



MIDSOMER NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

Recruitment and Selection Policy

Approved: 13th May 2024
Review Date: 2025

1. Introduction

Midsomer Norton Town Council is committed to providing high quality and value for money to the residents of Midsomer Norton. The effectiveness of these services depends upon the quality of people the Council employs.

The Town Council aims to attract and recruit the most appropriate person available. Recruitment and selection of decisions will be based on consideration of the required attributes for effective performance.

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. Aims of the Policy

The aim of the policy is 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

Every appointment of a person with a local authority “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.

3. Legislation

The Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that no lawful discrimination occurs in the recruitment and selection process. In that regard it will adhere to all current anti-discrimination legislation. This policy aims to achieve a consistent approach in order to comply with employment legislation and best practice.

The main legislations are –

- Data Protection Act 1998 as amended
- The Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Local Democracy Act 2009
- Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006
- Working Time Regulations 1998

4. Roles and Responsibilities in Recruitment and Selection

The Town Clerk is responsible for –

- Ensuring all involved in recruitment and selection, and any other selection panel members, are aware of this Policy.
- Keeping up to date with relevant legislation and Council policies and referring for further information and guidance, if necessary, from HR specialists so providing advice and guidance to all employees and potential employees
- Ensure the post is advertised in a timely and cost-effective manner.
- Co-ordinate the recruitment panel in the short-listing process by informing candidates they have been short listed for interview
- Chair the interview
- Obtaining references before issuing an appointment letter and contract of employment.
- Where the role being recruited is that of the Town Clerk, the Chair of Midsomer Norton Town Council, or an independent consultant will undertake the roles as described above.

5. Pre-Selection Process

Prior to Advertisement

As a post becomes vacant, this provides an opportunity for the Council to rethink a role and consideration should be given to the following –

- Is the post still required?
- Are there new duties which could be added to this role?
- How much has the role changed since it was originally created?
- Could the duties be reallocated to another member of the team?
- Is there sufficient budget for the post?

Under S.116 of the Local Government Act 1972, candidates are debarred from appointment if they have been a Councillor at this authority within the previous 12 months.

Job Description and Person Specification

A Job Description to be created or reviewed and this should clearly state the main duties and tasks for the role.

From the job description a detailed person specification should be completed, this will detail the relevant skills, knowledge and aptitudes required which are related to the post. It is essential that in compiling the person specification any criteria relating to personal qualities or circumstances should not be potentially discriminatory.

Advertising

Posts will be advertised using one or more of the following mediums –

- Professional journals
- Local Press
- Job Centre
- E-recruitment sites
- Government jobs advertising

When considering where to advertise, consideration should be given to the cost and maximum coverage to target groups before making a decision.

Application Packs

These will be available on the Town Council's website or contact the office to have an application pack emailed to them.

Each application pack will contain the following:

- Application Form
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form
- Job Description
- Person Specification
- Summary of the relevant terms and conditions of employment
- Relevant background on the Council and the post.
- Details of the closing date, interview date and who to contact for informal discussion with regard to the vacancy.
- Any additional information that is relevant to the post.

Applications

Applications may be submitted by email, hand delivered or by post. The deadline for the submission of applications will be noon on the stated closing date.

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

6. The Selection Process

Selection Criteria

Only those skills, experience and qualification requirements, which are necessary for the post, are to be established and used as criteria for selection.

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.

Short-listing decisions must be based on the information contained in the application form. The criteria for initial selection and other relevant available information must be consistently applied to all candidates.

Recruitment Panel

The panel itself will be of mixed gender, of at least three people, one who will be the Town Clerk, a Council member and / or an officer or another Councillor.

The recruitment panel should stay the same throughout the entire process and all members must fully participate in both the short listing and interviewing stages.

Members of the Recruitment Panel must declare if they know of any applicants and the capacity in which the applicant is known to them.

One person will be designated the Chair (usually the Town Clerk) to take the lead in the recruitment process and be the key contact. The Town Clerk will ensure the process is conducted in a fair and equitable manner and ensure that all decisions are recorded clearly.

The panel will -

- Conduct the short listing
- Decide the selection method to be used
- Develop questions and additional selection methods to be used e.g., a presentation
- Conduct interviews
- Decide on the final appointment
- Complete all necessary paperwork clearly.

Staff or Councillors may not take any part in the selection process where the applicant is related to, involved in a personal relationship with or is closely known to the member of staff or Councillor.

Short Listing

Applications will be assessed against the criteria contained in the Job Description and Person Specification with those applicants most closely matching the criteria being selected for interview.

It is recommended that short-listing is undertaken by way of a matrix which assesses applications against person specifications and that this is retained as evidence of how shortlisting decisions were made.

All members of the Recruitment Panel **MUST** conduct the short listing.

All documentation provided in applications must be fully completed and retained for six months.

All shortlisted candidates will be selected within 3 working days of the closing date and aim to give at least 3 working days' notice of any interview.

All short-listed candidates will be notified of the next stage of the recruitment process. Reasonable notice will be given to the short-listed candidates of the selection process and the candidate will be provided with the following information –

- Date and time of the interview and the venue
- Map / directions to the venue
- The names and job titles of the Recruitment Panel members.
- Details of any presentation if required and the selection method.

Disabled Applicants and Reasonable Adjustments

The statutory duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to disabled applicants might include the following –

- Rearranging the time of the interview
- Rearranging the venue
- Accommodating a hearing-impaired applicant by ensuring that the interviewer faces the applicant, speaks clearly and is prepared to repeat questions, or providing a hearing loop.

