



## **NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Recruitment Policy**

#### **1. Introduction**

Northam Town Council is committed to delivering high quality services. The effectiveness of these services depends upon the quality of people the Council employs. Consequently, this Recruitment Policy has been drawn up to ensure recruitment procedures are fair, follow best practice principles, and conform to the Council's equal opportunities standards and practice.

#### **2. Recruitment policy statement**

##### **Aim:**

To recruit the most suitable candidate for a vacant post on the basis of their skills, experience and knowledge as set out in the person specification. No person seeking employment with the Council will be treated less favourably than any other person or group because of their: -

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

Under section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, every appointment of a person to a paid office of employment with a local authority of any kind “shall be made on merit.” For this to be achieved it is recognised and accepted that the Council's recruitment process must be carried out fairly and is seen to be so, both within the Council and throughout the community served by the Council.

### **3. Employment opportunities**

3.1 The process of appointing a person to a post within the Council's workforce, whether this be a permanent , temporary, part-time, job share, casual or sessional position, is subject to the Council meeting its statutory obligations as well as fulfilling the Council's commitment to equal opportunities. Council employment opportunities can emerge as a result of a number of circumstances, the main examples being: -

- new posts being created
- employees leaving existing posts
- restructuring/redesigning departments and posts
- additional posts created to meet fluctuations in service delivery or to cover initiatives and projects
- secondments
- temporary posts covering periods of absence
- providing career pathways in appropriate areas and to encourage young people into the workforce

When such circumstances occur the Council has to ensure its compliance with the Employment Rights Act (1996) and associated legislation whereby, for instance, unlawful or unnecessary redundancies of existing employees does not take place. A number of considerations need take place to ensure that the Council conforms to statute.

3.2 The Council recognises that there may be times where secondment or other differing arrangements may be appropriate. eg for career development purposes, hard to fill posts etc.

3.3 Under s.116 of the Local Government Act 1972, candidates are debarred from appointment if he or she has been a Councillor at this authority within the previous 12 months.

#### **4. Recruiting to vacancies**

4.1 Vacancies cannot be advertised without the relevant authorisation from the Town Clerk (within existing structure) or the Finance and HR Committee (new roles or changes to the existing structure).

4.2 Redeployees will be considered for jobs prior to release for general advertising.

4.3 All vacancies must be advertised internally prior to or as well as externally.

#### **5. Person specifications/Job descriptions**

5.1 In every case, when a vacancy is to be filled an appropriate person specification and job description will first be drawn up. Where these are already in existence, they will be reviewed and, where necessary, updated by Finance and HR.

5.2 Where the post is new or has not been evaluated for some time, the revised job description and person specification should be externally evaluated by the Council's HR provider to ensure the salary scale is appropriate.

#### **6. Recruitment publicity**

6.1 All posts classified as "vacant for recruitment" will be filled by the most appropriate method.

This will include one or more of the following ways:

- Advertising on the Council's website
- Press and other media where appropriate
- Using external agencies where appropriate

except that this may be deferred where the considerations given at Appendix A are deemed to apply.

- 6.2 All advertisements for posts should be created in accordance with Town Council branding guidelines and be checked and approved in advance by the Finance Officer and Town Clerk.
- 6.3 All recruitment publicity must positively encourage applications from all suitably skilled, experienced and qualified people and attempt to demonstrate that the Council offers opportunities at all levels to all people. There must be no bias as to gender, race, disability, sexuality, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, religious belief or age. Jobs should be described in such a way that no person with the necessary skills and experience will be deterred from applying.

## **7. Recruitment quality standard**

- 7.1 It is vital that the Council promotes its image as a good employer and deals with applicants promptly. The timescales for all stages of the recruitment process which should be met are as follows:

We aim to select and inform the preferred candidate within 21 days of the closing date.

We will shortlist suitable candidates for interview within 3 working days of the closing date.

We aim to give short listed candidates at least 3 working days notice of any interview and/or publish the interview date in the advert.

We will inform the preferred candidate following an interview within 5 working days.

We aim to inform unsuccessful interviewees within 5 working days of an interview.

We will offer the opportunity for all candidates to receive feedback on their interview performance.

If candidates have a disability and are invited to interview, facilities such as lip speakers, signers, and other assistance will be sought wherever possible.

## **8. Applications**

- 8.1 All applications must be made using the Town Council's job application form rather than by submission of a Curriculum Vitae (C.V.), to ensure that all candidates have equal opportunity to present the same information in the same format.

