

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Employment & Appeals Committee

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PART I **FOR INFORMATION**

TEMPORARY WORKERS

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report provides Members of the committee with an update on the Council's use of temporary / agency workers and to respond to questions shown in section 6 that arose at the last meeting in February 2022.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

2.1 The Committee is requested to note the report.

3 Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five-Year Plan

3.1 The provision of temporary workers does not directly impact on the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy.

3.2 The provision does, however, enable the Council to deliver its services to the community through the provision of specialist skills or replacement labour when and where required.

3.3 The proposals within this report meet the Five-Year Plan objectives as follows

- the services engage temporary workers to deliver outcomes 1 to 4 when permanent workers are not available, or specialist skills are required.
- the supplier of temporary workers engages with local suppliers of temporary labour whilst also working with a wider pool to ensure Slough has access to the best available talent to make Slough an attractive place to operate and work.

3.4 Future reports will focus on the links with and the outputs from the ongoing work on responding to the directions and the recovery plan

4 Other implications

(a) Financial

The expenditure on agency and temporary workers for Period (1 January – mid-March 2022) is £3 million. Please note there are still timesheets for March which still need to be processed, so this figure will increase. In July a full year effect on the agency and temporary workers spend for 2021-22 will be presented to the committee

(b) Risk Management

The key risk for the council is the inability to deliver services where 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 must be balanced against the over reliance on agency workers and the longer-term use of agency workers where recruitment to permanent roles is unsuccessful. The functional capability assessments being undertaken by the council, as requested by the Commissioners, will support the reduction of agency spend through the functional realignment of services and a clear focus on 'growing our own', investing in training and development, and structured career progression to attract permanent members of staff. Fully costed recovery plans are being developed, which will include a focus on reducing agency workers.

(c) Legal Implications

There are no Legal implications.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no requirement for an Equalities Impact Assessment as we do not hold equalities data on agency or temporary workers as they are not our employees.

(e) Workforce

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

5. Background

- 5.1 In previous meetings members were reminded that Slough Borough Council continues to offer roles to staff on a permanent basis. Opportunities for vacant roles are advertised internally first, and where there are roles with an associated skills shortage, they are advertised both internally and externally at the same time.
- 5.2 Since 1 January 2022 42 posts have been advertised (both internally & externally). 13 of these posts have successfully been appointed to, 29 posts have not been appointed to of which 8 posts had no applications. The posts with no applications included the Hospital Social Work Manager; Clinical Lead and the Reablement Long Term Manager position. These remaining roles are still in the recruitment process
- 5.3 The turnover of staff continues to be a cause of concern as this is impacting services with key specialist skills / knowledge requirements. Table 2 shows that 64 of the 78 staff leaving in the period left as voluntary resignations of which 46 cited career progression or change in

career as the main reason. This has led to engaging additional temporary / agency workers to cover the posts in order to maintain the critical services for our residents. Whilst the preferred approach is to take on permanent employees, this is not always possible. The competition in the local and now increasingly national/global labour market means that many employers are attempting to source high knowledge/skilled employees in an increasingly competitive market.

5.4 The Council is working on developing a People Strategy and actions plans which will take into account all the resourcing elements including agency workers.

6. Action points from meeting in February 2022

6.1 Committee members requested additional information be supplied, this is detailed in this section.

a) Figures requested on the number of current agency-filled posts which are covering long-term sickness absences.

Currently there are 5 agency workers that are covering posts where staff are on long term sickness absence Below is the detail of where this cover is taking place:

- 4 x posts in Place Directorate - Operative posts being covered
- 1 x post in Adult Social Care - Qualified Social Worker post being covered.

b) The cost difference of employing an agency staff member in a role as opposed to a permanent staff member.

Appendix 2 provides a snapshot view of 23 roles across the council which form part of the agency expenditure in various directorates. The data relating to agency workers shows the total paid to worker which includes the workers rates and the agency fees. The employee costs for the same roles are shown and is inclusive of national insurance and employer pension contributions. In some cases, it is more cost effective to engage an agency worker then have a permanent member of staff.

