

Meath County Council

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

2017

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1. Statement

- 1.1 It is the policy of Meath County Council that the recruitment and selection procedure shall be operated in an open and fair manner, in line with good practice recruitment and selection standards, employment legislation and relevant circulars from the Department of Housing, Community and Local Government (DoHPLG).
- 1.2 There are protocols in relation to the filling of vacancies, for example, the Public Appointments Service is responsible for the filling of specific senior posts in the local authority and the filling of all other posts will be managed by the individual local authority through confined or open competitions.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this recruitment and selection procedure is to provide a robust framework, based around core recruitment and selection principles outlined below, within which to facilitate the recruitment and selection of high calibre employees.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This recruitment and selection procedure applies to candidates for all competitions (internal/external) i.e. employees of the Council and any external candidates. This procedure covers all activities that form part of the recruitment and selection process.

4. Legislative Requirements and Guidance

- 4.1 The Council has regard to all relevant legislative requirements and Guidance in its recruitment and selection processes, including:
 - **Local Government Acts, 2001 - 2014** – the recruitment and selection process will have regard to the Local Government Acts.
 - **Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government Circulars** – recruitment and selection will be carried out in accordance with the relevant DoECLG Circulars.
 - **Equality Acts** – the recruitment and selection process will have regard to all equality considerations. Employment opportunities will be accessible to all eligible applicants, including people with disabilities, for whom all

appropriate reasonably accommodating facilities are provided to ensure that they have the opportunity to perform to their optimum at interview.

- **Official Languages Act, 2003** – in accordance with government policy and strategy for the Irish Language having regard to our county’s cultural identity, the Council is committed to achieving its obligations under the Official Languages Act on a planned basis.
- **Freedom Of Information** – all information received and processed by the Council is treated in confidence subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Acts.
- **Data Protection Acts** – the information submitted with an application is used in processing the candidature and subsequent employment (if successful), and such information is held subject to the rights and obligations of the Data Protection Acts.

5. Core Principles

5.1 This recruitment and selection procedure (and any relevant procedures) sets out the commitment by the Council to comply with standards of best practice and integrity in its recruitment and selection procedures. This procedure outlines the obligations and responsibilities of applicants who apply for employment with the Council. The Council’s recruitment and selection procedure is based on the following principles:

- Probity (integrity, impartiality, fairness, reliability, ethical conduct and confidentiality).
- Merit (a transparent, competitive recruitment process where the criteria for judging suitability of candidates can be related directly to the qualifications, attributes, skills and competencies required to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of the post).
- Best practice (adhering to good practice recruitment and selection procedures extends to all aspects of the appointment process).
- Consistency and transparency (treating candidates fairly, to a consistent standard and in a consistent manner providing for transparency and open and active communication with candidates during the recruitment and selection process).

6. Equal Opportunities Statement

6.1 The Council shall work to promote a culture of equality and to develop equality and recruitment policies and procedures to ensure that all candidates are selected on merit. The Council shall endeavour to ensure that

the selection process does not provide unjustifiable advantage or disadvantage to any particular candidate or group of candidates. The recruitment and selection process shall embrace genuine equality of opportunity, and this will be integral to the process by which appointments are made.

- 6.2 It is the Council's intention to have recruitment and selection processes and procedures which are open to all, irrespective of a candidate's background, personal beliefs or circumstances. The Council shall therefore provide appropriate assistance and accommodation wherever possible, unless to do so would be to unlawfully disadvantage another candidate. This may include providing easily accessible interview facilities, agreeing an appropriately timed interview, arranging an alternative medical examination location or time, supplying or arranging appropriate equipment.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 *Human Resources Department*

The Council's Human Resources Department has overall responsibility to manage the recruitment and selection process in a confidential manner, in accordance with the core principals of recruitment and selection and shall assist line management in this respect.

7.2 *Line Managers*

Line Managers have the responsibility to work with the HR Department on recruitment and selection in accordance with the core principals of recruitment and selection. Key responsibilities include identifying the job and person specifications, shortlisting applications, attending interview skills training and participating in interview boards internally and/or in other local authorities.

