

Suggested Rule Change

Trigger ballots for the selection of parliamentary candidates

The Labour Party Rule Book 2013 Chapter 5 Selections, rights and responsibilities of candidates for elected public office, Clause IV Selection of Westminster parliamentary candidates section 5A (page 24) reads as follows:

“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.”

Amendment:

Delete the words after “according to NEC guidelines” to the end of the section, and insert:

“as follows:

- (i) Where a constituency party is organized on the basis of a delegate general meeting, all eligible party units (including members branches, womens’ and ethnic minorities forums etc) and all affiliated organisations which are entitled to nominate delegates to the general meeting shall be invited by a set date to indicate whether or not they wish to reselect their MP without ‘triggering’ a full selection process. These indications of preference shall be weighted according to the number of GC delegates (including any ex-officio delegates) plus one that each party unit or affiliate actually has at the freeze date.
- (ii) Where a constituency party is not organized on the basis of a delegate general meeting, all affiliated organisations shall be invited by a set date to indicate whether or not they wish to reselect their MP without ‘triggering’ a full selection process, and special meetings of individual party members shall be convened based on ward boundaries and subject to the approval of the RD(GS) for the same purpose. These indications of preference shall be weighted in accordance with NEC guidance based on a standardised number of GC delegates (including any ex-officio delegates) plus one that each party unit or affiliate would be entitled to if that CLP were to be organized on the basis of a delegate general meeting.
- (iii) If by the date set a two-thirds weighted majority of those party units and affiliated organisations that make an indication indicate that they prefer not to proceed to a full selection process, the MP shall be deemed to have won the trigger ballot and to have been selected as prospective parliamentary candidate for the following election, subject to NEC endorsement as set out in section 8 below.

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 & 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. In this case, in spite of widespread dissatisfaction with the MP’s performance, the MP 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.

The closing date for constitutional amendments is 5pm, Fri 21 June 2013.