

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview & Scrutiny Committee **DATE:** 6th December, 2011

CONTACT OFFICER: Kevin Gordon, Assistant Director, Professional Services
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875213

WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

UPDATE ON TEMPORARY WORKERS

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This paper follows a previous report to Overview and Scrutiny in September 2011 which explained how the introduction of a central monitoring system was helping to manage the use of temporary staff across the council.
- 1.2 This report provides members with details of numbers, costs and length of tenure of temporary staff by directorate.
- 1.3 The September paper explained how decisions to use agency staff are made within strict financial and approval controls, which includes business justification for decisions made. This report contains a narrative from each directorate area summarising the rationale and decision making processes that underpin the current use of temporary staff.
- 1.4 Cabinet recently approved a further restriction on agency/temporary staff as part of the savings drive for the medium term financial strategy. The decision challenges the use of agency staff on a full time basis requiring a full business case to support any appointments over 30 hours per week.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

- 2.1 That Overview & Scrutiny committee are requested to note the reduction in the use of Temporary staff since the instigation of a central monitoring system.
- 2.2 That Overview & Scrutiny committee note the tight financial and approval framework that supports the decision making on use of temporary workers.
- 2.3 The Overview & Scrutiny committee note the further commitment to reduce costs of temporary staff by restricting the utilisation of full time hours.
- 2.4 That Overview and Scrutiny note the business rationale provided by each council directorate that sits behind decision to deploy interims, contractor and temporary staff and how this supports the council to meet its overall objectives.

3 Community Strategy Priorities

- Celebrating Diversity, Enabling inclusion
- Adding years to Life and Life to years

- Being Safe, Feeling Safe
- A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play
- Prosperity for All

3.1 A flexible and responsiveness workforce is key in achieving the council's community strategy priorities. In relation to 'Prosperity for All' the council as a large employer in the town provides job opportunities to local residents. In addition to permanent opportunities, many residents take advantage of the flexible opportunities afforded by agency and temporary contracts. As part of the arrangements to ensure good access to employment opportunities for slough residents, the council has ensured that the employment agency supplier of staff is based within the Town.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

Decisions on how budgets for staffing are spent are delegated to cost centre managers throughout the organisation. As part of the approval framework for temporary staff, managers are required to obtain authorisation from the councils finance team. This authorisation ensures that sufficient funds are available and temporary staff costs are within the normal budget envelope for a particular service area.

(b) Risk Management

The ability to deploy staff resources flexibly to meet service peaks and demands is a key element of the council overall approach to managing risk. Some areas of the council for example Children's Social Care face national recruitment shortages and high risk to children and families if work is not covered by qualified staff. Use of temporary staff is one of the ways in which the council manages risks such as these.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

None

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

None

(e) Workforce

The subject of this report is a workforce matter.

5. **Supporting Information**

Understanding the Graphs and Information

5.1 **Total number of Temporary Staff** – How many temporary staff are used across each directorate . Overall the number of temporary staff used in the council has fallen significantly since central monitoring commenced in July 2011 from a total of **199 - 170 a reduction of 15%**

5.2 **Average costs** – The average day rate across the Directorate i.e $\frac{\text{Total cost}}{\text{Numbers of staff}}$

The council currently has a number of vacancies at Senior Management Level this contributes to increasing the overall average day rate.

- 5.3 **Length of Tenure** - Two graphs are included in the report to show the average time temporary staff are in post alongside the longest assignment recorded. Use of temporary staff should in most cases be for a limited period. Members should expect to see an overall reduction in the length of time agency staff are in place in future reports alongside a reduction in costs as controls are put in place to increase part time utilisation of such resources.

5.4 **Commentary from Individual Directorates**

Chief Executives

- 5.5 One of the three posts within the Chief Executives section is the Independent Chair of the Children's Improvement Board. This appointment, which is directed by the Secretary of State, is for a small number of days over the life of the improvement plan. The remaining posts relate to short term administration cover within the Complaints and FOI team for a one off project and temporary cover for the vacant Scrutiny Officer role, recently filled by a permanent worker.

Customer and Transaction Services

- 5.6 As part of the Thames Valley Service centre project Transactional Services has had a deliberate policy of filling posts that become vacant with temporary staff. This is to support the process of the tender exercise for Transactional Services including TUPE liabilities as a partnership agreement is entered into with an external supplier in April 2012.

Community & Wellbeing

- 5.7 Community & Wellbeing has successfully reduced their reliance on agency staff over the last 3 months, however there still exists an acute recruitment difficulty to particular posts within Adult Social care, these include the specialist roles associated with Approved Mental Health Work, Safeguarding Adults and other statutory Social Work roles where there exists a national shortage of qualified professionals.

Where future government funding intentions beyond March 2012 are unclear, including uncertainty around ongoing funding of areas such Drugs and Alcohol, Family Intervention Project and Community Safety a deliberate policy of filling posts that become vacant with temporary staff has been adopted. This minimizes the Council's exposure to future redundancy costs.

Education and Children's Services

- 5.8 ECS have also recorded a significant reduction in use of temporary staff. A planned recruitment programme for Children's Social Workers is expected to improve the level of vacancies within Children social care which make up nearly 60% of all of the temporary staff in this Directorate.

Sure Start is another area of council activity where uncertainty around future funding and delivery models have increased the usage of temporary staff.

Following the withdrawal of government grants to support raising achievement in schools, the Council has funded a small team of specialist schools advisors to support those schools causing concern.

