

New Buckenham Parish Council Recruitment Policy

1. Introduction

This policy is intended to provide guidance on staff recruitment. New Buckenham Parish Council employs a Clerk / RFO and one part time office assistant. This policy has been written to support recruitment with these roles. It has been written to explain the process involved in the recruitment of staff and also to identify documents supporting the engagement of staff.

This guidance is based on best practise and legislative requirements. It is to be used with other documents which guide recruitment such as the council's Equal Opportunities Policy and the council's Training and Development Policy. This policy provides an advisory framework for all aspects of the recruitment process as well as the documents to be used in this.

2. Aims and Objectives

Overall the main objective of the policy is to provide guidance to those involved in the recruitment process, to ensure that the process runs smoothly, time efficiently and successfully in that the right candidate is engaged. The key aims of the policy are to:

- ✓ Enable vacancies to be advertised and attract sufficient suitably qualified or experienced staff
- ✓ Maximise the effectiveness of the selection process
- ✓ Ensure that selection practice is in accordance with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and with equal opportunities legislation
- ✓ Ensure a consistent and fair approach is adopted across the council in the recruitment and selection of staff
- ✓ Recognise the documents available to support the recruitment process

3. Time line in the recruitment process

It is important for those involved in the recruitment process to understand that replacement can take time. This is because the vacancy should to be openly advertised, applications sorted and candidates invited to interview. It is also because the selected candidate could well have to work out their own notice. In all, the process could take 3 months. The process can be speeded up if it is undertaken by a Personnel Committee, and if dates are agreed at the start of the process i.e. closing date for applications and an interview date.

4. The Personnel Committee

The responsibility of the Personnel Committee is to use this policy for guidance in its task of staff recruitment. The process is supported by model documents available from outside organisations. Advice can also be sought from outside organisations such as Norfolk Parish Training & Support who offer a full or partial Recruitment Advisory Service. Documents used by the Personnel Committee will be model documents based on recommendations issued by NALC, the SLCC and Norfolk Parish Training & Support. The NALC publication "Being a Good Employer" issued in March 2016 offers useful advice supporting every stage of the recruitment process. The Council holds a copy of this document. The Council should ensure that when a revised copy is published it should obtain and use that revised publication.

The Personnel Committee must note that while they will be responsible for the recruitment process, the appointment must be agreed at a Full Council meeting.

5. The Documents

The key documents likely to be used are:

The Job Advertisement
The Job Description and Job Specification
The Application Form (although this can be replaced by a CV)
Sample questions to ask / questions not to ask at interview
Feedback form from the interview
The Appointment Letter
The Letter requesting references (two references will be required)
The Contract of Employment

The Job Advertisement This gives details of the position and job location, the intended pay, qualifications and experience required, how to apply for the job and when the closing date is. You will need to check the salary you are offering is based on the national pay scales. They in turn are based on comparable roles in other tiers in local government. The 2004 National Agreement between SLCC and NALC agreed national pay scales. The Agreement also advises councils either to adopt an incremental pay scale or a single pay point within the appropriate range which may be reviewed annually. Pay may also go up a point if a Clerk is qualified. (CiLCA qualification). Ultimately it is the council's decision what salary is paid.

A job vacancy should be advertised widely – in the local press and on websites such as Norfolk Parish Training & Support. www.norfolkpts.org

Documents to send a potential candidate:

- Job Description and Job Specification
- Application Form
- Any other information relevant for the role e.g. a parish newsletter

There is a model Job Description available from the SLCC. This needs to be tailored to the needs of our own council at the time of recruitment. The Job Specification also needs to be included in the vacancy pack. This details the sort of experience, skills and qualifications which you would expect a new Clerk to have or the skills required from a book keeper. It describes these as either essential or desirable. It is usual to test these attributes at interview stage.

The Job Application form should give you all the information you need to assess your candidates. With this information you can assess and shortlist your candidates for interview, determine questions that you might need to ask your candidates, provides the personal information you need to not only contact your candidate but also obtain references for them. You require two references from a successful candidate. The application form, along with the job advert should not advertise for people of a particular age or gender and should support your commitment to equality. When sending out your job application pack you could also send out a covering letter to remind your applicants when the completed form must be returned. It is also useful to state when interviews will be held.

The Interview

Once your committee has shortlisted the applications (5/6 maximum) you then need to arrange for the candidates to be advised that they have been selected for interview. Always ask your candidates if they need any special facilities or arrangements. Make sure you have a suitable waiting area for candidates and that they feel at ease. Allow enough time for the interview. The Panel should appoint a Chairman who should welcome the candidate and introduce the interview panel. The Chairman will then give the candidate some explanation about the job and the council. It is useful to have a set of agreed questions to ask candidates Panel members should be made aware of the questions they should not ask and they should keep notes from the answers which candidates give them. Explore size of committee and what to do if you don't have a personnel committee. An interview

should always allow time for candidates to ask their own questions. Candidates have a right to ask for feedback from interviews so the notes are used to provide this feedback and should also be kept for 6 months in case a claim for discrimination is brought against the council. Always notify candidates of the outcome as soon as possible. The successful applicant will require two satisfactory references, and they should be offered the job subject to this. It is usual to obtain a reference from the current or a most recent employer. Confidentiality needs to be respected when giving and receiving references. Always establish with your candidates the earliest date they could start if offered the job.

