

**North York Moors National Park Authority  
Finance, Risk Audit and Standards Committee**

**4 September 2017**

**Appointment of Conservation Architect**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To notify Members of the decision to directly appoint a Conservation Architect to the vacant position of Building Conservation Officer.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the Authority's internal employment policies state that we will ensure that all vacant posts will be advertised both internally and externally in the first instance unless there are sound reasons not to do so. If any other circumstances arise which appear to justify no external advertising of a post, the Chair of FRASC should be consulted before any further action is taken by Officers, and the decision of the Chair should be reported to the next meeting of that committee.
- 2.2 In this case, a vacancy for a qualified and experienced Building Conservation Officer on a 0.4 part time basis has arisen and to cover this over the short term period we have been using a conservation architect on a consultancy basis to provide advice to both planning officers and members of the public on proposals affecting historic buildings.
- 2.3 Various options for staffing the building conservation team (which amounts to 1.2fte) have been looked at, but the most favoured and effective option is to appoint the existing Conservation Architect Consultant as a permanent employee on a 0.4 part time basis to complement the existing conservation officer (0.6) and conservation assistant (0.2).

**3. Justification**

- 3.1 The reasons for not subjecting this post to full competitive recruitment are:
- Difficulty in recruiting – experience from other local authorities in the region (e.g. York, Hambleton, Yorkshire Dales) shows that, in common with other planning professionals at present, it is difficult to recruit due to a number of factors, but mainly the ongoing shift of resources in planning and related professions from the public to the private sector. Finding a suitably qualified and experienced building conservation officer for a 0.4 part time post as opposed to a full time one is likely to narrow the potential field further;
  - The preferred candidate is known to the Authority and has been “tried and tested” over a six month period working for the Authority, and has dealt expertly with a range of complex legal, historic building matters in his role as a contractor;
  - Additional sought after skills and significant experience would be brought to the building conservation team by this appointment, including design and conservation architectural skills;
  - Officers consider that this option would re-build the team with a single manager (the existing building conservation officer) and create a strong and effective team from the outset;

- The required skills and qualifications for this post do not exist within the Authority currently, so there are no potential suitable internal candidates for this position.

3.2 In summary, this decision has been made in the interests of getting the best option for the Authority to enable it to carry out the conservation and enhancement of the Cultural Heritage of the National Park and it was not considered a sensible use of public money to advertise the position.

#### 4. **Financial and Legal Implications**

4.1 There are no Standing Orders or Employment Law matters which need to be taken into account and the budget for this position is already agreed.

#### 5. **Staffing Implications**

5.1 This will complete the established and agreed level of staff resources to ensure the Authority can undertake part of its first purpose work in an effective and efficient manner

#### 6. **Recommendation**

6.1 That Members note the decision of the Chair of FRASC and the reasoned justification for this course of action.

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**Background papers to this Report**

**File ref**