

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 19 AUGUST 2006

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

8. REVIEW OF ADVERTISING CONTRACT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: NONE

'D' RECOMMENDATION - that the process and timetable for review of the Council's advertising contract, as detailed in the report now submitted, be agreed.

1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an outline process and analysis for reviewing the Council's current advertising arrangements, provide Members with a suggested timetable for this process and invite a Member to participate in the process

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Corporate Objectives

2.1 Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.

3.0 Background

3.1 Historically East Herts have had an agreement with TMP which has meant that all the Council's advertising is delivered through this agency. This includes recruitment advertising and statutory notices.

3.2 The contractual arrangement between East Herts and TMP has expired. TMP has not attempted to review this arrangement. The Council should now seek tenders for the provision of advertising services. This will provide an opportunity to review the service and demonstrate value for money and ensure an appropriate standard of service.

3.3 Research has been undertaken to identify what other local authorities are doing in terms of advertising. This has identified that there is a project within Hertfordshire, where some District Councils

have begun to consider linking together to purchase the services of an advertising agency, while others have reduced their spend on national advertising and moved towards the greater use of local press and job centres. Neither of these options provides the Council with the outcome suitable for East Herts. The 'shared partnership' approach is targeting only large advertising agencies, while the Council should consider agencies across the board because this enables the Council to be bigger clients to the smaller agencies. This should result in a better service. The second approach is not appropriate because as part of this review the Council wishes to look at the benefits and challenges of advertising locally and nationally

- 3.4 The Council's spend analysis on recruitment advertising last year is set out below. This seems a large figure for an organisation the size of East Herts and includes advertising of statutory notices for Development Control and car parking which account for most of the spend. Coupled with this, recruitment advertising is simply not working for hard to fill posts.

Spend analysis	£
Expenses	973.26
Hayes Group Management	1,966.93
Craven Publishing	995.00
Hayes Executive	30,481.33
Roebuck Hotel	3,366.10
SOLACE	31,701.19
Bartlett Scott	11,755.01
TMP	58,431.43
	139,670.25

4.0 Report

- 4.1 Given the background on this issue Heads of Services were consulted to determine their advertising requirements. The list of responses is attached as Appendix 'A8' (page 8.4).
- 4.2 It is suggested that a formal tendering process is undertaken for the appointment of a new advertising agency. It is proposed that the selection panel will consist of Director of Corporate Governance (as Chairman), a member of this Committee, the Head of Human Resources and another Head of Service.
- 4.3 As the Council no longer has a contract with TMP there is no need to continue using their services in the interim period. Local networks have been identified on recommendations from neighbouring authorities to enable the Council to use these agencies on a one off

basis. This exercise will also be used to inform the formal tendering process.

4.4 Timetable

It is proposed that the tendering process commences in November 2006, contract award in February and appointment the successful agency with effect from 1 April 2007

5.0 Consultation

5.1 This process does not require consultation with the Trade Union.

6.0 Legal Implications

The Council will need to comply with its tendering procedures and enter into a contract with the successful tenderer.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 Potential Gershon savings.

8.0 Human Resource Implications

8.1 It is important that we attract and retain good quality staff to provide excellent services to the community. The Council needs to ensure that it is promoting the organisation in the best possible light to enable the Council to become an employer of choice. This is particularly true in the case of hard to recruit to posts, where the Council is often in competition with other employers. As part of this review the project team will be examining the Council's advertising style, and accompanying literature, to assist with promoting East Herts in a positive way and also identifying a unique selling point (USP).

9.0 Risk Management Implications

6.1 Failure to attract key staff can have a detrimental impact on service delivery.

Contact Member: Cllr A Jackson – Leader of the Council

Contact Officers: Simon Drinkwater (Director of Corporate Governance – ext 2003) and Tina Nash (Head of Human Resources – ext 1635)

What we expect from an Advertising Agency:

- Cost effective, eye catching ads
- Something that sells the organisation i.e. what is our unique selling point (USP), why should people work here and not for the next district along?
- Good quality recruitment literature which supports our USP
- Targeted recruitment, particularly for hard to fill posts
- Other options for filling posts
- Better use of e-recruitment
- Better corporate ID
- Target recruitment more effectively, get to the people who aren't actively looking
- Need to identify what the public think are our strengths and focus on them
- Ad agency needs to be accurate
- Needs to get effective brief from line manager/person leaving to enable effective/targeted advertising
- No point in paying agency if all they do is re-write what the line manager has written
- Research into why people don't apply to come here for professional roles