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MORE than 50 candidates will contest the forthcoming local elections with seats up for grabs in all but one of Hartlepool's 17 wards.

The deadline for would-be councillors to get their nominations in passed at noon yesterday and 58 men and women have put their names forward to fight the 16 seats up for grabs across the town.

Challenging for a seat on the council will be 16 Labour, 14 Conservative, nine Lib Dem, eight UKIP, six Independent and five BNP candidates.

The number of candidates range from two in Brus ward to six in the Fens ward, while Labour candidate Peter Ingham will be unopposed in the Stranton ward.

The local elections will be held on Thursday, May 6, the same night as the General Election.

There will be Hartlepool Borough Council elections in all of the town's wards except for Greatham, although Stranton is unopposed.

Only one seat will be contested in each ward as the elections are held on a three-year cycle.

Hartlepool Borough Council has 17 wards with 15 of them having three councillors and two wards, Elwick and Greatham, one councillor each.

The council has a total of 47 councillors, plus elected mayor Stuart Drummond.

Councillors are elected for four years and each year one councillor is elected with polls held on a rolling three-year programme with the fourth year free for the Mayoral elections.

Those who will be contesting the local elections had to have 10 signatories who are on the electoral roll for the ward they hope to represent.

They have to be 18 or over, but there is no maximum age limit, and have had to have either lived or worked in the borough for the 12 months prior to their nomination and cannot be employed by Hartlepool Borough Council.

Residents can only vote in local or national elections if they are on the Electoral Register.

The closing date for registration on the Electoral Register or for receipt of completed applications to vote by post is Tuesday, April 20.

Because the General Election and local elections will be held on the same day, planned parish council elections in Dalton Piercy, Elwick and Hart have been put back until later in the month.

All inquiries about the elections – including regarding the Electoral Register and applications to vote by post - should be made to the council's elections office on (01429) 523088.

A FULL list of candidates will appear in Saturday's Mail