The data set shows that where there are high levels of % difference, these roles are hard to recruit to and some are key roles for supporting the council's recovery and renewal plans. These include:

- principal financial analyst
- technical solutions architect
- finance business partner
- financial accountant
- interim SEND officer
- IT infrastructure engineer.

c) Further detail and information on how the current ratio of agency staff (at 20% of the total workforce) compares with previous years at SBC and with other local councils.

Slough Borough Council is a small unitary authority that has gone through a sustained period of change, which makes it difficult to make comparisons with other authorities. However, in each report the ratio of agency staff to permanent staff has been reported on the headcount (at that time), please see below Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Last 2 years agency staff at % of total workforce at that time

Year	Agency Staff No	Ratio
July 2020	152	11%
July 2021	261	21%

d) Further detail and statistics on the agency workers employed in specialist roles.

This information is included in Appendix 1.

7. Leavers Information (Employees)

Table 2 below shows that SBC had a total of 78 leavers from 1st January to 18th March 2022 and provides the reasons for leaving and the types of posts that were vacated.

Table 2 – Summary of Leavers reasons and types of posts between 1st January – 18th March 2022

No of Leavers	Reasons for leaving	Further details of reason
64	Voluntary resignations	Career progression (31) Change in career (15) Change in personal circumstances (7) Carer responsibilities (2) Moving away (4) Family / Health (1) Personal health (2) Resigned due to management process (2)
5	Dismissed	Dismissal following formal procedures
7	Retirement	4 x Normal age retirement, 2 X ill-health 1 x Early retirement
5	Fixed Term Contract ended	Expiry of FTC
78	Total	

Types of Post

The posts that have had leavers are across the council and are listed below:

Directorate	Types of post	Reason for leaving
People Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Early Years Practitioners / Early Years Officer • SEND • Associate Director • Educational Psychologist • EY Specialist Support Teacher • Senior Admissions & Access Officer 	All due to Voluntary resignation
Corporate Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Customer Services Officer • Facilities Officer • Complaints, Casework & FOI officer • Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Lead • Financial Analyst • Financial Management Accountant • Health & Safety Professional • Leader and Cabinet Support Officer • Senior Employment & Learning Officer 	All due to Voluntary resignation, and Dismissal
People Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Workers • Occupational Therapist • Day Services • Public Health • Social Work Assistant • Social Worker/Care Co-ordinator 	Due to Voluntary Resignation and Early Retirement / End of Fixed Term Contract (FTC)
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSO Grounds • Construction Professional • Neighbourhood Recharges • Housing • Housing needs • Senior Housing Regulation Officer • Principal Planning Officer • Planning policy • Planning & Strategy • Principal Strategy & Policy Officer • Libraries & Culture Customer Assistant • Locality Hubs & Libraries Operations Lead • Neighbourhood Lead • Principal Technical Enforcement Officer • Principal Environmental Health Officer 	Due to Voluntary Resignation, End of FTC, and Dismissal
Chief Executives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive • Executive Assistant • Executive Director of People (Adults) 	Dismissal Voluntary Resignation Career progression

