

# South Kirkby and Moorthorpe Town Council



## **Recruitment and Selection Procedure**

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The success of any organisation depends on the quality of its workforce. To provide the best possible, modern services to the people of South Kirkby and Moorthorpe Town Council needs highly skilled, flexible, and motivated employees.

1.2 We have in place policies and resources for our Recruitment and Selection processes that are modern, efficient and effective and ensure we recruit individuals who demonstrate they are committed to service improvement and our organisational values.

1.3 This Guide outlines best practice in Recruitment and Selection activity in the Town Council and is supported by further documentation.

- Job Description and Person Specifications
- Good Advertising
- Interviews

1.4 This procedure is written for all Town Council staff involved in Recruitment and Selection.

### **2.0 The Role of Recruitment and Section**

2.1 Recruitment and Selection must:

- meet the needs of the modernising organisation
- provide a quality service to job seekers that is fair, transparent and equally accessible
- attract good recruits from across the community

- help promote a good image of the Council as an employer and service provider
- be consistent and promote the Council as a single employer
- support the council's policies on equal opportunities

### 3.0 Core Standards

3.1 The following core standards apply to all Recruitment and Selection activities across the Council, to provide a consistent approach to quality recruitment and to reflect the organisation's values:

- **Core Standard 1**  
Through the clarity, fairness and courtesy shown to candidates at each stage of the process, all staff involved in Recruitment and Selection will promote the Council as an employer of choice, concerned with service excellence and customer care.
- **Core Standard 2**  
All recruitment information will be up-to-date, in plain language and accessible.
- **Core Standard 3**  
Each opportunity to recruit will be assessed with a view to promoting Council employment initiatives and in accordance with Equal Opportunities Legislation.
- **Core Standard 4**  
All selection decisions will be justifiable and based on the fair and objective assessment of candidates against the skills, attributes, knowledge and experience required for the job.
- **Core Standard 5**  
Care will be taken to ensure that each stage of the Recruitment and Selection process is cost effective both in terms of financial outlay and officer time.
- **Core Standard 6**  
Recruitment processes will be conducted as swiftly as possible to ensure the minimum amount of time between a job becoming vacant and a new appointment commencing.

### 4.0 Corporate Values

4.1 It is vital that the Town Council's Values are embedded in the workforce and support the drive for excellence in service delivery. These values are to be used in service planning, service monitoring, self-assessment and, very importantly, recruitment. The values and their definitions are:

- **Pride in our Community**

We take pride in our township and the contribution we make to its success. We are committed to continuously improving the quality of life in South Kirkby and Moorthorpe.

- **Community-focused**

We recognise that a successful township relies on the success of its neighbourhoods and communities. We want to meet the aspirations of all our empowering communities.

- **People-focused**

People are at the centre of what we do. We will achieve an excellent standard of customer service by acting with speed, efficiency and respect.

- **Responsive and accountable**

We value the contribution of residents, employees and partners. We will communicate clearly and openly about our decisions and actions and the reasons for them.

- **Valuing our employees**

We value our employees and we will support and encourage their development in working hard to deliver better services.

## **5.0 Training**

5.1 All staff and councillors who take part in Recruitment and Selection must have completed the internal R&S training course.

## **6.0 Evaluating the Vacancy**

Think about the job that has become vacant

6.1 Before launching the process to fill any vacant post it should be carefully evaluated to make sure it is still required to meet organisational needs.

This is increasingly important in today's organisation where all services are subject to review and there is an ongoing drive for continuous improvement. In this very fluid environment, the way jobs are managed and organised is continuously changing. This can include what, why and how jobs are carried out.

### **Key questions to consider**

- Is the job still needed?
- Is it fulfilling its purpose?
- Can the duties be better distributed between existing staff?
- Does the job design reflect future Service/ Organisational requirements?
- Are the working hours and working arrangements of a particular post still appropriate?

6.2 If it is decided a new job, or a radical redesign of the current job is needed, then halt any plans to fill the vacancy.

### 6.3 The Exit Interview/ Questionnaire

The Council has a policy that an exit questionnaire be completed by all leavers and where possible an exit interview should take place.

## 7.0 Convening a Recruitment Panel

Who should be on the panel and what is their role?

