

Report to Planning Scrutiny Standing Panel



SCRUTINY

Date of meeting: 18 June 2009

Subject: Recruitment to the Assistant Director (Policy and Conservation) Post



Officer contact for further information: J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development) 01992 56 4111

Committee Secretary: M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant) 01992 56 4607

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That, the Recruitment to the Assistant Director (Policy and Conservation) Post report, be noted.

Report:

At the last meeting of the Panel on 12 March 2009 the members requested that a report be put before the Panel explaining the problems encountered in recruiting for the Assistant Director (Policy and Conservation) Post. Since that meeting the Leader of the Council had agreed that the post should be advertised rather than be frozen.

The post with the amended higher grade was subsequently advertised in:

The Epping Forest Guardian on 2 April.

Opportunities on 6 and 13 April editions (a small box directed those interested to the website for fuller details.)

The "Careers for Leaders" website.

Jobcentre Plus; and

EFDC's own website and related Essex links thereto.

These routes were used to reflect the Panel's desire for a lower cost more locally focussed approach. The Panel expected that the recession, particularly since last November, would produce a significant response. However, by the closing date of 23 April, only four applications were received, all from external candidates.

One of the candidates was not judged to meet the person specification; the individual had experience as a Transport Director for a private company, but did not have the many attributes required, in particular experience of Local Planning.

Following this the Interview Panel reconvened to interview the other 3 candidates, but on receipt of the request to provide a presentation on the key threats to EFDC in delivering a Local Development Framework, one candidate dropped out.

The other two candidates were tested and interviewed in the week commencing 4 May, but unfortunately, neither persuaded the Panel that they could "hit the ground running" on the prime/essential requirement concerning the Local Development Framework.

The Interview Panel were concerned that applications did not appear to be made from those

with good detailed and recent experience, ready to take the post as the next step on their career path. This could reflect that those with such experience, who live further away, and would need to move house, are not prepared to attempt this in the present climate. However this would not explain why reasonable numbers of candidates from London, Essex or Hertfordshire, within commuting distance, have not applied.

Accordingly an approach, which is now being used, is to approach recruitment agencies to ascertain if they have potential candidates (who will meet the requirements of the person specification) this will also include the Assistant Director (Development Control) vacancy at the same time (although there are likely to be internal applicants for that post)

The continuing absence of such postholders within the Directorate plainly places constraints on the Managerial capacity of the Directorate, and puts pressure on the existing Managers therein.