



9 March 2022

Agenda Item: 5

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEES

REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S RECRUITMENT PRACTICE AND PROCEDURES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide Personnel Committee with an update on the review of the Council's recruitment practice and procedures as commissioned by the Head of Paid Service following the exempt item debate at Full Council in November 2021, and to seek approval for a range of actions to improve and modernise our approach more widely to address ongoing recruitment and retention challenges as identified in the recently approved People Strategy 2022-2026.

Information

2. A review of recruitment practice and procedures was commissioned by the Head of Paid Service and undertaken by the Head of Human Resources as per the recommendation in the report to Full Council referenced above. This has provided the opportunity to further improve and modernise the recruitment process to reflect the expectations of a modern, 21st century public service employer.
3. The ongoing work seeks to address current recruitment challenges as identified in the People Strategy approved at January's Committee and to incorporate a number of the actions identified in the Equalities Action Plan. The review has considered the electronic recruitment system, Section C5 (Recruitment Statement) of the Personnel Handbook and the associated management guidance held on the Managers' Resource Centre. Specific wording has been included in the Recruitment Statement to ensure managers are aware of a specific statutory consideration when making an appointment. The e-Recruitment system is in the process of being amended where managers will be required to respond to a specific question on this issue and this question will be mirrored in the application process. Further amendments have been made to the recruitment guidance for hiring managers to emphasise the requirement to undertake a full check of all the statutory requirements in place for any county council position.
4. As part of the review, other improvements have been considered to address the issues highlighted in the People Strategy and in the various action plans supporting equalities, diversity and inclusion to ensure the identification and removal of any barriers to having a fair, transparent and accessible recruitment process including the following:
 - initial anonymising of applications for shortlisting purposes

- consider and incorporate the suggestions made by the Business Disability Forum as part of their validation of the Council's Disability Confident Leader submission
- review where and how adverts are placed including dedicated websites and wider use of social media to promote key vacancies
- linking recruitment and vacancy protocols with the aspirations set out in the People Strategy and associated action plans and strategies such as the Skills Development and Employment Opportunities Strategy and Equalities Action Plan
- develop and utilise consistent tests for basic literacy and numeracy skills as part of entry point recruitment
- continue to review the commitments made in various charters and accreditations to ensure we continue to deliver on these
- continue to explore examples of best practice and adopt new methods to maximise our attraction and fill rates in a period of recognised local and national recruitment challenges.

Other Options Considered

5. The review was commissioned as an action arising from a report to Full Council and as such no alternative was considered. The requirement was to learn from the situation and to put in place checks and balances to ensure it could not occur again. The changes to the Recruitment Statement (attached at Appendix 1) was considered the most appropriate way to deliver this as well as the highlighted system changes and revisions to existing management guidance.

Reasons for Recommendations

6. It is a key requirement for any employer to have a fair, legally compliant, consistent and accessible recruitment process where candidates feel they will be treated well. It is recognised that the candidate experience is a key consideration as to how the organisation is viewed, whether or not an application is successful or not. This is highly relevant in a landscape where the Council is facing recruitment challenges in areas where these have not previously been a factor.

Statutory and Policy Implications

7. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Equalities Implications

8. The equalities considerations are implicit in the ambition to have a fair, accessible and transparent recruitment process which runs through our procedure and the associated guidance for candidates and managers.

Data Protection Implications

9. There are no data protection implications arising from this report as all information is in relation to trends rather than named individuals' data.

Financial Implications

10. There are no direct financial implications arising from the content of this report.

Human Resources Implications

11. The Human Resource implications are set out in the body of the report.

Public Sector Equality Duty Implications

12. The policies and procedures of the Council apply to all current and future directly employed staff whatever their protected characteristic and as such the recommendations in this report will be universally applied.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 1) Approve the proposed changes to the Council's existing Recruitment Statement, online application and vacancy control processes and associated management guidance.

Marjorie Toward

Service Director - Customers, Governance and Employees

Chief Executives Department

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (KK 09/02/2022)

13. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

Finance Comments (SES 11/02/2022)

14. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

HR Comments (JP 11/02/2022)

15. The review ensures legally compliant recruitment practice and procedures.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All