

SUBJECT: RECRUITMENT POLICY CHANGES

DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK

REPORT AUTHOR: ALI THACKER (HR AND PAYROLL TEAM LEADER)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Executive with an overview of the proposed changes to the Councils Recruitment Policy, and to request that Executive consider the content of the report and consider the approval of the revised policy.

2. Background

- 2.1 In November 2022, the Council commenced a recruitment trial whereby managers had the opportunity to advertise roles internally and externally at the same time (once the roles had been advertised to redeployment).
- 2.2 Prior to this, in accordance with the Recruitment Policy all vacancies were subject to Redeployment advert, then internal (if the role was not recruited to at the redeployment stage), and then external adverts (where a vacancy had not been recruited to internally).

There was however provision within the policy to advertise a vacancy simultaneously. This required the recruiting officer to submit written reasons to HR of why the post should be advertised internally and externally at the same time and those written reasons are forwarded to the Trade Unions for their comments.

The Trade Unions had three working days in which to make written representations to HR, and those representations will be considered by the Chief Executive, together with any recommendations by the Assistant Director and HR, before making a final decision whether to proceed as proposed.

- 2.3 It was previously recognised by one union that they can see the value in advertising externally at the same time in some cases. However, they do not want to see jobs where there are promotional opportunities for staff going out to external at the first instance and maintain a level of training for existing staff for promotional opportunities.
- 2.4 Following a review of recruitment processes in relation to advertising vacancies a trial commenced whereby managers were able to advertise internally and externally simultaneously (without the need to seek approval).

It was envisaged that this would enable the Council to reach out to a wider market for a larger pool of applicants and ensure we are getting the best candidate for the role.

3. Proposed Permanent Changes to the Recruitment Policy

- 3.1 Following this trial, a proposal was put to unions for a permanent change to the policy to allow managers the opportunity and autonomy to continue to advertise posts internally and externally at the same time (where they feel this is necessary).
- 3.2 The proposed updated policy is enclosed to this report with the main changes being made to Section 5 (sub section “e”).

4. Key Background Information for Consideration

- 4.1 When looking back over information prior to the trial (approximately 2 years) there had been 67 successful external candidates and 68 successful internal candidates. This suggested that 50% of vacancies are filled internally.

In addition, in terms of timescales of processes prior to the HR department had reviewed a small number of roles which went through the full advertising processes (i.e. Redeployment, then internal, then external) and the average time it took between the advert stage – offer the role (for those roles) was 82.4 days.

- 4.2 Following the initial trial period, figures showed that there had been 21 successful internal candidates and 32 successful external candidates. This suggests that around 60% of vacancies which were advertised and appointed to were filled externally and in terms of timescales the average time it took between advert to the offer stage was 56.4 days.
- 4.3 HR also conducted a survey with managers who have recently recruited during the trial to gain an understanding of their views in relation to the trial and the potential processes moving forward. 18 responses were provided.

In summary:

- All felt having the option to advertise internally and externally was useful.
 - All felt this enabled the Council to ensure the most suitable candidate for the role is appointed.
 - All wanted to see the current processes continue.
 - The vast majority felt it reduced the time to recruit.
- 4.4 Having continued to offer managers the opportunity to advertise internally and externally at the same time since the trial, further figures have been gathered from August – December 2023, and figures show that where an appointment has been made, around 65% of vacancies which were advertised and appointed to were filled externally and in terms of timescales the average time from advert to offer stage was 47 days.

5. Organisational Impacts

5.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

The recruitment process can impact on delivering services and capacity issues due to the potential time it takes where a post is not filled.

Advertising simultaneously would potentially result in additional advertising costs.

5.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

N/A

5.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

All HR/recruitment interventions/actions/activity will be in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

5.4 Human Resources

During discussions with Trade Unions, The Unions have raised concerns with the proposal namely regarding the following:

- This could prevent promotional opportunities for current employees.
- Unions feel this goes against everything we do for apprentices (as they would be pitched against external candidates with more experience).
- They also feel there shouldn't be discretion applied and it should be a set policy in place, as the proposal allows managers to selectively recruit and takes away the benefit that has always been assumed by working in the council.

During discussions, Unions outlined that their view is that if this was to be implemented it should be for set roles from a specific grade (for example scale 6 roles and undergo internal and external at the same time, and for roles over scale 6 go internally first to allow for progression for internal staff). They also feel there shouldn't be discretion applied and it should be a set policy at a certain grade (please note: the Scale 6 example outlined above has only been used as a hypothetical example).

However, having taken these views into account it is the Councils view that the proposed permanent policy change (whereby managers have the discretion to advertise internally/externally simultaneously) should be progressed and taken to JCC/ Executive for consideration/implementation.

HR will however look to produce an e-learning course for internal employees on the Councils recruitment processes (Covering aspects such the completion of an application form and interview processes etc).

This Policy was also taken to JCC in January 2024, where it was discussed in further detail. A summary of the comments received are contained below:

- Development and Opportunities for Internal Staff – This should not be weighted towards external candidates.
- Consultation - Unions felt there should be discussions held/ consultation with Unions prior to a role being advertised internally and externally (between the manager / relevant unions) to ensure that any discretion is objective, open and transparent.
- Retention – . If an internal applicant was not successful in appointment to a role, it may be the case that they looked externally elsewhere. Internal employees' knowledge/ skills may be overlooked and this may hinder succession planning/ internal progression.

It was agreed that the above comments were noted for Executive to consider as part of the formal approval process.

6. Risk Implications

6.1 (i) Options Explored

N/A

6.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

N/A

7. Recommendation

- 7.1** To request that Executive consider the proposed policy changes and the content of the report when considering formal approval of this policy.

Is this a key decision?

No

Do the exempt information categories apply?

No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?

No

How many appendices does the report contain?

Two

List of Background Papers:

One (Recruitment Policy).

Lead Officer:

Ali Thacker
HR and Payroll Team Leader
Ali.thacker@lincoln.gov.uk