**UNIT 10**

**Recruitment Manual – step by step guide**

**SELECTION INTERVIEWING GUIDANCE**

**10.1 Interview Preparation**

1. **What is the purpose of the interview?**

An interview is *“a controlled conversation with a purpose”.* It is a two-way process to enable the candidate to decide if they want to work for the Council and you to decide if they are right for the job. It is not an opportunity for the interviewers to show off or act in any unreasonable way and the more planning and preparation you do the easier it will be for you and the candidate.

At the end of the interview the Council should be clear on who is the right candidate for appointment and the candidate will want to work for you!

1. What planning and arrangements should the Council make for the interviews?

Planning and preparing an effective interview strategy and structure is essential to success in terms of the physical arrangements (including virtual), and the interviewer’s approach and questioning technique.

Recognising the importance of the interview setting (in the same physical room or virtual) is critical as are the arrangements to invite and receive candidates. The following therefore needs to be agreed and/or provided in advance of the interviews being held:-

* the selection panel should ideally be comprised of more than one person but ideally no more than three (or if logistically necessary four persons) as too many people on the panel will inevitably make for a disjointed interview and may increase the anxiety of the candidates;
* a pre-interview meeting should be held by the selection panel to prepare for the interviews to agree the arrangements, set the format, agree who asks which questions and plan how the interviews will be conducted;
* everyone involved in the interviews should be properly briefed and trained;
* candidates should be given adequate notice and details of the interview location (providing a map if appropriate), date and arrangements (including whether or not you are paying travelling expenses), what is expected of them e.g. tests, presentation and anything you wish the candidate to bring with them and to whom to report on arrival;
* request candidates inform the Council of any special needs in advance of the interview and appropriate mitigating action taken;
* decide when you wish to obtain references;
* the time allocated for each interview may vary depending on the nature of the job;
* the selection panel must be fully conversant with the job description, person specification and all other relevant information about the job;
* the interview format and structure must be agreed in advance by the Panel;
* the interviews should be confidential and no interruptions should be allowed;
* relevant staff should be advised of the candidate reception arrangements;
* the interview room should be quiet and private with no distractions and facilities must be suitable for all applicants;
* the layout, seating (sit around a table rather than across a desk if possible), lighting etc of the interview room should be best arranged to provide a comfortable environment to get the best out of candidates;
* any specialist equipment or appropriate adjustments should be provided with due regard to a candidate’s needs;
* hospitality arrangements should be considered;
* internal and external candidates should be treated identically throughout the process;
* you should come to each interview with an open mind

**(c) Specimen Interview Documents**

The following specimen selection of forms and letters for the post of Clerk to the Council, which may also be adapted for other jobs, to help with the interview arrangements are enclosed as follows:-

**Appendix 10 (a) -** interview schedule

**Appendix 10 (b) -** initial interview invitation

**Appendix 10 (c) -** rejection letter after initial interview

**Appendix 10 (d) -** final interview invitation

**Appendix 10 (e) -** rejection letter after final interview

**Appendix 10 (f) -** reference request and letter.

**10.2** **Selection Interview Guidance**

**(a) How should the interviews be structured?**

The Council will have a clear picture of the job and the person required. Some evidence will have been obtained from the application form and possibly references and the purpose of the interview is to test the evidence provided and further examine the candidate’s suitability for the role.

The interview is also critical in enthusing a candidate to join the Council and poorly structured interviews can produce poor appointments. Remember, during the interview the candidate is, at all times, forming an opinion about the role and the Council as their future employer which in turn will inform their decision about whether or not to accept the post if offered.

To ensure that there is consistency in both the approach and fairness the interview should follow a number of recognised stages namely:-

* greeting
* acquiring information
* giving information
* parting.

***Greeting*** involves:-

* introducing all present
* establishing a calm and informal atmosphere
* explaining the interview format and structure
* advising the candidate that members of the panel might take notes
* establishing rapport and credibility early
* checking if any adjustments not already notified are necessary or if the panel needs to know anything that might affect a fair and transparent interview taking place.

***Acquiring information*** involves:-

* questioning to collect evidence on which to base a decision
* starting with low-threat questions e.g. safe topics such as biographical information
* encouraging candidates to talk about their skills and experience and how they apply to the job
* using techniques to increase the candidate’s contribution with open-ended and follow-up questions with careful use of silence and encouragement
* asking for examples from current or past experience to underpin or illustrate claims
* reassuring, such as nods, smiles, eye contact
* asking probing questions where responses are not as detailed as they could be
* allowing candidates time to think and speak
* assessing attributes and traits – focussing on both strengths and weaknesses
* keeping the interview on course if the candidate or panel is going off track.

