

Voting Procedure Paper Cover Sheet

Executive Summary

The BMC has used a number of voting methods over the last few years and the Governance & Compliance Officer, and Andy Syme, felt that standardising the approach would be beneficial for staff and members.

This was discussed at the Governance Working Group and the paper was agreed with the proviso that it should eventually be incorporated into the 'Director's Governance Manual' and that sections of this would be available to members.

The attached paper was discussed by National Council in June and a document was approved for release to the membership with the caveat that options on edge cases need to be considered.

Key Points of paper:

- There are 2 methods which are considered fair, rigorous and able to be implemented by staff on the day and through electronic voting platforms.
- These apply to all voting at AGMs & GMs.
- Areas may apply these procedures if appropriate but are not mandated to do so.
- This document will eventually be included within a wider governance manual which will be available to members.
- This would result in a change to the AoA whereby any current description of voting processes would be updated to refer to the Voting Procedure document.

Dealing with edge cases

While the attached policy is considered robust there is always the potential, albeit small, for a tied vote or some other condition where a clear result can not be determined. National Council felt that the process for resolving such edge cases should be documented to ensure that members had a clear expectation of the process (no surprises), and staff and volunteers have a clear process to follow.

The only restriction is that the procedure should, in the majority of circumstances, enable outcomes are finalised on the day, without need to start the process over again – so avoiding the delays and cost that would ensue. Options therefore fall into two categories:

- a second ballot dealing only with the undecided elements.
- a deciding or casting vote process.

Neither are perfect, and each has merit.

Second Ballot

The proposal would be that additional votes would be taken on the day of all who are in attendance at the AGM or GM.

- + This approach removes any potential accusation of favouritism.
- + It is a democratic process albeit limited only to those attending the AGM or GM; proxy votes would not be eligible and it is unclear if this could be facilitated by electronic voting.
- It has an additional administrative burden on staff, having to prepare and run the re-voting processes.
- It would not work in all edge cases

V1.0
16/7/20

Deciding Vote

The proposal is that the Deciding Group would have the absolute right to decide the result or the method by which a final decision is made. The Group would consist of:

- The President, who is the members' representative,
- Another member of the Council, who represents members; and
- The Chair of the Board, who represents the BMC as an organisation

advised by the Governance & Compliance Officer (who has a professional duty and knowledge to do the 'best thing').

- + This approach allows a quick decision with limited administrative burden.
- + It is flexible and could deal with any situation.
- It allows for potential accusations of favouritism.
- Is not as directly democratic.

Action Required

The Members are asked to:

1. Provide their views on the proposed Election Voting Procedure as a process to be adopted post the next AoA update.
2. Provide their feedback on the 2 'edge case' processes and any preferences they have between the 2 proposals.

Feedback should be sent to Lucy Valerio (Governance & Compliance Officer) - lucy@thebmc.co.uk

Next Steps

The feedback from this, and other membership engagements, will be reviewed by the Council and Board and a formal proposal will be presented at the 2021 AGM for appropriate endorsement by members.

BMC's Election Voting Procedure

This procedure sets out how any elected positions at any General Meeting or AGM of the BMC are to be decided. These voting systems are to be used for voting on the day, the equivalent electronic voting process will be used for electronic votes.

Any elections to be held by Areas may also apply this Election Voting Procedure if it is appropriate, if it is not appropriate Areas may use a voting system that is more appropriate to the circumstances of the election e.g. Areas may want to use a simple majority if they have three or more candidates standing for one position.

Simple Majority

If there are **two candidates for one position**, all those persons entitled to vote (Voters) shall:

- If the vote is by way of a ballot, be asked to put a cross (X) next to their preferred candidate and the candidate receiving the highest number of votes will be elected
- If the vote is by way of a show of hands, be asked to put their hand up when the candidates name is called out and the candidate receiving the highest number of votes will be elected

Single Transferrable Vote (STV)

If there are **multiple candidates or multiple positions (so anything other than the above situation)**, the vote will be by a ballot, all Voters get one vote and will be asked to rank the candidates in order of preference using the numbers as set out below:

- Preferred candidate = 1
 - Second preferred candidate = 2
 - Third preferred candidate = 3
 - Fourth preferred candidate = 4
- Etc.

