

## Consultants and Agency Worker Data – Quarter 2 2021/2022 and Quarter 3 2021/2022

To: Audit and Accounts Committee

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From: Janet Atkin, Assistant Director, HR Services

Recommendation: The Audit and Accounts Committee is asked to note the current data on the use of consultants and agency workers/interims.

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Information covering the Council's usage of consultants, agency workers and interims is presented to Audit and Accounts Committee on a six-monthly basis. This report outlines information on the use of consultants, agency workers and interims in Quarter 2 2021-2022 (July, August, September 2021) and Quarter 3 2021-2022 (October, November, December 2021).

## 2.0 Reporting on Consultants

- 2.1 OPUS People Solutions provide information on consultants that have been engaged through them. The Finance team have provided details of consultants paid via invoice and coded to the consultancy code (D4100).

## 3.0 Quarter 2 (July 2021 to September 2021) Consultant Summary

- 3.1 There were 2 consultants engaged via OPUS in quarter 2. These are the same 2 consultants that were engaged via OPUS in quarter 1. Details of each of the consultants that have been engaged via OPUS are given in the table below.

Consultants engaged via OPUS Q2 2021/2022			
Area	Output engaged to deliver	Spend in Q2	Ongoing/ended
P&E	Joint Professional Services Procurement	£2,393	Ended
P&E	Development Management Officer (Planning)	£12,861	Ended

- 3.3 Information on the spending coded to the consultancy code (D4100) is given in appendix A. In Q2 payments were made by invoice to 26 suppliers providing consultancy services – this compares to 29 suppliers in Q1. This is not in itself a significant number considering the size of the Council.

## 4.0 Quarter 3 (October to December 2021) Consultant Summary

- 4.1 There was no spend on consultants engaged via OPUS in quarter 3.

4.2 Information on the spending coded to the consultancy code (D4100) in Q3 is given in appendix B. In Q3 there were payments by invoice to 18 suppliers providing consultancy services, this compares to 26 suppliers in the previous quarter. As stated above this number is not surprising considering the Council's size, its diverse range of services and the current working agendas.

## 5.0 Agency worker/interims data in Quarter 2 (2021-2022) and Quarter 3 (2021-2022)

5.1 Information is also presented to Audit and Accounts Committee on agency spend on a quarterly basis. This spend relates to agency workers and interims (an interim being an individual engaged to cover a senior role on a temporary basis). Information on the amount spent on agency workers/interims in quarter 2 and quarter 3 is given in the tables below.

Period	Total spend on agency workers/Interims	Comparison to spending in the previous quarter	Comparison to spending in these quarters in 2020/2021
Q2 of 2021/2022	£3.50m	Increase of £0.44m compared to Q1 of 2021/2022	Increase of £2.13m when compared with Q2 of 2020/21
Q3 of 2021/2022	£3.24m	Decrease of £0.26m compared to Q2 of 2021/2022	Increase of £1.64m when compared with Q3 of 2020/21

5.2 Spending on agency workers/interims should be considered in the context of our overall workforce costs. Spending on agency workers in Q2 represents 9.4% of workforce costs and in Q3 represents 8.8% of workforce spending.

5.3 We have had significant spend on agency workers engaged by Public Health in Q2 (£742,742) and Q3 (£583,225). These agency workers were engaged to support the organisations ongoing Covid response supporting areas such as the testing programme, contact tracing and outbreak management. There will be a notable decrease in subsequent quarters as much of the activity that required these additional resources has now come to an end.

5.4 The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant number of employees needing to remain off work while self-isolating or unwell. This has resulted in higher spending on agency workers to cover for absent employees in services where minimum staffing requirements are necessary.

5.5 The highest level of agency worker use continues to be within services providing frontline social care in the Adults & Safeguarding and Children & Safeguarding services. This is in line with the position in all of the previous quarters considered and reflects the position in other local authorities.

## 6.0 Monitoring Spending

6.1 We are currently updating the approval processes in relation to employees, consultants, interims and agency workers. Approval will be sought via an eform which will be reviewed by finance and the relevant senior manager. This will allow increased scrutiny of spending prior to the engagement of consultants, agency workers or interims.