

PLANNING POLICY TEAM LEADER MATERNITY COVER: APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANT

CABINET 13 SEPTEMBER 2012

Report of the: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND PLANNING

Status: For Decision

Portfolio Holder Cllr Mrs Davison.

Head of Service Group Manager Planning – Alan Dyer

Recommendation: It be RESOLVED that Tony Fullwood be appointed as a consultant to provide maternity cover for the Planning Policy Team Leader.

Background

- 1 The Planning Policy Team Leader will be on maternity leave for a year starting at the end of September. The post needs to be filled to maintain the work programme of the team which in the next year includes taking the Allocations and Development Management Plan and the CIL Charging Schedule through publication, submission and examination and also includes consultation on options for the Gypsies and Travellers Plan.
- 2 An advertisement for a one year contract for maternity cover yielded only two applications, neither of which was suitable.

Consultancy Options

- 3 The alternative of using a consultant to fill the post was then investigated and a brief based on providing the service within the available budget of £50,000 was prepared and sent to three consultants who have worked for the Council on planning policy related projects in recent years. It was considered particularly important to focus on consultants with experience of planning issues facing the District. The brief was also sent to two recruitment agencies.
- 4 The consultants approached and responses received were as follows:
- 5 Roger Tym and Partners (who prepared the original Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in 2008). Offered a “critical friend” to advise on the CIL Charging Schedule but unable to offer a Team Manager consultant.
- 6 Tony Fullwood Associates (who provided interim management and the critical friend advice on the Core Strategy between 2007 and 2009 and prepared the

Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment in 2011). Made a submission meeting the technical requirements of the brief at a cost of £49,770.

- 7 URS (who prepared the Employment Land Review in 2007 and prepared an update in 2011). No submission received.
- 8 Two CVs were received from one of the recruitment agencies. One was for a candidate who had been rejected when the job was first advertised and the other was for a candidate from outside the region with no experience of working for a District in the South East. Neither submission specifically addressed the requirements of the brief or included a commitment to work within the available budget.
- 9 The only submission meeting the requirements of the brief is from Tony Fullwood Associates. Tony Fullwood has worked with the Council before and is familiar with planning issues facing the District and the Council's programme of planning policy work. These are important advantages that would enable him to "hit the ground running". A disadvantage is that within the available budget it will only be possible for him to work three days a week and this may require a limited adjustment to the work programme.

Options (and Reasons for the Recommendation)

It is recommended that Tony Fullwood be appointed to provide the Planning Policy Team Leader Maternity Cover role for 12 months starting 1 October.

There are two alternatives which are not recommended:

1. To re-advertise the post. This would result in a delay in filling the post and offers no guarantee that any additional suitable candidates will come forward.
2. Not to fill the post. This will leave the Planning Policy team short-staffed and without an experienced team leader at an important time for plan preparation. The work programme would need to be substantially revised, delaying some or all of the plans currently under way.

Key Implications

Financial. The appointment is funded from existing budgets.

Community Impact and Outcomes. The appointment will assist in progressing planning policy documents which support the Community Strategy.

Legal, Human Rights etc. Recruitment has been carried out in accordance with the Council's procurement process.

Equality. The appointment is made solely on the basis of ability to do the job.

Risk Assessment Statement

The main risk in making the appointment is that the work programme may be delayed because the consultant will only work three days a week. This can be mitigated by reviewing the work programme at the start of the appointment, making any detailed adjustments to ensure it remains deliverable. The other options will involve greater delay

to the work programme and the adoption of key policy documents. This would pose an increased risk to the delivery of the Council's planning strategy, particularly through a greater risk of appeals being allowed due to absence of up to date local policy.

Contact Officer(s): Alan Dyer x7196.

Kristen Paterson

Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Community and Planning