

Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

Approved 28th May 2026

Review date 28th May 2028

Willoughton Parish Council is committed to recruiting the most suitable person for the vacancy based on their abilities and the needs of the Council. 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. It will ensure it adheres to current legislation and comply with any future statutory requirements and codes of practices produced by lead organisations in employment relations, for example: the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission, and the Disability Rights Commission.

The Council is committed to ensuring that equal opportunity practices are embedded in all the recruitment and selection processes that it undertakes.

The Council:

- Ensures that the employees of the Council are representative of the community it serves.
- Ensures that employees are recruited and promoted based on ability and other relevant objective criteria to perform the duties and responsibilities of the post for which they have applied.
- Continues to ensure that the recruitment and selection procedure is applied consistently to ensure fair access to all jobs.
- Ensures that external job opportunities are communicated to all sections of the local community.
- Ensures that all employees and applicants are treated with dignity and respect. Where harassment, victimisation or bullying occurs this will be confronted and dealt with through the appropriate policies and procedures.
- Ensures that recruitment policies and procedures are reviewed and updated on a regular basis and reflect and incorporate national legislation and leading models of good practice and codes of conduct.
- Considers adapting organisational requirements or existing practices where they are contrary to employee's cultural and religious needs.
- Involves and communicates effectively with all employees.
- Provides a fair, equal and transparent pay, and reward system.

No candidate seeking employment with the Council will be treated unfairly on any grounds, including:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
 - Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

A vacancy can provide opportunities for the Council to rethink a role or area of work; replacement of the old post, hours, duties etc. are not automatic. Consideration is given to the following:

- Is the post still required?
- Are there new duties which need to be added to the role?
- How much has the role changed since its original creation?
- Are there any technological changes ahead which may affect the functions of the role or the skills and abilities of the person to perform it?
- Reallocation of duties to other members of a team.
- Reorganisation within the department.
- Is there sufficient budget for the post?

The Recruitment and Selection Process

This is divided into three areas:

1. The Pre-Selection Process
2. The Selection Process
3. The Appointment Process
4. Commencement of employment.

1. The Pre-Selection Process

The Personnel and Disciplinary Committee in conjunction with the Clerk/RFO, will undertake the following:

- Prepare a comprehensive job description detailing skills and qualities necessary for the vacancy.
- Prepare a person specification.
- Prepare an application form and application packs.

In drawing up the job description consultation is made with any relevant parties. The job description clearly states the main duties and tasks for this role.

From the job description a detailed person specification is completed which allows the council to profile the ideal person to fill the job.

A person specification details the relevant skills, knowledge and aptitudes required which are related to the job. It is essential that in compiling the person specification any criteria relating to personal qualities or circumstances are not potentially discriminatory.

It is essential that the job description is clear and precise, and the person specification makes a clear distinction between essential and desirable criteria. The success of the recruitment process is based on these documents, which are used at evaluation, advertisement stage and during the assessment process.

Advertising

The Clerk/RFO will be responsible for compiling the advertisement for the vacancy.

Posts are advertised using one or more of the following mediums:

- Professional journals.
- Local press and social media.
- E-recruitment sites.
- Local schools and colleges.
- Throughout the Council via email and on employee notice boards.

When considering where to advertise it is essential that consideration is given to the cost and maximum coverage to target groups before deciding. Consideration is given to job share arrangements for all full-time posts.

Application Packs

Applicants interested in any of the vacancies advertised are able to download the Application Pack from the Council website or contact the Clerk/RFO to have an application pack emailed to them.

Each application pack contains the following:

- Application form.
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form including details of why the information is requested and how it will be used.
- Post description and person specification.
- Details of the closing date, the possible interview date and who to contact for informal discussion about the post.
- Any additional information that is relevant to the post.

Applications

Applications may be submitted by email. The deadline for the submission of applications is noon on the stated closing date. The recruitment panel may decide to accept a late application providing the short-listing process has not been completed.

2. The Selection Process

The Recruitment Panel

The recruitment panel should consist of three Councillors and the Clerk/RFO for selection of a Clerk/RFO, and two Councillors and the Clerk/RFO for all other vacancies. The Clerk will co-ordinate the recruitment panel from amongst the members of the Personnel and Disciplinary Committee. The same Councillors should interview all applicants and declare if they know of any applicants and the capacity in which the applicant is known to them. Ideally all interviews should take place on the same day.

The Chair of the Personnel and Disciplinary Committee will be the lead interviewer. The questions and selection methods to be used will be based on the latest LALC Recruitment Manual in operation at that time.

