

DIRECTOR DECISION – DD 163

Title: Public Practice Placement Fees

Executive summary

Established by the Mayor of London, Public Practice is a non-profit organisation that recruits built environment professionals for roles within local government. The aim is to support local government with the skills to enable it to genuinely thrive; by improving leadership skills through training and support to enable candidates to navigate the complexity of this sector. OPDC applied to the Programme in December 2021 to fill two vacancies: a Principal Urban Designer and an Infrastructure Manager. Both roles were successfully filled by candidates identified by Public Practice in February 2022. The placement fee is £5,000 for each 12-month placement and an additional £2,000 for a permanent recruitment. Having secured the Infrastructure Manager permanently, the total fee owing to Public Practice is £12,000. This decision seeks approval for expenditure of £2,000 for the additional fee due to Public Practice. The cumulative spend with Public Practice is £12,000 to date this financial year.

Decision

The Director approves:

- i. Expenditure of £2,000 for the permanent recruitment of one Public Practice Associate as OPDC's Infrastructure Manager, taking total spend in financial year 22-23 to £12,000.

Authorising Director

I do not have any disclosable interest in the proposed Decision. It is consistent with OPDC's priorities and has my approval.

Signature:



Date: 23 November 2022

PART 1: NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

1. Background and context

- 1.1 Established by the Mayor of London, Public Practice is a non-profit organisation that recruits built environment professionals for roles within local government. The aim is to support local government with the skills to enable it to genuinely thrive; by improving leadership skills through training and support to enable candidates to navigate the complexity of this sector.
- 1.2 Public Practice run a successful recruitment support programme – known as the Associate Programme – where built environment practitioners, in the middle stages of their career and looking for a career change, are placed into public sector organisations looking for new skills and expertise.
- 1.3 Having successfully secured placements via the Associate Programme in the past (a number of whom were subsequently recruited permanently), OPDC applied to the Programme in December 2021 to fill two vacancies: a Principal Urban Designer and an Infrastructure Manager.
- 1.4 Both roles were successfully filled by OPDC, by candidates identified by Public Practice, during February 2022.
- 1.5 Authorities are required to pay a one-off placement fee to Public Practice upon entering into a contract with a successful candidate. The placement fee is £5,000 for each 12-month placement and an additional £2,000 for a permanent recruitment.
- 1.6 DAR 363 secured approval for expenditure of £10,000 to Public Practice for these two roles as, at the time of recruitment, it was anticipated that both candidates would join OPDC on a 12-month placement basis. However, in May 2022, the Infrastructure Manager joined OPDC as permanent employee which incurred an additional fee of £2,000 over and above the expenditure approved in DAR 363. The cumulative spend this financial year is £12,000.
- 1.7 This decision seeks approval for expenditure of £2,000 for the additional professional fee (being the difference between the £5,000 twelve-month placement and the £7,000 permanent recruitment fees).

2. The proposal and how it will be delivered

- 2.1 OPDC applied to the Associate Programme in December 2021 and participated in the following stages of the recruitment process:
 - Initial expressions of interest – including a job description of the available roles
 - Candidate assessment day
 - Meetings with ‘matched’ candidates
 - Confirmation of offers

- 2.2 As previously highlighted, placement fees to secure successful candidates range from £5,000 to £7,000, depending on placement type and duration.

3. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 3.1 The objective of the recruitment campaign was to secure candidates to fill two vacancies: a Principal Urban Designer and an Infrastructure Manager.
- 3.2 The outcome has been an increase in OPDC's in house skills and experience in technical infrastructure planning and delivery as well as urban design and place making.

4. Strategic fit

- 4.1 The recruitment of both posts supports OPDC's vision to deliver its regeneration objectives for Old Oak West.

5. Project governance and assurance

- 5.1 The Director of Projects led the recruitment campaign, working closely with the Director of Development, the Head of Design, and the Human Resources team.

6. Equality comments

- 6.1 Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, OPDC must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation as well as the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.¹
- 6.2 The Public Practice application process is specifically designed to attract and assess a diverse range of candidates using innovative and inclusive recruitment methods. The process is thorough and takes up to six months. Public Practice commits to:
- Removing as much bias as possible during the recruitment process, which is why most of the recruitment campaigns are anonymised.
 - Valuing colleagues who are adaptable, take initiative and believe in the mission and inclusive ethos.
 - Caring about whether candidates can do the job and become a collaborative colleague; and

¹ The protected characteristics and groups are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and marriage/ civil partnership status. Fulfilling this duty involves having due regard to: the need to remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share a protected characteristic or one that is connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the different needs of such people; and encouraging them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low. Compliance with the Equality Act may involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without the characteristic. The duty must be exercised with an open mind and at the time a Decision is taken in the exercise of the OPDC's functions.

- Placing an emphasis on ensuring consistency and fairness in the assessment of candidates.

7. Conflicts of interest

- 7.1 No-one involved in the preparation or clearance of this for, or its substantive proposal, has any conflict of interest.

8. Financial comments

- 8.1 The expenditure will be met from the 2023/23 Delivery Directorate Budget.

9. Legal comments

- 9.1 There are no legal implications arising from this decision.

Appendices

- DAR 363

Other supporting papers

- None

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Information in this Form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA). OPDC aims to publish the Form within three working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the Decision (for example, impacting a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date (when it will be published). Deferral periods are kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Part 1 – Deferral

Publication of this Part 1 is to be deferred: **No**

The deferral is until: N/A

This is because: N/A

Part 2 – Confidential information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in or attached to any separate Part 2 Form, together with the rationale for withholding the information at this time.

There is a separate and confidential Part 2 Form: **No**

DECLARATIONS

Drafting officer: Davena Wilson has drafted this Form in accordance with OPDC procedures, including for handling conflicts of interests, and confirms that:



Advice: The Finance team have commented on the proposal.



CONFIRMATIONS

Section 106 funding: This use of S106 to fund the expenditure proposal was approved via a Section 106 spend proposal form on N/A

SMT review: This Decision was circulated to the **Senior Management Team** for review on Monday 21 November 2022.

Chief Finance Officer

Financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this Form.

Signature: 

Date: 23.11.2022