



Axminster Town Council



Axminster Town Council Recruitment and Selection Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Effective recruitment and selection is crucial to the successful functioning of Axminster Town Council. It depends on finding people with the necessary skills, expertise and qualifications to deliver the Council's strategic objectives and the ability to make a positive contribution to the values and aims of the organisation.

1.2 The Council recognises that people are our most important asset. Selecting the right person for each role is essential - the quality of our services depends on it. Moreover, anti-discrimination legislation demands high standards of recruitment practice and justifiable decisions.

This policy provides a framework to ensure that all the Council's recruitment is handled with consistency, fairness and as effectively as possible. This policy will be followed for all vacancies.

2. Permission to fill a vacancy

2.1 When a vacancy arises, the needs of the role will be assessed to identify if the requirements of the post have changed; or are likely to change

2.2 Permission will be sought from Council to fill a vacancy. If there is an urgent need to advertise a vacancy prior to the next meeting, the situation must be discussed with the Chair of the Employment Committee and the Mayor.

2.3 No appointment shall be made without open competition, even where an individual has been "acting up". This requirement may only be waived for casual appointments and temporary cover.

3. Defining requirements

3.1 The selection panel for the appointment should be identified as soon as possible and fully involved in planning the recruitment and selection exercise. Careful planning is essential if the vacancy is to be filled in a timely manner and it is crucial that those involved in the selection process are given ample opportunity to assist the preparation of the advert, job description, person specification, job advertisement and shortlisting. Such involvement promotes consistency throughout the process.

3.2 Once requirements have been determined, these should be clearly defined by producing a job description and a person specification.

Note: The JD must be validated by the EC prior to the recruitment campaign. An existing Job Description does not presume its suitability. All recruitment roles must have the Job Description validated by the Employment Committee prior to commencement of a recruitment campaign.

3.3 A job description should describe the tasks and responsibilities in simple, clear and concise terms, specifying:

- Job Title

- Overall purpose of job
- Main tasks.
- Staff group / team
- Grade (plus any allowance)
- To whom/for whom responsible
- Date of Issue.

3.4 A person specification profiles the personal skills, knowledge, and experience to be sought.

It should specify:-

- Education level required
- Experience required
- Any other special requirements (a particular skill, quality, or willingness to meet a requirement such as shift working).
- Whether there is an English speaking requirement for the postholder
- Membership of Professional Bodies

3.5 If it is determined that a post is customer facing and has a particular standard of spoken English necessary for the role, applicants must be informed of this throughout the process. Adverts and person specifications must include the requirement along the lines of:

The ability to converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English is essential for the post.

The description and example of linguistic fluency should then be detailed in the person specification and form part of the assessment process. .

3.6 Defining requirements forms a basis for fair and objective recruitment procedures, which are our legal obligation. The job description and person specification are working documents which should assist in shortlisting and selection. In addition they inform potential applicants and promote self-selection.

4. Advertisements

4.1 Vacancies will be advertised in an appropriate newspaper or journal or suitable electronic media, and will not be confined to those media which, because of their particular source of applicants, provide only or mainly applicants of a particular group.

4.2 Advertisements will also be notified to the appropriate local job centre where this is appropriate.

4.3 All vacancies will also be posted on the Town Council website, and notice boards.

4.4 Axminster Town Council will consider internal appointments as development opportunities for its employees.

4.5 The key duties and requirements for the post form the basis of an advertisement. This should specify:

- Job Title, department/section; salary range, including any allowances
- The work of the staff group / team
- Main duties of the post
- Key requirements for the post (skills, experience, qualifications, English-speaking requirement if appropriate)
- Contact for an application form/pack

- Closing date

4.5 Employees on parental leave will receive all advertisements for posts advertised by Axminster Town Council during their period of leave.

5. Application Form

5.1 Candidates for all posts will, be asked to complete a standard application form, in order that they can be judged on the basis of comparable information.

