KAMM BRONN CAMBORNE TOWN COUNCIL	**Elected Member Co-Option Procedure** Camborne Town Council

In the event of a casual vacancy arising on the town council, the electors in the relevant ward have the opportunity to call for an election to fill that vacancy. However, should an election not be called, or if it fails to elicit any candidates, the council has the opportunity to co-opt.

A casual vacancy occurs when:

- A councillor fails to make a declaration of acceptance of office at the proper time
- A councillor resigns
- A councillor dies
- A councillor becomes disqualified
- A councillor fails for six months to attend meetings of a council committee or sub-committee or to attend as a representative of a meeting of an outside body
- A seat(s) remain vacant after an election cycle

If following an ordinary election, there are vacant seats remaining on the council, the council also has the option to co-opt members.

This policy will ensure there is a pre-agreed, transparent, and fair process.

Process

- A resigning member must do so in writing to the Town Mayor.
- The Town Clerk informs the Returning Officer at Cornwall Council, being the local election authority.
- The Notice of Vacancy is displayed for fourteen working days.
- An election can be called by ten or more electors.
- Cornwall Council will manage the election and re-charge the town council the cost of the election.
- If no election is called, the town council may co-opt.

Under the Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) Rules 2006 if the period of vacancy has more than six months to run, a vacancy must be filled by co-option, if it runs for less than this the council is not bound to

fill the vacancy. The Local Government Act 1972 sch12 p39 requires in order to co-opt a member that the candidate must receive an absolute majority of those voting and present.

Vacancies left from elections.
Cornwall has a quadrennial election cycle. Where a vacancy remains from an ordinary election, the town council should co-opt within 35 working days. If the council does not co-opt within this timescale Cornwall Council can order a by-election.

Procedure
When the council is to co-opt a new member, it will advertise that the vacancy is to be filled by co-option at the next suitable meeting of the full council via the town council website and other suitable means of communications. At least three weeks' notice shall be given.
Those seeking co-option should apply to be co-opted in writing to the Town Clerk completing the prescribed form which will set out their reasons for standing and a confirmation that they meet the eligibility criteria. This shall be supplied to the Town Clerk at least 10 days before the decision meeting.

If there is a vacancy in more than one ward, the Council may ask candidates to state the ward for which they wish to be considered.

The intention to co-opt to the vacancy will be placed on the agenda of a meeting of the Full Council. The application forms will be included with the papers for the agenda and those seeking to be co-opted should attend the meeting to make a short 3-minute address and to answer any questions the council may have about their application. They will be sent a copy of the full agenda pack for the meeting. If they are unable to attend, the council will proceed to consider their application, no alternative meeting will be arranged.

A co-option provides an opportunity for the council to assess any skills gaps and/or representation shortfalls from within its members and could advertise for applicants with desirable skills to apply.

Voting

1. The process will be carried out in the public session.
2. As soon as all candidates have finished providing their submissions and answering any questions Members may have, the Council will proceed to a vote, with each candidate being proposed and seconded by the Councillors in attendance (as defined by Standing Order 2b).
3. The vote will be taken by written ballot.

4. In order for a candidate to be elected to the Council, it will be necessary for them to obtain an absolute majority of votes cast (Over 50% of the votes available at the meeting).
5. If there are more than two candidates and none receives an absolute majority in the first round of voting, the candidate with the least number of votes will be eliminated from the process. Further rounds of voting will then take place using this process until a candidate has an absolute majority.
6. Only Councillors present at the meeting may vote upon a person to fill the vacancy. Each Councillor may vote for in favour of as many candidates as there are vacancies. If necessary, the Mayor may exercise the casting vote.
7. If the vacancies are in more than one ward, candidates will be asked on their ward preference beforehand which will be taken into consideration by the Council. Wards will be allocated to successfully co-opted candidates after the vote.

Failure to Co-opt

The council is not obliged to select anyone from the candidates who apply in the co-option process. If the process is unsuccessful (whether through lack of, or no suitable, candidates that achieve a majority vote) then the town council will re-run the co-option process, subject to the vacancy still having six months to run.

Co-option

Following the council resolution to co-opt the new councillor must undertake the acceptance of office requirements, complete and publish a Register of Interests, undertake the council's new councillor induction processes, and will be bound by the Members Code of Conduct and the rules and procedures of the council.