A Voter can rank as many or as few candidates as they like, or only vote for one candidate, as shown in the example ballot cards below. If a Voter wishes to abstain, they should put a cross (X) next to abstain.

Ranking all the candidates

BALLOT PAPER		
Place the candidates in order of preference (1,2,3 etc)		
Rank as many candidates as you wish		
	Chris Mountain	5
	Lucia Wall	4
	Rosa Crag	2
	Alex Rock	3
	Zac Ice	1
	Abstain	

Abstaining

BALLOT PAPER		
Place the candidates in order of preference (1,2,3 etc)		
Rank as many candidates as you wish		
	Chris Mountain	
	Lucia Wall	
	Rosa Crag	
	Alex Rock	
	Zac Ice	
	Abstain	X

Ranking some of the candidates

BALLOT PAPER		
Place the candidates in order of preference (1,2,3 etc)		
Rank as many candidates as you wish		
	Chris Mountain	
	Lucia Wall	2
	Rosa Crag	1
	Alex Rock	
	Zac Ice	
	Abstain	

If a Voter completes a ballot card as shown below, this is counted as an abstention and therefore the rankings on the ballot card will not count.

BALLOT PAPER		
Place the candidates in order of preference (1,2,3 etc)		
Rank as many candidates as you wish		
	Chris Mountain	
	Lucia Wall	1
	Rosa Crag	
	Alex Rock	
	Zac Ice	2
	Abstain	X

STV – how are candidates elected?

There are a number of stages in the counting of votes process following a STV, which are set out below.

In order to be elected each candidate needs to reach a quota. This is the minimum number of votes calculated according to the number of positions and votes cast. There is a standard equation to use for this which is:

$$\text{No. of votes cast} \div (\text{no. of positions} + 1) + 1$$

So, if there are two positions and 1,500 votes are cast the quota would be: $(1,500 \div (2+1)) + 1 = 501$

Stage 1

The first preference votes **only** for each candidate are added up. Candidates who achieve the quota e.g. 501 are elected. So, if Rosa Crag gets 550 votes as number 1, she is elected.

Stage 2

The lowest ranked candidate is eliminated from the election.

Stage 3

All of the votes for the eliminated candidate are passed on to the next preference on those ballot papers. So if Chris Mountain at the end of Stage 2 is the lowest rank candidate with 100 votes, he is eliminated and those 100 votes are transferred to the next preferred candidate i.e. the second choice on those ballot papers.

This process of eliminating the lowest rank candidate and transferring the vote to the next preference on ballot papers continues until candidates reach the quota and the positions are all filled.

Example

Using the ballot paper above, there are 1,500 votes cast (no abstentions) and all Voters ranked all of the candidates. There are two positions to fill. The quota is therefore 501 ($1,500 \div (2+1) + 1$).

The first preference votes only are counted and the following is the result:

	Ranked
	1
Chris Mountain	100
Lucia Wall	250
Rosa Crag	550
Alex Rock	250
Zac Ice	350

Rosa Crag is elected as she was the first preferred candidate of 550 Voters, but there is still one position to decide. So we move to stage 2: Chris Mountain is the lowest ranked candidate, so he is eliminated.

Stage 3 – the second preferred candidates on the ballot papers that had Chris has their first choice are transferred to the remaining candidates. Those numbers are

Lucia Wall – 40		Lucia Wall – 290
Alex Rock – 10	this takes their total votes to	Alex Rock – 260
Zac Ice – 50		Zac Ice – 400

No-one meets the quota, so the lowest rank candidate is eliminated i.e. Alex Rock.

Alex Rock's 260 votes are then transferred to the third preferred candidate on those ballot papers. Those numbers are:

Lucia Wall – 100		Lucia Wall – 390
Zac Ice – 160	this takes their total votes to	Zac Ice - 560

Zac Ice is therefore elected to the second position.