5.2 In applying for posts, all candidates will be provided with a job description, person specification and information about procedure if necessary. The job description will include a list of the main duties and responsibilities of the post, together with an outline of the qualifications and experience which candidates are expected to possess.

5.3 In drawing up the job description and written statement of particulars Axminster Town Council will ensure that all job applicants are treated within relevant employment law.

5.4 Applicants will be asked if they wish to make the Council aware of any disabilities, as defined in the Equality Act 2020, and whether there are any reasonable adjustments needed for them to attend an interview. All applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for a job will be interviewed, and considered on their merits

5.5 Applicants will be required to supply the names and addresses of two people from whom references can be obtained, one of which should normally be the applicant's current or most recent employer.

5.6 Only references for shortlisted candidates for interview will be obtained. References will normally be sought prior to interview, unless the candidate indicates otherwise.

5.7 For safe recruitment purposes, references must be made in writing or email.

5.8 All candidates will be asked to declare on the application form whether they have ever been convicted of any criminal offence which cannot be regarded as 'spent' in terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

5.9 For posts that involve working with children and vulnerable adults, and finance work, applicants will be asked to reveal details of 'spent' and 'unspent' convictions. Successful candidates for such posts will be required to provide the necessary documentation in order to complete a standard criminal records disclosure. Posts, which require such a disclosure, will be clearly indicated on the conditions of service and appointment procedure.

5.10 Applicants will also be required to declare if they are related to any employee or Councillor within the Town Council. Canvassing of members of the Town Council is not permitted. No councillor or employee must be put into a position where they are asked to interview a person to whom they are related.

5.11 It is the Town Council's policy to respond to all applicants.

5.12 Applicant's details will be recorded at the point of receipt. All information relating to the data collected in the equality and diversity recruitment monitoring form will be hidden from all those

involved in the recruitment and selection process. The information collected will be solely used for the purposes of equality monitoring.

5.13 All completed application forms are private and confidential and will only be made available to those directly involved in the recruitment and selection process.

5.14 All application forms will be collated by the Clerk and supplied to the Employment Committee and interview panel for shortlisting purposes. In the case of recruitment for a Clerk, this task would be undertaken by the Chair of the Employment Committee.

5.15 All unsuccessful applicants' details will be stored for three months and thereafter destroyed.

6. Shortlisting

6.1 Once the selection panel have received all of the application forms for a particular vacancy they need to systematically mark each candidate against the essential and desirable selection criteria for the post, and record their individual scores.

6.2 This record provides the main evidence that the selection panel has complied with proper recruitment and selection practices. It must be completed and forwarded to the Clerk before candidates are notified of selection (or the Chair of the Employment Committee for the recruitment of a clerk).

6.3 Failure to be specific and display objectivity will place the Council in a weak position in the event of a complaint to an Employment Tribunal.

6.4 The shortlist scoring sheet and vacancy file should be returned to the Clerk (or Chair of the Employment Committee) together with the date(s), time and location of interviews. The Clerk (or Chair of the Employment Committee) will:-

- Draw up a timetable.
- Notify candidates.
- Send an interview pack to each member of the panel at least three days in advance.

6.5 On receipt of each application form a unique reference number will be allocated sequentially. This will improve control over application forms and enable the Clerk (or Chair of the Employment Committee) to track that all applications have been dealt with and none misplaced.

6.6 All documentation relating to the applicant will be stored securely in line with ATC policy (normally 6 months) and thereafter destroyed.

7. Applicants with a Disability

7.1 The 2010 Equality Act came into place which gives a person a right to self-identify themselves as a person with a disability.

7.2 For recruitment purposes the onus is on applicants to inform the Council if they feel they have a disability which is relevant to their application and give details of any specific requirement they may have to enable them to attend an interview.

7.3 The Council is required to make the necessary arrangements/adjustments wherever possible. Declarations by applicants about disabilities appear on the equality information sheet which is provided with the application form. This sheet is removed before application forms are forwarded to the shortlisting panel. It will be the responsibility of the Clerk (or Chair of the Employment Committee) to liaise with applicants with a disability to ensure that due consideration is given to their stated requirements.