7.1 Where a recruitment panel is required to progress an appointment to a vacant post, staff involved in the panel need to have:

- Internal recruitment training

### 7.2 The Role of the Panel

The Panel's role is to:

- Plan the process
- Review the Job Description
- Agree the Person Specification
- Agree the information for applicants
- Agree the advertisement
- Plan and design the assessment methods, i.e. interview questions, tests, exercises
- Assess the candidates
- Select the appointable candidate

### 7.3 Planning the Process

Good Recruitment and Selection demands good planning and this should be the first task of the panel. The time it takes to fill a vacancy can be significantly reduced by agreeing a timescaled plan right at the start. This will effect the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the process and also enable candidates to organise their own plans accordingly.

### 7.4 Membership of the Panel

The Chair of the Employment Committee is the responsible person appointed to coordinate the process and two other councillors to ensure it is carried out fairly.

### 7.5 Declaring an interest

If a Panel member knows the applicant, is related (in any way) to the applicant or if their knowledge of the applicant is such that they cannot maintain objectivity, then the Panel member should declare the interest and *must* withdraw from the panel. This will ensure the highest standard of probity and transparency.

If a Panel member is unsure as to whether he/she should withdraw, he/she should err on the side of caution and withdraw. Again, this will ensure the highest standard of probity and transparency.

### 7.6 Continuity

Wherever possible the same people should serve on the panel throughout the entire process. If a substitute is necessary then they need to become familiar with all the applications and receive a thorough brief on the process so far.

## **8.0 Reviewing the job Description**

How should the job be described?

8.1 In Recruitment and Selection, the Job Description is a very important marketing tool, read by potential applicants to decide whether "this is the job for me" or "I want to work here". Job Descriptions should be presented in a concise and positive way which reflects the Council as a modern and forward thinking employer with excellent employment opportunities.

8.2 Panels need to critically review existing Job Descriptions in order to ensure that they are accurate and reflect the job requirements.

Modern Council Job Descriptions:

- Are short and succinct, containing clear, crisp statements which encapsulate the main purpose, duties and expected achievements of the job
- are in plain, jargon free, easily understood language
- use performance standards and outputs rather than just lists of tasks and duties
- are kept fresh and properly aligned to service requirements
- incorporate organisational values and staff development

## **9.0 The Person Specification**

What are the skills, values and behaviours needed for successful performance in the job?

9.1 The Person Specification is the central tool of the Recruitment and Selection process. Getting this document right is one of the most important roles the Recruitment and Selection panel has to perform. It is the basis for assessment and decision-making at every stage. It sets down the skills, behaviours, and underlying competencies which enable a person to perform that job successfully and in accordance with the organisation's values. It should also identify where there are essential qualifications for the post.

9.2 Potential applicants can self-assess against the requirements the panel identify and make a judgement whether they should pursue the vacancy further. This decision can be influenced by the quality, tone and clarity of your person specification.

9.3 Panels also need to write the person specification with equal opportunities in mind. No criteria should discriminate on the grounds of race, religious belief, disability, gender, sexual orientation or age unless the criteria is fundamental to the job, clearly justifiable and meets the legal requirements of anti-discrimination law.

9.4 A Good Person Specification:

- Is short, to the point, free from jargon and acronyms, in plain easily understood language
- Is up-to-date, understood and owned by the whole panel
- Is a key communication tool between the panel and applicants

9.5 For success in the modern organisation, it is vital to think beyond just hard skills, knowledge and experience. The right attitude can be the most important factor in determining an individual's success in a job and their contribution to achieving service goals. We need to recruit individuals who are flexible and committed to delivering excellent service. The panel need to identify the styles of behaviour, values and commitments needed for success in the job and reflect these within the person specification.

## **10.0 Methods of Assessment**

How should the candidates be assessed?

10.1 The assessment methods to be used in the selection process should be carefully considered by the panel to determine whether in addition to an interview, the use of other assessment methods would provide useful information.

10.2 The choice and construction of any assessment method should flow from the requirements of the job in question. It is inappropriate to create a complex assessment methodology for jobs requiring basic level skills - this would be unlikely to add substantially to the information needed by the panel to assist them in decision making, and may well put off potential applicants. Use of a range of assessment tools for senior management recruitment may well however prove a cost effective investment. In all cases, ensure that any proposed assessment methods are both relevant and reliable.

## **11.0 Information to Applicants**

What information should the candidates be sent?

11.1 The Town Council has developed a Job Application Pack for use across all departments and all vacancies.

11.2 Curriculum Vitae (CVs), are only acceptable where stated.

11.3 Care should be taken not to overburden applicants with too much information that is inappropriate for the particular post and pool of applicants.

