

Selection process for key civic post referred to auditor

Councillor's son given £60k job without an interview



HAPPY FAMILY Councillor Eudine Hanagan with her son Christian.

A COUNCIL was today forced to explain why the son of a cabinet member was given a key job without any interviews being held.

Christian Hanagan, whose mother Eudine is Rhondda Cynon Taf council's executive member for transport and better public services, was appointed the authority's head of strategy in May 2006.

It has since emerged the post was not advertised and no other candidates were considered.

The authority today refused to detail Mr Hanagan's salary, but the Echo believes it to be about \$60,000.

His responsibilities include managing the council's press office, civic relations and "key projects or initiatives as directed by the chief executive".

The council insists Mr Hanagan, who until May 2006 was personal assistant to Labour council leader Russell Roberts, was merely given a new title and extra responsibilities.

Coun Roberts represents Tonyrefail East and Coun Hanagan the neigh-

Ben Glaze

bouring ward of Tonyrefail West.

A Liberal Democrat councillor has called for an investigation into how Mr Hanagan was appointed.

Mike Powell, who represents Pontypridd, said: "It seems to me there's too much of this 'slotting into position' on a higher pay scale than people started on. How can you go from assistant to the leader to head of strategy without an interview?"

"I'm going to ask the district auditor to look at it because there's an awful lot of public money at stake."

In the 2004 council elections Mr Hanagan stood as a Labour candidate for Llanharry. He lost by 49 votes to Plaid candidate Vyv Williams.

Mr Hanagan has also worked in politics in Cardiff Bay for three years, including as a researcher for Swansea West Labour AM Andrew Davies.

The original RCT council job Mr Hanagan applied for, and got, was advertised.

The University of Glamorgan graduate, who studied public relations as part of his degree, beat three other shortlisted candidates at interview. He declared his relationship to his mother and she took no part in the process.

RCT council today defended Mr Hanagan's appointment but admitted his latest job was not advertised.

In a statement, it said: "During 2005 Mr Hanagan was assigned additional responsibilities over and above his original post by the chief executive.

"The post was not created as an additional post but was in fact an amalgamation of the previous role of

personal assistant to the leader and the increased duties and responsibilities that were assigned to the post during 2005.

"These were subsequently agreed and accepted by the holder of the position of PA to the leader of the council, who commenced working as head of strategy on May 1, 2006.

"Such practice is not unusual. As the council evolves over time, so inevitably will the duties attached to individual officers' posts."

Mr Hanagan was unavailable for comment.

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