***Giving information*** involves:-

* providing any further information about the job and the Council
* inviting questions from the candidate
* stating what happens next.

***Parting*** involves:-

* making candidates aware of the next steps in the process e.g. appointment, second interview, tests and timescales as appropriate
* ensuring you have the candidates’ contact details and they are clear when they will hear from you
* thanking the candidate for their time and attending.

All members of the selection panel should prepare for each set of interviews using this approach.

A good interview is one that gathers enough relevant information against each of the essential and desirable criteria set out in the Person Specification to make a reasoned, fair decision with any potential discriminatory issues avoided.

Remember – you are looking for the right candidate not necessarily the best technically qualified one!

A recommended structure for the selection interview is set out in the above guidance and reflected in the specimen Interview Script for the post of Clerk to the Council enclosed at **Appendix 10 (g)**.Whilst this script is relevant to the appointment of the Clerk to the Council it can apply once appropriately amended for most jobs.

**(b) Questioning Techniques**

**General**

The aim of the interview is to obtain as much relevant information about the candidate as possible. To achieve this there are questioning and listening techniques that will improve both the rapport with the candidate and/or elicit more relevant information or opinions. Understanding and using the following questioning techniques will help secure a successful conclusion.

**Questioning Types**

Interviewers tend to use three types of selection questions namely:-

* general questions – the same generic questions asked of all candidates
* specific questions – used to focus on any issues arising; based on the needs of the job
* confirmation questions – used to clarify information already gained.

**Useful Forms of Question**

* ***Open-ended* questions**

Use to invite interviewees to express opinions or articulate using their own style of words as they cannot be answered “yes” or “no”. This can be helpful to explore their ability to think and communicate. The questions often start with *“Why….”, “How…..”, What……”, “Tell me about…..”* etc.

* ***Probing* questions**

Use to pursue a line of questioning or thought (often leading on naturally from open questions) to dig for more information e.g. *“Why do you think ……………? Tell me more about…” etc* *“That is interesting - give me some examples so that I can understand fully what you mean.”*

* ***Clarifying* questions**

Use to check what the employee said e.g. *“I’m not quite clear about ………. would you*

*explain it a bit more?”* *“When you say that………what exactly do you mean?”*

* ***Linking* questions**

Use to link to earlier answer or hold issue for later e.g. *“you said earlier that ……. How does that fit in with …….?”*.

* ***Summarising and Feeding Back***

Use to clarify, correct, explain, get further information, bring together responses to give more significance e.g. *“Let me see if I understand that …………..?” “In other words you mean ……?”* etc

## Not –So-Useful Questions

* ***Closed or Direct* Questions**

Questions which allow only an answer of “*yes*” or “*no*” or some other short response.

They get little real information and do not get interview flowing freely or promote discussion. They often begin with *“Where”, “When”, “Which”, “Did you” etc*. You need to ask the same question in a more open or challenging way.

However, they may be used to establish simple facts, to round off a topic, to shorten a conversation or to test your understanding by exploring a response further if followed up by an open question or to summarise.

* ***Hypothetical* questions**

With these you are asking candidates how they would handle a situation and may be

useful to introduce ideas in a non-threatening way. However they only tell you something about mental agility or creativity but nothing about how they have handled a situation in real life or their skill at tackling problems.

Hypothetical questions often just get hypothetical answers so try to concentrate on what the candidate has done not what they would do unless to do this is a factor in the job role.

* ***Multiple* questions**

Asking employees to respond to two or more issues in one question can simply get candidates confused and they invariably answer only one of the questions – generally the one they prefer. Simply ask the questions separately.

* ***Leading* questions**

###### These questions suggest the expected answer you want to hear and force agreement so give no useful information and candidate’s knowledge or ideas are not discovered e.g. *“You do agree that …… don’t you?” “I take it you welcome the chance to take on more responsibility?”*

In appropriate cases this may can be used to test if employee will disagree with you but care is needed if trying this tricky approach.

* ***Value-Laden* questions**

Leading questions that give away your own feelings especially negative ones so influence the reply. Sometimes imply criticism of the person and destroy rapport e.g. “*Surely you do not mean that ……?”*.

* ***Vague or Redundant* questions**

These questions get little reliable or meaningful information e.g. “*So you are pretty keen on sport?”*

# Guidance

The above types of question are not watertight and a particular question might be open, hypothetical and leading or closed, probing and value-laden. The key to using a successful questioning technique is to plan ahead and use as many open questions as possible related to real events and issues that encourage the employee to talk about their actual experiences, knowledge and abilities. Use closed questions only to confirm or establish facts.