11.4 It is good practice to include either in the advertisement, or in a covering letter in the pack, when interviews are to be held.

## **12.0 The Advertisement and Marketing the Job**

How should the job be advertised?

12.1 Advertisements are often the first point of contact with potential recruits, so the panel need to think about creating a positive image of the Council and the job on offer.

12.2 Good Advertisements:

- Are short, succinct and describe the job in a nutshell
- Engender enthusiasm for the job
- Avoid lists of items lifted from the person specification
- Are stripped of service details, or long explanations
- Don't include jargon, buzz words, complex sentences or dense text

12.3 The panel need to take care in the choice of advertising media in order to optimise the number and quality of good candidates. All jobs appear in the jobcentre, local press and the council's website as a minimum.

## **13.0 Shortlisting the Candidates**

Which applicants should be considered further?

13.1 After the closing date, panel members should read every application and make an initial assessment of each applicant's suitability for further consideration. The full panel then discuss these assessments and reach final agreement on the applicants who should be on the shortlist.

13.2 Panel members need to approach the applications with an open mind so as not to pre-judge or make assumptions about applicants' suitability. Applicants have different ways of presenting what they have to offer. The panel needs to look at the individual submissions to see if there is enough evidence to suggest that the person is a potential candidate for the job.

## **13.3 Obtaining a manageable shortlist**

If the number of shortlistable candidates is more than can possibly be interviewed, the panel can follow one of the options below:

- Remove from the shortlist any candidates the panel has not been fully sure about at this stage, but thought it worth exploring the areas of uncertainty at interview, time and numbers permitting;
- Reduce the shortlist by prioritising as follows:
- Place any disabled applicants on the shortlist

### **13.4 Requests for Reasonable Adjustments**

If a disabled applicant has requested an adjustment to the job to overcome a disabling barrier to their application, the panel must take the request seriously and be open to all possibilities for achieving a reasonable adjustment. The town clerk will work with panels in considering adjustments. Such a request should not be used as a means of reducing the shortlist to a manageable number.

### **13.5 Notifying the candidates**

The managers will work with panels to inform shortlisted candidates that they are invited to interview, giving the time, date and venue details. If additional assessment methods are to be used, details should be provided of the types of exercises and/or tests to be given and how long the process is likely to take.

- If one or more of the shortlisted candidates indicates they are disabled then it is essential to use an accessible venue
- Panels may need to adjust any of the interview or assessment arrangements to remove identified disabling barriers

## **14.0 The Interview**

How will the interview work?

14.1 A structured interview should form a core part of every Recruitment and Selection process. For some jobs it will be sufficient and appropriate as the only method of assessment used. Where other assessment methods are used the interview is usually the last stage.

14.2 Good interviews have a clear structure which helps keep the panel objective and focused throughout. However, this must allow flexibility and the necessary freedom for skilled interviewers to use probing, supplementary and additional questions as required.

An interview plan should cover:

- an introductory opening
- a schedule of questions which may be asked, by which panel members, relating to the job requirements
- space for candidates to raise any issues or ask their own questions
- the close of the interview, explanation of what will happen next

This provides a framework for collecting examples and evidence against the job requirements. But it is not a rigid script and should never involve simply reading out set questions and noting the reply! Disabled candidates should be assessed against the requirements of the person specification only.

### **14.3 Note taking**

Standard note-taking stationery is used for efficiency and professionalism. Panel member notes and assessment sheets are retained for record keeping at the end of the process. It is important to prepare candidates at the start of the interview by explaining that some notes will be taken and why, so they don't become put off by this.

### **14.4 The Assessment Process**

Before starting the interviews, decide which requirements from the Person Specification carry the greatest weight for determining successful job performance. This will be important later for the decision-making stage. These requirements shouldn't include (for example) essential qualifications - it should already have been established that all shortlisted candidates meet these.

Throughout the interview, the panel should continue to focus on all the requirements being assessed. After each interview, individual panel members should separately consider all the evidence gathered from the candidate, referring to their notes as necessary, without conferring with the other panel members.

Depending on the type of vacancy, panels may find it useful to consider the use of a scoring guide to assist them in identifying how well the candidate demonstrated they met the requirements. A scoring guide is included at the back of this manual.

When all the interviews are complete, and any additional assessment results are available, the full panel shares and pools their assessment of the candidate and scores (if used). The panel should discuss any large discrepancies between different panel member's

assessment for a candidate on any of the requirements. The panel should now be able to identify which candidates are appointable, and (if used) a score for each candidate.

