



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Recruitment of Director of Property and Projects
Date:	23 October 2009
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Jill Minne, Head of HR, extension 3220

Relevant Background Information

On 4 September 2009, the Committee agreed that a future report would be submitted to members on the proposed recruitment process for the Director of Property and Projects post following work on the job description and grading and clarification on the RPA Vacancy Control procedure.

Members were subsequently advised on 9 October 2009 that the RPA Vacancy Control procedure came into effect on 1 October 2009 in respect of Chief Executive, Director, Head of Service, PA and Members' Services posts. This means that the Council must consider trawling any vacancies it has for such posts to the appropriate 'at risk' pool to mitigate against possible redundancies within the sector.

The at risk pools contained in the procedure are as follows:

- within the individual council;
- within the amalgamated council cluster
- within all 26 councils
- across all the sectors in the RPA Affected Group.

Each vacancy must be looked at individually in the circumstances of the case, but as Members are aware the practical implications of implementing this scheme in Belfast City Council differ to the other local authorities as we do not have the same degree of risk as amalgamated council clusters. Also, the final definition of 'at risk' is still the subject of ongoing discussion within the Local Government Joint Reform Forum. Consequently, it was agreed that advice should be sought from the LGSC in relation to the filling of director posts within Belfast City Council.

Key Issues

The LGSC's view is that in its broadest definition Belfast City Council is listed as one of the RPA Affected Bodies and as such posts can be considered to be potentially at risk. A vacancy therefore for one of the aforementioned posts could be trawled within Belfast City Council at present, this being the first step in the process. Alternatively should the Council consider the risk to Belfast City Council employees to be sufficiently minimal to move to the next pool then it is the LGSC's view that the post should be trawled to the 26 local authorities. The LGSC has advised that it considers each option to be acceptable in terms of implementing the agreed Vacancy Control procedure and in terms of equality considerations represents a "proportionate means

of achieving a legitimate aim” i.e. making every possible effort to avoid redundancies as accepted and endorsed by the NI Executive.

Members should note that should no suitable candidate be appointed from the agreed trawl consideration must then be given to moving to the next pool before advertising externally.

Recommendations

Following consultation with the LGSC members are asked to decide whether they wish to trawl within Belfast City Council or the 26 local authorities in the first instance.

It is recommended that:

- (i) the vacancy is trawled within the Council / 26 local councils on 26 October for 2 weeks with a closing date of 6 November 2009;
- (ii) application forms are short-listed on 11 November 2009;
- (iii) short-listed candidates are invited to attend an assessment centre on 13 November 2009; and
- (iv) the panel interviews are held on 16 November 2009;

It is also recommended that the selection panel comprise the Chair and Deputy Chair (or their nominees) and another member of the Committee, along with the Chief Executive and another chief officer. The entire panel needs to be representative of gender and community background. An observer from the LGSC and a professional assessor will also be in attendance but with no voting rights. Finally, it is recommended, in the interests of making an early appointment, that in consultation with the selection panel the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to offer the post to the recommended candidate with the outcome being reported for notation.

Decision Tracking

The outcome of the recruitment process will be reported to committee on 11 December 2009

Key to Abbreviations

LGSC = Local Government Staff Commission