



SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL

CONSTITUTION

PART F4

PROTOCOL FOR SENIOR OFFICER APPOINTMENTS (INCORPORATING SAFER RECRUITMENT)

Document Information			
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Summary of changes to document			
Date	Version updated	New version number	Brief description of changes
12/05/2011	1.0	1.1	Adopted SIC 12 May 2011 [effective 18 May 2011]
30/6/16	1.1	1.2	Updated with changes to committee and officer names, references to current Corporate Plan and revised Recruitment and Selection Policy
08/12/2016	1.2	2.0	Document information added and policy formatted for submission to SIC 14 December 2016.

1 VISION AND STRATEGY

- 1.1 The Council is developing a modern, competent workforce, and establishing a strong culture of corporate focus and performance management, led by high performing Senior Officers, and designed to inspire the confidence of employees, as well as the wider Shetland community.

This Protocol should be read alongside the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy and related procedures, which apply to all Council employees, and set out the legal and policy framework within which this Protocol operates.

- 1.2 The Council's recruitment and workforce development strategies are based on a vision which is designed to ensure that:

- employees are of the highest calibre and meet the highest quality requirements for qualifications and skills;
- the Council provides continuous professional development;
- the Council creates strategies for fostering talent in the workforce, and career paths that motivate and retain staff; and
- the Council provides training, development and learning activities which are fit for purpose.

- 1.3 This Protocol, alongside other Council strategies and plans, is designed to help the Authority to realise the targets set out in *Our Plan 2016-2020*, namely that "Our staff will have the highest possible standards of leadership and management" (Number 1 in *Our Plan*), and "We will be an organisation that encourages creativity, expects co-operation between services, and supports the development of new ways of working (Number 20 in *Our Plan*).

2 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 2.1 The Protocol applies to appointment to the Senior Officer posts of Chief Executive and Directors. Appointments to manager posts below the level of Director will be made in accordance with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy and associated procedures.
- 2.2 The Protocol applies to all Councillors, employees, advisers or assessors who participate in the recruitment and selection process relating to Senior Officer appointments.

The Scheme of Administration and Delegations in Part C of the Council Constitution requires the Policy and Resources Committee to establish an Appointment Panel to undertake the tasks set out in this Protocol, in respect of the posts of Chief Executive and Director. The Appointment Panel will consist of no fewer than five, and no more than nine Councillors, and will include and be chaired by the Leader of the Council, or in his/her absence, by another Councillor appointed by the other Panel members.

In the case of Joint posts appointed to carry out duties for the Council and an external body [for example, the NHS], the Appointment Panel shall consist of no fewer than six, and no more than ten Panel members, half of whom must be Councillors. The Chair shall be appointed from amongst the Councillors by the other Panel members (and will normally be the most Senior Councillor).

As a Sub-Committee of Shetland Islands Council, the Appointments Panel will be administered by the Council through Committee Services, and will follow the Council's Standing Order for meetings.

2.3 This Protocol is designed to ensure that:

- the vacancy is widely advertised, and the best available candidates are attracted to apply;
- the best information is available to the Council about the qualities, skills, experience and personal attributes of candidates; and
- information about candidates is assessed effectively and fairly during the assessment, selection and appointment process.

The law requires that appointments are made solely on merit. To demonstrate this, those who are responsible at each stage of the recruitment process will demonstrate a professional approach and will assess all candidates honestly and fairly.

3 RECRUITMENT

3.1 Making the wrong appointment will cost the Council considerably more than the costs associated with a carefully planned and thoroughly executed recruitment and selection process. For appointments to posts to which this Protocol applies, suitably qualified and experienced recruitment advisers will normally be

engaged, to support the Council's HR Service in providing the services set out in this document.

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Manager, Human Resources is responsible for ensuring that the Council's policies and procedures are implemented and adhered to throughout the process, and that the appropriate level of administrative support is provided.

3.3 Job Description and Person Specification

On each occasion when a Senior Officer recruitment exercise is due to commence, the job description and person specification for the post is reviewed by HR, with additional technical advice where appropriate, to ensure that as well as achieving the actual outcomes for which the post exists, they are relevant to changing circumstances and to making a significant contribution to the strategic development of the organisation.

3.4 The Recruitment Campaign

The focus must be on reaching the right pool of candidates in the most cost effective way.

