

COMMITTEE: ADMINISTRATION

DATE: 10TH NOVEMBER, 2003

SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT OF 64 YEAR OLD

REPORT BY: HEAD OF PLANNING/STRATEGIC PLANNING MANAGER

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	COMMUNITY SAFETY	<input type="checkbox"/>
EQUALITIES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ENVIRONMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>
FINANCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONSULTATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>
STAFFING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OTHER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

PURPOSE

1. To authorise officers to appoint a person into a part-time temporary position as local plan programme officer who, following interview, was the preferred candidate for the post and will be 65 years old prior to the completion of the contract around December 2004.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That the Committee authorise the appointment of the preferred candidate for the post of local plan programme officer who will be 65 years old prior to the completion of the contract.

BACKGROUND

3. It is Council policy not to employ anyone over the age of 65 years without prior approval by the Council. Officers have recently interviewed for the temporary part-time post of Local Plan Programme Officer and the preferred candidate is 64 years old. He will reach 65 prior to the completion of the contract and hence the Committee's approval to appoint is now sought.

REPORT

4. The post of Local Plan Programme Officer is a requirement in the process of the preparation of the local plan. The post is a temporary one leading up to, and during, the local plan inquiry. The officer undertakes various necessary administrative tasks (including the preparation of a library, the collection and distribution of documents and the time-tabling of the inquiry itself. During the

inquiry the officer is the go-between for the Inspector and both the public and planning officers such that the Inspector can be seen to maintain his/her impartiality. It is therefore a very specialised role. The post is generally part-time, increasing to full-time immediately before and during the course of the inquiry. Given the relatively short-term nature of the post (9-12 months) it is important to retain one officer in post for the duration.

5. Officers recently interviewed three candidates for the post. All three were found to be acceptable and the preferred candidate had the advantage of having undertaken the task before for another authority. The candidate had a letter of commendation from the inspector at the time. A telephone conversation with the relevant officer at the authority revealed that he had performed the task to a very high standard. It was explained that the post would start probably in February 2004 and terminate by the end of the calendar year. Prior to the interview, officers were aware that the candidate would reach the age of 65 in March 2004. When asked if he would be willing to work beyond the accepted retirement age, he confirmed that he was willing to do so.
6. The candidate has subsequently been offered the job verbally and has accepted. He understands that the offer is subject to approval by Committee and by the union because the post would require him to work past his 65th birthday. A Unison representative has indicated verbally that the union would have no objection to the appointment. This is to be confirmed in an exchange of letters.
7. Members will be aware that the government is looking to change legislation to outlaw age discrimination by October 2006.

OPTIONS

8. The only alternative to appointing the preferred candidate is to attempt to appoint the second (or, if necessary) third choice candidate. Whilst officers consider that both other candidates could do the job sufficiently well, neither has experience of exactly what this specialised job entails and would therefore take longer to train.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9. The Council need to agree to authorise the appointment given that it would involve him working for the Council at the age of 65.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10. Currently none, although not to appoint on the basis of age would be contrary to the manner in which legislation is expected to change in the relatively near future.

STAFFING

11. An important temporary specialist post would be filled by a very willing, capable and experienced individual.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

12. There are no background papers relating to this report.