



Leicester
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED
ALL**

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Cabinet

8 March 2010

Smaller Rule Book New Recruitment Policy and Procedure

Report of the Director of Human Resources

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a proposed new Recruitment Policy and Procedure.
- 1.2 The new policy and procedure is part of a series of new policies designed to create a smaller rule-book. Consultation took place last year with recruiting managers, workforce representative groups and trade unions on what they would like to see in the policy and procedure.
- 1.3 The purpose of the policy is to ensure we attract and retain a high calibre workforce in order to deliver quality services for the people of Leicester. As the Council enters a period of financial constraint where higher quality services are required using less resources, it is particularly important that we attract and appoint the best calibre of staff with the right skills set and approach to deliver services in this environment.
- 1.4 It aims to promote a positive image of the Council as an employer and to reflect the diversity of the community we serve.
- 1.5 As Leicester's largest employer, the way in which we recruit our workforce will impact on our broader vision for the city. The policy therefore aims to ensure our recruitment practices are accessible, promote equality and have a positive impact on skills development and prosperity in the city.
- 1.6 As Members will be aware it was recently agreed to have a Managed Vacancy process. This policy would be followed after a decision to recruit to the role has been made.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the new Recruitment Policy and Procedure be agreed for consultation with Trade Unions

3. SUMMARY

3.1 The new policy (attached at Appendix 1) has been written to support the six values of the Council's 'One Leicester' values

- **Driving out inequalities:** it helps to ensure fair access to services and opportunities
- **Delivering quality services:** it ensures that recruitment is efficient and effective
- **Delivering outcomes:** by enabling the best candidates to be selected
- **Having a customer focus:** it aims to be responsive to potential applicants as well as the needs of managers
- **Joining up what we do:** we will work with other agencies to be more effective in how we recruit and to contribute to the shared vision for Leicester
- **Being sustainable in everything we do:** by taking into account social, economic and environmental requirements

3.2 The new procedure (attached at Appendix 2) aims to attract and select high quality candidates with the necessary competencies to ensure that the council delivers excellent services and operates in the most effective and efficient way.

3.3 The procedure does recognise the need for flexibility and therefore, depending on the needs of a service area, the relevant labour market and the nature of the vacant job, recruitment and selection processes may vary. However, to ensure objectivity and fairness, each selection process will, in itself, be followed consistently.

3.2 Performance management begins with effective recruitment. The new policy and procedure therefore supports the objectives of the individual performance management project. It is based on competency-based recruitment designed to ensure that applicants are selected against the key competencies needed for a particular post.

4. REPORT

4.1 **New Recruitment Policy and Procedure - What's Different?**

4.2 **The introduction of competency based recruitment** - where the job description and person specification identify the main purpose, key tasks and, in particular, the competencies and other attributes the post-holder requires to carry out the role.

4.3 **A new revised competency based application form will be used** - This will include a series of pre-determined questions which allow applicants to self-select themselves prior to submitting a completed application form. It will also provide recruiting managers with a mechanism for scoring candidates at the application

stage and deciding which candidates best meet the criteria on the person specification

