

## RECRUITMENT POLICY

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### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a revised Council Recruitment Policy for approval. It has been developed based on findings from research, recruitment data, stakeholder engagement and benchmarking and aims to place the council in the best possible position to recruit talent to our workforce for the future.
- 1.2 There are no immediate financial implications of the policy.
- 1.3 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee approves the revised Recruitment Policy.

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Through engagement with recruiting managers we know that there are challenges with the current recruitment policy and procedures, including difficulty attracting quality candidates and inflexibility in our current recruitment process.
- 2.2 Through our workforce planning conversations we understand the challenges our services are facing in terms of recruitment and retention. Recruitment remains the highest red risk workforce planning factor across council services.
- 2.3 Through our recruitment data we can see that processes are lengthy and challenging when posts are not filled. On average it takes 78 days to fill a post.
- 2.4 We can see that we receive a high percentage of unsuitable applications for our posts. During the period January 2023 to August 2025, 37% of applicants were shortlisted as suitable for interview.
- 2.5 The revised policy is designed to address these issues.

### 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee approves the revised Recruitment Policy.

### 4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 A revised Recruitment Policy has been developed to address the recruitment challenges faced by our organisation and is focused on three core themes; Connect for Success, Recognising Potential, and Inclusive Hiring Practices.

#### 4.1.1 Connect for Success

Our Connect for Success principles are our shared purpose of how we contribute to a thriving Argyll and Bute. They also describe the attributes required of people working in our council and local government.

### **What will be different?**

The Connect for Success principles will be used throughout the recruitment processes from how we promote our roles to how we assess and score applicants.

### **What will we do?**

We will update our Job Description and Person Specification (JDPS) to outline the Connect for Success principles, so role holders and candidates are clear about what is being looked for. We will also ask questions as part of the application and interview process which allow candidates to demonstrate how they embody these principles in their approach to work.

The improved application form in our new HR and Payroll system will allow applicants to clearly demonstrate how they meet the criteria in the specification. This will include a section for our Connect for Success principles. Managers will select the most relevant principles for the role and ask behavioural based interview questions to ascertain how the candidate demonstrates these by describing specific past experiences that demonstrate the key behaviours and encourage reflection. Managers will be supported in doing this through training and supplementary guidance as part of the manager toolkit.

We will promote this approach to applicants through our updated recruitment pages on the website where they can access information to support them when considering the council as an employer and making applications.

#### **4.1.2 Recognising potential**

The policy recognises the importance of values and capacity for growth and development alongside technical expertise, experience and qualifications.

### **What will be different?**

We will apply weighting criteria to our short-listing process to allow recruiting managers to weight the criteria within the JDPS. This is to allow the most critical aspects of a role to be given appropriate emphasis during the candidate evaluation process. Furthermore, it reflects the priorities of the role as not all criteria may be of equal importance.

Weighting allows recruiting managers to prioritise what matters most, whether that's technical expertise, values alignment, or leadership experience. Additionally, when candidates score similarly overall, it can help highlight those who excel in the most important areas, making it easier to identify your most appointable candidate.

Our process supports managers to recruit for the workforce they need now and in the future by weighting skills and potential alongside necessary qualifications. Hiring decisions will be made on merit using a fair

and structured selection process with pre-agreed assessment criteria to remove any influence of bias.

#### **What will we do?**

We will provide managers with guidance on how to apply the weighting approach. Managers will determine with their panel members, prior to starting the shortlisting process, what the weighting will be based on their priorities for the role. As part of the interview process, managers will be able to assess responses to behavioural based interview questions designed to measure a candidate's ability to embody the Connect for Success principles, measuring their potential to thrive within our organisation.

### **4.1.3 Inclusive hiring practices**

“Having a workforce that reflects the culture and diversity of the community is essential in making sure that public services are designed to meet the needs of all citizens and to build trust and a positive reputation with community groups” (Local Government Workforce Report, 2024).

As acknowledged within the Local Government Workforce Report, attracting a younger generation into the local government workforce as well as making local government an attractive place to work is critical for future workforce planning. Figures from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework show that currently 43% of all pupils within mainstream secondary education have identified additional support needs. In acknowledging all of these issues we need to continue to monitor and adapt our practices to meet the needs of our future workforce.

#### **What will be different?**

Our recruitment policy remains fully compliant with all relevant employment legislation, ensuring fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory practices throughout the hiring process.

As more people with different cultures, ways of thinking and learning join the workforce, it's important to ensure our recruitment and workplace practices continue to be inclusive. This policy shows our promise to keep things fair and based on merit.

Managers will be equipped with the training and guidance needed to confidently address the diverse needs of applicants throughout the recruitment process, ensuring consistency and fairness.

#### **What will we do?**

We will provide a helpful and comprehensive toolkit to guide managers and make sure we follow best practice.

We will design our processes to be inclusive and accessible by supporting reasonable adjustments, using job descriptions and job adverts which are jargon free, adjusting interview practices to meet applicant's needs, such as

interview questions in advance and provide feedback and transparency throughout the process.

By being transparent about the support, we offer as an employer, candidates will be more likely to get the adjustments they need to engage in the process and workforce more effectively and we won't miss out on the potential and valuable contribution they can make.

Managers will be supported in all of this by our toolkit that will hold all the relevant information in one place in a clear and logical approach. We will deliver training focused on identifying and mitigating unconscious bias, alongside building awareness and understanding of neurodiversity. This training will equip managers with practical strategies to create fair, inclusive, and supportive recruitment processes that recognise and value diverse perspectives.

We understand the importance of monitoring equalities characteristics as part of the recruitment process. We will continue to evaluate and monitor our performance in this area and update our practices to ensure consistency of reporting on equalities characteristics in recruitment.

We will review the outcomes and recommendations of our equalities self-assessment and the Equality Forum and how it is accommodated in our recruitment practices.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The evidence from engagement, workforce planning, and recruitment data has informed the review of the recruitment policy. Challenges such as attracting quality candidates, lengthy processes, and high volumes of unsuitable applications highlight that our current approach needs to be updated to meet the needs of our organisation.
- 5.2 The revised Recruitment Policy directly addresses these issues through its three core elements, Connect for Success, Recognising Potential, and Inclusive Hiring Practices which will ensure a fair, transparent, agile and modern recruitment process. By implementing this policy, supported by practical tools and training, we will strengthen our ability to attract, assess, and retain the right talent.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy: The policy supports the delivery of our People Strategy objectives and contributes to the objectives of our Growing our Own Strategy.
- 6.2 Financial: There are no immediate implications. Effective recruitment policy and procedures provide protection from the risk of employment tribunals in relation to

		equality of opportunity and treatment which could result in financial compensation claims against the council.
6.3	Legal:	There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report
6.4	HR:	HR implications are outlined in the report
6.5	Customer Service:	None identified
6.6	Risk:	None identified
6.7	Climate Change:	None identified
6.8	Fairer Scotland Duty:	Policy promotes equity in recruitment practices which are inclusive for all.
6.9	Equalities – protected characteristics:	The policy supports the council’s commitment as an Equal Opportunities Employer
6.10	Consumer Duty:	None identified
6.11	Island Communities:	This is unlikely to have an impact on island that is significantly different from other communities
6.12	Children’s Rights and Wellbeing:	None identified

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**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1:	Recruitment Policy
Appendix 2:	Supporting activities and deliverables