All applications must be given equal consideration, and the criteria must be applied consistently to all applicants.

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.

The Town Clerk ensures the process is conducted in a fair and equitable manner and ensures that all decisions are recorded clearly.

The panel:

- Prepares a short list of candidates for interview.
- Decides the selection method to be used.
- Develops questions and additional selection methods to be used.
- Conducts interviews.
- Makes recommendation to Full Council for final approval.

The Clerk:

- Notifies applicants that they have been short listed for interview.
- Ensures candidates are legally entitled to work in the UK.
- Notifies candidates in writing that they have been unsuccessful following interview.
- Provides feedback to the unsuccessful candidates if required.
- Conducts the pre-employment checks on the preferred candidate.
- Sends out offers of employment, and associated paperwork.

Short listing

Applications are assessed against the criteria contained in the job specification with those applicants most closely matching the criteria being selected for interview. The decision must be based upon the evidence provided and not on assumptions.

All members of the Recruitment Panel **MUST** conduct short listing. Under no circumstances does only one member of the Recruitment Panel conduct short listing.

All short-listed candidates are notified of the next stage of the recruitment process. Reasonable notice is given to the short-listed candidates of the selection process and the candidates provided with the following information:

- The date, time, and venue.
- Map/ directions to the venue.
- Length of time the process is expected to take.
- The names and job titles of the Recruitment Panel members.
- Selection methods to be used and guidance on how to prepare (if appropriate).

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 (e.g., keyboard skills).
- 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

For each vacancy it is advisable that no more than six candidates are interviewed. 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, although these do not have to be the exact same questions. Supplementary questions can be used to explore areas of concern, interest, or other aspects of the candidate's application.
- Questions are focussed on obtaining relevant information and evidence of the candidate's ability to do the job.
- Questions are allocated to specific panel members according to expertise and knowledge.
- 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 (for example childcare arrangements).

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.

The Preferred Candidate

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 or medical assessments being received. (No offer can be made if the post is subject to a satisfactory DBS check). The 'preferred candidate' must not commence in post until all the appropriate checks have been completed.

The final decision on employment of a candidate rests with Full Council and this cannot be delegated to the Clerk/RFO or any committee.

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.

3. 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 to work in the United Kingdom.

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

Safeguarding

Certain posts within the Council may have restrictions and can only be filled subject to receipt of a satisfactory Disclosure check that has been made through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Criminal Convictions

Applicants are asked on the application form whether they have any convictions for criminal offences. Information on the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and the requirements for completion of this section will be enclosed in the vacancy information pack. If an applicant is found not to have completed this question accurately appropriate action would be taken.

References

Reference(s) are sought for preferred candidates. For new employees to the Council at least two references are sought, one of which must be from the current or most recent employer. For preferred candidates that are already employed by the Council only one reference will be required.

Qualifications

Copies of all relevant qualifications are made and kept on an individual's personal file.

The Formal Offer

After all the appropriate checks have been completed and are deemed satisfactory, a formal offer of employment is made. The Clerk/RFO sends the employee the letter of Formal Offer once they have been provided with a start date. The starting salary for all new appointments is at the lowest salary scale point for the appropriate salary grade. If the Council 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.

4. Commencement of Employment

Prior to commencement of employment, 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. The candidate must sign the contract of employment and return to the Clerk/RFO prior to taking up their position

The induction process will be undertaken by the Clerk/RFO, and they 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 are subject to the satisfactory completion of a three-month probation period. A probation period enables the Council to:

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

Short term appointments are subject to the same criteria, however probationary periods for shorter term contracts will be in line with the term of the contract.

A probation review meeting is held with the post holder before the end of their first month in employment, the second month and again before the end of the period. The purpose of the probation review meeting is to discuss how the commencement in post is progressing as well as to potentially identify any problems that the new employee may be experiencing in their post.

If there are noticeable problems with an employee's performance during the three-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 three-month period before highlighting any problems.

If at the end of the three-month probation period, the employee's performance has not met the standard required the Council can choose to:

- Extend the probationary period for up to three months implementing new agreed performance targets and timescales; or
- Terminate the employment.

The Clerk/RFO or line manager must complete the 'Probation Review Form' at each of the review meetings and a copy is placed on the employee's personnel file at the end of their probationary period. Employees will be informed in writing of the outcome of these reviews.

Recording and Storage of Recruitment Documentation

Copies of all relevant documents relating to the filling of each vacancy is 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 are held separately from the application form and details contained on the forms logged and then destroyed after a maximum period of six months.

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

All unsuccessful applicants shall have the right to feedback.