Whilst the overall purpose is to obtain as much relevant information from the candidate as possible and elicit appropriate opinions and views, this should be done in a consistent and structured way to get the best results and ensure fairness in the process.

Candidates must be judged solely on the evidence of the candidate’s ability to do the job and their answers at the interview will obviously be key in helping you make this judgement along with the outcomes from any other parts of the selection process.

Questions must be relevant to the job and should concentrate on the requirements that are essential to do the job. In explaining the job or answering questions from candidates always give an honest description of what the job entails and do not exaggerate the requirements of the job.

The selection panel should therefore determine in advance a set of questions that should be asked of all candidates. Some tips include:-

* using information from the candidate's application form or CV
* looking for any gaps in education or employment, or things that don't seem to add up
* be aware of possible discrimination in the questions you ask, which could mean you miss the best candidate and may be unlawful
* knowing the job description and person specification really well so that your questions help you compare candidates
* if two or more people are interviewing, decide who will deal with what topics
* thinking about what information candidates may want about the job and the Council.

The questions should be structured to relate to the Person Specification and you need to be clear about which particular category or criteria they are designed to help inform and/or assess. You are strongly recommended to avoid using trick or gimmicky questions that just make the interviewer think how clever they are and do nothing to gain necessary information about the candidate!

However, questions alone are not always sufficient and therefore it is essential to ask follow-up questions which will vary according to the answers given by each candidate.

The candidate’s key responses and assessment scores should be noted before the start of the next interview. It is possible that any such notes might have to be produced at an Employment Tribunal if the selection is subsequently challenged.

**Avoiding Discrimination in Questioning**

Always avoid discriminatory questions, comments and assumptions. You should:-

* be sure questions can be put fairly to all candidates
* not ask questions about such matters as
	+ health or disability
	+ family intentions
	+ trade union membership
	+ pregnancy/maternity/paternity
	+ marital or civil partnership status
	+ gender
	+ sexual orientation
	+ relationships
	+ child care or dependency arrangements
	+ partner’s employment
	+ age
	+ beliefs (religious, cultural or political)
	+ heritage/nationality

unless in the rare case that any of these issues are a justifiable occupational requirement of the job

* avoid questions about a candidate’s criminal record unless relevant
* do not make a judgement based on appearance unless there is a justifiable requirement for a standard of appearance or clothing
* linked to this is being prepared for those who dress according to their culture or religion – there are real issues and ethics related to religious dress and what is or is not acceptable and it would be best to have a clear policy on this before interviews take place.

Ensure that all candidates are treated the same and asked the same general selection questions.

You should also be aware of any possible cultural differences e.g. handshaking, words, body language and gestures, eye contact etc, but equally not make any unreasonable changes at the applicant’s behest e.g. no women on the panel.

**Specimen Questions**

A specimen selection of example questions for an interview for the posts of Clerk to the

Council and Responsible Financial Officer which may be adapted to match the Person Specifications and the Council’s particular needs are enclosed at **Appendix 10 (h) Appendix 10 (i)** respectively which can also be adapted for other jobs.

Whilst a range of possible questions to consider for both posts are included obviously not all will be needed and the Selection Panel should prepare for the interviews by choosing those to be used and by whom they will be asked.

**(c) Active Listening**

**Guidance**

As an interview is a two-way process with feedback from both persons and it is as described above “a conversation with a specific purpose” so the candidate should therefore talk for at least 80% of the time.

To help with this the interviewer needs to indicate to candidates that they are genuinely listening to what the candidate is saying. The key general techniques to help with this are:-

* to concentrate on the conversation between the two of you and ignore distraction
* to make sure the interview takes place in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed
* to encourage the candidate to contribute and give their opinions first so that they are not intimidated by what you have to say
* to create the sort of atmosphere where the person feels comfortable speaking freely
* to not feel frightened of silence.

**Useful Techniques**

You should show the candidate that you are concentrating on what is being said and the way it is being said and this can be done by techniques such as:-

* ***the Nod***

Every so often give a slight nod to indicate you acknowledge and understand the response.

* ***the Pause or Silence***

Do not be embarrassed by silences as long as they do not go on unreasonably. Allow silences for the employee to think. Look at the employee expectantly.

* ***Casual Remarks***

Say something that may encourage the candidate to continue or expand on what has just been said e.g. *“I see…” “That’s interesting...”*

* ***Reflecting***

Repeat the candidate’s remarks to check your understanding.

* ***Summarising***

Check you have understood the candidate’s overall response to key issues and give them a chance to correct if necessary.

