

RECRUITMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE

Policy

1.0 Scope and aims of the Policy

This policy applies to all employees of the council.

The council's policy is to recruit the best person for each vacancy based on its responsibilities under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, section 7 in considering relative merits and abilities, regardless of gender, marital status, race, creed, sexual orientation, age or disability. In no circumstances will any appointment be made based on personal recommendation without the prospective employee going through a selection process.

1.1 General Principles

The council recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce and values the different contribution that individual employees bring to the workplace. The council is committed to a programme of action that will enable it to recruit and develop a diverse workforce and create an environment that allows each employee to feel valued for their individual talent and where individual skills, knowledge and competencies are fully nurtured. The council recognises the potential conflict between ensuring a diverse and varied workforce, its commitment to open recruitment and the career development of existing employees. The council's recruitment and selection policies endeavour to provide an appropriate balance between these conflicting interests.

The council will comply fully with any legislative requirements but will aim to go beyond mere compliance. The council will take positive action wherever possible to create opportunities for personal development for employees and will ensure that all persons with a disability who meet the person specification will be invited for interview and, if required, special arrangements are made for the interview.

Those people involved in the recruitment process will be given appropriate training to ensure they have the skills to recruit the best candidate. No person shall chair a recruitment panel until such time as they have received or have evidence of previous substantial recruitment experience or training.

1.2 Pre-recruitment

All posts will have a Job Description that sets out the context of the post, the key tasks against which the post-holder's performance will be reviewed. A Person Specification setting out the required skills, abilities, knowledge, work experience, qualifications and competencies will also be prepared.

Recruitment to all posts shall be by application form. CVs will not be accepted. The application form shall be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to meet the recruitment needs of the organisation and meets legislative requirements.

1.3 Recruitment Advertising

To achieve a consistent approach to the filling of vacancies and to ensure that all posts reflect current organisational requirements, the council or personnel committee shall be responsible for authorising recruitment.

All posts shall be advertised as widely as possible within the constraints of the budget allocated for the recruitment process. The council will be proactive in utilising a variety of mechanisms to reach applicants from diverse backgrounds

Recruitment may be monitored for age, disability, ethnic origin, and gender.

2.0 Internal Recruitment

2.1 This policy recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce. It also recognises that the nature of the council's work is such that projects may sometimes be funded for a fixed-term, and that the retention of staff, following the completion of a project, may be in the best interests of the council, provided suitable alternative employment is available. Equally, this policy recognises that the talents required to fill a vacancy may already exist within the organisation.

2.2 The personnel committee will have authority to restrict the advertising of a vacancy to internal applications only, if it can be demonstrated that this represents the best interests of the council. In a situation where a vacancy cannot be filled by internal selection, the external recruitment process will then be applied.

3.0 Interview Process

3.1 An interview panel will comprise three members of the Personnel Committee, supported by the Clerk and/or an external advisor. The Chair of the Panel must be experienced in recruitment and selection.

3.2 Shortlisting will only be carried out by those persons on the interview panel.

3.3 The assessment of candidates called for interview will be through a variety of mechanisms including (in all cases) an interview, but may also involve presentations, relevant tests, questionnaires, or other appropriate assessments each of which will relate to the requirements within the Person Specification.

4.0 Interviewing

4.1 Interviews shall follow the same general pattern for each candidate but shall not prevent the use of follow-up questions or questions that relate to an applicant's individual experience or response to a question, whilst ensuring that the conduct of the interview remains within the equality framework.

4.2 The authority to appoint lies with the personnel committee which should take into account not only an applicant's performance at interview, but their application form and their performance in other tests etc.

4.3 Where it is considered helpful, one or more candidates may be invited back for further interview. In such cases, at least two of the three initial Panel members must be present.

5.0 Post Interview

5.1 Where employees are working with vulnerable people or in the community, appropriate checks shall be required. The cost of any such check required will be met by the Council.

5.2 All appointments shall be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references. Where references are not satisfactory and there are no mitigating circumstances to consider, or there are medical problems that make the applicant unsuitable or unable to fulfil the post to which they have been appointed, the personnel committee must take appropriate action to withdraw the offer.

5.3 All appointments are subject to a six-month probationary period, a satisfactory declaration by the applicant under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended), a satisfactory medical record (if required), and the requirements of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996

(together with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and the Immigration Act 2016) being met.

5.4 All unsuccessful applicants called for interview shall have the right to feedback.

5.5 All employees shall have an induction arranged for them that relates to their specific needs and arrangements made for their probationary period to be meaningfully monitored.

