



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy Overview Committee Major Review 2016/17

Recruitment & Selection - Recommendations

1. Introduction

1.1 Following the POC witness session held on 29 November 2016, the following recommendations have been compiled summarising some of the developments already in progress within the Council, some of the Members suggestions, and the ideas presented by Robert Peasnell, Managing Director of TMP Worldwide, in his presentation on 'Leading Edge Recruitment'.

2. Sustaining Competitiveness in the Recruitment Market

2.1 The London Borough of Hillingdon is not only competing in the workforce market against other councils, but also against other public sector bodies, not-for-profit organisations, and increasingly, private sector companies. To ensure we are able to recruit high-calibre candidates it is essential that we are able to position ourselves competitively and attractively as an employer. While salary and remuneration remain important considerations, research continues to demonstrate that other factors significantly determine which organisation an applicant chooses to apply and work for.

2.2 A key opportunity for the Council is to define and articulate our 'employer brand' so that we are able to clearly differentiate ourselves in the recruitment market. We have successfully produced an 'employer brand' for social worker recruitment and it is recommended that this work is replicated to produce a corporate employer brand which attracts candidates who would embrace the Council's vision, culture and values.

2.3 Due to our process of national negotiation of terms and conditions (T&C's) of employment, the public sector often incurs workforce costs, for example pension contribution overheads, which the private sector would not be subject to. However, these nationally negotiated T&C's are often a source of differentiation. For example, few private sector companies would offer the level of holiday leave or pension contributions available to our employees. It is therefore recommended that the

Council develop what is known as a 'Total Reward' approach to recruitment marketing which involves not only advertising remuneration but also the total worth of the recruitment package. In effect we may be offering a similar salary to a competitor, but offering much more in additional holiday entitlement, pension contributions and other benefits. This should be clear to applicants.

- 2.4 Social media is becoming increasingly important in recruitment. Through sites such as 'Glassdoor', applicants are able to research companies and hear from existing employees about the realities of working for a particular employer. It is therefore recommended that the Council develop and implement a social media recruitment strategy, not only focused on advertising vacancies but also promoting and managing our online reputation and employer brand.
- 2.5 Developing 'internal advocacy', where employees act as 'ambassadors' and promote their own organisations, is an extremely powerful recruitment marketing tool. It is recommended that we develop internal advocacy and reinforce this through introducing a recruitment referral scheme.
- 2.6 Increasingly, video media is helping to differentiate between potential employers and embedded video is very compelling to certain applicants. It is recommended that our recruitment web pages should be reviewed and video content enhanced to include 'vox pops' of current employees, recruiting managers, residents and other stakeholders.
- 2.7 Overall, the intention of enhancing the Council's workforce brand, developing our online presence, especially around social media, and focusing on the development of an extremely interesting jobs page, is to reduce the reliance upon paid-for recruitment advertising. We know that the majority of job searches begin online and we should maximise our presence and the quality of our content to be an extremely 'eye-catching' prospective employer.

3. Creating 'Talent Pools' of Potential Employees

- 3.1 Currently, the Council's approach to recruitment is relatively reactive, with job roles advertised as they become vacant. It is possible to take a more proactive approach and 'nurture' prospective applicants so as soon as a vacancy arises there is a pre-existing 'talent pool' of interested candidates. Again, social media is enabling easy development of groups and communities and provides various ways of maintaining communication with prospective talent pools.
- 3.2 It is recommended that an Alumni Network talent pool is developed and the Council maintains social media communication with former employees who may be interested in returning to work for us.
- 3.3 The Council will begin an extensive recruitment campaign for apprenticeships for 2017/18. It is recommended that all apprentices are considered a 'talent pool' and a workforce planning process is put in place to ensure successful and high-performing apprentices have opportunities for employment with the Council once their apprenticeships come to an end.
- 3.4 The most obvious pool of talent available to the Council is that of its existing employees and internal succession provide the most cost-effective 'recruitment'

solution. It is recommended that a Workforce Succession Plan is put in place for all key positions across the Council.