- 4.4 **Selection panels** – There are two main changes proposed. Firstly, we are proposing that only one member of the recruitment panel *must* have undertaken the Council’s Recruitment and Selection training. Secondly, following feedback from the workshops, it is clear that some authorised recruiters from minority groups felt they were asked to join a selection panel merely to make a selection panel ‘balanced’ and not because of their knowledge of the role. They felt this was ‘tokenism’. Under the new arrangements, therefore the emphasis on the make up of panels will be that panel members will be selected based on those with the greatest knowledge and understanding of the job. The panel will also be diverse wherever possible.
- 4.5 **Selection process** - again feedback from the various workshops highlights the fact that we need to be flexible in assessing candidates’ ability. It shouldn’t be about who can answer the questions on the day. Various objective assessment methods should be available to assist recruiting managers in testing for the most relevant competencies and skills, depending on the nature of the role, to ensure the best overall candidate is appointed. Various options are detailed in the procedure (Appendix 2).
- 4.6 **Telephone interviews** may be used to assist the shortlist process, again making the process slicker.
- 4.7 **To speed up the recruitment process**, pre-employment checks could be undertaken and information collected *prior to, or at, interview*. This shifts the responsibility of gathering this information to the recruiting manager, especially around CRB checks and medical questionnaires. The completed forms are to be returned at the interview stage to the Recruitment Team, who will shred unsuccessful applicants’ information,
- 4.8 **Pooled Recruitment** - this allows the authority to recruit ‘in bulk’ for future vacancies for generic posts. This system affords many benefits. It reduces advertising costs and the time taken to get someone into post. It cuts down the time taken by managers in terms of planning and organising the selection process. It also saves time on pre-employment checks such as references, which will already have been obtained.
- 4.9 **Flexible working** -the presumption that all posts will be available for job-share or flexible working hours would no longer apply automatically. Instead, managers would consider carefully service needs and if the posts are suitable for flexible working arrangements in accordance with the law.
- 4.10. **Different options** to finding suitable replacements will be available, including developing new talent through apprenticeships or graduate trainees or placements; sponsored government work placements, redeployment opportunities, filling jobs part-time or negating the need to recruit through job re-design.

- 4.11 **Secondment opportunities** should now normally go through the HR Recruitment Team for advertising, except on rare occasions where exceptional business needs exist. This will ensure secondments opportunities are normally open to all LCC staff.
- 4.12 **Complaints Procedure** - HR currently has a Recruitment Complaints Procedure, which has a high profile place in the procedure. This sends out the wrong message to potential employees, i.e. 'you will probably have to complain' Any complaints with regard to recruitment will now go through the Council's Complaints Procedure and then be referred to Head of Employment Service Centre for investigation.
- 4.13 **Employing Non European Economic Area migrant workers** - With the introduction of the UK Border Agency's new points based immigration system, managers wanting to employ skilled workers from Non EEA countries may do so. The Council has successfully applied to be a licensed sponsor.
- 4.14 **Sickness absence history** - to ensure the Council continues to drive down its sickness absence rate the revised application form will ask for details of applicants' sickness history. (It did not previously include this). This information should be taken into account when making a recruitment decision. The selection panel may further explore this at interview if they feel it is appropriate.

5. OTHER BENEFITS / DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 HR are currently working with the Individual Performance Management Board and ODI on improvements around the life cycle of the employees. An action plan has been agreed. This will compliment the revised Recruitment Policy and Procedure
- 5.2 To attract and retain high calibre staff we need to also learn from feedback on candidates' recruitment experience. We have received feedback from recently recruited staff and are acting upon recommendations.
- 5.3 The electronic recruitment workflow system is being further developed. These improvements to the Recruit on-line web system are detailed in the Improvement Plan. This will enable us to move forward from circulating paper applications forms around the council and enable managers to have access to application forms on-line, thus speeding up the recruitment process
- 5.4 Revised Recruitment Guidelines are being produced to give more guidance and support to managers on the new policy and procedure. A revised Recruitment and Selection training course will be provided to enable managers to use the new policy and procedure effectively.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The new Recruitment Policy and Procedure will assist the Council in complying with its legal obligations in relation to recruitment. Furthermore, it will assist the Council in defending claims brought against it in relation to recruitment decisions.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report however the proposals it contains should facilitate a more streamlined recruitment procedure resulting in a more efficient and effective process.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Other Implications	Yes/No	Paragraph References
Equal Opportunities	Yes	1.4 , 3.1, 4.4
Sustainable and Environmental	No	
Crime and Disorder	No	

10. CONSULTATION

Workshops were held with recruiting managers, employee groups, equality representatives, Trade Union representatives, plus

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Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	N/A
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)

Leicester City Council
Recruitment Policy

Introduction

There are two key drivers for the Council's recruitment policy: -

- the need to attract and retain a high calibre workforce in order to deliver quality services for the people of Leicester.
- as Leicester's largest employer, the way in which we recruit our workforce will impact on our broader vision for the city. The policy therefore aims to ensure our recruitment practices are accessible, promote equality and have a positive impact on skills development and prosperity in the city.