The above examples of active listening should, if practised, lead to an interview that is a true conversation with the candidate encouraged to talk openly.

Rapport will be established by creating a friendly, encouraging atmosphere in which the candidate can speak freely and active listening will ensure that the person knows you are interested in their responses.

**(d) Helpful and Hindering Behaviours**

###### General Guidance

Your body language and gestures will send powerful signals to the candidate being interviewed. The following checklist of helpful and hindering behaviours will help the interview flow and get the best out of the candidates.

**Helpful Behaviours**

* Leaning forward with hands open, arms and legs uncrossed.
* Looking at the candidate for at least 80% of the time.
* When listening nod and make “I’m listening” noises such as “um”, “yes”, “really?”
* Smiling.
* Sitting around a table or at least at a 90 degree angle to the candidate.
* Using the candidate’s name early in the interview.
* Summarising back to the candidate.
* Saying things that refer back to what the candidate has said.
* Encouraging open discussion.
* Try matching the candidate’s body posture to make person feel you are in tune with them.

###### Hindering Behaviours

* Leaning away with hands clenched, arms crossed and legs crossed.
* Looking at the employee for less than 50% of the time.
* Listening silently with no continuity noises.
* Interrupting before the candidate has finished their response.
* Having a blank or disinterested expression.
* Sitting opposite the candidate across a large table.
* Using the candidate’s name too often or in a jarring way.
* Sticking rigidly to only general or routine issues.
* Not acknowledging the employee’s responses or point of view.
* Picking holes or arguing with the candidate’s response or views.
* Criticising the candidate or commenting on the Council’s existing staff.
* Having visual and verbal behaviours out of step with each other.
* Remaining aloof from the candidate.
* Fiddling with pens, hair, papers on desk, looking at watch etc.
* Doing other things e.g. writing long notes, staring out of the window etc.

The above is not an exhaustive list but interviewers should practice doing less of the hindering behaviours and more of those that will help.

**(e) Common Interviewing Flaws**

Some of the common flaws that affect interviews are as follows and you should be aware of them and try hard to avoid them:-

* **devil/angel** – some interviewers will decide that a candidate is either very good or very bad then fail to identify any evidence to the contrary so you need to build up a rounded picture of the candidate not one that focuses on their positives or negatives
* **like me** – interviewers will tend to feel an affinity for candidates that remind them of themselves so try to focus on the needs of the job
* **primacy** – interviewers can put too much emphasis on the first few minutes of the interview and make their mind up then!

**10.3 Other Selection Methods**

###### Use of Tests

**General**

There are other ways of helping to select the right candidate and some options might include:-

* practical tests
* psychometric tests e.g. ability tests, aptitude tests, personality profiling
* assessment centres
* biodata

Tests can be done before or at the time of the interview but should not be used as the sole method of candidate selection. Keep in mind that such tests could also be unlawful if they discriminate against candidates for example of a particular race, sex or age or who have a disability.

You should use such tests only if they have been validated and are relevant to the job and well designed. When thinking about using any kind of test, you should also weigh up the benefits against the costs of organising them.

### Practical tests

For the post of Clerk of the Council practical tests might include making a presentation, report writing, etc.

For other Council jobs, the following may be more appropriate:

* jobs where trade skills are required, such as facilities management or grounds management – some practical tests
* administrative jobs – MS Word or other software packages can be used to test competency such as word processing skills
* reception staff – telephone skills can be tested
* finance roles – practical tests on industry financial software or MS Exel

### Psychometric tests

Interviews combined with other selection methods e. g. tests and/or psychometrics are regarded by some as a more effective predictor of an individual’s ability to do the job.

Psychometric tests can be useful when choosing a candidate from a group of people who do not have easily comparable skills or experience. They are more likely to be used when a senior manager is being sought. Psychometric tests can be used to measure intelligence, personality or aptitude for specific tasks, such as:-

* reasoning/problem solving
* decision making
* interpersonal skills
* confidence

You should bear in mind that these tests:-

* are not always a good indicator of future performance
* should not be used unless there is a proven need and a suitably qualified person to administer them and interpret the words back to the selection panel
* often require a fee when you use them.

### Assessment centres

These are generally used by large organisations, particularly when making senior appointments. Individual and group exercises take place, sometimes over a few days, often including an interview, psychometric tests, group discussions and tasks, written exercises and presentations. Assessment centres can however be expensive and time-consuming and need to be organised with professional help to gain maximum benefit.

### Biodata

This test takes the form of a multiple-choice biographical questionnaire and is more likely to be used by large organisations. If you do choose to use it you must take care not to breach data protection or discrimination laws.

