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| Subject: | Revised Recruitment and Selection Policy | | |
| Date of Meeting: | 13 October 2016 | | |
| Report of: | Executive Director for Finance & Resources | | |
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| Ward(s) affected: | All | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief the Committee on the main drivers for revising the council's recruitment and selection policy and to seek approval for implementing a revised Policy.
- 1.2 The council's current Recruitment and Selection Policy was originally approved in 2007. Although reviewed in 2012, the policy remained largely unchanged.
- 1.3 It is important that the council has a recruitment and selection policy that not only provides a consistent, fair and transparent process for recruiting high calibre employees with the right knowledge, skills and abilities to the right jobs but that it also supports the development of a workforce that reflects the diversity of the local economically active population.
- 1.4 Evidence from our recruitment and workforce data suggests that the current policy could be more effective in supporting applications from under-represented groups in the workforce.
- 1.5 In view of this, a review of the council's current recruitment and selection policy, practices and processes was carried out. A number of potential barriers to the recruitment of individuals from groups currently under-represented within the workforce were identified.
- 1.6 These findings have informed the development of the new policy which will provide an improved framework for recruitment and selection within the council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee approve the new Recruitment and Selection Policy attached as Appendix 1.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Equality monitoring of the council's workforce shows that the overall profile of the council's workforce is changing only slowly and that certain groups remain under-

represented compared with the economically active population of Brighton and Hove. Levels of under-representation are particularly acute for those from a BME or White Other background, males and individuals who identify as disabled. By contrast, the council employs a proportionally higher percentage of female employees and individuals from a White Irish background.

- 3.2 One of the key objectives of the council's Workforce Equalities Action Plan is to increase the diversity of the organisation's workforce, at all levels, so that its equality profile more closely reflects that of the local economically active population.
- 3.3 This may be achieved by recruiting a more diverse range of new employees. Therefore the council needs an effective Recruitment & Selection Policy that is underpinned by consistent robust processes and practices.
- 3.4 The current recruitment & selection policy is longstanding (it was introduced in 2007) and whilst it was reviewed in 2012, its key provisions remained unchanged. Although the current policy complies with legislative requirements and best practice, it is considered that certain aspects of the policy do not support the development of a more diverse workforce.
- 3.5 A review of the current policy, processes and practices was initiated following:-
 - feedback we had received from our Workers Forums, in particular the BME workers Forum
 - the findings from an engagement exercise we undertook with local BME communities to learn about their experiences of applying for council jobs and
 - a scrutiny exercise of a number of recruitment exercises.
- 3.6 The review identified the following:-
 - there was a heavy reliance by managers on the use of agency workers to cover vacancies, sometimes for protracted periods
 - the council's application form was onerous to complete
 - applicants did not understand how to complete the key knowledge, skills and experience section of the form to maximise their chances of being shortlisted
 - person specifications were overly long
 - not all managers were completing the requisite training before recruiting
 - appointments were made predominantly on an assessment of technical competence with far less emphasis on whether individuals were compatible with the council's values and behaviour framework.

Proposed changes to the recruitment and selection policy

- 3.7 A copy of the new Recruitment and Selection Policy is attached at Appendix 1. The changes that have been made are designed to address the perceived shortcomings of the current policy. The new policy strives to:
 - strike a balance between recruiting externally with the aspirations of existing staff to develop and progress within the organisation
 - minimise the organisation's reliance on the use of agency workers and
 - ensure that new recruits are assessed not only on their technical ability but also on their compatibility with the council's values and behaviours.
- 3.8 The principal changes that have been made are:

- all vacancies of more than 12 weeks duration should be advertised internally and externally at the same time once they have been cleared through redeployment
- positive action statements should be included in all adverts and other positive action initiatives undertaken as part of recruitment campaigns to increase the diversity of job applicants and subsequent recruits
- agency workers to be used for short-term or emergency staffing needs only (normally up to a maximum of 12 weeks). Where the need for the post goes beyond this, then it should be advertised as described above
- Chairs of recruitment panels should be at least grade SO1/2 and have completed the recruitment and selection and equalities e-learning modules in the last 12 months and, normally, the recruitment and selection skills workshop within the last 3 years. This is considered essential to improve the quality of recruitment decisions
- Recruitment panel members should have completed, as a minimum, the recruitment and selection and equalities e-learning modules within the last 12 months
- Two experienced and trained recruiting managers must accompany a manager who is recruiting for the first time on a recruitment panel
- Two satisfactory references must be obtained for an external candidate covering at least the last three years of employment.

3.9 To support the new policy, the council has already introduced a number of changes to its recruitment and selection processes in an effort to minimise the potential barriers to employment that had been identified for different equality groups. These include:

- amending the council's application form to make it less onerous to complete
- providing examples of completed application forms to illustrate to applicants how best to demonstrate how they meet the essential criteria set out in the person specification for the job
- reducing the number of criteria applicants need to compete at the application stage by indicating on person specifications at which stage of the recruitment and selection process each criterion will be assessed
- adding the council's values and associated behaviours to person specifications – this will support culture change and the building of a truly inclusive workplace culture
- reviewing the council's recruitment and selection training offer to improve recruiting managers knowledge and skills and so improve decision-making. Monitoring mechanisms will be established to ensure that recruiting managers have undertaken the requisite training

3.10 The range of proposed changes will enable the council to appoint talented people with the right skills, values and behaviours and encourage a more diverse workforce.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty ('PSED') which requires them to have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

4.2 The new policy seeks to implement the changes to its recruitment and selection practices and processes as outlined in this report, therefore meeting the PSED to which the council is subject more effectively.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The proposed changes to the recruitment and selection policy have been discussed with members of the Workforce Equalities Group and formal consultation has taken place with the council's recognised trade unions.

6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 6.1 The proposed policy of externally advertising all contracts over 12 weeks duration will add to the cost of recruitment for the council. However assuming a similar level of activity to 2015/16 this would only equate to approximately £0.015m per annum, which would be expected to be contained within existing resources.

Finance Officer Consulted: Peter Francis Date: 25 August 2016

Legal Implications:

- 6.2 As stated in point 4 above, the Council is subject to the PSED, and the proposed policy more effectively seeks to address the specific requirements of the PSED placed on the Council as a public authority. The analysis undertaken, including an Equality Impact Assessment, to make the amendments to the current policy has highlighted those areas for improvement for the new policy. The proposal to monitor the new policy on an ongoing basis reflects that the PSED is a continuing one, and further analysis of the new policy should reflect the Council's ongoing compliance with the PSED, and its commitment to elimination of discrimination and advancement of equality of opportunity in particular.

Lawyer Consulted: Alison Leitch Date: 26 August 2016

Equalities Implications:

- 6.3 The equalities impact of the council's current recruitment and selection policy has been identified through a variety of means including the results of an Equality Impact Assessment. The new policy has been designed to eliminate or mitigate as far as practicable, the adverse impacts of recruitment and selection on certain equality groups, particularly those identifying as BME, White Other, male or disabled cited in this report.

The impact of the new policy will be monitored through the continued equality monitoring and analysis of the council's workforce and recruitment data. Its success will be measured in terms of changes in the diversity of the council's workforce profile, particularly in relation to those groups currently under-represented in the workforce, compared with the equality profile of the City's economically active population.

Sustainability Implications:

- 6.4 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report.

Any other significant Implications:

6.5 There are no other significant implications arising from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Proposed Recruitment and Selection Policy

Background Documents:

None.