

PROCEDURE TO SET UP A COMMUNITY COUNCIL IN WEST LOTHIAN

Community council elections take place in West Lothian every 4 years in September/October on a date set by West Lothian Council.

In order to set up a community council which is not successfully established during the 4 yearly elections, or a subsequent second calling, the following steps must be undertaken:-

1. Petition Requirement -

West Lothian Council will require a petition with the names, addresses and signatures of not less than 20 registered electors from within the community council area who wish a community council to be established.

2. Publicity Procedure -

Once the petition has been checked and verified, West Lothian Council will place an advert in the local newspaper for one week only inviting nominations from all interested registered electors in the area who wish to serve as community councillors.

This notice will give details of (i) the relevant closing dates and (ii) the minimum and maximum number of valid nominations which will be required to establish the Community Council.

West Lothian Council will write to all those who signed the petition.

3. Nominations Below Prescribed Community Council Size -

By the closing date for acceptance, the Council must receive at least 4 nominations before a community council can be established. If less than 4 nominations are received, West Lothian Council will not be able to establish a Community Council for that area and letters will be sent to any candidates advising them of the position.

4. Nominations Within Prescribed Community Council Size -

If by the closing date for acceptance, the Council has received at least 4 nominations and not more than the maximum size for the area (e.g. 8, 12 or 18), all candidates will be duly elected to the community council and this will be confirmed in writing by the Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer will make arrangements for an inaugural meeting of the new Community Council to take place within 28 days where possible and an agenda/relevant paperwork will be issued to all community councillors before the meeting.

5. Nominations Above Prescribed Community Council Size-

If more nominations are received than there are places available, an election may be necessary.

After the closing date for acceptance, a period of one week will be allowed for any candidates who may wish to withdraw their nomination. West Lothian Council will write to all candidates advising of this process and at the same time, will seek the views of candidates on the preferred method of election should this still be necessary.

If a sufficient number of withdrawals are received by the set closing date, the remaining candidates will be elected to the community council and arrangements will be made for an early inaugural meeting. This will be confirmed in writing to all candidates.

If, on the other hand, an insufficient number of withdrawals are received, West Lothian Council will immediately make arrangements for an election to be held, taking into account the preferences expressed by candidates.

Adverts will then be placed in the local newspapers advising of the names of candidates, polling places and hours of poll or in the case of a postal ballot, issue ballot papers to all registered electors in the community council area.

6. Inaugural Meeting

Following the election process, a letter will be sent to all candidates confirming who was successful/unsuccessful. The Returning Officer will then make all the necessary arrangements for an inaugural meeting to be held within 28 days where possible. All community councillors will be issued with an agenda for this meeting which will confirm time and place, etc. and the business to be dealt with.