**(b) How should the Council use any of these tests?**

Whilst the use of selection tests are encouraged as interviews alone are a limited measure of a candidate’s abilities and suitability they should be relevant, meet one or more of the person specification criteria and approached with care using professional help if necessary. The results of any tests used should only be applied where they provide evidence not easily obtained through an interview alongside the interview outcomes which will always be used as the main factor in deciding who to appoint. Tests should never be used as the only basis for the final selection.

Specifically:-

* the type and level of test must be relevant to the duties of the job;
* selection tests should be clearly related to the Person Specification and should measure an individual’s actual or inherent ability to do the particular work;
* testers must be trained and/or accredited to administer and interpret the tests;
* internal practical tests should be related to the actual tasks of the job and the Council’s normal work;

## if tests are to be used the candidates should be made fully aware when advised of the interview arrangements;

## if psychometrics are used feedback should be offered to all candidates.

**10.4 Recording the Selection Process**

### You need to keep records of the whole process in case of challenge by an unsuccessful candidate including:-

* backing up interviews with a detailed record of the procedure, completed as soon as possible after the interviews
* using the forms provided as part of this selection manual
* if you make notes, you should only record what has been said in the interview and how the selection decision was made and not your beliefs or thoughts about the candidate
* video or aural recordings but always tell candidates that you are using them and for how long they will be retained.

You should be aware that candidates who later make a complaint to an Employment Tribunal have the right to ask for copies of any notes made during the interview and of other evidence you may need them for defending any possible discrimination case relating to the process.

Only record or keep personal data after an interview if it is necessary and relevant to the recruitment process or in respect of a discrimination challenge. Data that is kept should be securely stored and you should bear in mind the data protection legislation and the right of a person to access to any information kept on them.

**10.5 Further Help**

If you require training, help or any other assistance with your recruitment and selection processes or have any questions on anything in the Recruitment Manual please email your county association.

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Updated September 2022

**Appendix 10 (a) - Interview schedule**

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT OF CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

**(Enter Date)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Time | **Applicant** | Present Post |
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|  |  |  |

**Appendix 10 (b) - Initial interview invitation**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxx**

**xxxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Date**

Dear **Enter name**

# Xxxxxxxxxxxxxx Council

# Appointment of Clerk to the Council

Further to your application for the above post with the Council I am pleased to advise you that you have been short listed to proceed to the selection assessment stage. The selection process will be over two stages as follows.

**Initial Interview**

You are invited to attend for an initial interview at **xxxxxxx** on. The interview will be held at the **xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.** On arrival please report to **enter name**.

A map is enclosed showing the location and the car parks around the Council Offices.

The interview will be with the **xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Sub-Committee/Selection Panel** consisting of **xxxxxxxx Councillors** and as part of the interview you are asked to produce a concise but sufficient written report for the **Sub-Committee/Selection Panel** (probably not more than two sides of A4) on the following topic in your preferred Committee style.

***“*xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx*“***

You are asked to bring copies of the report along to the interview and be prepared to present to it the Panel.

**Final Interview**

Following the initial interviews a reduced shortlist of candidates will be selected to go forward to a final interview on **xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx**.

That interview will be with the **Council’s xxxxxxxxxxxx Sub-Committee/Selection Panel** and as part of the interview you will be required to make a presentation to the **Sub-Committee/Selection Panel**. You will be advised of the final arrangements and the topic for the presentation if invited to proceed to this stage.

There will also be an opportunity to meet the Council’s key staff and Councillors informally on that day and prior to the interview you will also be expected to undertake **an online personality profile/psychometric tests**. Full instructions on the latter will also be given after the initial interview.

**The Council will reimburse any reasonable expenses involved in attending the interviews and a claim form is attached which should be completed with receipts attached and submitted to me at the above address.**

If you have any special requirements either for the attendance at interview or in undertaking the report please let me know straight away.

I hope that you will accept this invitation to attend for the initial interview and should be pleased if you would let me know as soon as possible if you will be attending by either email on **xx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxxxx** or calling me on **xxxxxxxxxxxx**. If you have any questions about any of these arrangements please do not hesitate to let me know.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

## Name

## Post Title

**On behalf of xxxxxxxx Council**

**Appendix 10 (c) - Rejection letter after initial interview**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

##

## Date

Dear **Enter name**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Council**

### Appointment of Clerk to the Council

Thank you for attending for the initial interview yesterday for the above post.