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to attract and select the best candidates to work at the Council to ensure that we are resourced to deliver quality services and achieve our objectives. It aims to promote a positive image of the Council as an employer and to reflect the diversity of the community we serve.

Our Values

The policy supports the Council's values:-

- **Driving out inequalities:** it helps to ensure fair access to services and opportunities
- **Delivering quality services:** it ensures that recruitment is efficient and effective
- **Delivering outcomes:** by enabling the best candidates to be selected
- **Having a customer focus:** it aims to be responsive to potential applicants as well as the needs of managers
- **Joining up what we do:** we will work with other agencies to be more effective in how we recruit and to contribute to the shared vision for Leicester
- **Being sustainable in everything we do:** by taking into account social, economic and environmental requirements

Principles

- The number and calibre of potential applicants are developed within the city, by creating links with local schools, colleges and universities, building skills and relationships within local communities and promoting opportunities for under represented groups
- Vacancies will be advertised once they have been made available as redeployment opportunities.
- Vacancies may be considered as internal secondment opportunities to provide experience and develop and retain talent within the organisation.
- Recruitment and selection will comply with relevant legal requirements. This includes ensuring that candidates are not treated less favourably on the grounds of age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief or nationality.
- A consistent approach is taken **within** each recruitment and selection process.
- Recruitment and selection processes **may vary from each other** in order to respond to the needs of the business, the nature of the skills and labour market and differing job requirements.
- Recruitment will be as efficient as possible by developing talent pools and facilitating permanency for employees who are performing well in posts to which they were appointed on a temporary basis
- The Council's Recruitment Procedure will be based on competencies, with reference to the Council's Competency Framework

- Selection will be based upon ensuring candidates have the competencies required for good job performance
- Selection processes will include assessment tools to measure objectively the skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes required for the role.
- Selection decisions are based on merit to select the best candidate for the job.
- Practical guidance is available to all those involved in recruitment and selection at all stages of the process.
- Those involved in recruitment and selection will have attended relevant training.
- Relevant checks will be carried out prior to employment, including additional checks to safeguard children and vulnerable adults when recruiting to relevant jobs.
- Once appointed, employees will be provided with an induction and development action plan, with assessments made during the selection process informing development plans.
- All appointments will be confirmed after completion of a 6-month probationary period.
- Feedback is available to all candidates.
- Recruitment and selection processes will maximise wherever possible the benefits and efficiencies of developing new technology

Scope

The policy applies to recruitment and selection of all jobs at Leicester City Council, except those in schools and further education colleges, where the local policy will apply.

The policy may not apply to recruitment and selection conducted on behalf of the Council's partners.

External consultants, agencies and third party suppliers who assist in recruitment and selection are required to comply with the policy.

Appendix 2

Leicester City Council Recruitment Procedure

Recruitment Process Stages

This will include a visual flow chart

Procedure Paragraph No.	Step in the Process
2	Vacancy Arises
2.1	Identifying If There Is A Need To Recruit
3	Planning The Recruitment Process
3.2	Designing The Job
3.2	Job Analysis And Evaluation
3.3	Reviewing & Drafting Job Descriptions And Person Specifications
3.4	Considering Options For Filling The Vacancy
4	Attracting Applications
4.1	Preparing Information For Candidates
4.2	The Competency-Based Application Form
4.3	Dealing With Late Applications
4.4	Dealing With Casual Enquiries
5	Establishing A Selection Panel
5	Ensuring Panel Members are Trained
6	Selecting Candidates
6.1	Short-listing From Applications
6.2	Selection Processes And Exercises
6.3	Making Reasonable Adjustments For Disabled Candidates
6.4	Interviewing Candidates
6.5	Paying for Candidates' Interview Expenses
6.6	Ensuring Documentary Evidence Is Provided
6.7	Making The Selection Decision
7	Ensuring Pre-Employment Checks Are Carried Out
8	What To Do With The Recruitment Documentation
9	Getting A Contract Of Employment Issued
10	Ensuring Confidentiality
11	Providing Feedback To Candidates