6.0 Confidentiality

6.1 All aspects of the recruitment process will be considered to be wholly confidential.

7.0 Equality

7.1 The Equality and Human Rights Commission may issue Codes of Practice for the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment. Councillors and officers, acting as members of a recruitment panel are responsible for ensuring that the Code is implemented. The Council may be liable if discrimination occurs. Panel members will also be expected to comply with the Code of Conduct for members of parish and town councils.

Procedure

1.0 Pre-Recruitment

1.1 Review of Existing Post

The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for reviewing the duties and grade of the post and its relevance to current and future needs, concentrating on whether:

- the post should continue in its present form
- at the same level
- and that funding is still available for the post.

The first task is to review the need for the post in its present form. The following questions may be helpful:

- is there still the need for the job – either on full or part time basis?
- can the job be done in any different way e.g. has it changed because of changes in technology?
- does the Job Description meet current or changed needs?
- are the same skills required?
- does the person specification need to change if the job is being done differently?
- does the council want to make use of the vacancy to do things in a different way?
- does the council want to fill it on a temporary basis with a view to longer term changes?
- is there money in the budget to continue the post?
- is there likely to be difficulty recruiting to the post? If so, is the remuneration package at the right level?
- does the Job Description clearly set out the outcomes the organisation wants to achieve from the job?

1.2 Establishment of a New Post

The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for justifying the need for and recommending the duties and grade of any new post, its relevance to current and future needs and be satisfied that funding is available for the post. In looking to establish a new post, the following questions may be helpful:

- is there a real need for the job or can the outputs be achieved in some other way?
- what is the impact of the creation on the post on other posts?
- has the opportunity been taken to ensure that the Job Description reflects current, and not historic, information and utilises up to date technology and work practices?
- is the council certain that the number of hours allocated for the post are appropriate?
- has the council clearly identified the essential tasks and required outcomes for the post?
- has the council identified the right skills to achieve the desired outcomes?
- will the Job Description take account of future needs and does it provide appropriate flexibility?
- is the funding in place to pay for the post?
- is there likely to be difficulty recruiting to the post? If so, is the remuneration package at the right level?

1.3 Job Description

The Clerk shall be responsible for drafting a Job Description for each post as set out in the agreed format. A copy shall be kept on each employee's personal file. All posts shall have a Job Description that sets out the nature and duty of tasks that the post holder will be required to undertake. There shall be a standard format that will set out:

- Job title and grade
- Who is responsible for managing the post?
- Context of the post
- Key tasks
- Required job outcomes
- Responsibilities and accountabilities
- Other relevant information
- Date of the last review of Job Description

1.4 Person Specification

The Clerk shall be responsible for drafting the Person Specification for each post as set out in an agreed format. A copy of the person specification shall be kept on each employee's personal file which shall include essential job requirements and set out how those specifications are to be assessed as part of the overall interview process. Desirable requirements will be shown separately. The specification shall cover:

- Skills and abilities
- Knowledge
- Qualifications/Education/Training
- Work Experience
- Other requirements

The Person Specification shall be reviewed by the Personnel Committee each time that the Job Description is reviewed and amended.

1.5 Application Form

The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that the application form is reviewed regularly and, where appropriate, application forms developed to meet the developing needs of the organisation and its activities. Recruitment to all posts shall be by application form. CVs alone will not be accepted.

2.0 Recruitment Advertising

2.1 Authority to Recruit

The council shall authorise the recruitment to existing posts provided that the continued need for the post (in its existing, or revised, form) has been demonstrated and there is appropriate budgetary provision. Responsibility for managing the recruitment process may be devolved to the Clerk, to the Personnel Committee or to an external body.

The Personnel Committee shall record that it has reviewed the job description, person specification and job information and prepared a draft job advert. It should also indicate whether there are any specific arrangements it wishes to make for advertising and interviewing for the post e.g. internal recruitment.

Adverts shall be agreed by the Personnel Committee which shall determine the final format of the advert and authorise that the advert to be placed in the appropriate media.

2.2 Where to Advertise

Where it is considered that the post could be filled by internal application only, or through means other than external advertisement, the personnel committee will agree the reasons to justify that decision.

2.3 Job Advert

The Personnel Committee shall have responsibility for agreeing the wording of job adverts and agreeing the closing date and interview timetable. Job adverts shall:

- include details of the grade, hours and location of the post
- summarise the responsibilities of the role
- summarise key employment benefits
- include details of how to apply
- contain details of the closing date, and where possible the intended interview date
- be clear and concise as to where completed applications should be sent.