Resources and Regeneration

- 5.9 Reduction in the use of agency staff have taken place in the Resources and Regeneration Directorate.

A high number of temporary staff within Highways and Transport & Property is partly due to contractors being brought in appropriately to run particular projects and capital schemes which have limited life for example the 'Heart Of Slough'.

A restructure of the Transport & Planning service area will correct the historical anomalies, including a temporary staff member in place for over 200 weeks, this recruitment process has begun and permanent staff will in place for January 2012.

Vacancies in the Housing Resettlement and Supported Housing Team are due to this service being tendered. Use of agency staff is deliberate and planned to reduce the councils TUPE liabilities.

Some temporary resources still exist in the Finance services pending an external recruitment campaign planned for the New Year. The current uncertainty around the government's future plans for Schools finance has meant vacancies have been deliberately left unfilled as a prudent measure and a number of these posts will be transferred to transactional services, and therefore and will remain vacant to reduce future liabilities.

6 Comments of Other Committees

None.

7 Appendices Attached

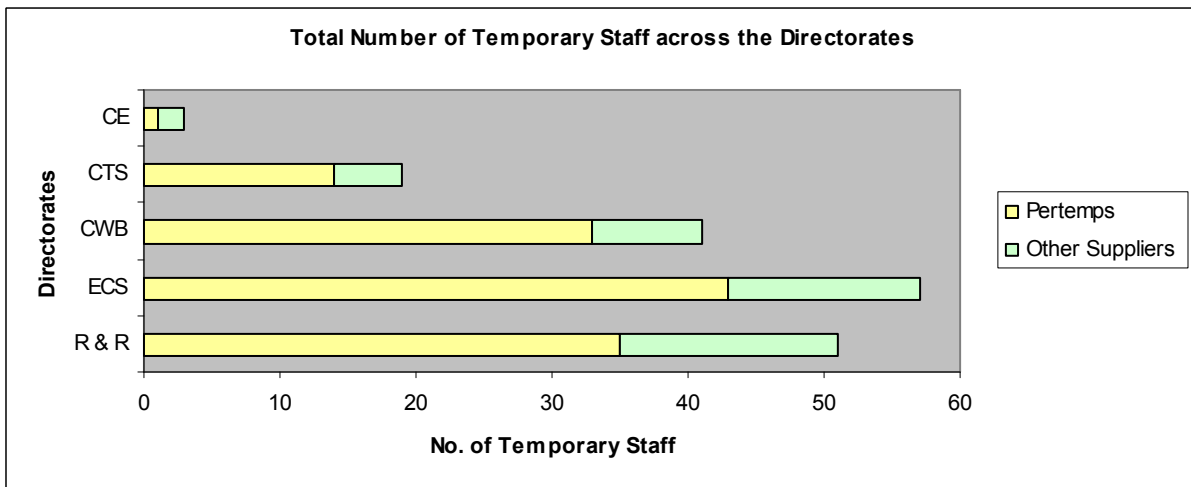
Graphs of Temporary Staff Usage

Appendix 1

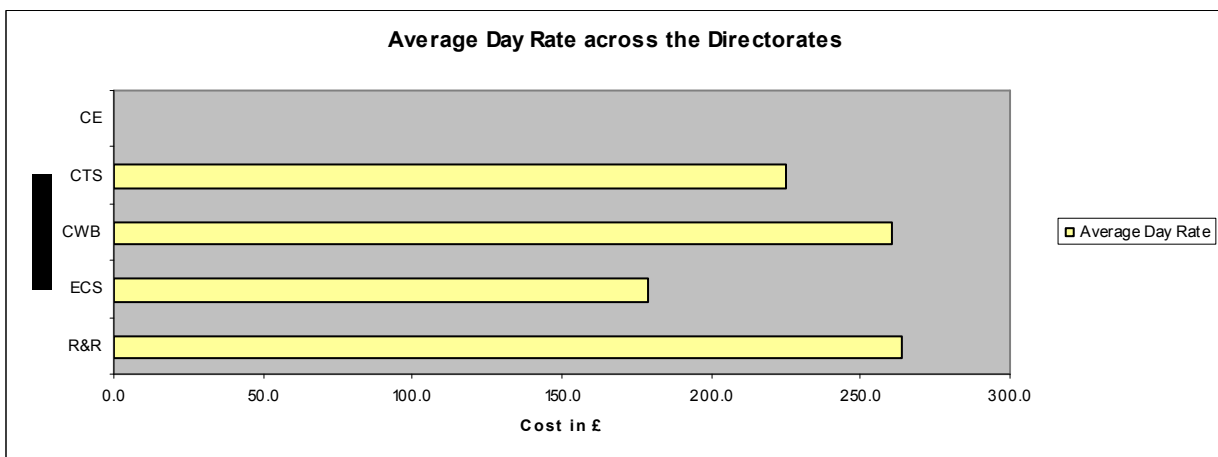
Total number of Temporary Staff

30th November 2011 (Figures in Brackets Indicate Position as at 31st July 2011)

	R & R	ECS	CWB	CTS	CE	Total across all Directorates
Pertemps	33 (48)	42 (53)	34 (48)	13 (7)	1(1)	123
Other Suppliers	17 (12)	14 (12)	9 (14)	5 (4)	2 (0)	46
Total	50 (60)	56 (65)	43 (62)	18 (11)	3 (1)	170 (199)



Average costs



Length of Tenure