For Recruitment Advice and Support please contact Employment Service Centre

1. INTRODUCTION

Attracting and selecting high quality candidates is essential to ensuring that the Council delivers excellent services and operates in the most effective and efficient way. This procedure sets out the main steps when recruiting and selecting employees within the Council.

The procedure does recognise the need for flexibility and therefore, depending on the needs of a service area, the relevant labour market and the nature of the vacant job, recruitment and selection processes may vary. However, to ensure objectivity and fairness, each selection process will, in itself, be followed consistently.

The key elements of recruitment and selection are contained within this procedure, with additional information for guidance purposes available separately.

2. WHEN A VACANCY ARISES

A vacancy will arise if a need for a new post within the organisation is identified and is approved or when an employee leaves a job. If an employee leaves a job voluntarily, his/her line manager should discuss the reasons for leaving to see if there are any options available which would help the Council to retain high quality staff. Employees should complete exit questionnaires on MyView. Alternatively, paper copies are available for completion from the Employment Service Centre.

2.1 Is Recruitment Necessary?

When a post becomes vacant due to an employee leaving, it may not be necessary to recruit a direct replacement. It is an opportunity for the line manager to consider the following prior to deciding to recruit:-

- Workforce planning:
 - What are the current and future needs of the service?
 - How does the current structure fit with staffing capacity?
 - Do we need different skills?
 - Is there any impact from restructuring within or outside of the service area?
- Do we need this job as it is?
- Does the job need to be redesigned if our needs have changed?
- Do we still need the post to be carried out for the same number of hours or on the same work pattern?
- What is the current and future financial position – is the post affordable?

At this stage, a decision will be made by the line manager as to whether to seek permission to fill this role during the period when the Managed Vacancy process is in place. The Managed Vacancy process is designed to control the Council's expenditure on staffing during a period of financial restraint and minimise the potential for redundancies. If the manager believes it is essential to fill the role either on the basis of reduced hours or on a full-time basis, he/she must submit their Permission to Fill form with their case for filling the role to their Divisional Director who will decide whether or not to allow the manager to proceed to fill the vacancy.

3. RECRUITMENT PLANNING

3.1 Forward Planning

Planning the recruitment process in advance will ensure that it is as effective as possible so that the skills and experience required can be sourced for the role. Planning can also shorten the time it takes to recruit by ensuring that unnecessary delays are avoided, e.g. meeting advertising deadlines, confirming availability of interview panel members.

3.2 Job Design/Job Analysis and Job Evaluation

When a job becomes vacant, the nature of the role should be reviewed to identify if the job is meeting the needs of the business. It may be appropriate to re-design the job to ensure it is focused on what the service requires.

It is also an opportunity to review the hours or work-pattern of the role to better fit the needs of the service. The use of flexible contracts and different forms of contracts to meet the delivery needs of the service concerned should also be considered e.g. annualised hours or compressed working week contracts. Further guidance on these is available in the Recruitment Policy guidelines.

A new post will need to go through a job analysis and job evaluation process.

The benefits package associated with the post should also be reviewed – for example whether there is an identified objective case for market increments and whether the car allowance policy is applicable to the post. It is important that these considerations are taken in line with the relevant Council policy as way of helping to maintain a consistent approach.

3.3 Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

The job description sets out what the role entails – its main purpose, key tasks and the competencies required to carry out the role. It is important to get the job description right, as it forms the basis of the recruitment and selection process, sets out what is expected of the post holder, forms part of the contract of employment, and is the basis for the grade assigned to a post.

