

HR01 – Recruitment Policy

Berwick Town Council



Adopted: 30 September 2024

Revised:

Review: Biannually or as changes are required.

HR01 - Recruitment Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. We will follow fair and lawful processes in recruitment.

1.2. This policy:

- a Goes through each step of our process for attracting and selecting external and internal job candidates
- b Explains how we make sure that we avoid discrimination and any unfairness in recruitment
- c Sets out how we tackle the risk of unconscious bias
- d Explains how we incorporate special cases, such as agency workers and those selected for redundancy, into our recruitment processes

1.3. This Policy does not form part of your contract of employment. We reserve the right to amend or remove this Policy.

1.4. This Policy applies to all external and internal candidates or prospective candidates for employment vacancies within our Council.

2. An overview of the recruitment process

Recruitment for senior officers (such as the Chief Officer and the Operations Manager) is outsourced to an HR recruitment company and follows all lawful requirements.

Berwick Town Council recruitment process for all other positions includes the following steps:

2.1. Need to recruit: Identifying a need to recruit is delegated to the Staffing Committee in consultation with the Operations Manager, with review by the Budget and Administration Committee for budget implications, and approval required by full Council.

2.2. Job description: The Operations Manager, in consultation with the Staffing Committee, will prepare a full job description and a person specification, or review any existing documents for the position. These documents will include the key criteria we are looking for in any applicant and will help us to prepare job adverts.

2.3. Internal recruitment: We will consider whether to open the vacancy to internal applicants before advertising externally.

- 2.4. Receiving applications and shortlisting: We will look at all applications received and shortlist candidates. We will only consider information submitted as part of the application process when making decisions on shortlisting. We will not look at any online profiles which may exist or seek personal comments from any shared contacts. This is to make sure that we treat all applicants fairly and equally.
- 2.5. Selection process: The selection process will vary depending on the vacancy. Examples of selection methods which we may use include structured interviews, case studies, presentations and psychometric tests.
- 2.6. Offer: We will make any offers in writing. They will usually be conditional on the following:
- a Receipt of two satisfactory references
 - b Completion of our Right to Work checks in line with our *Right to Work Policy*
 - c Completion of a health assessment – for certain roles only
 - d Receipt of confirmation of essential qualifications – for certain roles only.

3. Questions about health and reasonable adjustments

- 3.1. We will not generally ask candidates any questions about their health or any disabilities before any job offer is made. However, we may do so in the following circumstances:
- a To find out whether a candidate is able to carry out an assessment which forms part of the application process.
 - b To understand whether a candidate would be able to carry out a function which is central to the job.
 - c To find out whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to allow the candidate to take part in our recruitment processes.
 - d For the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring. Please note we will store any information provided anonymously and separately from the candidate's application. Further details can be found below.
 - e To support positive action in employment for disabled people.

4. Internal and external recruitment

For each vacancy which arises, we will consider the needs of the Council and what we are aiming to achieve from the recruitment process. This will involve consideration of whether the vacancy should be advertised internally before any external advertisement

5. Berwick Town Council commitment to avoiding discrimination and unfairness in our recruitment processes

5.1. Berwick Town Council takes the following steps to avoid discrimination and unfairness in our recruitment processes:

- a We ask candidates if they need any adjustments to help them with the recruitment process. We will action any reasonable requests made.
- b Our application forms do not require the submission of any details relating to protected characteristics (such as sex, marital status, age, religion and belief, sexual orientation and disability).
- c Any equal opportunities monitoring will be carried out and stored separately. Submitted monitoring forms will not be viewed by any person actively involved in the recruitment process for the role in question.
- d Anyone who is actively involved in recruitment (whether as an interviewer or otherwise) receives regular Equal Opportunities training.
- e We generally follow a competency-based structure for interviews.
- f We keep our recruitment marketing techniques under review to make sure that we reach a broad range of potential candidates. For example, we consider advertising using several forms of media.
- g We ask for Right to Work documentation at the same stage in the recruitment process for all candidates, so we are not influenced by immigration status in making any decision on recruitment.

6. How we deal with the risk of unconscious bias in recruitment

6.1. The brain makes judgments every day by processing information at rapid speed. The brain interprets the information it receives to make judgments and to influence actions. This is not something that we can stop from happening. However, this thought process can also cause us to treat some people more favourably or less favourably. This is what we mean by unconscious bias.

6.2. Berwick Town Council recognises that unconscious bias is not something that can be prevented; it is human nature. However, we believe that by making those involved in recruitment aware of it, we can help them to step back and assess any decision they make for the presence of unconscious bias. To assist with this, Berwick Town Council will:

- a Provide Equal Opportunities training to those involved in recruitment, which will include training on unconscious bias and how to avoid it.
- b Make sure that recruitment decisions are made by at least two individuals – to make sure that a breadth of opinion is taken into account and to reduce the impact of any unconscious bias.
- c Standardise aspects of our recruitment processes so that candidates are judged on objective criteria and standards in job-related areas.

7. Special situations: redundant employees, agency workers and fixed-term workers

- 7.1. Employees who have been provisionally selected for redundancy will be made aware of all vacancies existing within the Council and will be kept informed should any new vacancies arise. For further information, please see our [*Redundancy Policy*](#).
- 7.2. We have a clear process in place to inform agency workers and those on fixed-term contracts of employment of vacancies which become available with us.

8. Expenses

- 8.1. Reasonable expenses incurred in travelling to attend an interview or assessment will be refunded up to a capped amount, subject to production of valid receipts. The Staffing and Budget & Administration Committees will decide on the capped amount for each vacancy on a case by case basis.

9. Data protection

- 9.1. All information and documentation collated in relation to candidates as part of Berwick Town Council recruitment processes will be stored, processed and destroyed in line with our *Data Protection Policy*.
- 9.2. We will keep information in relation to candidates collated as part of any equality and diversity monitoring processes anonymously. We collect this information on a voluntary basis to monitor equality of opportunity and treatment to enable equality to be promoted or maintained. We will not share the information collated with any member of personnel involved in the recruitment process. Further information can be found in our *Data Protection Policy* and *Privacy Notice*.

10. Complaints

- 10.1. If any candidate is unhappy with the way Berwick Town Council have handled their application, then they should raise this with the Chief Officer.

11. Useful links and contacts

11.1. The following Berwick Town Council policies, referred to in this Policy, can be obtained from the Staffing Committee, and contain additional information and guidance:

- a *Data Protection Policy*
- b *Right to Work Policy*
- c *[Redundancy Policy]*
- d *Privacy Statement*
- e *Equality and Diversity Policy*

12. Administration and Revision of the Recruitment Policy

12.1. Berwick Town Council will revise this policy as often as may be appropriate to ensure its contents remain accurate and valid in light of changing practices and statutory requirements.

12.2. At a minimum, this policy will be reviewed every two years.

12.3. The Staffing Committee is responsible for the administration of the Recruitment Policy. Should you have any feedback, please contact the Chair of the Staffing Committee.

Approved and adopted: 06 September 2024 Review in two years: Aug 2026