

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Employment Committee
Date:	22 June 2023
Subject:	Temporary Workers Report
Chief Officer:	Sarah Hayward
Contact Officer:	Surjit Nagra Associate Director - HR; Belinda Collins – Interim Group Manager – HR; Adrian Thomson - Interim Recruitment Lead
Ward(s):	All
Exempt:	No
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Summary of specific types of roles of all agency/temporary workers Appendix 2 – Performance KPIs

1. Summary and Recommendation

1.1 This report presents Committee Members with information from the last financial year on the Council's use of temporary / agency workers engaged within the different directorates.

Recommendation:

Committee is recommended to:

- Review and note the contents of this report.

Commissioner Review

Commissioner comments have been included in the papers.

2. Report

Introductory paragraph

- 2.1 The recruitment of a skilled workforce is essential for the Council to deliver its services. The recruitment market is challenging and requires specialist skills to attract talented staff and to do this in a timely manner to avoid service delivery being impacted.
- 2.2 Temporary workers are used by the Council to provide short-term and in some cases long-term resources to fill absences, vacancies and add capacity to deal with peaks in workflow. There is a further need to engage with highly skilled professionals who can enable the authority to fill skills gaps, work on fixed term projects and add an external perspective to the management of the organisation. The use of agency workers can be a cost-effective way of dealing with peaks and troughs of work and does provide flexibility that a permanent workforce cannot.
- 2.3 Due to the ongoing difficulties over the last few years, the council have had to rely on temporary workers to fill key roles. Some of these placements have been extended on numerous occasions due to available skills in the market for example Social Workers, Finance, Planners, Occupational Therapist, ICT & HR Staff. Slough also has additional pressures due to the geographical location and competition with other local authorities and private sector.

3. Background & Actions

- 3.1 This report covers details the spend and usage of Agency /Temporary workers over the last financial year broken down into 4 quarters for the Council, as follows:
 - Quarter 1 – 1st April – 30th June 2022
 - Quarter 2 – 1st July – 30th September 2022
 - Quarter 3 – 1st October – 31st December 2022
 - Quarter 4 – 1st January – 31st March 2023
- 3.2 It is important to acknowledge that the Council has during the last financial year, once again, gone through a significant change. This has included organisational change programmes in Finance and ICT; key permanent appointments being made into the Corporate Leadership Team (including the permanent appointment of the Chief Executive). It has also required to have specialist skilled personnel to be engaged in services such as Finance to support stabilising the service due to the impact of the Our Futures Programme.
- 3.3 Below is detailed the spend for each quarter of the last financial year (2022/2023) in the directorates. Please note the directorates and some of the services moved during the year so the spend in the directorates may not be reflective of the actual spend. For example, Finance and Commercial Services became a separate

directorates part way through the last financial year and previously were identified as Corporate Resources.

Directorate	Quarter	Net Spend
Chief Executive	1	£182,118
	2	£166,148
	3	£180,359
	4	£132,852
	Total	£661,477
Corporate Ops	1	£2,050,768
	2	£2,536,463
	3	£3,127,906
	4	£2,939,565
	Total	£10,654,702
Finance & Resources	1	£224
	2	£35,913
	3	£101,624
	4	£130,884
	Total	£268,645
People Adults	1	£876,140
	2	£927,472
	3	£1,262,989
	4	£1,556,425
	Total	£4,623,026
People Children	1	£181,549
	2	£136,974
	3	£99,508
	4	£147,995
	Total	£566,026
Place	1	£820,241
	2	£1,021,309
	3	£1,100,737
	4	£1,125,701
	Total	£4,067,988
Regeneration	1	£32,500
	2	£29,423
	3	£35,553
	4	£21,061
	Total	£118,537
Transformation	4	£44,634
	Total	£44,634
Grand Total		£21,005,035

The above demonstrates the spend has been high within the Corporate / Finance and Resources areas, with People (Adults) being the next highest users of Agency / temporary workers. As a comparator the spend for the previous year totalled £15 million. The increase of spend is attributable to the increase in spend in the corporate services where the executive category increased. The executive category includes specialised / difficult to recruit roles such as financial, project workers, planners and ICT.

- 3.4 Future reports will be twice yearly and show information on quarterly data.
- 3.5 The turnover of staff continues in the current financial position of the council impacting key skilled roles. Turnover has fluctuated during the last year but remains high. The overall assessment of turnover has been between 19 and 25%. For a workforce of @ 1000 employees this churn does increase the demand on temporary resource. Therefore, the need to engage temporary / agency worker/s to maintain critical council functions is ongoing. The last year has required significant investment in some services to create capacity and improve services, such as Finance and ICT.
- 3.6 It should however be noted that the usage of agency worker demand varies from service to service. Some front-line services require urgent day to day coverage for sickness and other employee absence. Some agency workers will be longer term cover whilst permanent recruitment is taking place and some agency workers are retained longer due to the high level of skill gaps in the labour market.
- 3.7 If the council has good agency workers in areas where it is a long-term challenge there will be some long-term placements.
- 3.8 Agency placements by Job category includes:

Job Titles	Summary of placement numbers
Admin & Clerical	92
Catering / Hospitality	3
Driving	1
Education including Early Years	54
Engineering & Surveying	4
Executive	206
Facilities & Environmental Services	2
Financial	12
Housing	32
Housing, Benefits & Planning	17
Human Resources	2
IT	17
Management	5
Manual Labour	125
Planning	7
Revenues / Benefits	18

Social & Healthcare Non-Qualified	15
Social & Healthcare Qualified	71
Grand Total	683

- 3.9 The council has implemented an additional check to ensure that agency workers are correctly allocated the IR35 status in relation to taxation.
- 3.10 HR continues to work with managers to support the longer-term aim to reduce the spend on agency workers. Additionally, the council is investing in an applicant tracking system to improve recruitment timelines and slicker process for permanent recruitment.