The person specification sets out the competencies and other attributes the post-holder requires in order to carry out the role effectively. This document is important because potential candidates will refer to it to decide their own suitability for applying, it will indicate what types of selection tests and assessments would be included in the selection process and will be the basis of the decision on whom to appoint.

Both of these key documents should therefore be reviewed when recruiting in order to ensure they are updated to current requirements and clearly set out expectations. If as a result of this review there are changes to the principal responsibilities within the job description, the post should be submitted for job evaluation to check if the changes produce a change in grade.

Key points when writing job descriptions and person specifications are:-

- Ensure plain English is used and jargon is avoided
- Ensure that the criteria you include within the person specification are relevant to the job, and does not unfairly take into account age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, nationality and can be justified in terms of supporting effective performance in the job.
- Avoid using too many criteria
- Differentiate between what is essential for good job performance and what is desirable
- Think about how you can/will assess candidates against the criteria, e.g. on-line tests, assessment centres. The Recruitment Team in the Employee Service Centre can provide advice and assistance with this.
- The Council has a competency framework, which sets out behaviours that support good performance as well as our organisational values. The competency framework should be referred to, identifying the competencies which are required within the role and which would therefore be incorporated into the person specification.
- The person specification should also include other competencies that are required to undertake the role effectively, qualifications and the nature of any previous experience which are necessary.
- Be prepared to make reasonable adjustments for people with a disability. Consider what adjustment might be made depending on the candidates disability
- Where a job involves working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, include reference to responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and that the jobholder is subject to the relevant statutory pre-employment checks, e.g. (CRB), ISA registration.
- Jobs graded at spinal column point 44 and above or those that regularly advise Council or Committees or which speak to the media on behalf of the Council are politically restricted. This restriction should be made clear in the specification and job description.

Guidelines on how to prepare job descriptions and person specifications, as well as example documents are provided in the guidelines on InSite.

3.4 Options for Filling a Vacancy

Apart from advertising a post, other options are available in finding a suitable post holder: -

- Providing a redeployment opportunity for an existing City Council employee in accordance with the established 'Redeployment Priority Order', which can be found on Insite through the following link ([Link to Redeployment Priority Order](#)). This should be considered in advance of advertising a post externally. The Council has a legal responsibility to redeploy staff at risk of redundancy to suitable alternative employment. Facilitating redeployment also assists the Council in managing costs arising from redundancy/early retirement
- Confirming a temporary employee in a role permanently, subject to them obtaining the temporary appointment via a competitive interview and satisfactory completion of a probationary period.
- Where a job-share role becomes vacant, offering the remaining hours to the other job-sharer.

- Offering the post to a candidate from a previous recruitment exercise to the role who was deemed to be appointable, having met the criteria for the role, by the recruiting panel. This should be within 12 months of the original recruitment process.
- Appointing a candidate from a generic recruitment or talent pool. This is where the Council runs a recruitment and selection process for generic posts, where continuous service delivery is important, or those with higher turnover rates. Successful candidates are then notified when a vacancy arises, having already been assessed as having met the requirements for the role.
- Where jobs are difficult to recruit to, a recruiting manager may wish to consider a range of options including growing talent by taking on an apprentice or graduate trainee, or recruiting from outside the EEA under the UK Border Agency's points-based system. Information on the provisions of these schemes or the conditions and criteria which apply to recruiting from outside the EEA, along with associated costs, are provided in briefing notes on In Site.

4. ATTRACTING APPLICATIONS

Advertising the vacancy internally and externally will generate interest from applicants. All vacancies will normally be advertised on the Council's website with links to specialised recruitment sites for local government, and through Jobcentre Plus. The Council's policy is normally to advertise externally, therefore use of local and/or national press and specialist professional magazines and websites should be considered. (Advertising in the local press may sometimes mean primarily using sign-posting adverts to the Council's web site.)

Sharing vacancy information with partner organisations of the Council, such as the PCT and Universities may also be appropriate ways of attracting suitable candidates.

