years the following methodology will apply.

Step 1

After the municipal election in May and immediately before the Annual Meeting each year all Councillors will be placed into one of two categories -

Category A - Controlling Group

Category B - All other Councillors

Step 2

Each category will list Councillors in order of seniority based on the number of years and part years service as a Councillor with Wolverhampton City Council or any of its predecessor authorities. Councillors with the same number of years and part years will be listed alphabetically. Councillors who have already held office as Mayor will be treated as if their years of service begin again.

Step 3

1. The unopposed nomination for the post of Deputy Mayor for the next ensuing municipal year will be offered in strict order of seniority to Councillors within the same category as the sitting Mayor.

2. Where a Councillor is unable or unwilling to accept the nomination for whatever reason the offer will pass to the next most senior Councillor within that category and so on.

Step 4

At the immediate following Annual Meeting the current Mayor will preside over the election of the current Deputy Mayor to the office of Mayor for the ensuing municipal year.

The newly elected Mayor will preside over the appointment of the new Deputy Mayor selected in accordance with steps 1 to 3.

NOTE: For the purpose of this procedure -

“Group” means a political group duly constituted in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

“Controlling Group” means -

(a) Any Group with 31 or more Members

(b) If there is no such Group then the Group with the largest individual membership.

This Constitution thus provides a useful and detailed step-by-step outline of a party-based rotation of office, which also uses seniority as a method of selection.

Source:

<http://wolverhampton.cmis.uk.com/DecisionMaking/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=rDIYorWSsmw08xO2YS88tGKh1V14nvikGa4BjZ4oQJp7n9JEzEbWJw%3d%3d&rUzwRPf%2bZ3zd4E7lkn8Lyw%3d%3d=pwRE6AGJFLDNIh225F5QMaQWCtPHwdhUfCZ%2fLUQzgA2uL5jNRG4jdQ%3d%3d&mCTIbCubSFfXsDGW9lXnlq%3d%3d=hFfIUdN3100%3d&kCx1AnS9%2fpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3d%3d=hFfIUdN3100%3d&uJovDxwdjMPoYv%2bA.JvYtyA%3d%3d=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&FgPIIEJYlotS%2bYGoBi5oIA%3d%3d=NHdURQburHA%3d&d9Qjj0ag1Pd993isyOJqFvmyB7X0CSQK=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBux0r1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJFf55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCPMRKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJFf55vVA%3d>

5. Cheshire East Council

As with the precedent for other councils researched, the Wolverhampton City Council Constitution states “At each Annual Council meeting in May of each year, the Council elects a Councillor to serve as the Council’s Mayor. It also appoints a Deputy Mayor.” It also states “Where either office becomes vacant, the Council will elect/appoint a successor at its next meeting.”

However, the Constitution also contains an interesting protocol with regards to the Deputy Mayor:

The Deputy Mayor will normally succeed to the Mayoralty in the following year. Each year, the Deputy Mayor will be chosen by full Council at the recommendation of the political group which has the majority of Council Members, provided that in making such choice, another political group or groups may be invited to put forward a nomination for consideration by the majority group.

The Council has adopted a Mayoralty Code of Practice which is included in Part 5 of the Constitution.

Mayoralty Code of Practice:

7. Selection of Mayor:

The Deputy Mayor will normally succeed to the Mayoralty in the following year. The selection process should normally ensure that, upon election to office, the Mayor will have served at least one term of office as a local authority Councillor.

Cheshire East therefore provides a precedent for the use of a party based system of appointment, subject to the will of the majority of Council Members. This is a variation on other party based systems that could be adopted by Epping Forest District Council.

Source:

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/your_council/constitution.aspx

6. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

The Constitution adopts a seniority approach with regards to the election of Deputy Mayor:

Electing the Deputy Mayor/Mayor

Each year the Councillor with the longest cumulative service on the Council will be nominated to serve as Deputy Mayor (unless that Councillor has previously served as Mayor).

When appointed by Council as Deputy Mayor, the Councillor concerned will then be agreed as the person nominated to serve as Mayor for the following Municipal Year. Where, in any year, more than one Councillor satisfies the criterion as the Councillor with the longest cumulative service on the Council, and no one agreed nominee has been chosen, lots will be drawn to secure the nomination for Deputy Mayor for the forthcoming municipal year.

If in any year the Councillor with the longest cumulative service or chosen nominee, decides not to agree to their name being put forward as nominee to the annual meeting of the Council, this will not preclude that Councillor from being re-considered for nomination in future years.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council thus differs from other councils in its approach to the seniority rule, by way of drawing lots for the nomination of Deputy Mayor should more than one Councillor be eligible. Again, this approach could be adopted at Epping Forest District Council.

Source:

<http://www.stockton.gov.uk/documents/stocktoncouncil/832215/constitutionarticles.pdf>

7. Chester West and Chester Council

This Council has introduced the following system, which could be implemented at Epping Forest District Council:

1. Each year, prior to the Annual Council (nominally about 10th May or after the elections early May, prior to the Annual Council), each Party will be allocated a point for each Member they have on the Council at that time.
2. The number of points, when added to the carry over number of points will give a total number of points per Group and the Group with the largest number of points will be entitled to put forward a name for the post of Duty Chairman CWaC and Deputy Lord Mayor of Chester who will in due course become the Chairman of CWaC and Lord Mayor of Chester.
3. If the Group with the largest number of points has no name to put forward then the Group with the next largest number of points will be entitled to nominate.
4. When a group nominates a name, 72 points (the current size of the Council) will be deducted from the Group's total.
5. It is expected that the Group Whips will liaise to ensure the process operates correctly
6. Democratic Services, independent of the Groups, will maintain a running list of the points system for both Civic appointments each year and which Group makes the nominations.