Policy 12.3 – Staff Recruitment Policy & Procedure

1. Approval and Advertising of Vacancies

1. The Human Resources Committee will review any staffing requirements including the need for the post, job description, person specification, salary scale, budget implications, interview panel and advertising platforms and make recommendations to Full Council.
2. Proposed permanent vacancies must be submitted to Full Council for consideration and approval before being advertised – all permanent vacancies will be advertised.
3. Advertisements should include a brief outline of responsibilities, the salary scale, pension arrangements, the closing date for applications, and details of how to apply. They should be published on town notice boards, *The Bramley* and other press, social media – as agreed.
4. Advertisements must explain the pension arrangements, including the Council's pension contribution arrangements during the first three months of employment and the probationary period for the post.

2. Applications

1. In response to each request, an application form, job description and person specification will be provided to the prospective applicant. Applicants must be advised that all required documentation must be completed and returned for their application to be considered.
2. Applicants who require further information or reasonable adjustments to participate in the recruitment process should be accommodate where possible.
3. Applicants will be advised that, to minimise administrative costs, only candidates shortlisted for interview will be contacted further.
4. Applicants will be informed how their personal information will be used / stored, who may access it and how long it will normally be retained for.
5. A record of all enquiries and applications received will be maintained in accordance with the Council's data protection and records retention policies.
6. Enquiries and applications will be stored securely, accessed only by authorised individuals and retained only for 6 months, (in accordance with the right of a candidate to bring a claim under the Equality Act) to enable investigation of the recruitment process should any concerns be raised.
7. All candidates interviewed will be notified of the outcome, after the position has been filled.
8. The successful applicant's documentation will be stored in their human resource file.

3. Equal Opportunities and Reasonable Adjustments

1. Southwell Town Council is committed to providing equal opportunities throughout the recruitment and selection process. All applicants will be assessed fairly against the requirements of the job description and person specification.
2. The Council will make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants to help ensure they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage during recruitment.

3. Reasonable adjustments may include, where appropriate:
    a. Interviews shall be conducted on the ground floor or an alternative accessible venue, interview room and facilities.
    b. Providing application documents or interview materials in accessible formats.
    c. Allowing additional time for written tests or assessments.
    d. Making reasonable changes to interview arrangements, communication methods or the selection process.
4. Applicants should be given the opportunity to advise the Council of any adjustments they require. Requests will be considered individually, and appropriate arrangements will be made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
5. Interviewers must focus on the essential requirements of the role and must not ask inappropriate questions about an applicant's health, disability or personal circumstances. Any questions about adjustments must be relevant to enabling the applicant to participate in the recruitment process.

4. Shortlisting Applicants

1. Following the closing date, all applications will be reviewed against the job description and person specification to identify suitable candidates for interview or progression to the next stage of the recruitment process.
2. Shortlisting will be consistent and based on the same objective criteria for all applicants. Reasons for shortlisting decisions should be recorded.
3. All panel members must understand their responsibilities and should receive appropriate guidance or training in recruitment, equal opportunities, reasonable adjustments, confidentiality and fair assessment.
4. Panel members must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest before participating in shortlisting or interviews. This includes personal relationships or other circumstances that could reasonably call their impartiality into question.
5. Any declared conflict must be considered and managed appropriately. Where necessary, the individual must withdraw from the recruitment process and an alternative panel member appointed.
6. Once the shortlist has been agreed, the following arrangements will be made:
    a. Confirm the interview panel, ensuring any conflicts of interest have been addressed.
    b. Agree the interview date and time.
    c. Reserve a suitable and accessible room.
    d. Prepare an interview timetable.
    e. Panel to agree and consistent interview questions based on the job description and person specification.
    f. Contact shortlisted candidates and confirm the interview date and time in writing. A record will be kept of contacts made with applicants.
    g. Ask candidates whether they require reasonable adjustments to participate in the interview.
    h. Prepare and issue an interview pack containing the job description, person specification, applications, agreed interview questions, assessment criteria, scoring

sheets and any other relevant documentation to each panel member, electronically wherever possible.

5. Selection

1. Following the interviews, candidates will be assessed and ranked against the requirements of the post using the agreed assessment criteria. The panel will record the outcome and identify a preferred candidate.
2. The recommendation will be submitted for approval at the next Full Council meeting.
3. No unconditional, conditional or provisional offer of employment may be made before Full Council approval has been obtained.
4. Any offer of employment will be subject to the required pre-employment checks, including satisfactory references and verification of the candidate's right to work in the UK. These checks must be completed using the appropriate procedures.
5. All candidates should be advised of the expected timescale for notification of the outcome.

6. Notification and Feedback

1. The second- and third-ranked candidates should not normally be notified that they have been unsuccessful until the preferred candidate has accepted the offer and the necessary references and checks have been completed.
2. All candidates who attend an interview will be informed of the outcome once the appointment decision has been confirmed.
3. Requests for feedback for unsuccessful interviewed candidates can be provided in writing by a member of the interview panel.
4. Feedback will be professional, factual and based on the agreed selection criteria. It must not disclose confidential information about other candidates or panel members.

7. Appointment and Probation

1. Once the preferred candidate has accepted the offer and the required checks have been completed, an appointment letter will be issued confirming the terms and conditions of employment, salary, pension arrangements, start date and probationary period.
2. Southwell Town Council will offer a standard probationary period of six months, and the line manager will arrange regular reviews during the probationary period, including a formal review before the end of the probationary period. The review will include feedback on performance, conduct, training needs and any areas requiring improvement.
3. Where performance or conduct gives cause for concern, the employee will be informed promptly, given appropriate support and a reasonable opportunity to improve. The probationary period may be extended with the approval of the Human Resources committee.
4. A decision to confirm the appointment, extend probation or terminate employment must be documented and authorised by the Human Resources committee. Decisions will be fair and reasonable and will be detailed in the employee's Human Resource file.

8. Data Protection and Retention of Recruitment Record

All recruitment records will be handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Council's data protection policies.

1. Recruitment records may include applications, shortlisting notes, interview assessments, scoring sheets, references, correspondence, conflict-of-interest declarations and records of the appointment decision.
2. Access to recruitment records is restricted to authorised individuals who require the information for recruitment, governance or legitimate legal purposes.
3. The standard retention period for recruitment records relating to unsuccessful candidates will be for 6 months after the recruitment process has concluded, unless a complaint, legal claim, audit requirement or other legitimate reason requires the records to be retained for longer.
4. Where a complaint or potential legal claim arises, relevant records must be preserved for as long as necessary to address the matter and any associated legal obligations.
5. Records relating to successful candidates will be transferred to the employee's personnel file.

Date of policy: November 2026

Approving committee: Full Council

Date of committee meeting: 18 November 2026

Policy version reference: 01

Supersedes: Policy 12.3 Staff Recruitment Procedure

Policy effective from: 18 November 2026

Date for next review: November 2029

— policy ends here —