### **14.5 Appointments on merit**

All Council appointments must, by law, be made on merit. Therefore, the job should be offered to the best appointable candidate. If there is only one appointable candidate, offer the job to that person. If there is more than one appointable candidate, and scores have been used, go back to the requirements assigned the greatest weight and use the total scores for these requirements to provide a ranking order of candidates.

Where scores were not used then ranking should be introduced at this stage. Individual panel members should go back to the requirements assigned the greatest weight before starting the interviews and assign a score for each appointable candidate against each of these requirements.

Offer the appointment to the candidate ranked highest. For more than one vacancy, make offers to the top ranked candidates.

### **14.6 Job Sharers**

Applicants applying to job share should be assessed in exactly the same way as any other candidate.

Some candidates may ask about opportunities to follow other patterns of working - the panel should consider whether these are feasible for the role in question.

## **15.0 Pre-Employment Checks**

What checks need to be undertaken before an offer can be confirmed?

15.1 All offers of appointment are conditional subject to:

- Satisfactory references
- Medical clearance if applicable
- Evidence of the right to work in the UK (usually the NI number) in line with S.8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1997
- Completion of the Council's equal opportunities monitoring form (if not already submitted at application stage)

In addition, one of the following may be required:

- An Enhanced or Standard Criminal Record Disclosure for relevant posts
- A Basic Disclosure Certificate for posts where the need for this is clearly justified

If any of the above criteria are not met, the conditional offer should be withdrawn. Where the criteria are satisfactorily met, then the offer can be confirmed.

## **15.2 References**

For most jobs in the Council, references are only considered for appointable candidates. Many candidates do not want referees approached until they are being offered a job (particularly if the referee is a current employer) therefore it is only likely to be possible to request references at this stage.

## **16. Probationary Periods**

Every appointment is subject to a 6 months probationary period, then approval is needed by the town clerk and the manager concerned. If approval is not given it will be passed to the employment and support committee to be extended for a further 6 months.

## **17.0 Record-Keeping**

What record keeping is required?

17.1 Accurate record-keeping is an essential part of recruitment for the following reasons:

- To assist the town clerk in monitoring the council's adherence to best practice
- To enable accurate and objective investigation of complaints as speedily as possible
- To enable an accurate and speedy response in cases where complainants invoke their statutory rights under anti-discrimination legislation

The following documents are vital for achieving these objectives:

- The application form and related documents (e.g. C.V., written submission)
- Shortlisting forms
- The forms recording candidate interview assessment

- Copies of assessment tests and exercises
- Candidate's written exercise responses, test score sheets, presentation handouts (if available)
- Panel member notes

To meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act, documents should be stored for a period of 6 months or a longer specified period of time where necessary, then destroyed.

Storage must be in a secure place where confidentiality can be assured. All documents which are not to be stored (photocopies of application forms etc.), must be destroyed to maintain confidentiality. Stored documents must be destroyed after the required storage time.

## **18.0 Feedback to Unsuccessful Candidates**

How will feedback be given to candidates on their performance?

18.1 Feedback should be readily available to all candidates. It is a very important part of good Recruitment and Selection practice and can make a significant difference to the way candidates feel about the organisation, even if their application has been unsuccessful. Where feedback is requested, it should be given as quickly as possible. Include in the feedback an overview of the results of any tests and exercises as well as assessments from the interview. The feedback should be accurate, factual and helpful. It is important to provide a balance between those areas where the candidate did well or showed strength, and areas of weakness, where the candidate needs to improve for the future.

## Candidate Scoring Guide

Score	Description	Relation to Job Performance
6	Excellent	A full response which demonstrated in-depth knowledge and understanding of the subject/ full possession of the requirement for superior job performance.
5	Good	A good response which answered the question and showed depth of understanding and knowledge/ full possession of the requirement for effective job performance
4	Satisfactory	A response that was relevant and showed some understanding/ meets base requirements for adequate performance with scope for further development.
3	Less than satisfactory	A response which was relevant but superficial and failed to demonstrate depth of understanding/ candidate requires significant further development to demonstrate the requirement satisfactorily.
2	Poor	A response which was inadequate but which had some relevance/ candidate falls well below the base requirement for adequate performance and is unlikely to demonstrate competency

		without a great deal of further development
1	Very Poor	A response which is either not relevant or substantially lacks any depth of content