

Who can become a Community Representative?

The following principles have been adopted for all Community Representatives on Area Panels:

- i) That the term of office will be for two years and there will be no substitutes. For the young people's representative the term of office would also be for two years, unless the person was in their final year of further education and about to enter Higher Education e.g. University.
- ii) That no Council employee in a politically restricted post can be a community representative.
- iii) That a community representative does not occupy a position of:
 - a) Chairman or Vice Chairman of a constituency political party, operating within the Forum area.
 - b) Spokesperson or act as a spokesperson for a constituency political party, operating within the Forum area.
- iv) That no prospective Parliamentary or Council election candidate can be a community representative.
- v) That, existing community representatives, upon becoming an election candidate (from the date the nomination forms are submitted to the Returning Officer for the election) will cease to be a member of the Panel and relinquish any associated position that they may hold, with immediate effect.
- vi) That should such a person be unsuccessful in the Parliamentary or Council elections, they cannot stand as a community representative for a 24-month period, from the date of the election.
- vii) That all community representatives become co-opted members of the Panels and be required to observe the same requirements for standards of behaviour as councillors, as set out in the Blackpool Council Code of Conduct for Members.
- viii) That a community representative position will only become vacant when the community representative or their appointing body puts their resignation in writing to the Council's Head of Democratic Services.
- i) To stand for election, the community representatives will need to fulfill the following criteria on the day of appointment:
 - a) be over 18 years of age (this would not apply to the young people's representative who would need to be over the age of 13 years)
 - b) be registered as a local government elector in one of the electoral wards in the Area Forum/ Area Panel area where election is sought, or have lived, worked or owned property in that area for the whole of the 12 months preceding the date of the appointment.
 - c) be a resident or attend a school/ educational facility in that area for the whole of the 12 months preceding the date of the appointment (young people's representative).

The proposed representative would be disqualified as standing as a community representative if he or she be:

- ii)
 - a) is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order.

- b) has a criminal conviction which has a minimum penalty of three months in prison within the 5 years preceding the election
- c) has been found guilty of a corrupt or illegal practice within 5 years preceding the appointment

How are the Community Representatives appointed?

Elections will be held at the April/ May 2012 cycle or Forum meetings. The term of office will be until April/ May 2014 and subsequent elections will be held at the same time on a twice yearly basis.

That where a Community Representative fails throughout a period of six consecutive months, from the date of last attendance (or appointment as a Community Representative) to attend a meeting of an Area Panel or Area Forum, he/ she ceases to be a member of that Panel, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Such dispensation to be given by the Area Panel, no later than its first scheduled meeting following this six-month period.

All candidates must be on the electoral register (with the exception of the young person's representative) for a ward within the Area Panel/ Forum boundary and their application needs to be proposed and seconded by persons who are also be on the electoral register for a ward within the Area Panel/ Forum boundary.

All nominations must be forwarded to the Council's Head of Democratic Services by a specified date. The full address of the nominee, proposer and seconder must be indicated on the nomination form. A role description for Community Representatives on the Area Panel/ Forum will be circulated to candidates prior to standing for election.

The election will be by secret ballot, to be completed on voting slips prepared by the Council and counted by Council Officers. The candidates will have the opportunity to witness the count. All ballots will be held according to the first past the post system.

Candidates will be offered the facility of distributing written background information regarding themselves, at the meeting. Candidates will be expected to prepare their own information on one sheet of A4 paper, which should not exceed 200 words. In order to promote awareness of individual candidates, the Council's Democratic Services Unit will type and photocopy information if received prior to a specified date.

Community Representative candidates will also have the option of a two-minute "hustings" format. This will provide all nominees with a, strictly adhered to, two-minute opportunity to promote their candidature. Candidates have the right not to participate in the hustings.

In order not to exclude candidates who are unable to make the election meeting, it is permitted for candidates to be elected in their absence.

Anyone wishing to vote for the appointment of the Community Representatives must be on the current electoral register for a ward within the Area Panel/ Forum boundary. Each eligible voter will have the same number of votes dependent on the number of representatives to be elected. For example, where there are six vacant positions, each voter will have six votes. An Officer from Democratic Services will act as the Returning Officer and oversee the election process.

The young people's representative will be elected through a separate process. Should one not be elected to an Area Panel, then this position will be open for election as a community representative.

How will the Chairman and Vice Chairman be appointed?

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Area Panels will be Community Representatives and will be appointed by the Forum for a two year period of office. Representatives one of the electoral wards in the Area Forum/ Area Panel area where election is sought, or have lived, worked or owned property in that area for the whole of the 12 months preceding the date of the appointment will be invited to nominate themselves to initially become a Community Representatives and then for one of the above roles.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Panel will also be the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the corresponding Area Forum.

The position of Chairman and Vice Chairman are eligible for an allowance. We recognise that being a Community Representative will place certain responsibilities on you, in particular if you are a Chairman or Vice Chairman. It will also mean that you will need to attend meetings to make decisions, on behalf of the community in your area. In recognition of this we pay representatives a small annual allowance as follows:

Chairman £514
Vice Chairman £203
Other Community Representatives £75.

During the election of the Community Representatives, the ballot paper lists all the nominees standing to be a community representative and those wishing to be elected as the Chairman would be identified on the ballot paper. The Vice Chairman would then be appointed from those individuals who stood as "chairman" and who received the second most votes. In the event of that person declining the position of Vice Chairman it would be offered to the person with the next highest amount of votes.