8. Selection Methods

8.1 Interviews will be held by a panel comprising of at least three persons including the line manager (to the exclusion of clause 5.10). The interviewers will encourage candidates to be at ease during the interview, in order that they can give a fair and accurate impression of themselves.

8.2 The selection and appointment of the Town Clerk will be made by members of the Town Council. A panel of three members of the Town Council, and the chair of the employment committee and the Mayor, who has the casting vote.

8.3 A set of questions will be agreed by the interview panel in advance and will be developed from the current job description for the post. The panel will seek to develop questions which ask the candidates to give examples of their previous relevant experience.

8.4 All candidates will be asked the same questions in the same order, and their responses rated between 1-9. The panel will each have a copy of the questions and will score independently of each other during the interview. Time is allocated between interviews for the panel to discuss each candidate and to award a total points score. Additional notes may be made by the panel during the interview, however it should be noted that candidates will have access to all information should they request it.

8.5 It should be remembered that an interview is a two-way process, and candidates will be given every opportunity to view the offices and sites where they will work and ask questions about the Council, to ensure that they have a full understanding of the post for which they are applying and the way the Council operates.

8.6 In addition to interviews, a range of other selection techniques may be used. In such circumstances reasonable notice and relevant information will be given to ensure that candidates have sufficient time and information to prepare.

8.7 All appointments will be made strictly on merit and related to the requirements of the job.

8.8 All interviewed candidates will be notified of the outcome of the selection process as soon as possible, either by telephone, letter or electronic media.

9. Relevant Checks

9.1 All offers of employment will be made conditional upon satisfactory results from the following:

- two satisfactory references
- confirmation of the right to work in this country (if appropriate)
- Criminal Records Disclosure (if appropriate).

10. Probationary Period

10.1 All appointments will be made subject to a probationary period of six calendar months. After three months a review meeting will take place between the post holder and their line manager to discuss progress. At the end of the probationary period, and subject to a satisfactory report by the appropriate line manager, employees will be notified in writing that they have successfully completed their probationary period. The probationary period can be extended by a further 3 months should the individual's line manager consider this appropriate.

11. Recruitment Monitoring

11.1 Axminster Town Council recruits employees on the basis of their ability and the requirements of the post.

11.2 Axminster Town Council ensures that no applicant receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of disability, gender, race, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, caring responsibilities or hours of work.

12. Exit Interviews

12.1 All employees who leave the employment of the Council voluntarily will have an exit interview with their manager before their last day of employment.

12.2 Exit interviews provide the opportunity for departing employees to discuss their reasons for leaving. The information provided is useful in identifying trends, learning and development and evaluating the effectiveness of the Recruitment and Selection Policy and practices.

12.3 The appropriate line manager should receive all appropriate information, such as recommendations made for change, or significant issues raised in the questionnaire, whilst bearing in mind confidentiality issues. The exit interview questionnaire will be retained on the employee's personal file.

13. Monitoring

13.1 Responsibility for monitoring this policy and procedure rests with the Employment Committee.

13.2 Within the procedure, each recruiter shall be responsible for ensuring that their decisions are made in accordance with best practice.

13.3 The Clerk will maintain a database of all recruitment and selection activity for monitoring purposes.

Policy agreed

Policy review

APPENDIX 1 – RECRUITMENT CHECKLIST

Recruitment Procedure:

1. Define the vacancy to be filled.
2. Define the skills required by the post.
3. Define the responsibilities and decision-making requirements of the post.
4. Choose Job Advert media: Newspaper advertisements; Job Centre; Social media; DALC / Agencies; Town Council website
5. Choose method of gathering information from candidates: Application forms; Skills tests; Interview tasks.
6. Information to be sent to Applicants: Application Form; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure; Job Description; Person Specification.
7. Choose method of assessment. Informal interview; Formal interview, Assessment Centre or Trial work period.
8. Assessment criteria are based exclusively upon the specific Job Description for the post. The Job Description criteria are ranked in order of priority and weighted. Individuals are then given a score against each of these criteria. The Candidate with the highest score is the most successful.
9. Information to be sent to successful applicant:
 - a) Letter of appointment
 - b) Health questionnaire
 - c) Request for referees – if not sought at shortlisting stage
10. Information and evidence to be gained before starting date:
 - d) Personal details and contact details
 - e) Bank details (for BACS payments)
 - f) DBS (if required)
 - g) Entitlement to work in the UK.
11. Documents to be issued to new recruit at induction:
 - a) Written statement of particulars (commonly referred to as a contract of employment)
 - b) Staff handbook containing policies and procedures
 - c) Health and Safety policy and procedure.
 - d) Job Description – roles and responsibilities

APPENDIX 2 – INDUCTION CHECKLIST FOR LINE MANAGERS

- Have you explained the profile of the organisation and identified key posts and people?
- Have you discussed the detail of the Job Description and an outline of a general work plan?
- Have you discussed the written terms and conditions of employment and ensure that the employee fully understands them?
- Have you fully explained the pay arrangements and ensured you have all relevant information; e.g. P45?

Have you provided Personal Protective Equipment and explained the Council's policy and procedure regarding this equipment?
Have you fully explained the Council's Health and Safety procedure?
Have you fully explained the Council's fire and evacuation procedure?
Have you conducted a training needs assessment for the new employee?
Have you discussed and agreed a training programme for the new recruit?

APPENDIX 3 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT FOR PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS

From 21st November 2016, Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016 created a duty to ensure that all public sector staff working in customer-facing roles speak fluent English (or Welsh) to an appropriate standard. The government code of practice sets out what public bodies need to take into account in order to comply with this new duty.

Employees who, as a regular and intrinsic part of their role, are required to speak to members of the public in English (face to face or telephone conversations) are considered as working in a customer-facing role.

When determining whether a role is customer-facing or not, line managers should consider the following aspects of the work involved:

- is there a business need for interaction with the public?
- what is the frequency and form of this interaction?
- what is the level of service quality and responsiveness expected by the public?
- what is the proportion of the role which would require spoken interaction with members of the public?
- what is the nature of the role?
- is English the primary language required for the role?

If it is determined that a role is customer-facing, line managers should then consider the nature and extent of the spoken communication necessary for effective performance. The following factors may be relevant when considering the standard required:

- the frequency of spoken interaction
- the topic of spoken interaction
- whether the communication is likely to include technical, profession-specific or specialist vocabulary
- the typical duration of spoken interaction
- whether the communication is repeated in or supplemented by, written material provided to customers
- the significance of the spoken interaction for service delivery.

The level of fluency required must however be matched to the demands of the role in question to ensure a proportionate approach to the fluency duty.

Line managers must satisfy themselves that an individual has the necessary level of fluency appropriate for the role they will be undertaking. Fluency relates to a person's language proficiency and their ability to speak with confidence and accuracy, using accurate sentence structures and vocabulary. In the context of a customer-facing role, a person should be able to choose the right kind of vocabulary for the situation at hand without a great deal of hesitation. They should listen to their customer and understand their needs. They should tailor their approach to each conversation

appropriate to their customer, responding clearly with fine shades of meaning, even in complex situations.

Fluency does not relate to regional or international accents, dialects, speech impediments or the tone of conversations.

Description	Linguistic Fluency
Threshold or intermediate	<p>Can exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what they want.</p> <p>Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and verbal planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.</p>
Vantage or upper intermediate	<p>Can adjust to the changes of direction, style and emphasis normally found in conversation.</p> <p>Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although they can be hesitant as they search for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.</p>
Effective operational proficiency or advanced	<p>Can express themselves fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.</p>
Mastery or proficiency	<p>Can express themselves spontaneously at length with a natural conversational flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the customer is hardly aware of it.</p>