2.4 Recruitment information

It is insufficient to send out application forms without appropriate information relating to the job. The following information must be sent as a minimum:

- standard covering letter from the council explaining the process
- Application Form
- Applications Form guidance notes
- Job Description
- Person Specification
- additional information may be sent out with the information pack depending upon individual job requirements
- information about the council.

3.0 Interview Process

3.1 Interview Panel

The Personnel Committee, Clerk or appointed external body will be responsible for arranging the dates and venues for shortlisting and interviews. Interview Panels should have the skills and knowledge to recruit successfully to the post and the Chair of the Panel must be experienced in recruitment and selection. Where appropriate, external advisors/consultants may sit with the interview panel.

3.2 Shortlisting

Shortlisting should be completed the Personnel Committee, Clerk or appointed external body. Applications should be assessed against the criteria set out in the Person Specification. All disabled applicants who meet the Person Specification shall be invited for interview.

3.3 Invitation to Interview

The Personnel Committee, Clerk or appointed external body shall arrange for invitations for interview to be sent out, for the venue to be booked and all involved persons to be notified of the date and time of the interview etc. The invitation to attend interview should give at least 7 days-notice using a standard letter and should cover:

- Time and place of interview
- The format of the interview and any additional information relating to presentations or written tests
- The need to acknowledge attendance
- Details of how to get to the interview venue
- Requesting proof at interview of any required professional or other qualifications required for the post
- Whether any specific assistance may be required to enable the applicant to attend the interview.

3.4 Questions, Presentations and Tests

The Personnel Committee shall ensure that appropriate presentations, tests and questions have been drawn up, agreement reached as to what outcomes are expected and who shall ask which question.

Details as to how an individual is to be assessed for a job should be led by the content of the Person Specification and the job functions laid out in the Job Description. This will include information to be found in the application form, and by questions to be asked at interview. Other ways of assessing a person's ability to perform may be through setting tests or exercises designed to assess their ability or knowledge in specific areas or activities.

Presentations should be relevant and intended to test specific skills against the Person Specification. They are primarily a test of a person's ability to communicate information, ideas and concepts and to inter-act with their audience, including an ability to answer questions on any presentation. Careful consideration should be given to the purpose, nature and content of any proposed presentation.

Tests should be used to assess specific skills against the Person Specification. They should be used to test an individual's ability to solve a particular problem, test their skills, test ability to deal with problems within a given timescale or test knowledge in a specific area.

Interview questions must test an applicant's knowledge and understanding that is required by the Job Description and Person Specification. Questions should be specific and potential 'follow up' questions to explore fully a candidate's responses are permitted.

4.0 Interviewing

4.1 The Interview

The Chair of the Panel shall be responsible for the overall control and management of the interview within the policy and for recording the reasons for any deviations from the policy. They shall ensure that other members of the Panel are fully aware of the procedures and comply with them. Interviews shall follow the same general pattern for each candidate covering:

- welcome and introductions to Panel
- outline of interview process
- outline/recap on any issues relating to the job on offer
- presentation or the test (if appropriate)
- questions from Panel
- questions from applicant (if any)
- information about terms and conditions, decision making process etc.

No person will be asked any question which is directly or indirectly discriminatory nor any assumptions made based the protected characteristics scheduled in the Equality Act.

4.2 Making and Recording the Decision

The Clerk shall:

- ensure that the decision is properly made
- ensure the process is properly recorded
- have responsibility for taking up references
- arrange for the post to be offered to the successful candidate

At the end of the interviews the Chair shall ensure that the Interview Assessment Forms are completed and discuss with the Panel the appointment of the successful applicant. This will normally, but not always, be the candidate with the most points. The responses of each candidate will be noted and at the end of each interview the Panel shall assess the candidate's performance and shall complete their Interview Assessment Form.

Applicants who are unsuccessful can complain about a decision not to appoint them and they have the right to take a case to an Employment Tribunal if discrimination is alleged. It is necessary therefore to ensure that all decisions are properly recorded and the use of interview scoring sheets provide the necessary evidence of good decision-making.

The Clerk should check any information relating to medical certification, criminal conviction declaration and eligibility to work in the UK. If there are any concerns relating to the health of the individual to carry out the job they have applied for, then further medical information about fitness to work may be sought.