Following the interview with the **xxxxxxxxxxx Sub-Committee/Selection Panel** I regret that I now have to advise you on behalf of the Council that on this occasion your application has not been successful and you are not proceeding to the second interview stage.

I am sorry to disappoint you but the Panel had to make a really difficult decision.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your interest in working for the Council and the time and effort put in to preparing for and attending the interview.

I wish you every success in finding a suitable appointment in the near future.

Yours sincerely

# Name

# Post Title

**On behalf of xxxxxxxx Council**

**Appendix 10 (d) - Final interview invitation**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxx**

**xxxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Date**

Dear **Enter name**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxxx Council**

# Appointment of Clerk to the Council

Further to my call earlier and your interview this week for the above post with the Council I am pleased to confirm on behalf of the Council that you that you have been selected to go forward to the final stage of the selection process which will run from **xxx am** on **xxxxxxxxxxxx** at the **xxxxxxxxxxxx.** On arrival please report to **xxxxxxxxxxx**. This final stage will be as follows.

**Testing**

The Council wishes you to undertake **a personality profile/psychometric tests** which is intended to measure a number of competencies such as risk taking, stamina, time management, how dynamic someone is etc. You will be contacted shortly by email by **xxxxxxxxxxxxx** and the test should be undertaken on-line by **xxxxxxxxxxxxx** **at the latest**. The test should take no more than 30 minutes.

**Informal meeting with Councillors and Staff**

The Council is arranging an informal meeting between all candidates being interviewed, Councillors not directly involved in the selection process and the Council’s staff. You should therefore ensure that you attend at **xxxxxx** on the above date and this meeting will last up to an hour. This **will/will not** form part of the candidate assessment.

**Interview**

You are then invited to attend for a final interview at **xxxxxxx** on **xxxxxxxxxxxxx** with the **Council’s xxxxxxxxxxx Sub-Committee/Selection Panel**. As part of the interview you are asked to prepare a powerpoint presentation on the following topic.

**“xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.”**

The presentation should last no more than ten minutes. You are asked to bring it on a USB memory stick and be prepared to present to it the **Sub-Committee/Panel**. You may also wish to bring hard copies of the presentation along to the interview for the **Sub-Committee/Panel** (**xxx** copies).

**The Council will reimburse any reasonable expenses involved in attending the interview and a claim form is attached which should be completed with receipts attached and submitted to me at the above address.**

If you have any special requirements either for the attendance at interview or in undertaking the job please let me know straight away.

I hope that you will accept this invitation to attend for the final interview and should be pleased if you would let me know as soon as possible if you will be attending by either email on **xx@xxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxxxxx** or calling me on **xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx**.

If you have any questions about any of these arrangements please do not hesitate to let me know.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

## Name

**Post Title**

**On behalf of xxxxxxxx Council**

**Appendix 10 (e) - Rejection letter after final interview**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

## Date

Dear **Enter date**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Council**

### Appointment of Clerk to the Council

Thank you for attending for interview again yesterday for the above post.

Following the interview with the **xxxxxxxxxxx Sub-Committee/Selection Panel** I regret that I now have to advise you on behalf of the Council that on this occasion your application has not been successful.

I am sorry to disappoint you but the Panel had to make a difficult decision.

If you would like a personal feedback on the interview and your application, please contact me on **xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx**.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your interest in working for the Council and the time and effort put in to preparing for and attending the interview.

I wish you every success in finding a suitable appointment in the near future.

Yours sincerely

# Name

**Post Title**

**On behalf of xxxxxxxx Council**

**Appendix 10 (f) - Reference request and letter**

**Private and Confidential**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Date**

Dear **Enter date**

# Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Council - Appointment of Clerk to the Council

**Application of xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx**

**Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx** has been interviewed and offered the above post subject to receipt of satisfactory references. **He/she** has given you as a referee in support of the application and I should be pleased therefore if you would provide a reference for **him/her**.

I would be grateful in particular for your views on their suitability for the post as detailed in the Job Description and Person Specification enclosed and in particular, **his/her**

* organisational and administrative ability
* leadership and management skills
* oral and written communication skills
* committee work experience
* motivation and attitudes
* interpersonal skills
* any disciplinary or capability procedures or penalties still in operation
* anything that would adversely affect their ability to undertake the job role or which would cause difficulties for the Council.

We have the permission of this candidate to contact you and can assure you that the information provided will be treated in strict confidence.

