

Trigger ballots for the reselection of Westminster candidates

The Labour Party Rule Book 2012 Chapter 5 Selections, Rights and Responsibilities of Candidates for elected public office Clause IV Selection of Westminster Parliamentary Candidates subclause 5 (page 28) reads:

“If a CLP is represented in Parliament by a member of the PLP:

- A. If the sitting MP wishes to stand for re-election, a trigger ballot will be carried out through Party units and affiliates according to NEC guidelines. If the MP wins the trigger ballot he/ she will, subject to NEC endorsement, be selected as the CLP’s prospective parliamentary candidate.
- B. If the MP fails to win the trigger ballot, he/ she shall be eligible for nomination for selection as the prospective parliamentary candidate, and s/he shall be included in the shortlist of candidates from whom the selection shall be made. “

Amendment

Insert in (A) after the words “if the MP wins the trigger ballot”:

“by at least a two-thirds majority”, and

Insert in (B) after the words “if the MP fails to win the trigger ballot”:

“by at least a two-thirds majority”.

Supporting argument

The selection of parliamentary candidates is one of the party’s most important tasks. The existing trigger ballot process, however, which is a ballot of members and affiliated branches, does not provide a sufficiently responsive mechanism to ensure the accountability of sitting MPs as was clear in the experience of East Lothian CLP with their MP, Anne Moffat. In this case, in spite of widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of the MP, Ann Moffat survived a trigger ballot. After a long-running campaign, and the temporary suspension of the local party, the NEC did eventually allow the local party to deselect their MP. Although many would prefer a return to full mandatory reselection, this is a sensible compromise which means that where sitting MPs had only a small majority in a trigger ballot, a full selection procedure would be held.

Closing date for constitutional amendments: 22 June 2012