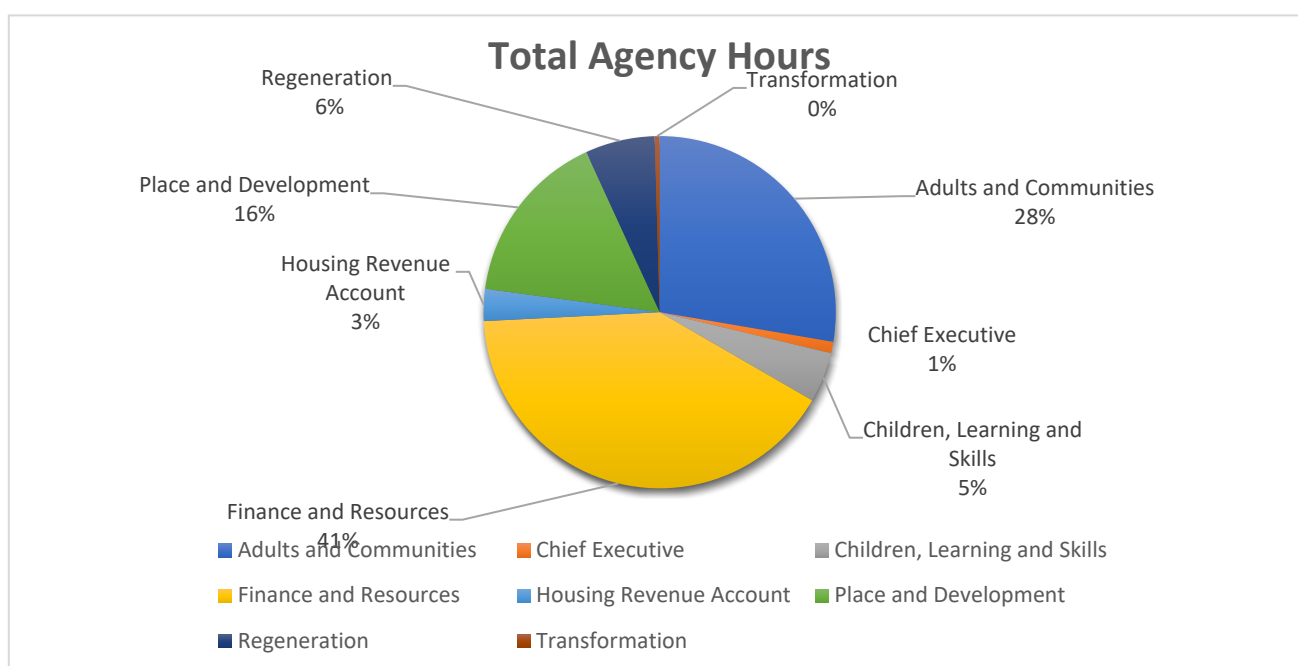
8. Monthly Live placements temporary / agency workers

Table 3 below illustrates the number of monthly 'live; placements of temporary / agency workers within the organisation during the months between November 2021 to March 2022.

Table 3– Live Placements by Month

Month End	Live placements at end of month	The percentage below represents the portion of agency worker vs our total workforce	Increase - ↑ Reduction - ↓ Unchanged - ↔
November 21	225	19%	↑
December 21	237	20%	↑
January 2022	237	20%	↔
February 2022	254	23%	↑
March 2022 as at 18.03.2022 (please note this is not a full months data)	251	pending	pending

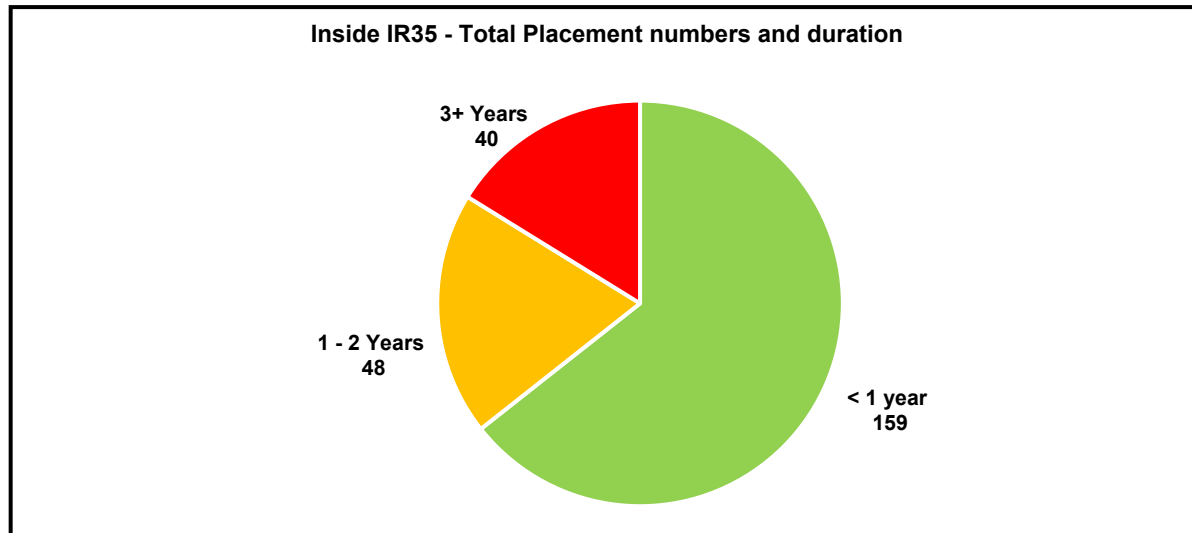
Chart 1 below shows where the highest percentage of use of temporary / agency workers has been in Finance and Resources, followed by Adult Social Care.