7.3 *Candidates*

Candidates in the recruitment process shall not:

- knowingly or recklessly provide false information
- canvas any person, with or without inducements
- interfere with or compromise the process in any way.

- 7.4 Candidates have the responsibility to provide verification of the education qualifications deemed necessary for the post. Candidates have the responsibility to provide verification of their identity.

7.5 Candidates should note that canvassing (representations being made on or behalf of the candidate) will disqualify them and will result in their exclusion from the appointment process.

7.6 A third party shall not personate a candidate at any stage of the process.

7.7 ***Conflict of Interest***

Any person involved in a selection process who has a personal or familial relationship with an applicant shall immediately bring this to the attention of the Human Resources Department.

8. Eligibility Criteria and Education Qualifications

8.1 Where appropriate, the DoHPLG has responsibility for setting and approving eligibility qualifications for appointments to local government posts. There may be exceptions with local posts where locally agreed qualifications apply. Eligibility criteria shall be outlined in each job description.

8.2 ***Verification of Education Qualifications***

The Council values the function of appropriate documentation in assisting candidates to self-select for suitable vacancies, to inform them of the process and procedures and of the standards which apply. For each advertised vacancy the Council will make the eligibility criteria available and applicants shall have a responsibility to provide verification of the education qualifications deemed necessary for the post.

9. Job Description and Person specification

9.1 A job description and person specification will be developed or updated for any vacant post that is to be filled.

9.2 ***Job Description***

The job description should accurately reflect all elements of the post and qualifications.

9.3 ***Person Specification***

The person specification shall state both the essential and desirable criteria in terms of skills, aptitudes, knowledge and experience that are required for the job, all of which shall be directly related to the job and applied equally to all applicants.

9.4 **Marking Criteria**

Marking criteria, based on key requirements, will be set for each post by the Human Resources Department and will be based on the critical skills and job behaviours that underpin the job/post performance. The marking criteria will be made available to candidates prior to the interview stage of the selection procedure.

10. **Communication of Vacancies**

10.1 For competitions managed by the local authority, the Council is committed to ensuring that vacancies are communicated openly to afford equality of opportunity. The appropriate methods of communication for vacancies are selected which offer value for money and are appropriate to the vacancy under consideration.

10.2 Advertisements should be drawn up advising of the vacancy and indicating where the relevant information can be accessed. Full details and particulars should be made available.

10.3 To encourage diversity of applicants, vacancies are advertised using at least **two** of the following:

- local authority website and/or Intranet
- localgovernmentjobs.ie
- national press
- local press
- specialist journals
- recruitment websites
- employment agencies
- university or other 3rd level institution careers services
- professional bodies
- representative organisations
- other appropriate sources

11. **Applications**

11.1 The Council shall specify the method of application in the job advertisement. Applications may be accepted in a variety of formats, including web-links, once they are accessible using standard office applications. Applications are received in the manner nominated (usually by email or on-line application) up to the advertised closing date/time. Applications sent by post will only be

accepted where specifically stated in the job advertisement and/or details of the particulars of the post. Late applications shall not be accepted by the Council. The Council may request to receive a number of copies of the application form from the candidate for administrative purposes. Receipt of applications should be acknowledged by the Council in writing (by email).

12. Selection Procedure

The following are the key steps in the selection procedure

12.1 Screening

In the first instance, all applications will be screened for eligibility using the principles of the eligibility criteria, where appropriate. Applicants who possess the required eligibility criteria will be progressed to the next stage of the selection process. The local authority may request verification of education qualification (for example result transcripts) at this stage of the selection process.

12.2 Shortlisting

Where a large number of applications are received for a post, the Council reserves the right to shortlist as required.

12.3 Other Selection Methods

The selection process may involve additional assessments, tests or interviews. Applicants will be notified of these additional stages, if applicable.

12.4 Interview Procedure

Interviews shall be carried out in line with the agreed interview board procedures.

13. Panel

13.1 For some competitions, a panel of successful candidates may be formed as a result of the interviews. The interview board may recommend a panel of successful candidates to the Chief Executive (or delegated official) for approval. The placement on a panel does not necessarily lead to a job offer. The selection process will not be concluded until such time as references have been sought and clearance checks, i.e. Garda vetting, occupational health, verification of education qualifications and experience have been carried out.