4. **Implications of the Recommendation**

4.1 *Financial implications*

Whilst the spend on agency worker demand remains high, the reasons for using agency staff is not currently recorded post by post. Comparison against the expected salary budgets as opposed to the potential premium of using agency spend has not been recorded throughout the year and so the full picture of the value for money of agency usage is not currently known. The focus by hiring managers should be about the appropriate use of agency workers, so for example there will be incidences where permanent staff undertaking time limited projects would not be appropriate or where agency staff are used to manage fluctuating levels of demand instead of paying overtime, which may actually be more expensive.

The identified spend of £21m in 2022 – 2023 is for the full financial year and councillors may wish to consider the breakdown of costs they would like to see in the future about agency usage so appropriate data can be collated.

4.2 *Legal implications*

There are no anticipated legal implications from this report.

4.3 *Risk management implications*

Key risk for the council is the inability to deliver services were skills shortage and turnover of staff are creating gaps, which must be filled with the short-term use of agency / temporary workers. As a long-term issue this risk also must be balanced against the over reliance of agency workers and the longer-term use of agency workers where recruitment to permanent roles is unsuccessful.

4.4 *Environmental implications*

There are no environmental implications from this report.

4.5 *Equality implications*

The equalities data is held by individual agencies and managed accordingly. This data is not held by the council.

4.6 *Workforce implications*

There are no implications for permanent staff. Priority is given to any staff member that is displaced to apply for any suitable vacant posts where they have transferrable skills.

5. Appendices

Attached to this report are two appendices. The first covers a summary of the use of temporary agency workers and the second covers the management of Key Performance Indicators against the current temporary labour contract.

Appendix 1 – Summary of specific types of roles of all agency/temporary workers (brackets represent no of agency)

Job Title	Job Category	Services	Directorate
Support Worker (Level 2)	Social & Healthcare Non-Qualified	Adult Social Care Operations	People (Adults)
Qualified Social Worker (Level 7)	Social & Healthcare Qualified	Adult Social Care Operations	People (Adults)
Lateral Flow Programme Manager (1)	Public Health	Public Health	People (Adults)
Group Manager	Social & Healthcare Qualified	Adult Social Care Operations	People (Adults)
CONTACT TRACER COVID-19 (5)	Public Health	Public Health	People (Adults)
Long-term Occupational Therapist Practice Manager (2) OT Standby Level 7 – (7)	Social & Healthcare Qualified	Adult Social Care Operations	People (Adults)
General Support Assistant	Admin & Clerical	Children, Learning and Skills	People (Children)
Early Years Practitioner (11)	Education including Early Years	Children, Learning and Skills	People (Children)
Planning & Strategy (3)	Housing, Benefits & Planning	Building Management	Regeneration
Planning Officer (Level 7) (Housing)	Planning	Planning and Transport	Regeneration
Project Officer/Implementation Officer	Housing (People) Services	Place & Development	Place
Operative (51)	Manual Labour	Direct Service Organisation (DSO)	Place
Housing Revenue; Housing Needs (6)	HRA Housing Development	Management	Place
IT Server Engineer (1)	IT	Digital and Strategic IT	Corporate Operations
IT Project Manager (1)	IT	Digital and Strategic IT	Corporate Operations
IT Infrastructure Engineer (1)	IT	Digital and Strategic IT	Corporate Operations
Desktop Support Analyst (6)	IT	Digital and Strategic IT	Corporate Operations
Digital and Strategic IT Support (5)	IT	Digital and Strategic IT	Corporate Operations
IT Support roles (working on S114)	IT	Digital and Strategic IT	Corporate Operations
Customer and Communications	Revenues / Benefits	Customer – Awaiting funding ESFA	Corporate Operations
Customer and Communications	Revenues / Benefits	Housing, Benefits & Planning	Corporate Operations
Agresso technical Support (8)	Agresso Technical support	People / Finance Services	Corporate Operations
Principal Financial Analyst (6)	Finance	Finance	
Finance Business Partner, Lead; Financial Assessment, Commercial; Financial Assessment (15)	Executive - Covering live vacancies	Finance	Corporate Operations
Consulting Project Manager (Level 9)	Executive	People	Corporate Operations

Appendix 2 – Performance KPIs

Measurement	Target Service Level	Frequency of Activity/Monitoring	April 22 - March 23
The Service Provider will fill all Assignments where CVs are not requested to the specified timescales	98.00%	Monthly, based on a rolling quarter	100% Grounds Maintenance & Operatives. If there is a requirement for additional staffing the service goes direct to suppliers. Early Years. - Service Manager sends roster's based on where a worker needs to be provided
Urgency	Timescale		
Within 4 hours	Within 30 minutes		
Within 24 hours	Within 1 hour		
Within 3 working days	Within 4 hours		
Otherwise	Within 48 hours		
Percentage of roles where number of accepted CVs requested is matched by number of CVs supplied by the Service Provider	98.00%	Monthly, based on a rolling quarter	100%
Percentage of assignments where there is supply of a suitable Temporary Worker, accepted by the Hiring Manager,	98.00%	Monthly, based on a rolling quarter	100%
Percentage of appointed Temporary Workers completing the assignment	90.00%	Monthly, based on a rolling quarter	96%
The Service Provider will satisfactorily close all complaints within 28 working days of receipt.	100%	Monthly	100% No Complaints Log form created to carry out formal complaints