

How do I become a Councillor?

Becoming an Ashford Borough Councillor

Do you have an interest in improving your local community and helping others who live in the area? If you do, why not consider standing for election to Ashford Borough Council?

Councillors can represent a political party and, if you are considering standing, you may wish to contact the leaders of the various groups already represented on Ashford Borough Council to discuss your interest. These are Conservative, Ashford Independent, Liberal Democrat, Labour and UK Independence Party. However, it is also possible to stand as an independent candidate and there may be other political groups in the borough.

A person wishing to stand as a candidate will be issued with the following:

- Nomination paper
- Consent to nomination
- Appointment of election agent
- Timetable
- Candidates' guidance

A candidate who is standing on behalf of a registered political party will also need to submit:

- Certificate of authorisation
- Request to use the party emblem

At the close of nominations the candidate will be notified as to whether or not the nomination is valid. If a candidate wishes to withdraw their nomination they have until 4pm on the 19th working day prior to the date of the election which is the same deadline as the close of nominations.

[Further information can be obtained from Electoral Services.](#)

Nomination paper

Each candidate must submit a nomination paper, which requires ten signatories - a proposer, a seconder and eight assentors who must be local government electors within the ward they wish to represent. The nomination paper must be delivered before the date given on the Notice of Election.

What type of skills should a councillor have?

- Be a good listener and be able to provide advice and help to local residents
- Have the ability to understand and consider detailed and often complex issues

- Be able to work in partnership with other councillors on various committees or with representatives on external organisations for the good of the whole borough

To be eligible to stand as a candidate a person must:

- Be aged 18 or above
- Be a British citizen, or a citizen of another Commonwealth country, the Republic of Ireland or the European Union

On polling day and the day for nomination the person must:

- Be registered to vote with Ashford Borough Council **OR**
- For the whole of the previous 12 months have lived or occupied land or premises or had your main place of work in the Ashford borough

No formal qualifications are required to become a councillor and, unlike general elections to parliament, no deposit is required to stand as a candidate.

When am I ineligible to stand for election?

A person cannot stand for election as a councillor if:

- They are the subject of a bankruptcy restriction or interim order
- They are employed by Ashford Borough Council or certain other authorities with which it has close links
- They hold what is known as a politically restricted post
- They have served a prison sentence (including a suspended sentence) of three months or more within five years of the election
- They have been disqualified from holding office as a result of an election offence relating to corrupt or illegal practices

A person is disqualified from being elected by reason of any disqualification set out in [section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 - Part V](#).

Consent to nomination

A nomination is not valid unless accompanied by a consent to nomination. The candidate must sign a declaration to the effect that he/she is qualified to stand, and the consent must be attested by a witness.

Appointment of election agent

Another person can act as an election agent for a candidate. They must complete an appointment of election agent form, and that appointed agent must sign a declaration of acceptance. If no such application is received, the candidate will be deemed to be acting as their own agent.

The election agent is entitled to attend polling stations, the opening of postal ballot papers, the verification and the count.

The election agent is responsible for all acts involved in carrying out the election on behalf of the candidate and has a duty to ensure the campaign is conducted according to the law. In particular the election agent is responsible for the financial management of the election campaign and for ensuring that the declarations and returns of expenses incurred by and on behalf of the candidate are delivered to the appropriate officer.

Support

The council provides support to councillors by organising a comprehensive training programme that follows the elections, and by arranging further training throughout the four-year period based on individual need.

A current basic allowance is available to help meet any day-to-day costs of being a councillor.

The council will provide IT equipment and training to enable a councillor to communicate electronically with the council and residents, together with a dedicated webpage, which can be used to display information and other items of interest.