4. Ensuring Selection of High-Calibre Applicants

- 4.1 Candidate selection is potentially one of the more strategic decision-making processes a manager will engage in. Poor selection can have an extremely negative impact on performance, productivity, team morale and overall service delivery. Correcting poor selection can lead to painful, time-consuming and extremely costly capability processes. However, good candidate selection can be the opposite, and a 'great hire' can go on to be a top performer and an asset for the Council for many years. It is essential that we equip managers with the tools to ensure that they select the right candidate.
- 4.2 All selection decisions should be related to the criteria outlined within the 'person specification' section of the job description. All selection decisions are ultimately subject to the scrutiny of an Employment Tribunal and so should be made as fairly, objectively and equitably as possible. The quality of job descriptions is essential to being able to justify a sound selection decision. Currently, the standards are not consistent and no central management of job descriptions is conducted. It is recommended that the Council considers introducing a centralised job description library. A set of relevant and consistent interview questions should also be associated with each job description.
- 4.3 Recruitment is not solely based on skills and experience. It is important that we also recruit people who exhibit the desired behaviours to help us deliver our organisational objectives. The Council's competency framework defines the behaviour expectations of its managers and staff. This framework forms part of the person specification criteria and so selection decisions are made against the competency framework. This framework has not been reviewed for over ten years and the Council has been through unprecedented change during this time. It is recommended that a review of the competency framework is conducted to ensure that the behaviours described remain relevant and desirable to the Council in the current climate.
- 4.4 Similarly, it is important to recruit people who share similar values to the Council, for example every one of our employees should be service-focused and be passionate about putting our residents first. Recruitment based on shared values is an example of 'culture-fit' and research demonstrates that high performing organisations ensure that candidates are suitable culturally, as well as having the requisite skills and knowledge. It is recommended that 'culture-fit' selection techniques are introduced to the recruitment process.
- 4.5 Occupational 'testing' can augment the interview process to improve selection decision-making during recruitment. For example, if a role requires high levels of accuracy then this cannot be determined by asking a question at interview. However, an online accuracy test can allow a candidate to demonstrate accuracy skills and provide an objective selection score. It is recommended that occupational testing is introduced for relevant roles to ensure better selection decision-making.

5. Enhancing Internal Processes

- 5.1 Candidates rarely apply to a single employer and the applicant's experience of the recruitment process is often a contributing factor in which employer they eventually choose. Frustrations and delays during recruitment often make candidates reconsider working for a particular employer. It is therefore important that we continue to develop our internal processes to ensure the recruitment experience is positive.
- 5.2 The Council's e-recruitment platform will receive a system upgrade in early 2017/18 aimed at improving the user-interfaces for both applicants and recruiting managers. It is recommended that all managers involved in recruitment are re-trained on the new system together with refresher training on selection methods and equalities.

6. Evaluation of Recruitment Success

- 6.1 It is important that we are able to continuously monitor the effectiveness of our recruitment processes and evaluate the success of investment in new initiatives.
- 6.2 It is recommended that a 'scorecard' of key recruitment and selection performance indicators are agreed and reported quarterly as part of the Council's business performance monitoring process to ensure that the recruitment process is both effective and efficient. This would include data such as 'time to recruit', exit interview analysis and cost per hire.
- 6.3 It is also recommended that an analysis of the recruitment selection process is conducted as part of the sign-off of the probationary process to evaluate the correlation between recruitment processes and the eventual performance of the recruited employee.

7. Summary of Recommendations

- 7.1 Develop the Council's employment brand.
- 7.2 Introduce a Total Reward approach to advertising total worth of recruitment package.
- 7.3 Implement a social media recruitment strategy.
- 7.4 Create an 'internal advocacy' culture reinforced by an Employee Referral scheme.
- 7.5 Enhance video media on the Council's job pages.
- 7.6 Develop an Alumni Network enabled by social media.
- 7.7 Create an Apprenticeship Talent Pool to ensure talented apprentices have opportunities to maintain employment within the Council.
- 7.8 Develop a workforce succession plan for all key roles.
- 7.9 Explore the implementation of a centralised Job Description Library to support consistent selection processes.

- 7.10 Conduct a review of the current Competency Frameworks.
- 7.11 Introduce 'culture-fit' and values-based recruitment techniques into the recruitment process.
- 7.12 Introduce occupational selection testing for recruitment to key and relevant roles.
- 7.13 All recruiting managers receive training in 2017/18 on the new e-recruitment system, selection methods and equalities.
- 7.14 Agree and report key recruitment and selection performance indicators.
- 7.15 Introduce an evaluation of recruitment and selection as part of the probationary period sign-off process.