

CONSULTANTS POLICY REVIEW – QUARTER 1

To: Audit and Accounts Committee

Date: Monday 29th July 2019

From: Martin Cox, HR Director

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 An internal audit was undertaken on the use of consultants in 2018. This identified concerns about compliance with the Consultant policy and a potential risk that the Council was not achieving value for money in this area.
- 1.2 The Consultants Policy has been reviewed, strengthened and approved by the Council's Joint Management Team (JMT) in March 2019. This policy and actions were part of the Audit and Accounts Committee meeting in April 2019. This report outlines the implementation of the policy and its operation in Quarter 1 – April to June 2019.

2.0 Reporting on Consultants

- 2.1 The new Consultants Policy is now in place and each Director at JMT has reviewed their current use of consultants. The new policy is attached in Appendix 1.

The policy included creating a central management control process to support improved monitoring and reporting. The initial system identified is being replaced so we are working to specify how the future project management system can record and report on the use of consultants, but in the meantime, alternative reporting arrangements have been put in place and information has been provided by other sources to provide a Q1 summary.

- 2.2 To ensure that there is greater scrutiny of consultancy engagement the new policy puts in place an approval to engage a consultant form (equivalent to the approval to engage an agency worker/interim and the recruitment control process). The engaging manager is now required to detail the business case for engaging a consultant. These business cases need to be approved by the Director of Business Improvement & Development or Deputy Chief Executive. Information on approved forms will be collated for JMT along with data on agency workers/interims and recruitment.
- 2.3 OPUS LGSS have provided information on consultants that have been engaged through them. LGSS Finance has provided information on payments made to consultants (outside of OPUS LGSS) that were engaged as at 01 April 2019 and coded to the budget code for consultancy. HR Business Partners have worked with Directors to source details of the

placements that these invoices relate to and to review current consultancy placements.

3.0 Quarter 1 (April to June) Consultant Summary

- 3.1 The information available indicates that there were or had been 26 consultants engaged on some level from 1st April to 30th June 2019. This is not in itself a significant number considering the size of the Council, its diverse nature of services and the shared working agendas that exist.
- 3.2 The new policy is clear that the Council only uses consultants where necessary – in particular where skills and experience does not exit within the existing workforce, specific skills are needed for a project, or short term capacity. Directors have reviewed their current use of consultants against this and business priorities to ensure delivery of ongoing projects.
- 3.3 In summary of the 26 placements used in Quarter 1; 11 have now come to an end naturally or as part of the review. With effect from 30th June there remains 15 engagements with a planned end date. Details of each of these consultant placements and the expected end dates are provided in the tables below.

Summary of the 7 ongoing placements that are due to end in 2019			
Team	Output consultant engaged to deliver	Planned end date	Actual spend since April 2019
Historic Environment	Work on digital media and virtual reality	August 2019	No payments made. Single invoice due on completion.
Historic Environment	Museum advice. Placements was for 10 days in total over the period engaged.	December 2019	No payments made. Single invoice due on completion.
Historic Environment	Audience development analysis. Placement was for 10 days in total over the period engaged.	June 2019	No payments made. Single invoice due on completion.
LGSS Digital Services	Work on a new innovation area within LGSS Digital, essentially project delivery where skills shortage AI work and develop own internal understanding of the that work and skills transfer underway in team. Cost neutral as MKC grant funded.	30th September 2019	£11,199
LGSS Digital Services	IT Consultancy - Mosaic work	November 2019	£34,650

Public Health	Engaged to work on a large procurement of sexual health and contraceptive services across both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils with potential joint commissioning with NHS England and the CCG. Consultant has specialist expertise in this field.	September 2019	£20,900
Public Health	Engaged to work on renegotiation of Section 75 for the 'Healthy Child Programme' (health visiting and school nursing) across Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council, Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust. Specialist expertise in NHS contracts and financial baselining.	September 2019	£10,239

Summary of the 6 placements ongoing placements that are due to end in 2020			
Team	Output consultant engaged to deliver	Planned end date	Actual spend since April 2019
County Planning, Minerals and Waste	Bespoke projects most recently for Barrington Quarry	End of 2019/2020 financial year	£600
Major Infrastructure Delivery / Infrastructure & Growth	Required through to March 2020 to deliver the Joint Professional Services procurement for the County Council, Peterborough City Council, GCP and Combined Authority. The GCP and Combined Authority are funding this procurement. Standalone piece of work for which expertise does not exist in house. Associated costs fully covered externally through recharge.	Spring 2020	£7,388
Infrastructure and Growth	Engage to work closely with Highways England in relation to the A14.	April 2020	£24,639
DASV Partnership	Evaluation of Children Affected by Domestic Abuse Project	April 2020	£975

Environment & Commercial	Bespoke planning work, namely the Waterbeach Energy from Waste Planning Appeal	November 2020	£2,555
Commissioning	Resource identified to bring specialist skills for CCC and PCC savings reviews. Focussing on improving outcomes and value for money for services provided for people with exceptionally high, complex needs.	31st March 2020	£39,867

Summary of the 2 ongoing consultants that are engaged on an ongoing intermittent basis

Team	Output consultant engaged to deliver	Planned end date	Actual spend since April 2019
Fostering Service	Independent Chair of Fostering Panel. Statutory position which is required by law to be independent of the LA	Engaged on an ongoing intermittent basis	£3,230
School Intervention Services	Individual works with a group of schools and as we reduced in number of team advisers. We have 5 Associate Advisers who do similar work but they have a smaller number of schools. We get the money back as schools buy into our Primary School Improvement Offer.	Engaged on an ongoing intermittent basis	£12,018

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is asked to note the current summary on use of consultants and the implementation of the new Consultants Policy.

Background Papers: None