Using careers fairs within the City, advertising vacancies within communities and/or providing pre-recruitment/skills development support for people within Leicester will help to improve diversity within the Council as well as support the objectives of One Leicester in terms of investing in skills and in communities.

Advertisements must be clearly written and must outline:-

- the requirements of the job
- the essential criteria to limit the number of inappropriate applications received
- salary and nature of the contract, e.g. part-time, temporary etc
- the role in a way that will appeal to all sections of the community by using positive visual images and wording

4.1 Information for Applicants

Applicants will be provided with information on a consistent basis within a recruitment exercise. As a minimum they will be provided with the application form, person

specification and job description, a copy of the advertisement and guidance notes. This will be available on-line or provided in paper-format when requested.

At each stage of the selection process candidates will be provided on a consistent basis with sufficient information to support them and inform them about the process.

4.2 The Application Form

Applicants are required to complete a competency-based application form in order to ensure that relevant information to make a short-listing and selection decision is provided. This process can also be conducted via a prearranged telephone interview.

The application form is customised to include the competencies required in the post concerned and any further criteria required, e.g. additional information required for posts working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. An example is provided as an Appendix/on In Site.

Applicants are able to track the progress of their application on-line or by contacting the Recruitment Team.

4.3 Late Applications

Normally the closing date for applications will be kept to. However, the selection panel may agree to accept late applications on an exceptional basis, maintaining a consistent approach.

4.4 Casual Enquiries for all Permanent, Temporary and Casual Posts

Casual enquirers will be informed that they will need to apply to advertised vacancies. They will be offered the opportunity of registering their interest in working for the Council on the Council's website so that they can be notified via e-mail when relevant vacancies are advertised.

5. SELECTION PANELS

The selection panel will comprise of at least two people and will be responsible for short-listing and selection decisions. The Chair of the panel will normally be the most senior officer on the panel.

The Chair of the panel must have been completed the Council's Recruitment and Selection course, or as a minimum, been provided with a briefing on the Council's Recruitment and Selection policy and relevant legal and procedural aspects from an HR or Training Manager.

The Chair has lead responsibility for the recruitment and selection process and will be the final arbiter where there is any disagreement amongst the selection panel.

A panel will consist of the most appropriate individuals. Having a balanced panel in terms of gender, ethnic origin, disability etc, is positive in representing diversity, however this is not essential as the priority is that membership of a panel is based on the contribution the

panel member can make, in terms of their knowledge of the role or service and/or their expertise/experience in recruitment and selection. A panel would typically therefore include the line manager and potentially their manager or alternatively an experienced senior professional or staff member in the most relevant service area.

All panel members will have a full role in the decision-making process. Panel members are equally responsible for ensuring decisions are made fairly and objectively, following the Council's policies and procedures in order to make the best decision on the best candidate for the post.

Panel members must declare to the Chair any conflict of interest regarding relationships with applicants as soon as they are aware of the situation and should stand down from the panel.

5.1 External Advisers and Partners

External advisers can provide a specialist, technical input to support the panel's decision-making process. Employees or Board Members of partner organisations of the Council may be invited to join a selection panel as appropriate to the nature of the role. As the appointment is to Leicester City Council, however, the short-listing and selection decisions will be the ultimate responsibility of Council employees and Members.

5.2 Member Panels

Where the vacancy is at or above 3rd tier, the selection panel will be a Member panel as set out in the Council's Constitution, advised by relevant officer(s). The Council will commission and work with a specialised recruitment agency to undertake an executive search to strengthen the pool of candidates from under represented employee groups.

Recruitment to posts below that level will be conducted by an officer selection panel.

Members on appointment panels will have been briefed in advance on the Council's Recruitment and Selection policy and relevant legal and procedural aspects by an HR or Training Manager. The appointment panel will be advised by a relevant Director or senior officer and an HR adviser.