## **9. Selection criteria**

- 9.1 Only those skills, experience and qualification requirements, which are necessary for the post, are to be established and used as criteria for selection. All relevant experience should be taken into account, not just that attained over periods of time in paid employment.
- 9.2 All applications must be given equal consideration and ability or non-ability demonstrated through the recruitment process to do the work required in accordance with the job and person specification.
- 9.3 Shortlisting panels will be a minimum of the Town Clerk, Mayor and Chair of Finance and HR and will usually be the same group that form the interview panel, unless there are special circumstances, eg panel member taken ill between shortlisting and interview.
- 9.4 Short-listing decisions must be based on the information contained in the application form (and any additional information supplied as part of that application). The criteria for initial selection and other relevant available information must be consistently applied to all candidates.
- 9.5 It is highly recommended that short-listing is undertaken by way of a matrix which assesses applications against person specifications and that this be retained as evidence of how shortlisting decisions were made.

## **10. Interviews**

- 10.1 It is the Council's decision that interviews should be conducted by a competent group and that each interview panel comprises a minimum of three people.
- 10.2 Where an employee or Member is related to, involved in a personal relationship with or is closely known to the candidate outside of work then that employee/Member should not take part in either the shortlisting or interview process.
- 10.3 The Council supports the use of competency based interviewing. All questions posed during interview must be relevant to the criteria in the person specification and to the post to which recruitment is being made. The interview panel should not make assumptions about a person's willingness or ability to meet certain requirements and should ensure in asking any questions that no discrimination occurs.
- 10.4 As with shortlisting, it is highly recommended that notes of interviews be retained as clear evidence as to how recruitment decisions have been made.
- 10.5 Feedback on all candidates' applications and interviews must be offered and given where requested. If requested, reasons for rejection should be given to the candidate. The reasons for rejection must be recorded at the time the decision was made.

## **11. Disabled applicants (disability confident)**

The Council operates a guaranteed interview scheme and all applicants with disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010 who advise the Council at their time of their application who meet the essential criteria of the post must be offered an interview. Disabled candidates may request a reasonable adjustment, either at the application, interview or testing stage of the process, or an adaptation to the job role or workplace. All requests must be considered and, where found to be reasonable, applied. Advice will be available from Finance and Human Resources.

## **12. Selection testing**

- 12.1 Selection testing will only be included in recruitment processes where it can be shown to be justified by the duties and accountabilities of the post and the criteria set out in the person specification.
- 12.2 The outcomes of such tests will be maintained on a confidential basis to the Council and only utilised in the Council in respect of the appointment process, which gave rise to the selection test and for monitoring purposes

## **13. Records and monitoring of recruitment**

- 13.1 All documentation relating to the recruitment and selection process, including questions asked, method of scoring, agreed criteria, notes of interview and reasons for rejection must be documented and kept for six months. All such records to be treated as confidential in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy.

## **14. Terms and conditions of appointment**

- 14.1 Once the interview panel has made a recruitment decision, the preferred candidate can be advised of the decision subject to certain conditions being met. These conditions are:
- Immigration status
  - References suitable to the Council
  - Verified qualifications where applicable
  - Where applicable, Criminal Record Check
- 14.2 To ensure consistency, fairness and to protect the council from equal pay claims, any salary offered should normally be at the base of the grade of the job. Only the Town Clerk can authorise deviation from this. The reasons for this should be recorded.
- 14.3 Care must be taken when making any verbal or written offers of employment to ensure that the terms and conditions attached to it are accurately presented. It is also important that any discussions during or after the interview cannot be misinterpreted by an applicant as offers of employment.

- 14.4 Under no circumstances can unconditional offers of employment be made.
- 14.5 Offer paperwork may only be issued by the Deputy Town Clerk or Town Clerk and any offer of employment must be signed by the Town Clerk.
- 14.6 Advice should be sought from Finance and Human Resources before any offer of employment is withdrawn.

## **15. Recruitment complaints**

- 15.1 Existing employees who wish to complain about the Council's recruitment procedures should raise the matter under the Council's Grievance Procedure.
- 15.2 External applicants for posts or other affected individuals or groups should raise any issues related to recruitment under the Council's Complaints Procedure.

## **16 Member involvement**

- 16.1 As set out in the terms of reference for the Finance and HR committee, elected Members will be responsible for recruitment of the Town Clerk and may be involved in the recruitment and succession planning for other senior members of staff.

## **17. Communication of this policy**

- 17.1 All Council Members, managers, supervisors and employees must be made aware of this policy and in particular employees with responsibilities for recruitment must be competent and accountable for their involvement and participation within the recruitment process of the Council.