Where a final decision has not been made, it may be helpful for one or more candidates may be invited back for further interview. In such cases, a majority of the initial Panel members must be present.

Interviewees should be advised within a reasonable timescale as to whether they have been successful or not. They should always be offered the opportunity of feedback from the interview.

All interview Assessment Forms will be held in a sealed envelope and appropriately archived. Records relating to unsuccessful candidates may be destroyed after six months.

5.0 Post Interview

5.1 Offer Letter

The Clerk should ensure that the offer letter is sent out immediately and that a response is received, as soon as possible together with the appropriate documents.

A copy of the offer letter and signed acceptance should be placed on the employee's file.

5.2 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and Police Checks

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act provides that some convictions are spent after a specified period of time and do not have to be declared by persons applying for jobs. The Act also requires that where employees or potential employees are likely to work with vulnerable people any conviction, even those that would otherwise be spent, may have to be declared. Where employees work with vulnerable persons a Disclosure and Disbarring Service check may have to be undertaken.

Where convictions have been declared the matter should be discussed with the personnel committee which shall decide whether an appointment is appropriate, or that the employment option be not continued. In coming to such a decision they shall have regard to:

- The nature of the conviction
- The length of time since it occurred
- The person's age at the time of the offence
- The overall number of offences
- The relevance of the offence to the nature of the work to be carried out
- Whether a police caution should be regarded as the same as a conviction

5.3 References

A standard letter requesting a reference should be sent to referees given by the candidate. The letter should include details of the job description and person specification.

There may be specific individual circumstances where potential employees may not wish to use a present or past employer for a reference (such as in cases where there may have been victimisation or intimidation or violence) and seeking a reference may jeopardise an individual's security. All such cases should be discussed with the Clerk.

5.4 Unsuccessful Candidates

Information sent out with the job application pack will advise applicants who have not been shortlisted, that they have been unsuccessful if they have not heard from the council within 14 days of the closing date for the post. All unsuccessful applicants attending for interview will be advised that they have been unsuccessful as soon as possible after the interview.

5.5 Complaints

There may be some occasions at the end of, or even during, the recruitment and selection process when an applicant (or applicants) may be aggrieved at the outcome or potential outcome.

Any applicant who feels they have been aggrieved by any decision or are unhappy about the way in which their application has been treated at any stage of the procedure, may complain in writing to the Clerk or Chairman of the Council if the Clerk is implicated in the complaint. Any such complaint must be made within seven days of either the closing date for applications, notification of the decision or the incident about which they wish to complain.

Complaints must be investigated and resolved within fifteen working days. This does not prejudice any statutory right to lodge a claim for discrimination.

A copy of the Council's Complaints Procedure will be made available to all applicants upon request.

5.6 Personnel File

Each employee shall have a personnel file that complies with the provisions of data protection legislation covering manually or electronically held data. The file shall hold the following data relating to the recruitment process:

- application form
- equality monitoring form
- offer letter
- offer letter - signed by new employee
- contract of employment
- references
- medical form
- job description
- person specification
- any specific details under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- Asylum and Immigration Act declaration (if appropriate)

The Clerk shall ensure that an employee's personnel file contains all the above documents.

5.7 Setting up Payroll

The Clerk requires specific information to ensure a new employee will be paid on the appropriate date. This information should be sought on the first date of employment. The information required is:

- Details of bank or building society account
- P45/P46
- Date of birth
- Proof of identity and right to work in the UK

5.8 A written statement of terms and conditions of employment shall be drawn up and must be given to the successful candidate on their first day of employment, together with copies of the councils' disciplinary and grievance procedures.

6.0 Confidentiality

6.1 It is essential that those involved within the recruitment and selection procedures at all stages should treat information in strictest confidence. This means:

- not passing on information to others, including other candidates, who have applied for a particular job
- not discussing performance at interview with anyone else except as feedback to individual candidates
- returning to the Clerk, or the body assisting the council with interviews, all documentation used during the interview process
- the council must ensure that material obtained as part of the interview process is stored securely

Any breach of confidentiality may have implications under the Data Protection Act for the council, the Code of Conduct for councillors and, for staff, the Council's Disciplinary Procedures.

7.0 Induction

7.1 All employees shall have an induction arranged for them that relates to their specific needs. The induction for each employee shall cover

- The organisation
- Health and safety
- Specific job requirements
- Identification of training needs

Arrangements made for the induction period to be meaningfully monitored and recorded. A copy of the employee's induction record shall be maintained on their personnel file.