We would be pleased to receive your response if possible by **xxxxxxxxxxxxx**. If you wish to discuss the reference please give me a ring.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you in advance for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely

## Name

**Post Title**

**On behalf of xxxxxxxx Council**

**Appendix 10 (g) – Interview Script for the post of Clerk to the Council**

**XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX COUNCIL**

## APPOINTMENT OF CLERK TO THE COUNCIL - INTERVIEW SCRIPT

**Interview Date: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx**

The following outlines a possible approach to the structure of the interview. The same format should be followed for each interview.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ACTION** | **BY WHOM?** |
| Opening the Interview* welcome and ice breaking introduction
* Panel introductions
* any further adjustments necessary?
 |  |
| Outline Interview Format* explain interview format and likely duration
* explain aim to get fuller information on candidate and ensure candidate fully understands job and challenge
* stress wish to encourage discussion
* opportunity at end for candidate to put questions
 |  |
| **Questions*** See attached list of potential questions
 |  |
| Opportunity for Employee Questions* Do you have any questions on the role or the duties required?
* Are you clear on the performance standards expected?
* Have you any questions on the terms of employment?
 |  |
| Interview Close* Are you clear about the job and the standards required and if offered the post would you accept it?
* Explain what will happen next and when decision expected.
* Thank for coming.
 |  |

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**Post-interview Action**

* Make notes on your view of each candidate immediately after the interview.
* Complete Selection Interview Assessment Matrix.
* Discuss and agree selection or need for further interview.

## Appendix 10 (h) - Specimen Questions for the post of Clerk to the Council

## XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX COUNCIL

## APPOINTMENT OF CLERK TO THE COUNCIL – QUESTIONS

**Interview Date: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx**

The following outlines a selection of potential questions to be considered for the initial interviews.

Not all questions will be needed and the Selection Panel members need to agree which may be appropriate (plus any particular questions of their own) and then who will ask each question. The same format should be used for each interview although there may be different follow up questions depending on each candidate’s responses.

# Introduction

1. Tell us briefly about your current or most recent job.
2. Why do you want to leave your current job?
3. What has attracted you to this post?
4. What do you see as the key challenges in the post for you?

# Relevant Experience and Skills

1. Tell us about your experience of formal Committee work and minute taking.
2. What do you see as the key skills and qualities needed to be successful in this job?
3. How do you feel your previous experience equips you well for this post?
4. What specific and relevant skills can you bring to this post and to benefit the Council?
5. What do you find most challenging in your current post?
6. What do you find most frustrating in your current post?
7. What examples can you give of improvements and changes at work that you have initiated?
8. How do you think the Council can engage better with the community and other relevant organisations to improve its public image?
9. Can you give an example of when you have made a significant impact at work? Probe answer with how did you achieve this?
10. Can you describe an occasion when you actively influenced events perhaps by going beyond the scope of your role? Probe answer with what was the outcome?

# Technical Knowledge and Experience

1. How do you feel about the key challenges for the Council over the next few years?
2. What role have you played in budget setting and control?
3. What do you most frequently worry about? Can you think of some specific examples from your work?
4. Are there any aspects of the job description for this post with which you do not feel completely confident?
5. Tell us about your level of IT literacy?
6. What is your experience of meeting the public and dealing with their complaints?
7. How did you feel about making presentations to groups?
8. Can you describe a recent presentation you have made and to whom?

# Management

1. What is the highest number of employees you have directly managed?
2. How would you describe your personal management style?
3. What do you regard as the key challenges in managing and motivating your staff?
4. Give an example of how you have dealt successfully with a situation when one of your staff was performing badly or just not getting the job done?
5. How do you ensure that you and your staff meet work targets and deadlines?
6. During your working life who has been your best manager and why?

# Personal Qualities

1. What personal qualities will you bring to this post to make you successful in it?
2. How do others describe you?
3. How open are you with other people?
4. What kind of first impression do you think you make on people? Probe answer with how does this change once the relationship is more established?
5. What role do you generally play in group or team situations at work? Probe answer with why do you take this role?
6. What do you think are the benefits or downside of letting people know your opinions?
7. Are there any personal traits or skills on which you could improve?
8. What would you do if the Council made a decision with which you strongly disagree?
9. Tell us how you handled, in any job, problems or pressures that tested your ability to cope.
10. How would you define success in your work?
11. When do you feel satisfied with the work that you have done?
12. What criteria do you use to decide when to call it a day at work and go home?
13. How do you achieve a work/life balance?
14. When was the last time you were under a lot of pressure at work?
15. How did you deal with the pressure of a complex workload?
16. What steps do you take to ensure that your work is of a satisfactory standard?
17. In what situations at work do you tend to react flexibly? Can you describe a specific instance of this?