6. SELECTING CANDIDATES

Selecting candidates involves two main processes: short-listing and assessing applicants in order to decide who should be offered a job.

6.1 Short-listing

The competency-based application form provides a mechanism for scoring candidates and deciding which candidates best meet the criteria on the person specification. A

manageable number of candidates should be selected for the next stage of the selection process, based on those who have best demonstrated meeting the criteria from the evidence provided on their application form. The panel should include desirable criteria as well as essential criteria in order to achieve a manageable number of short-listed candidates.

This process should be carried out in an objective and consistent way by at least one member of the selection panel. An example of a scoring sheet which panel members may wish to use is provided on InSite.

Disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria are guaranteed to be taken forward to the next stage of the selection process.

6.2 Selection Processes

The selection process filters applicants to the point that the person who best meets the criteria for the post can be identified and selected.

Assessment methods will measure candidates' abilities to meet the criteria for the post. A range of selection methods are available which will support this decision-making.

Examples of assessment methods available include:-

- psychometric ability tests and personality/work styles questionnaires – which can be completed on-line or in written formats
- group exercises
- presentations
- interviews – including telephone interviews for initial sifting
- in-tray exercises
- job simulation exercises where candidates carry out an activity required within the job
- written reports or job related exercises
- role plays
- work trials

Choosing which method(s) are most appropriate will depend on the competency or criteria being assessed and the nature of the role. The decision on which to include should be based on providing the best way of assessing a skill or competency in way which links to the nature of the job.

The Council's recruitment procedure provides flexibility in determining which selection methods are most suitable, but they should:-

- be relevant to the post
- assess performance in an objective way
- not unfairly disadvantage candidates because of their background or because of being external candidates
- be consistently applied to the candidate pool, except when making reasonable adjustments for applicants under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Assessment Centres are selection processes which include a number of different assessment methods to ensure that criteria are assessed in more than one way. They therefore provide a full range of information on candidates' ability to perform across different types of situation and assessment method and provide the most accurate prediction of candidates' future performance and potential. Their use is advisable in senior management roles, roles with significant impact on service users and where the impact of a poor selection decision is significant. They can also be appropriate for talent pools.

Further information on selection methods and assessment centres is available on Insite and advice can be sought from the Recruitment Team in the Employment Service Centre.

6.3 Disabled Candidates

At all stages within a recruitment and selection process, from the format of information being provided on vacancies to the arrangements for assessing candidates, reasonable adjustments should be made for candidates with a disability, as set out in the Disability Discrimination Act. Disabled candidates who meet essential criteria are guaranteed an interview.

6.4 Interviews

Interviews provide the selection panel with relevant information about the candidate's ability to do the job beyond that which is provided in the application form.

The interview will also enable the panel to clarify any discrepancies or gaps in employment history, which is particularly important when recruiting to posts involving working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

From the candidate's perspective, the interview will provide an opportunity to find out more about the role, the service and the Council and will inform the candidate's decision as to whether they would want to accept the post if it was offered. The interview should therefore be arranged and conducted to promote the image of the Council as an employer and provider of quality services.

Interviews will be structured to ensure that questions are linked to identifying how well candidates meet the requirements for the role. Candidates are generally asked the same questions, but additional questions and probing are also necessary to ensure that a clear picture is provided of the candidate's ability to carry out the role and to cover issues which are specific to an individual. For example, in clarifying a discrepancy in the application form, or for seeking further information about a candidate's sickness absence history, as appropriate.

It is recommended that interviews are competency-based. This means that they include a structured series of questions aimed at eliciting information against specific job-related competencies and criteria, i.e. skills or behaviours found to be relevant to the job. Questions elicit specific examples from candidates, describing situations where they have

demonstrated the required behaviours or skills. These are probed to build up a picture of candidates' strengths and weaknesses against the criteria for the role.

Interview questions must be relevant to the vacant role and must avoid any questions that discriminate against candidates because of their gender, gender identity, age, ethnic origin, disability, religion/belief, or sexual orientation.

