



Public report
Ethics Committee

Ethics Committee

8 January 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:

Not Applicable

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Law & Governance

Ward(s) affected:

All Wards

Title: Prospective Councillor Information

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive summary:

At their last meeting on 25 September 2025, the Ethics Committee requested further details of what information was going to be available for candidates who were intending to stand in the elections in May 2026, in view of the fact that all 54 seats were up for election and the number of potentially inexperienced candidates. This report provides details of what is proposed to be provided and seeks Ethics Committee's endorsement of the Becoming a Councillor Booklet.

Recommendations:

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Consider the contents of the report and make any recommendations for any additional information which could be provided to assist prospective councillors.
- 2) Endorse the use of the Booklet as a way of providing prospective candidates with information in relation to the role of a Councillor.

List of Appendices included:

The following appendices are attached to the report:

Appendix 1 – Becoming a Councillor Booklet

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Prospective Councillor Information

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 At their meeting held on 25 September, the Ethics Committee highlighted the importance of ensuring that prospective new Councillors fully understand the responsibilities and expectations of the role before standing for election. This follows concerns arising from the elections held in 2025 where individuals were elected in other parts of the country without anticipating or understanding the demands of office.
- 1.2 Work is currently being undertaken to ensure that newly elected Councillors in 2026 will be fully supported in their role. This includes reviewing the induction and training offer, particularly in the first few weeks following the election. Officers have also produced a booklet 'Becoming a Councillor' which is available to prospective candidates in the elections (copy attached at Appendix 1). The approach taken has been to ensure that it remains politically neutral and focus' on what the role entails, what support is available and the election process. It is also proposed that this information will be made available on the Council's website.
- 1.3 Every year the Returning Officer holds Candidates and Agents briefings prior to the election which focus on the election timetable, completion of nominations, the count and campaigning. In 2026 there will be an earlier briefing session for candidates which will focus more on the information contained in the Booklet and will provide the opportunity for candidates to ask questions around becoming a Councillor, expectations and duties of that role and the functions of local government.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Option 1 – Support the use of the Prospective Councillor Booklet (Recommended)

The use of the Booklet will ensure that prospective candidates understand the role of Councillors and the expectations and duties associated with that responsibility. This option is an improvement on the information which was previously available for prospective candidates at elections.

- 2.2 Option 2 - Do nothing to prepare prospective candidates for the role of a Councillor (Not recommended)
In view of the elections in Coventry being for all 54 seats, not providing candidates with relevant and important information about the expectations and duties of the role is not recommended.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. All the Leaders of the four Political Groups currently represented on the Council have contributed to the production of the Booklet.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. The Booklet has been made available, and the holding of candidate briefings will take place in February/March 2026.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law and Governance

5.1. Financial Implications

There will be limited financial implications, with the costs of printing a small number of hard copies being met from within existing budgets.

5.2. Legal Implications

No legal implications.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>

Providing the information enables residents to consider representing their local communities as local Councillors and understand what is expected of someone in this role. It contributes to the enabling priority of the Council's role as a partner, enabler and leader.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

No risks.

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4. Equalities / EIA?

No EIA has been done.

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

None.

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

None.

Report author(s):

Name: Liz Read

Title: Head of Electoral Services

Service Area: Law and Governance**Tel and email contact:**

Tel: 024 7697 1435

Email: liz.read2@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to the above person

Contributor/approver name	Title	Service Area	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Officer	Law and Governance	11/12/25	11/12/25
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Ewan Dewar	Head of Service Finance	Finance	11/12/25	12/12/25
Director: Julie Newman	Director of Law & Governance	-	11/12/25	12/12/25
Members:	Cabinet Member - Not Applicable	-		
Councillor S Nazir	Chair of the Ethics Committee	-	12/12/25	12/12/25

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