The Offer Letter

Once the candidate has been selected and offered the job and short letter should be written to them "The offer letter" must contain the following information:

- The job offer (including the job title) which is subject to two satisfactory references
- The terms of the offer i.e. salary, hours, benefits, holiday, place of employment
- The start date
- What you would like the candidate to do i.e. a letter to confirm that they accept the terms of the offer letter and will be starting on XXX date
- A note to advise that as a formality appointment has to be confirmed by a full council meeting and then give the date of that meeting.
- Employment is subject to a satisfactory probationary period
- If relevant, a council should inform the candidate that any offer will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service.

Notes that the terms of the offer should detail benefits. Benefits include pensions; the fact that previous service elsewhere in local government may be taken into account when calculating benefits such as holidays and sick pay, any additional payments which will be made for such things as home office or computer use.

Confirming appointment

This is done at a full council meeting. It should of course be minuted. The Council's Internal Auditor will always look for the minute which confirms a new Responsible Financial Officer. They will always look for a minutes to confirm the salary of an employee. Any personnel matters relating to salary or other things within the contract should be treated as confidential. The actual appointment is not a confidential matter.

The Contract of Employment

Employment Contracts need not be in writing to be legally valid, but writing down the terms of the contract can avoid later disagreements. It is the document which forms the basis of the employment relationship, and it is best to do this in writing. The contract is then signed by both parties i.e. the employee and the Chairman of the Council (on behalf of the Council). Once signed the document can only be changed by mutual agreement and there may be a need to detail change in a letter to the employee. A model contract was written by NALC and the SLCC in 2013. Certain details must, in law, be included in a Contract of Employment.

The following is a list:

Name of employee and employee: Job Title and Job Description (to accompany the Contract); the date employment began; place of work and the address; amount of pay or the method of calculating this; payment intervals; hours of work; holiday entitlement; sickness arrangements; pension

arrangements; notice period; if the employment is not permanent, the period it is expected to continue; where only fixed term the date when it will end; grievance and disciplinary arrangements.

There are also implied terms within a contract such as the employee is expected to take reasonable care to ensure safety and health in the workplace.

In addition there are a wide range of statutory rights and obligations derived from law which include:

Right not be discriminated against. (Equality Act 2010) – Note that older workers can voluntarily retire at a time they choose. Employers cannot force employees to retire or set a retirement age unless it can be objectively justified as what the law terms as “a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”

Right to equal pay

Right not be unfairly dismissed

Right to an itemised pay slip

Rights to maternity benefits / rights and paternity leave

Right to paternity leave, adoption leave and dependants leave

Right to shared parental benefits

Shared Parental duties - Eligible employees are the mother, adopter or partner who share the main responsibility for the child's care. There is an entitlement of up to 50 weeks shared parental leave in the year following a child's birth or adoption

Right to apply for flexible working - Employees who have at least 26 weeks' continuous service on the date of their request may have the right to apply to their employer to work flexibly. The “work life balance” provisions in the Children and Families Act 2014 include the right to request flexible working to all employees, not just parents. There is a duty on employers to consider requests in a “reasonable” manner

Right to notice of termination of employment and reasons for dismissal

Right to trade union membership

Right to apply for time to train

Right to protection is a business transfer is covered by the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) – right to be transferred automatically on the same terms and conditions of employment without loss of employment rights

Right for part timers to be treated no less favourably than comparable full timers

Right not to have unlawful deductions from pay

Right to redundancy pay (where employee has at least 2 years' continuous employment)

Right to a safe system of work

Right to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

Right to a reasonable amount of time off e.g. for jury service

Right to minimum hourly rates The National Living Wage replaced the National Minimum wage in April 2016 for all workers aged 25 or over

A Clerk's salary is worked out through job evaluation. The National Terms and Conditions Agreement sets out 4 profiles with 3 sub groupings for Parish Clerks. The National Agreement on pay and conditions is detailed in "the Green Book" and it compares clerks with other comparable roles in local government. The starting point in relation to salary calculation is the profile and the sub group within that profile. The profile is based on responsibilities within the role e.g. number of councillors, committees, meetings, functions.

Salary scales and hourly pay rates for part-time Clerks are calculated pro-rata reference to the standard NJC working week for all local government staff of 37 hours. To calculate the hourly pay rate for part-time clerks paid between LC1 and LC4 the full time annual salary would be divided by 52 weeks and then by 37 hours rounded to the 3rd decimal place. Ultimately full council has to agree to the salary paid to the clerk and it must also agree to any wage increase or supplements paid due to such things as qualifications being gained. A compulsory minimum wage premium for all staff over 25 years of age, and referred to it as the 'national living wage' - must be paid.

Pensions

Right to be enrolled automatically into a "qualifying" pension scheme, subject to eligibility criteria. Staged implementation of "auto enrolment" started in 2012.

Post recruitment

New employees would be placed onto a "trial" period of six months. This is mentioned in the Offer Letter and the Contract of Employment. Their employment is then reviewed at this stage. Within a year of engagement employees would have an appraisal. The Clerk would appraise other employees in the council, whereas the appraisal of the Clerk would be undertaken by no more than three members of the Personnel Committee.

The Clerk is answerable to the Council – a process which may be conducted through the Personnel Committee. However, the Clerk is responsible for the management of any other employees the Council may have.

Data Protection

All personal information should be treated carefully and in accordance with the Council's policy on Data Protection.

Please note that we treat your personal information with the greatest of care. Please refer to our page on Data Protection and the Privacy Statement. The Privacy Statement advises about how personal information is used.

For further advice contact:

www.slcc.co.uk

www.norfolkpts.org

This policy was agreed on

This policy will be revised on

.....Chairman

.....Clerk / RFO