

Ferndown Town Council Recruitment, Selection, and Induction Policy

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1. Introduction

The intention of the recruitment policy is to ensure that Ferndown Town Council (Council) can attract and retain high caliber employees into its job vacancies. It aims to attract the widest possible response to any employment vacancy. Council will take positive steps to advise minority groups of all vacancies and of its Equal Opportunity Policy. Council recognises the advantages of recruiting individuals with specialist knowledge and experience of local needs.

The selection process is of crucial importance in this policy and must, therefore, be carried out according to objective, job-related criteria. Council will ensure that, through appropriate training, people making selection decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these selection decisions.

2. Principles

The Town Clerk is responsible for employee recruitment in conjunction with the Personnel Committee.

This policy will be implemented with regard at all stages to Council's Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy, the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent legislation. All persons involved in the recruitment process will be made aware, through training, of the above legislation and its implications.

All stages of the selection process will focus on the needs of the job and the skills needed to perform effectively. The Town Clerk and councillors will ensure that questions they ask job applicants are not in any way discriminatory or unnecessarily intrusive.

All candidates with a disability that meet the minimum selection criteria will be invited to an interview.

It is Council's practice to seek the successful candidate's consent to seek two written references and to ask for documentary proof of qualifications.

3. Recruitment process

Before embarking upon the selection process, the Town Clerk should have recruitment authority from Council, an updated job description and an accurate person specification. Prior to seeking Council approval to advertise, the level of remuneration will be considered by the Personnel Committee, and a recommendation made to Council. Advertisements will be placed appropriately to allow maximum exposure to all sectors of the community.

Council reserves the right to only advertise the position internally and not externally. Candidates invited to interview where possible will be given at least one week's notice. All letters sent to unsuccessful candidates will be issued as soon as practicably possible after the decision has been made.

Reserve candidates may be kept 'on hold' for a period of time and should be notified of the delay in finalising the outcome of their application.

3.1 Job description

Each job will have an up to date job description that accurately reflects the job requirements; they should be written in a clear and concise manner in the agreed Council format and should be reviewed and discussed prior to the commencement of the recruitment process. Where appropriate the equal rights dimension of service provision should be included.

3.2 Person specification

A person specification will be prepared for every job description reflecting the skills and qualities required to undertake the job and reviewed prior to the recruitment process. A standard format together with guidance on usage will be issued separately and a criteria relevant to the requirements of the job. The criteria should not be unnecessarily restrictive so as to exclude particular disadvantaged groups, since this may be viewed as indirect discrimination and therefore unlawful.

All stated requirements must be clearly justifiable in terms of the principal function of the job vacancy, literacy, numeracy, qualifications, age and educational level achieved.

If the job is to work directly with members of ethnic minorities in promoting their welfare or providing personal services, it may be considered a genuine occupational qualification for a post.

3.3 Advertising

Whilst there is no legal or general duty to advertise vacancies, there is a general duty not to discriminate against employees or potential employees. It is good practice to advertise widely allowing for a fair, equitable and cost-effective recruitment process and due regard must be given to the Equality Act 2010 throughout the recruitment process; with particular regards to protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). Publicity material must reflect Council's Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy.

Positions will be advertised as follows: local newspaper for two consecutive weeks, Council's website, DAPTC, SLCC website, Council notice boards and local press.

Advertisements must be clear and unambiguous, so that applicants will be able to determine their own suitability.

Council application forms should be used for recruitment purposes which should include a section on equality monitoring and will include an overview of Council's services and facilities.

Assistance should be offered to candidates to complete any sections of the form if required.

3.4 Selection

The selection panel will consist of either the Chairman of the Personnel Committee, another member of that Committee and the Town Clerk as senior employee and line manager (members of this panel will act under delegated authority

of the Council and are authorised to appoint to this position) or the Town Clerk and another member of staff (the Town Clerk will have authority to appoint this position). These individuals have previous experience of the selection and interview process and are sufficiently competent and experienced in this field.

Members of the selection panel will also be members of the interview panel to allow for continuity.

Panel members will be provided with copies of the application pack as provided to all candidates and a copy of completed application forms, excluding the monitoring forms. Councillors must ensure that they do not breach the Council's Code of Conduct and ensure compliance with the seven general Nolan principles.

Specific reference will be made to the job description and person specification with each candidate being assessed against these requirements and short listing will only be based on the information contained in the application form.

No more than eight candidates will be shortlisted and the criteria for short listing must be consistently applied to all applicants.

The application form should not be used as a test of literacy unless a high standard of literacy is required as a genuine requirement of the job.

Reasons for not meeting the shortlist must be recorded for incorporation within the monitoring process.

Second interviews may take place at the discretion of the panel.

