

Labour party to vote on parliamentary candidate for Edinburgh South this Thursday

Voting will take place this Thursday in the Edinburgh South constituency to decide upon the Westminster parliamentary candidate for the Labour Party for any upcoming General Election.

The MP in Edinburgh South has been Ian Murray for the last number of years, and from 2015 to 2017 he was the only Labour MP who held his seat in Scotland in the face of 56 SNP MPs elected to Westminster. In 2017 he was returned with a majority of 15,514, the largest by a long way in any of the five Edinburgh constituencies.

In a vote which we understand took place last night Unite the union are triggering a ballot or full reselection process in this constituency.

The National Executive Council introduced new rules set out in Chapter 5 of the Labour Party Rule Book. These mean that full reselection of a candidate **can** be triggered if one third of the membership wants it or if one third of the local affiliates or trade unions want it.

The Rule Book states : *"If either one third or more of Party branches, or one third or more of affiliated branches, indicate that they wish a selection to take place, a selection shall proceed. The MP shall be included in the shortlist of candidates from whom the selection shall be made."*

Labour councillor Scott Arthur who represents

Colinton/Fairmilehead said : "It's very disappointing to hear this – Ian Murray's constituency covers a small part of my Ward and he commands the respect of residents from right across the political spectrum. His work ethic and commitment to our movement is undoubted."

Conservative councillor Phil Doggart who also represents the Colinton/Fairmilehead Ward said : "Obviously would never vote for Ian, but he is a decent man and politician. Says it all about Labour."

Advocate Jonathan Brown said : "I'd be very surprised if he loses. Strong personal vote and big unionist tactical vote. All helped by his consistent opposition to Corbyn. I think he might be the only Scottish Labour MP to hold his seat. Much more doubtful Labour could hold it if they deselect him."

So why are the local Labour parties voting? There is a need to have a parliamentary candidate selected for any General Election. In view of the current Brexit debate there is more likelihood of an election being called, notwithstanding the terms of the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011 which sets out the timetables for that.

Who gets to vote? Ordinary members in the four council wards which make up the parliamentary constituency of Edinburgh South and affiliate members of the Labour Party including Unite the union.

What are Unite the union doing? Unite the union don't like the fact that Ian Murray has been openly critical of Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn. Ian Murray has adopted the line of seeking a People's Vote or second referendum on Brexit. This is at odds with the Labour Party leadership.

A Unite spokesman said : "This decision was taken by Unite members following consultation with the relevant committees and branches of the union under our democratic processes. Our members are clearly concerned that Ian Murray has consistently

undermined the Labour leadership in Scotland and at Westminster, and has on occasion attacked our union. No MP is entitled to their seat. It is for Mr Murray to now demonstrate why Unite members in Edinburgh South should return him as their representative.”

Murray is not the only Labour MP to fall foul of the new rules as to selection. There are four English MPs who will face a full reselection process and only yesterday the [Liverpool Echo](#) said that long time MP Sir George Howarth will have to be reselected in terms of the Rule Book.



Ian Murray MP

Ian Murray said: “It is disappointing that in the week where I’m leading the People’s Vote campaign in Scotland and working around the clock to maintain the cross-party coalition that’s defeating Boris Johnson disastrous Brexit in order to protect workers’ jobs and rights, that this is Unite’s priority.

“My constituents are my priority and I won’t be distracted from fighting for them.”