# Organisation/Planning

1. Outline situations where you enjoy working in a planned way. Probe answer with when do you prefer to be spontaneous and react to circumstances as they occur?
2. How do you usually plan your work?
3. Tell us about a project for which you were responsible at work of which you are particularly proud and why?
4. What would you expect to have achieved in the post within the first three months, if appointed?

###### Personal Questions (Please enter any of your own particular questions or anything you wish to question from the candidate’s application form)

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1. ………………………………………………………………………………………………….

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**Conclusion**

1. Looking back on your career is there anything you would have done differently?
2. We are seeing a number of candidates for this post so why should we appoint you?

## Appendix 10 (i) - Specimen Questions for the post of Responsible Financial Officer

## XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX COUNCIL

## APPOINTMENT OF RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

## QUESTIONS

**Interview Date: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx**

The following list includes a selection of potential questions to be considered for the interviews.

Obviously not all questions will be needed and the Selection Panel need to agree in advance of the first interviews which may be appropriate (plus any particular questions of their own) and then who will ask each question. Once agreed the same format should be used for each interview although there may be different follow up questions depending on each candidate’s responses.

# Introduction

1. Tell us briefly about your current or most recent job.
2. What has attracted you to this post?
3. What do you see as the key challenges in the post for you?

# Relevant Technical Knowledge and Experience

1. Tell us about your range and depth of relevant financial experience in managing annual and capital budgetary expenditure and income, particularly in the public sector.
2. How do you feel your previous experience equips you well for this post?
3. What do you think are the key financial challenges for the Council over the next few years?
4. Please explain your experience of preparing management and trading accounts.
5. Please take us through your most recent budget preparation process.
6. Please outline your experience in financial forward planning, strategy and policy work.
7. What is your experience of raising finance by way of grants or sponsorship?
8. What examples can you give of improvements and changes that you have personally initiated to improve budgetary systems and/or control?
9. How do you ensure that there are adequate financial security and internal controls in place and maintained?
10. Please outline your experience of working with Internal and External Audit?
11. How do you keep up to date with the financial regulations that affect the Council?
12. Please tell us about your experience of arranging relevant insurances to cover the Council’s activities.
13. Have you ever compiled an asset register and/or terrier of Council or other property?
14. What is your experience of running a payroll and handling SSP, income tax and VAT matters?
15. Describe the criteria you use for evaluating the reliability of the financial information you receive.

# Relevant Skills

1. What specific and relevant skills can you bring to this post to benefit the Council?
2. What do you find most challenging in your current or most recent post?
3. What do you find most frustrating in your current or most recent post?
4. Can you describe an occasion when you actively influenced events at work perhaps by going beyond the scope of your role?
5. How did you feel about making a presentation to groups?
6. Can you describe a recent presentation you have made and to whom?
7. Tell us about your level of IT literacy and the computer systems and software packages with which you are particularly familiar?
8. Explain the different accounting packages you have used recently and tell me which best met your needs.
9. Tell us about a time you handled a complex financial project with a tight deadline that required precise data collection and analysis.

# Personal Qualities

1. What motivated you to establish a career in accountancy?
2. What personal qualities will you bring to this post to make you successful in it?
3. How do others describe you?
4. How open are you with other people?
5. What do you most frequently worry about? Probe answer with can you think of some specific examples from your work?
6. Describe a recent tough financial analysis problem you faced at work.
7. Give me an example of when you were not happy with the details of an established procedure and what you did about it.
8. When did you last coordinate your work with others in a team project? Probe answer with what was your most successful contribution?
9. When you are part of a team that is working exceptionally well, what do you think the reasons are for its success?
10. What do you think are the benefits or downside of letting people know your opinions?
11. Are there any personal traits or skills on which you could improve?
12. What would you do if the Council made a decision with which you strongly disagree?
13. Give me an example of how you keep track of things requiring your attention.
14. How would you define success in your work? Probe answer with when do you feel satisfied with the work that you have done?
15. How did you deal with the pressure and a complex workload?
16. How important is it to you to make very last detail correct in your work? How do you control errors in your work?
17. Are there any aspects of the job description for this post with which you do not feel completely confident?
18. What do you regard as the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the accounting profession today?

# Organisation/Planning

1. How do you usually plan your work?
2. Tell us about a single project for which you were responsible at work of which you are particularly proud and why?
3. What would you expect to have achieved in the post within the first three months, if appointed?

###### Individual Panel Member Questions (Please enter any of your own particular questions or anything you wish to question from the candidate’s application form)

1. ……………………………………………………………………………………...............

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1. ……………………………………………………………………………………...............

**Conclusion**

1. We are seeing a number of candidates for this post so why in just a few words should we appoint you?

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