

Item 8 - Recruitment information

Town Council Staff Recruitment Process (All Roles)

1. Identifying the Need

- Staffing Committee identifies a vacancy or new role.
- Reviews business need, budget, and role objectives.
- For senior roles, may involve discussions with Chief Executive / Clerk.

2. Draft Job Description & Person Specification

- Staffing Committee prepares or updates JD and Person Specification.
- Includes duties, reporting lines, essential/desirable criteria, and remuneration.

3. Committee & Council Approval

- JD and recruitment plan reviewed by Staffing Committee.
- Committee may:
 - Approve → forward to Full Council
 - Request revisions → iteration required
- Full Council formally approves JD, recruitment plan, and budget.
- **Each iteration can add 2–4 weeks**, depending on meeting schedules.

4. Advertising the Vacancy

- Minimum **1 month** advertising in appropriate channels (local, regional, or professional).
- For senior or niche roles, consider wider professional networks.

5. Application & Shortlisting

- Applications reviewed against the Person Specification using scoring matrices.
- Shortlisting typically takes **≈2 weeks**.
- Candidates selected for interview:
 - Administrative / junior staff: 2–3
 - Middle management: 3–4
 - Senior staff: 3–5

6. Scheduling Interviews

- Arrange interview dates **2–4 weeks** after shortlisting.
- Confirm candidate availability, interview agenda, panel members, and duration.
- Interviews generally **within standard business hours**, unless candidates request accommodations.

7. Interviewing Candidates

- Panel composition varies by role:

Role Level	Panel Composition	Notes
Administrative / junior	2–3: Clerk/Manager + HR/Advisor	Optional technical assessor
Middle management	3–4: Manager + HR/Advisor + Peer/Technical	Ensure fair evaluation
Senior / statutory	3–5: Staffing Committee + Clerk/Executive + HR + optional external	Structured scoring, defensible decision-making

- Structured interview questions and scoring recommended for fairness.
- Typically 3–4 candidates per day, fewer for smaller roles.

8. Selection & Council Recommendation

- Panel reaches consensus on preferred candidate.
- Recommendation submitted to Full Council for approval if required.
- Council may approve or request further deliberation, adding additional weeks.

9. Offer & Notice Period

- Offer issued after Council approval (if applicable).
- Notice periods vary by role:
 - Junior/administrative: 2–4 weeks
 - Middle management: 1–3 months
 - Senior/statutory: 3–6 months
- Start date coordinated with candidate and council.

10. Onboarding & Paperwork

- Once notice period ends:
 - Employment contract finalized
 - HR paperwork completed
 - Induction arranged

11. Realistic Timeline

Stage	Duration
Committee & Council approval (may require iterations)	2–6 weeks per cycle
Advertising	4 weeks minimum
Shortlisting	≈2 weeks
Scheduling interviews	2–4 weeks

Interviews	1 day (for 2–4 candidates)
Council approval & offer	2–3 weeks (may require iteration)
Notice period / start	2 weeks – 6 months
Total from vacancy to start	≈6–9 months, depending on role, iterations, and notice period

Key Notes

- Iterations at committee or council stage are common, adding weeks to the process.
- Panel composition scales by role level.
- Notice periods vary and must be factored into start dates.
- Process ensures governance, transparency, and fairness across all Town Council staff recruitment.

For a standard 9am – 5pm role (full-time, weekday business hours), interviews should generally occur within normal professional working windows unless there is a compelling reason otherwise.

Standard Practice

Best window:

- Tuesday–Thursday
- 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM
- 1:30 PM – 4:30 PM

These times:

- Avoid early-morning rush stress
- Avoid lunch interruptions
- Avoid end-of-day fatigue
- Respect typical business-hour norms

Monday mornings and Friday afternoons are typically lower-quality slots (planning mode on Monday; mental checkout on Friday).

When After-Hours Interviews Are Appropriate

Even for 9am – 5pm jobs, exceptions can be reasonable:

1. **Candidate accommodation**
 - They currently work 9am – 5pm and cannot take time off easily.
 - They request early morning (8am) or early evening (5.30–6.30pm).
2. **Shift-based or customer-facing roles**

- If the job requires occasional extended hours, interviewing slightly outside 9am – 5pm may signal realistic expectations.

3. Executive or senior-level roles

- Calendars are constrained; flexibility is often expected.

4. Virtual interviews across time zones

- Adjust appropriately but still respect standard professional hours in at least one location.

When It's Inappropriate

- Late evenings (after 7pm) without explicit candidate request
- Weekends (unless the industry norm supports it)
- Public holidays
- Extremely early mornings (<8 AM)

These can signal poor boundaries or unrealistic culture expectations.

Professional Etiquette Guidelines

- Always offer multiple time options.
- Confirm time zone explicitly.
- Provide interview duration in advance.
- Send calendar invite with agenda and participants.
- Avoid scheduling within 24 hours unless mutually agreed – ideally 2 weeks notice is appropriate

For senior council officer roles (local government, director-level and above), panel size should balance governance rigor, diversity of oversight, and decision efficiency.

Recommended Panel Size

3–5 members is optimal.

- Minimum: 3 (to avoid tie decisions and ensure balanced evaluation)
- Maximum: 5 (beyond this, coordination and scoring reliability decline)

For most senior officer appointments (e.g., Director, Assistant Chief Executive, Head of Service), 4–5 panelists is best practice.

Typical Composition (Local Government Context)

1. Political Representation (Elected Members)

- 1–2 councillors

- Often cross-party representation for transparency and legitimacy
- May include committee chair or portfolio holder

2. Senior Executive Representation

- Chief Executive or Deputy CE
- Another senior corporate director

3. HR / Governance Oversight

- Senior HR advisor (may not score, but ensures procedural compliance)
- Monitoring Officer if governance risk is high

4. Technical / Subject Matter Expert (Optional)

- Internal or external specialist
- Particularly useful for statutory or regulated roles

Rationale for 3–5 Members

- Ensures diversity of perspective
- Supports defensible scoring under public sector recruitment scrutiny
- Reduces risk of dominance by one individual
- Maintains manageable deliberation dynamics

Panels larger than 5:

- Increase conformity pressure
- Reduce depth of candidate engagement
- Complicate consensus-building
- Increase risk of inconsistent scoring

Role-Level Guidance

Role Level	Typical Panel Size
Head of Service	3–4
Director	4–5
Chief Officer / Statutory Officer	5–6