9. Duration of Placements – this remains unchanged

Chart 2 below shows the total number of placements and duration of agency workers (inside of IR35) that have been engaged with the council over the last quarter. This shows workers that have been with the Council up to four years.

Chart 2 – Total placements and length of placement – This data remains unchanged



55 workers that are outside IR35 have not been included in the data above. These workers have been engaged on specialist projects or have specialist skills.

Table 4 – Categories of roles & length of placement of current workers

Sum of Number of Placements – Inside IR35	Column Labels			
Categories of Roles	< 1 year	1 - 2 Years	3+ Years	Grand Total
Admin & Clerical	14	2	4	20
Education including Early Years	35			35
Executive	43	6	5	54
Facilities & Environmental Services	1			1
Financial	2			2
Housing	9	3		12
Housing, Benefits & Planning		5	10	15
IT	5	4		9
Management		2	1	3
Manual Labour	13	13		26
Planning		1		1
Revenues / Benefits	5	2		7
Social & Healthcare Non-Qualified	17	5	6	28
Social & Healthcare Qualified	15	5	14	34
Grand Total	159	48	40	247

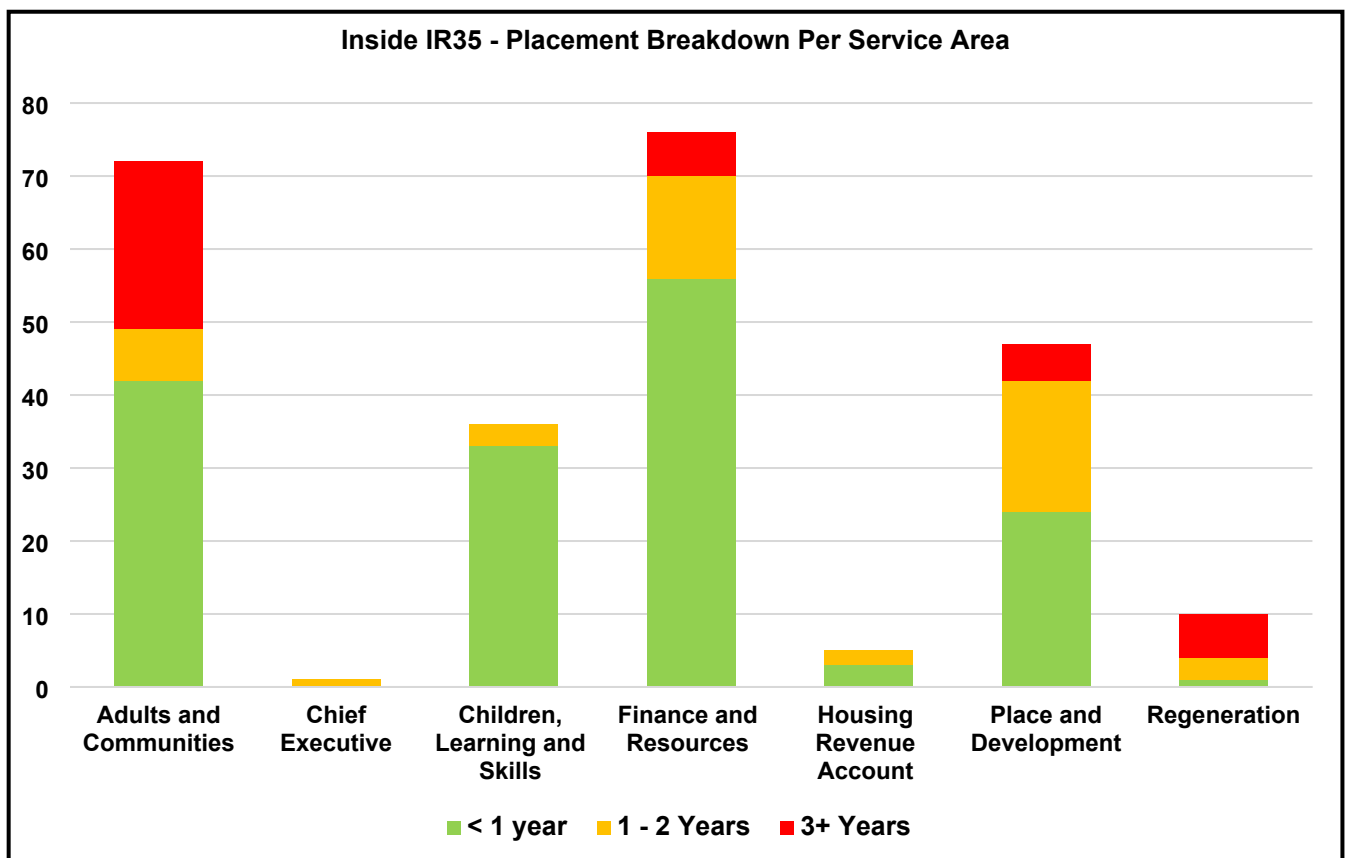
This data was accurate as at 9th March – hence the difference from above.

The table above shows there are 40 placements which have had an agency / temporary worker more than 3 years. Most of these placements are covering hard to recruit to posts such as Social & Healthcare professions, Housing Benefits & Planning.

Appendix 1 also highlights the roles of all agency/temporary workers we have engaged, which includes the hard to fill roles.