Using suitable recruitment advisers may also secure access to an executive search portfolio of potential candidates throughout the public sector and beyond, and where the services of recruitment advisers are engaged, this facility should be included in the contract.

The Council's standard application process, as set out in the Recruitment and Selection Toolkit (available on the Council's Intranet) should be followed for Senior Officer appointments. Where external recruitment advisers are engaged, when applicants access the *My Job Scotland* portal they will be directed to a link which takes them straight to the chosen recruitment advisers' website, where they can progress their application.

4 TRAINING

- 4.1 Councillors taking part in a Senior Officer appointment must be familiar with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy and associated procedures.

5 ASSESSMENT

5.1 All applications should be assessed through the following stages:

Task	Post	Responsibility
Stage 1 - Long Leeting		
Initial assessment against job description and person specification criteria and select long leet	Chief Executive	Recruitment Advisers
	Director	CE with Recruitment Advisers, with support from Executive Manager, Human Resources
Stage 2 – Approval of Long Leet		
Signing off long leet	Chief Executive, Director	Appointment Panel
Stage 3 - Short Leeting		
(1) Interview long leet candidates and prepare assessment report for each candidate, with recommendations for short leet	Chief Executive	Recruitment Advisers
	Director	CE with Recruitment Advisers, with support from Executive Manager, Human Resources
(2) Sign off short leet.	Chief Executive	Appointment Panel
	Director	Appointment Panel
Stage 3 - Assessment Centre		
Professional detailed assessment of short leet candidates	Chief Executive	Recruitment Advisers
	Director	CE with Recruitment Advisers
Final Interview and selection of preferred candidate	Chief Executive	Appointment Panel
	Director	Appointment Panel
Stage 4 – Confirmation		
In the case of Chief Executive appointments only, confirmation of the appointment by the full Council.		
For Directors or Joint Posts, the relevant Council officer undertakes the role of making the appointment formally.		

5.2 **Assessment Centres**

Assessment centre evaluations are conducted for all Senior Officer appointments, and based on the principle of multiple testing; a 360° approach.

This stage of the selection process serves to enable those responsible for making the appointment to distinguish amongst a group of strong candidates, all of whom might be capable of doing the job, and to enable the Appointment Panel to identify the candidate who most closely fits the requirements of the post.

Assessment centres will include a combination of management exercises, psychometric tests, stakeholder engagement and one-to-one discussions, designed to produce the most useful results and to complement the information gained from the more traditional interview format.

A bespoke programme will be designed, to meet the requirements of each particular appointment. Elements of an assessment centre could include:

- Case Study Briefing Exercises;
- Fact Finding Exercises;
- Psychometric Assessment; and
- Stakeholder Engagement Exercises.

5.3 **Technical Advice**

Where it is deemed appropriate, consideration will be given to the appointment of a technical adviser to the Panel. A technical adviser does not take part in the decision-making process, but can provide valuable professional expertise to the Panel.

5.4 **Evaluation**

Following the completion of all interviews, the Panel should:

- receive an assessment of each candidate from the recruitment advisers, against the requirements of the post, and in the case of Directors, hear the Chief Executive's assessment. While the final decision rests with the Panel, Panel members must pay careful attention to advice they receive, and should not seek to override clear and proper concerns from them, that a particular candidate would not be acceptable;

- evaluate the relative strengths of all the candidates consistently, to ensure that the successful candidate is the one who most closely matches the person specification for the post. Each Panel member should record and sign his or her evaluation, using a consistent rating scale. At the close of the process, the evaluation forms will be retained centrally by Human Resources.

5.5 **Making the Selection**

The following process should be followed:

- Panel members must ensure that they leave out of account issues of personal or political difference between members of the Appointment Panel, or any other consideration which is not related to the evaluation. Issues of this nature must not be allowed to detract from the legal requirement to appoint solely on merit;
- at the outset, the Panel should seek to agree which candidate or candidates might by unanimous agreement be considered unsuitable; this allows the Panel to concentrate on the candidates who are most closely matched to the requirements of the post;
- for each candidate who is a serious contender for appointment, the Chair should invite each Panel member to provide his or her assessment of the candidate. Panel members should direct their assessment to the merits of the candidate, using the evaluation form as a basis for the assessment, rather than focusing on contradicting other Panel members' opinions. This process may allow a preferred candidate to emerge quite quickly; sometimes however this process may need to be repeated through a further process of elimination;
- voting should be avoided; it is preferable to seek to end with consensus. If a vote emerges as the only way to reach a decision, those who vote for the unsuccessful candidate should be prepared to accept that the decision is unanimous. Whatever the outcome, the record of the outcome will simply record the name of the successful candidate;
- if the Panel has reservations about making an appointment, it should not do so. In this situation there are a number of options available to the Panel, including re-interviewing one or more candidates, or interviewing another candidate who may not have been short listed (provided they meet the core criteria for the post),

or re-advertising. Appointing the wrong person can be a costly and damaging mistake;

- if possible, in addition to selecting a preferred candidate, the Panel should select a reserve candidate, who may be offered the appointment in the event that the preferred candidate turns the offer down. The reserve candidate should always be agreed as a positive choice and not as a compromise, and only if the candidate meets the requirements of the post and could be appointed if the preferred candidate turns down the post, or resigns within three months of appointment.

6 THE APPOINTMENT

6.1 Making the Offer

In the case of the post of Chief Executive, the Leader of the Council should make the offer orally. This should take place before, and be conditional on, the offer of appointment being confirmed by the full Council. In that context, steps should have been taken to hold the Council meeting quickly after the interview process; it is not necessary to wait until after the interview process has concluded to issue the notice calling the Council meeting.

In the case of Director posts, the Chair of the Appointments Panel should make the offer orally.

In **all** cases, the offer of appointment to the preferred candidate should be conditional on the terms of the formal offer, to be provided in writing by the relevant Council Officer when all conditions have been met.

6.2 Making the Appointment

The relevant Council Officer undertakes the role of making the appointment formally and creating the contract of employment.

Before making or confirming the appointment, there are a number of formalities to be completed, in line with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy and associated procedures. Certain checks need to be made and satisfied by the Executive Manager, Human Resources, and relevant documents should be inspected and copied, namely:

- references, where these have not been available prior to interview;
- academic and other professional qualification certificates;
- evidence of eligibility to work in the UK;

- driving licence (where required);
- health questionnaire, and
- Disclosure Scotland check, or PVG membership where appropriate (where there is responsibility for protecting vulnerable groups).

Candidates should have been advised to bring the above documents to the first day of the selection process, in order that the Executive Manager, Human Resources can inspect and copy them as necessary.

The letter of appointment should state that the offer of employment is conditional on receipt of an acceptable medical certificate from the Council's Occupational Health Service provider.

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Where the appointment is to a post designated for the purposes of the protection of vulnerable groups then the appointment is conditional on obtaining membership of the PVG Scheme.

Finally, arrangements should have been put in place to communicate the outcome of the appointment process to Councillors, Council employees and the media.

Following completion of the appointment, each candidate should be asked to provide feedback on their experience of the whole recruitment and selection process, using the post-recruitment questionnaire (which is available on the Council's Intranet, and which should be provided to each candidate by the Panel. Recruitment and selection exercises should be a positive experience for candidates and the Council, and feedback from candidates represents very important information in terms of ongoing review and improvement of this Protocol, as well as the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy and associated procedures.

7. REVIEW AND CHANGES TO THE PROTOCOL

The Executive Manager – Human Resources will periodically review this Protocol, in terms of any new or emerging best practice and guidance, and will bring a report to Committee, as deemed necessary.

Other than changes required by statute, any changes to this Protocol will require a decision of the Policy and Resources Committee.

8. **INFORMATION AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

Members of the Appointments Panel and relevant Council Officers will ensure that the principles of Data Protection are adhered to at all times, and take all necessary steps to ensure the security of personal information during any recruitment process.

All paperwork held by the Appointment Panel members in connection with the recruitment process for any post shall be returned to the relevant Human Resources Adviser following the conclusion of the final meeting.

A formal minute of the decision of the Appointments Panel shall be prepared by Committee Services and signed by the Panel Chair within one month of the final meeting, and held by Committee Services as the prime record of the decision.

Thereafter, Committee Services will return all remaining paperwork to the relevant HR Adviser, and all records will be maintained in accordance with the Council's Retention and Destruction Schedule (available on the Council's Intranet).

END