Panel members should make individual notes of the interview to support their decision-making and to maintain a record of the process. An example of a competency-based interview assessment record is provided as an Appendix/on In Site.

Further information is available on selection interviewing, including competency-based interviewing within the briefing notes on In Site and from the Recruitment Team in the Employment Service Centre.

6.5 Interview Expenses & Financial Assistance

Candidates attending interview may claim for reasonable expenses in line with the Council's policy. (Further details of this are in Section 6 of the Terms and Conditions of Employment, paragraph 6.4)

Financial assistance may be available to support successful candidates to relocate to the area. (Further details of the relocation policy are at Appendix B1 of the Terms and Conditions of Employment)

6.6 Other Documentary Evidence

At the interview stage, other documentary evidence should be asked for and checked and photocopied. Depending on the role, this may include:-

- Qualification certificates (originals)
- Driving licences (originals)
- CRB forms
- ISA Registration – from July 2010
- Identity checks
- Medical questionnaires
- Eligibility to work in the UK

The Recruitment Team in the Employment Service Centre can advise on these and agree with the Chair of the selection panel what support the Team can provide in checking and processing these documents.

6.7 Making the Selection Decision

Once all assessment and selection methods have been completed for all candidates, the selection panel will decide from all the information provided which candidate best meets the criteria for the job and should be offered the vacant post.

A verbal and written conditional offer may be made subject to appropriate pre-employment checks, but a formal offer appointment should only be confirmed when all relevant checks are complete and satisfactory.

The panel may wish to identify and agree a “hold” candidate – who was second strongest in terms of demonstrating their suitability for the role and whom the panel felt confident in appointing. This person can then be offered the vacancy if the candidate originally offered declined to accept the job, failed their probationary period or left the role within 12 months.

Second interviews may be considered if a panel is unable to decide whom to appoint.

If no-one is deemed appointable, then the panel will need to consider whether re-advertisement or a review of the job design is appropriate.

7. PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

Pre-employment checks will include reference checks and medical assessments as a minimum.

7.1 References

The selection panel should seek and refer to two references, at least one of which should be from the current or previous employer, if the candidate has been previously employed. References may be taken up, with candidate’s permission in advance. An offer may be made once one satisfactory reference has been received, where this is from the current or most recent employer.

Where recruitment is to a post involving working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, two references are required prior to an offer being made and these will need to be validated.

The Chair of the panel should liaise with the Recruitment Team in the Employment Service Centre to agree when and how references are sought and provided back to the selection panel.

Any issue or concern arising from a reference should be explored with the referee and/or the candidate, without breaching the referee’s confidence.

7.2 Medical Checks

A medical questionnaire is sent out to all interview candidates to complete and return when they attend for interview. Only the successful candidate will have their questionnaire processed, with the questionnaires of other candidates being destroyed.

7.3 Additional Checks

Depending on the nature of the role, some posts will require further checks, for example jobs working with children, young people and vulnerable adults and those which process bank information. These checks may include Criminal Records Bureau, Independent Safeguarding Authority checks and other checks. Further information is available from the Recruitment Team in the Employment Service Centre and on InSite.

8. RECRUITMENT DOCUMENTATION

The selection panel must ensure that notes are made to record short-listing and selection decisions, including candidates' performance in any assessment exercises or tests. These records may be required to demonstrate a fair and transparent process. All recruitment documentation should be returned to the Recruitment Team in the Employment Service Centre.

9. CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT

The Employment Service Centre will produce and send out the contract of employment to the successful candidate, based on information provided by the Chair of the selection panel.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

All recruitment documentation, e.g. application forms, interview and short-listing records, assessment records, references and medical information etc are confidential and all employees and Members involved in recruitment processes and having access to such documentation are required to maintain the confidentiality of the documents and the information they contain.

11. FEEDBACK

All applicants may receive verbal feedback on their application if requested. This should be provided or arranged by the Chair of the Recruitment Panel.