Chart 3 below shows the length of placements by Directorate, this identifies Finance and Resources as having the highest number of placements. The Council has engaged finance specialists to support the recovery work in relation to the S114 notice and the DLUHC directions. Overall Adults and Communities have had most placements in the category of 3 years and above. Again, these placements are covering hard to recruit to posts in the Social & Healthcare profession.

Chart 3 - Breakdown per Service Area and length of placement – this remains unchanged data from last report



10. Matrix efficiency saving project

- 10.1 Each month work continues within each directorate to encourage agency workers to move into permanent vacant positions where posts have received approval to engage workers into.
- 10.2 Agency worker renewals continue to be monitored requiring a business case approval at the Expenditure Control Panels to enable relevant scrutiny and challenge, with directorate discussions to reduce the spend.
- 10.3 The HR Business Partnering team’s on-going work with each of the directorate managers on reviewing their current usage of agency workers will continue to remain a priority.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of specific types of roles of all agency/temporary workers
Appendix 2 - Cost difference of employing an Agency staff vs Permanent staff

12. Background Papers

None

Appendix 1 – Summary of specific types of roles of all agency/temporary workers

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) (20)	Social & Healthcare Qualified	Adult Social Care Operations	People (Adults)
CONTACT TRACER COVID-19 (15)	Public Health	Public Health	People (Adults)
Group Manager	Social & Healthcare Qualified	Adult Social Care Operations	People (Adults)
Commissioning Professional -SEND	Commissioner	Commissioning Team	People (Adults)
Interim Consultant Public Health	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)
Early Years Practitioner (20)	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

