

RECRUITMENT OF HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER – MARKET FACTOR SUPPLEMENT

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Cath Giel
LEAD OFFICER: Len Gleed, HR Manager
REPORT AUTHOR: Len Gleed, HR Manager

Summary and Recommendation:

The Council is experiencing difficulty in replacing its Health & Safety Officer, and there is evidence that the current salary offer is below the market rate for appropriately qualified and experienced professionals

The Panel is requested to agree that the post should be re-advertised with the addition of a Market Factor Supplement of up to 4 Spinal Column Points.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council's Health & Safety Officer post has been vacant since the end of September 2007, and has been covered by the employment of an interim Health & Safety Adviser.
- 1.2 When the vacancy initially arose, discussions were held with Allerdale Borough Council regarding the possibility of a shared service arrangement. However, the respective line managers felt that their organisation was at a stage in its development in which each needed a full-time resource to progress its in-house health and safety agenda.
- 1.3 An alternative approach based on the "grow your own" philosophy has also been considered. It would be possible to advertise internally for existing employees with an interest in health and safety to take a "trainee" role and study for the professional qualification. However, such an arrangement would require significant support from a qualified professional during the training phase and beyond. It is believed that the continuing need for rapid improvement in the Council's performance in the sphere of health and safety requires a post holder who can be fully operational and effective in the short and medium term.

2. PERSON SPECIFICATION

- 2.1 The Council has a wide range of business activities, from office-based jobs to higher risk areas such as open spaces and waste management, and the in-house health and safety officer has an important role in both helping to ensure the health and safety of the workforce, and protecting the Council from breaches of the law.

- 2.2 The Job Profile and Person Specification for the post are attached as Appendix 1. An IOSH professional qualification is specified as essential. As can be seen from the guide to health and safety qualifications attached as Appendix 2, the “Grad IOSH” or NEBOSH National Diploma qualification are seen to be appropriate requirements for “full-time safety practitioners who have a substantial degree of personal responsibility and autonomy.”

3. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

- 3.1 The post was initially advertised in local and specialist media in September 2007 with a salary offer of up to £27,000 per annum (pay award pending and subject to job evaluation). Only 3 candidates who were in any way suitable were short-listed and interviewed at the end of October 2007, but none was found to be suitable.
- 3.2 A further unsuccessful round of advertising followed in January 2008. No suitable candidates came forward.
- 3.3 It was then decided to attempt to recruit through specialist health and safety Internet-based agencies. Several candidates have been put forward through this route, but many were found to be light on both qualifications and experience. Only one, who did not have the level of qualification preferred, was interviewed, and was found to be too inexperienced.

4. SALARY OFFER

- 4.1 This post has traditionally been graded SO1/SO2. For 2008/9, this carries a salary range of £24,331 to £28,270 per annum.
- 4.2 Following the recent job evaluation project, the current pay and grading proposals position the post in Grade 9, with an annual salary starting at £25,146 and rising to the same maximum of £28,270.

5. MARKET RATES

- 5.1 The previous post-holder who left at the end of September 2007 had been made redundant from a private sector post and accepted a significant reduction in salary to take the Copeland post. He was willing at the time to accept the reduction in the light of other personal benefits which the post offered, but as time went on, the reduction became more difficult to accommodate.
- 5.2 The market salaries offered for health and safety professionals vary considerably, but it is clear that those with Grad IOSH or equivalent qualifications can command salaries of at least £30,000.

5.3 The Local Government Analysis & Research Survey's Market Pay Service shows a median minimum salary of £27,506 and a median maximum of £31,391 for this type of post at 2008/9 prices.

5.4 The comparative rates paid currently to equivalent posts in other Cumbrian authorities are:

Allerdale BC	SCP 38	£31,348
Barrow BC	SCP38-41	£31,348 - £34,107
Carlisle City	SCP 35 -38	£28,862 - £31,348
South Lakeland DC	SCP 34 - 39	£28,270 - £32,380

5.5 A selection of typical current salary offers for similar posts is attached as Appendix 3

5.6 The Panel previously agreed to the creation of a Market Factor Supplement Policy (attached as Appendix 4) to overcome this type of problem.

6. FINANCE

6.1 Any increase in the salary for this post would be paid for out of the already agreed budget for the Pay and Grading Review.

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 The Council has a past history of difficulties in achieving the required standards of in-house health and safety performance, and there is clearly an on-going need for sound professional advice and leadership in this field. In view of the strong evidence that the level of salary currently on offer is making it impossible to fill the vacancy at the current rate, the Panel is requested to agree to apply a Market Factor Supplement of up to 4 Spinal Column Points. This would take the offered salary range to £28,270 to £31,348 per annum which appears to be in line with minimum market expectations.

List of Appendices

- Appendix 1 Health & Safety Officer Job Profile
- Appendix 2 Guide to Health & Safety Qualifications
- Appendix 3 Sample of market salaries
- Appendix 4 Market Factor Policy

List of Consultees: Corporate Team
Cllr C Giel
Trades Unions