4. Interview process

Interview dates will be set at a mutually convenient date/time usually in the Council Offices and will take into account of any Government guidelines (e.g. COVID-19).

Letters will be sent to candidates at least ten days prior to the interview providing details of the date/time, venue (if appropriate) and members of the interview panel.

Due regard and provision will be given to candidates regarding any specific requirements or needs to attend interview; this includes flexibility where practicable and possible on interview dates/times.

Attention is drawn to the need to be in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Should any changes be required, the Town Clerk will make such adjustments in accordance with guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Interview questions will be set in advance of the interviews.

The Personnel Committee Chairman and/or Town Clerk will lead at the interview and will:

- (a) Introduce the interview panel and explain the interview process
- (b) Provide additional information and details regarding the Council and specifically the purpose of this new role.

Each candidate will be asked the same series of questions. The Equality and Human Rights Commission provides examples of inappropriate questioning (could be deemed as sexist or racist). Supplementary questions may be asked of candidates to "tease out" additional information. Questions will be appropriately scheduled so that the

person asking the question is best placed to answer any questions arising from the candidate. All candidates will be provided the opportunity to ask questions to the

interview panel and advised that they will be notified within three working days of the outcome of the interview.

On conclusion of the interviews, the panel will convene to determine which candidate will be offered the position.

Interviewers must keep adequate notes of the interview in order to be able to make a fair comparison between candidates. This will be recorded on an interview report form. Some interviews may require a skill test which will be publicised as part of the interview process.

5. Post interview

The Town Clerk/ Chairman of the Personnel Committee will contact the successful candidate, making a verbal offer and if accepted, the Town Clerk will contact other candidates to advise that they were not successful. Should the verbal offer not be accepted, the interview panel will reconvene to determine the best course of action.

A conditional offer letter will be sent, subject to receipt of satisfactory references and medical assessment (if required). Under the Equality Act, Council is permitted to request a medical assessment once an offer has been made but care must be taken not to discriminate as a direct result of information received from pre-employment checks.

Details of unsuccessful candidates will be retained on file and held in accordance with GDPR and disposed of in accordance with the Council's document and retention policy.

6. Prior to commencement of employment

A contract of employment will be sent to the successful candidate which will be in accordance with the Employment Rights Act 1996.

References will be applied for, subject to consent being granted from the prospective employee (either by means of the application form or by later written agreement).

The prospective employee may be requested to undertake an independent medical assessment. This will only be requested once a job offer has made to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and only where the Council considers it may need to make reasonable adjustments. This decision will be based on an evaluation of whether changes need to be made to the way things are done, whether any physical changes are required to the workplace and/or whether additional equipment or services need to be supplied.

A copy of the Council's Employee Handbook will be provided to the future employee which provides details of Council procedures and policies and will form part of the employment contract.

No employee will commence employment until the following documents have been received:

- a) satisfactory references;

b) returned signed contract, signed by both the Town Clerk (on behalf of the Council) and the employee, and

c) medical assessment and report from independent Occupational Health (where requested).

It may be necessary to postpone the employment start date if these documents are not supplied in advance of the employment start date.

7. Letters of appointment

Appointment letters will contain Equal Opportunities information and be accompanied by a copy, which the applicant is required to sign and return to indicate acceptance of the job offered, and which is retained in the personal record. This should include the following: "I have read and understood the Council's Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy, and acknowledge that the offer of employment is made subject to my agreement actively to pursue that policy during the course of my employment and to undergo any training associated with this".

Letters must be sent to unsuccessful candidates stating valid reasons for non-selection and include the name and telephone number of the person to contact if further information or feedback is required (usually the Town Clerk).

Reasons for non-selection should be given to candidates if requested. The reasons will be at the discretion of the Panel and relevant to the feedback on the recruitment monitoring form.

All appointments will be subject to receiving two satisfactory references, one of which must be from the most recent employer or educational institution. If satisfactory references are not received, the Council may terminate the employment relationship.

8. Induction process

The aim of the induction process is to:

- help the new employee settle into their new job and surroundings,
- to make them feel part of the team,
- inform them of Council's priorities,
- ensure they understand what is expected of them and how their role will make a valuable contribution to the work of Council,
- to maintain high standards in service delivery by adopting a consistent approach throughout Council services and business,
- to assist with the retention of staff, and
- to make them aware of the health and safety matters at work and do not put them or others at risk.

The process may vary in time length depending on the role and will apply to new employees, employees that change roles within Council, temporary employees (such as agency staff), and employees returning from a prolonged absence.

The Town Clerk has overall responsibility for the induction process.

9. Monitoring

The Town Clerk is accountable for this Policy, will monitor its implementation and effectiveness, and provide regular monitoring reports to the Personnel Committee when recruitment processes are implemented.