Selection Methods

The Recruitment Panel chooses the selection method to be used. This can include one or more of the following -

- Interviews
- Written exercises
- Practical tests
- Presentations

It is important that the method used is appropriate to the job being applied for. The method used must relate to the requirements of the job as identified in the person specification.

Any tests that are used should not be directly or indirectly discriminatory.

The candidates must always be notified of the proposed selection method to be used when they are invited for interview.

The Interview

Ideally all interviews should all take place on the same day. In exceptional circumstances they may take place on separate days, but ideally should be held consecutively.

The Recruitment Panel must ensure that –

- Sufficient time is allowed for preparation, conducting the interview and writing detailed notes.
- Candidates are asked questions about the same matters.
- Questions are focussed on obtaining relevant information and evidence of the candidate's ability to do the job.
- Any requests for variations in terms and conditions or about the duties of the role are recorded.
- All paperwork is completed clearly and retained for six months.
- Questions are not asked in relation to personal lives.

Questions will be arranged in advance and all candidates will be asked the same questions and in the same order.

Supplementary questions may be asked of candidates to obtain additional information. All candidates will be provided the opportunity to ask questions to the recruitment panel.

Each member of the Recruitment Panel will score each person interviewed. After all interviews have been carried out the panel should discuss all candidates and record their decisions allowing an offer of appointment to be made to the successful candidate.

If, in exceptional circumstances a candidate is unable to make the interview date it is up to the Recruitment Panel to decide if the interview can be rescheduled ensuring that no other person has been disadvantaged. In such circumstances there should be no changes to the Panel or to the format of the interview.

Feedback on all applications and interviews must be offered and given when requested. If requested, reasons for rejection should be given to the applicant. The reasons for rejections must be recorded at the time the decision was made.

The Preferred Candidate

The preferred candidate will be informed following the interview within five working days and aim to inform unsuccessful interviewees within five working days of an interview.

All pre-employment checks should be completed prior to a formal offer being made, but there may be occasions where an offer will need to be made immediately and this will mean that the offer is made subject to satisfactory references being received. The 'preferred candidate' must not commence in post until all the appropriate checks have been completed.

The Reserve Candidate

The Recruitment Panel may select a reserve candidate who they consider capable of undertaking the vacant post should the preferred candidate decline the offer of employment, or the pre-employment checks prove to be unsatisfactory.

7. The Appointment Process

Pre-employment Checks

For each preferred applicant, a number of pre-employment checks will need to be made. The Council Officers are responsible for administering all aspects of the checking procedures.

Eligibility to Work in the UK

The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for an employer to employ those who do not have permission to live or work in the United Kingdom.

All new members of staff must provide evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK (show ID) and the Town Clerk will coordinate this pre-employment check prior to a formal offer of employment being made.

Criminal Convictions

Applicants are asked on the application form whether they have any convictions for criminal offences.

References

References will be sought for preferred candidates. At least two references will be sought, one of which must be from the current or most recent employer.

The Formal Offer

After all the appropriate checks have been completed and are deemed satisfactory, a formal offer of employment should be made. The Town Clerk will send the employee the letter of Formal Offer once they have been provided with a start date.

The starting salary for all new appointments will be at the lowest salary scale point for the appropriate salary grade. If the Town Clerk wishes to appoint at a higher level, it must reflect the candidate's level of experience and skills and the responsibilities of the vacant position.

8 Commencement of Employment

Prior to Commencement of Employment

Two copies of the contract of employment will be sent to the preferred candidate plus a copy of the Council's Employee Handbook which provides details of Council procedures and policies.

Both will be signed, and one returned to the preferred candidate, the other one will be kept with their personnel file.

Induction

The induction process applies to all new employees. The Town Clerk must ensure new employees receive all necessary information, training, and support to undertake their role effectively.

The Probation Period

All appointments of 12 months duration or longer will be subject to the satisfactory completion of a six-month probation period. A probation period will enable the manager to –

- Assess the initial performance of the candidate and their suitability for the post.
- To identify the employee's development potential in the role.

An initial meeting should be completed by the Town Clerk within a week of the employee commencing their employment followed by a first review at three months. A final review will take place before the six-month period, this can be extended by two months and if necessary and by a maximum of three months if there are extenuating circumstances. If the probation relates to the Town Clerk, the review meetings will be carried out by the Chair of the Staffing Committee plus one other member of the staffing committee. During probation, if the employee's performance is unsatisfactory, the Council can issue a notice of termination to terminate the employment.

The purpose of the probation review meeting is to discuss how the member of staff is progressing as well to potentially identify any problems that they may be experiencing in the post.

If there are noticeable problems with the employee's performance during the six-month probation period these must be addressed at the earliest opportunity to enable the employee to improve their performance. It is unreasonable to wait until the end of the six-month period before highlighting any problems.

The Town Clerk must complete the 'Probation Review Form' at each of the review meetings and a copy should be placed on the employee's personnel file at the end of their probationary period. Employees will be informed in writing of the outcome of the review meetings.

9 Recording and Storage of Recruitment Documentation

Copies of all relevant documents relating to the filling of each vacancy should be kept for a minimum of six months following the appointment to a post.

The records, which must be kept, are as follows –

- A copy of the advertisement
- Job Description
- Person Specification
- All unsuccessful application forms
- Details of the Recruitment Panel and their notes throughout the process
- All correspondence between the Council and the applicants
- All correspondence between the Council and the referees.

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Forms will be held separately from the application form and details contained on the forms logged and then destroyed after a maximum period of six months.

Applications will be held in a secure area and will only be made available to those involved in the recruitment process. Information will not be passed on to anyone outside this process without the express consent of the individual applicant.

10. Review of the Policy

The Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in the light of operating experience and / or changes in legislation.