

# NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL



## Recruitment Policy & Procedure

Date of adoption	February 2022
Reviewed	14 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Next Review Date	February 2026
Reviewed By	Policy & Resources Committee

# Recruitment Policy & Procedure



## 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Newton Abbot 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

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 **and equality and diversity**. 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 must ensure its compliance with the Employment Rights Act (1996)<sup>1</sup> 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. e.g., for career development purposes, hard to fill posts etc.
- 3.3 Under s.116 of the Local Government Act 1972<sup>2</sup>, candidates are debarred from appointment if he or she has been a Councillor at Newton Abbot Town Council within the previous 12 months.

## 4. RECRUITING TO VACANCIES

- 4.1 Vacancies cannot be advertised without authorisation from the Town Clerk (within existing structure) or the Staffing Sub Committee (new roles or changes to the existing structure) and subject to budgetary conditions.
- 4.2 Vacancies must be advertised internally and externally. Internal promotions will be permitted at the discretion of the Town Clerk on the basis the subsequent vacancy will be filled by open competition.

## 5. PERSON SPECIFICATION/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 managers.
- 5.2 Where the post is new or has not been evaluated for some time, the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk should externally evaluate the revised job description and person specification to ensure the salary scale is appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> [Employment Rights Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [Local Government Act 1972 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

## 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

6.2 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 STANDARDS

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:

- shortlist suitable candidates for interview within 5 working days of the closing date.
- give short listed candidates at least 5 working days’ notice of an interview and/or publish the interview date in the advert.
- inform the preferred candidate following an interview within 3 working days.
- inform unsuccessful interviewees within 3 working days of an interview.
- offer the opportunity for all candidates to receive feedback on their interview performance.
- All offers of employment are made subject to satisfactory references being received and are subject to a six months probationary period on both sides if new entrants to local Government.
- Where a post becomes vacant within six months of the successful applicant taking up post, the Council may agree to appoint the next available candidate of appointable quality without the need for a further process.

## **8. APPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 All applications must be made using the Town Council's job application form. Curriculum Vitae's (C.V.) will not be accepted in place of the application form, to ensure that all candidates have equal opportunity to present the same information in the same format.
- 8.2 Receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by letter or email.

## **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 The Council's external HR provider can be requested to undertake Shortlisting if the Council considers it appropriate. Evidence of how shortlisting was undertaken should be retained.

## **10. INTERVIEWS**

- 10.1 Interviews will be conducted by the Town Clerk and the Line Manager for the particular service where the vacancy exists, unless the vacancy is for the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk where an interview panel will be agreed by the Staffing Sub Committee.
- 10.2 The interview panel should comprise a minimum of two people, ideally three, one of which should be the Town Clerk or the Deputy Town Clerk depending on the post that is being advertised.
- 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 any 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. All documentation relating to the recruitment and selection process, including questions asked, method of scoring (if appropriate), 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.

## **12. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

- 12.1 Once a recruitment decision has been made, the preferred candidate can be advised of the decision subject to certain conditions being met. These conditions are:
- Proof of National Insurance
  - References suitable to the Council
  - Verified qualifications where applicable
  - Where applicable, Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) (and other checks where appropriate)
- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 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.
- 12.4 Under no circumstances can un-conditional offers of employment be made.
- 12.5 Offer paperwork may only be issued by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk and any offer of employment must be signed by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

## **13. RECRUITMENT COMPLAINTS**

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

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## **14. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT**

- 14.1 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, at the discretion of the Town Clerk.
- 14.2 The Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk to make Personnel appointments where they are in accordance with this policy. Appointments will be reported back to the next Full Council or appropriate committee/sub-committee, but do not need to be confirmed.