

**TO: EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
20 JUNE 2012**

**SOUTH HILL PARK – PROJECT MANAGER POST
(Director of Environment Culture and Communities)**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** This report seeks approval to the redundancy of a Project Manager in the Leisure & Culture division of the Environment Culture and Communities directorate.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1** That the Employment Committee approve the deletion of the post identified in Exempt Appendix A with effect from 31 July 2012 and authorises the payment for the redundancy from the Capital Programme; the pension costs will be met from the Structural Changes Reserve Fund.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1** The completion of the South Hill Park restoration works means there will no longer be the need for a Project Manager post.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1** To keep the post on the permanent establishment. This would not be required operational nor be financially viable as there is no more grant funding available.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1** South Hill Park is a 23 hectare Grade II Registered Park of Special Historic Interest located to the south of Bracknell town centre. The former mansion and associated walls, steps, piers and gates are also Grade II listed. The combination of an important designed landscape with an Arts Centre created an excellent opportunity to enhance the public enjoyment of a mix of heritage and modern creativity.

In 2004, the Council was successful in securing Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) support (Project Planning Grant) to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for South Hill Park. A major review was carried out as part of the preliminary stages of plan preparation, including extensive consultation with a wide range of interested bodies, groups and individuals.

- 5.2** In accordance with Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)/Big Lottery Fund rules, projects of this scale have to be delivered through a two-stage process. A Stage One bid was made to the "Parks for People" programme in September 2007. This was successful and a Stage One pass was awarded in April 2008 which funded the detailed design and costing work. A sum of £298,000 was allocated as the Stage One costs and a grant of 70% (£210,000) was provided. Stage One was successfully completed in March 2009.

Unrestricted

The detailed scheme was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund as a Stage Two application in March 2009. A Grant award of £2.3m was confirmed by the HLF to implement the landscape restoration works at South Hill Park, together with access improvements and conservation of heritage features.

- 5.3 The Project Manager post was therefore appointed in July 2008 on a time limited basis of 4 years to manage the landscape restoration of South Hill Park, with an expectation that the works phase was to be completed in 2012. The post has focused on co-ordinating the landscape restoration project with key duties including research, design, arranging and supervising tenders/contracts, consultation and promotional work.
- 5.4 The completed restoration work has been delivered to a very high standard. Large scale woodland management and extensive replanting have been undertaken. Views and vistas have been opened up and woodland walks and trails have been identified and waymarked, with great community involvement. A thriving Friends Group and conservation volunteer groups will work closely to ensure the well being of the parkland well into the future under the guidance of a dedicated park manager and gardener. The work of the Project Manager is now, however, at an end.
- 5.5 This employee was originally appointed in October 2001 as the Lily Hill Park Project Officer, where he remained until he was appointed as the South Hill Park Project Manager in July 2008. The South Hill Park Project Manager post was a fixed-term appointment and, at the time of recruitment the postholder was clearly the best candidate so was appointed. As he was already employed by the Council, he had almost 7 years service at the start of this appointment. He was therefore legally a permanent employee and was accordingly issued with a permanent contract of employment. Therefore for this termination process the Council's normal Redundancy Handling Procedure is being followed rather than the End of a Fixed Term Contract Procedure which only requires the Chairman's authorisation. That is the reason it is now a matter for the Employment Committee to determine.
- 5.6 As the postholder has been employed to deliver capital schemes and has been working on this project for some time the Accounting Code of Practice allows the cost of redundancy to be funded through the Council's Capital Budget (approved contribution to the South Hill Park project). However, the capitalised cost of pension will need to be met from the Structural Changes Fund in accordance with the required accounting rules.

6. ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

6.1 Borough Solicitor

Nothing to add.

6.2 Borough Treasurer

This post was funded by a combination of HLF grant and the Council's capital programme; no future provision for funding has been made. The funding of the redundancy and capitalised pension costs is set out in paragraph 5.6.

6.3 Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Principal Groups Consulted

In accordance with the Council's Organisational Change Protocol.

7.2 Representations Received

None received.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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