14. Notification of Outcome of the Selection Procedure

14.1 Candidates shall be notified of the outcome of any shortlisting procedure as soon as possible.

14.2 Candidates shall be notified of the outcome of their interview at the earliest possible date after the interview. If a candidate has been placed on a panel, the candidate shall be informed of their position on the panel. The lifetime of any panel will be one year from the date it is formed, but may be extended for a further period of up to one year at the Chief Executive's discretion.

15. Feedback to Candidates

15.1 The Council is committed to offering feedback to candidates and to responding to requests for feedback in a timely and efficient manner. In this regard the Council will automatically forward the marks awarded to the candidate at interviews and associated comments made by the interview board on the marking sheet.

16. Right to information and to review

16.1 Candidates have a right to information and a review of the recruitment and selection procedure. The Council will consider submissions in relation to eligibility, short-listing and final decisions of interview boards. Such appeals must be made by candidates in writing within 5 working days of notification of the relevant decision. On receipt of appeal, the selection decision will be re-visited and the candidate will be informed of the outcome.

17. Appointment

17.1 Once a panel has been approved by the Chief Executive (or delegated official) an offer of employment will be issued as appropriate. Offers of employment shall be taken up within the specified time constraints, as prescribed by the Council, and are subject to satisfactory employment checks being completed. The terms and conditions of the appointment should be in accordance with the appropriate DoHPLG Circulars.

18. Employment Checks

The following employment checks shall be completed for successful candidates:

18.1 *Verification of Education Qualifications*

Verification of education qualifications, i.e. results transcripts, shall be required from candidates before and job offer can be made.

18.2 *Garda Vetting*

Garda Vetting will be sought in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau Act, 2014.

18.3 *References*

The Council reserves the right to seek both written and verbal references from current and previous employers, educational institutions or any other organisations with which the candidate has been associated. The Council reserves the right to determine the merit, appropriateness and relevance of such references and referees. Information sought from referees shall be structured around the requirements of the job and the job description, person specification and/or competency profiles should be provided. Referees shall only be contacted with the candidate's consent. The information provided shall be treated as confidential and shall be used to verify information collected through the selection process. Documents relating to all applicants will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and in accordance with the Data Protection Acts.

18.4 *Pre-employment Medical Assessment*

Where appropriate, candidates will be required to undergo a pre-employment medical assessment as a condition of any job offer.

19. *Employee Awareness*

19.1 All employees of the Council are obliged to familiarise themselves with the Council's recruitment and selection procedure. The procedure will be provided as part of induction and general employee awareness activities. Employees may be required to acknowledge receipt of the recruitment and selection procedure.

20. *Infringements of the Recruitment and Selection Procedure*

20.1 If a candidate is found to have breached this procedure, then

- Where he or she has not been appointed to a post, he or she will be disqualified as a candidate

- Where he or she has been appointed subsequent to the recruitment process in question, he or she shall forfeit that appointment.

20.2 Any breach of this recruitment and selection procedure may result in disciplinary action for council employees, up to and including termination of employment, in line with the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

21. Freedom of Information and Data Protection

21.1 Records created, maintained and stored by the Council as part of the recruitment and selection process are subject to a range of legislation, including Freedom of Information and Data Protection. The Council shall comply with the National Records Retention Policy (2001) and any other relevant records retention policies.

21.2 Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 - 2014; applications will be treated in strict confidence.

21.3 Freedom of Information and General Data Protection Regulations

Records created, maintained and stored by the Council as part of the recruitment and selection process are subject to a range of legislation, including Freedom of Information and Data Protection. The Council shall also comply with relevant National Records Retention Policies

All applications will be treated in strict confidence in line with the requirements of Freedom of Information legislation and General Data Protection Regulations. Please refer to Meath County Councils privacy statement available at www.meath.ie for more information.

22. Monitoring and Review

22.1 The Council shall monitor the implementation of and compliance with the recruitment and selection procedure and will review it on a regular basis.