Appendix 2 - Cost difference of employing an Agency staff vs Permanent staff

Level	Job titles	No. of roles	Temporary Hourly Rate	Value to workers	Value paid to agency	Total Paid for Agency costs (1)	Total no. of hours invoiced	Mid-Point Hourly Rate SBC	PAYE Equivalent cost (incl On Costs) (2)	Percentage Difference [[1]/(2)]x100]-100
4	Customer Service Advisor (Level 4)	6	£ 9.23	£ 4,624.23	£ 1,350.55	£5,974.78	501.00	£ 10.30	£6,708.39	10.94
7	Desktop Support Analyst	7	£ 25.70	£ 62,309.65	-£ 1,946.45	£60,363.20	2424.50	£ 19.67	£61,996.89	2.63
6	Financial Assessment Benefits	2	£ 22.50	£ 16,025.63	£ 5,525.87	£21,551.54	712.25	£ 16.74	£ 15,499.98	39.04
7	Housing Needs Officer (Level 6)	4	£ 16.13	£ 19,178.57	£ 7,283.11	£26,461.68	1189.00	£ 19.67	£ 30,403.92	12.97
6	Housing Officer (Level 6)	2	£ 15.15	£ 9,862.65	£ 3,631.83	£13,494.48	651.00	£ 16.74	£ 14,167.06	4.75
6	Operative	26	£ 14.32	£ 59,399.36	£ 6,210.91	£65,610.27	4148.00	£ 16.74	£ 90,268.78	27.31
7	OT (Standard) (Level 7)	7	£ 30.68	£ 68,447.08	£ 16,540.21	£84,987.29	2231.00	£ 19.67	£ 57,048.90	48.97
6	Project Officer/Implementation Officer (fixed term)	5	£ 25.00	£ 39,512.50	£ 16,851.80	£56,364.30	1580.50	£ 16.74	£ 34,394.84	63.87
7	Qualified Social Worker (Level 7)	16	£ 28.13	£102772.96	£ 41,191.24	£143,968.20	3653.50	£ 19.67	£ 93,423.65	54.10
10	Qualified Social Worker + AMHP	4	£ 26.90	£ 30,060.75	£ 20,037.45	£50,098.84	1117.50	£ 29.31	£ 42,580.10	17.66
6	Revenues Officer	1	£ 22.30	£ 6,216.13	£ 2,324.77	£8,540.90	278.75	£ 16.74	£ 6,066.16	40.79
7	Senior Building Control Surveyor	2	£ 44.96	£ 30,145.68	£ 13,840.17	£43,985.85	670.50	£ 19.67	£ 17,145.36	156.54
10	Senior Planning Officer (Executive)	1	£ 36.03	£ 13,042.86	£ 6,237.26	£19,280.12	362.00	£ 29.31	£ 13,793.29	39.77
5	Sessional Tutor (Level 5)	7	£ 25.25	£ 9,468.75	£ 3,463.01	£12,931.76	375.00	£ 13.78	£ 6,717.75	92.55
6	Youth Worker - Personal Development PHSE (Level 6)	5	£ 15.10	£24,892.35	£ 8,539.76	£33,432.11	1648.50	£ 16.74	£ 35,874.66	6.80
	Grand Total			£495,959.14	£ 150,981.49	£646,940.63	21543.00		£526089.3	22.97

The highlighted posts above indicate the posts where it is less expensive to engage agency workers. The list above costs the council £120,851.33, more for employing agency workers than for direct employees. However, agency workers are not entitled to any time off as paid annual leave and are not entitled to sick pay or any future pension/redundancy or other liabilities.

Note

The hours multiplied by the council hourly rate, is then a sum, which has "oncosts" for employer pension and employer National Insurance costs added, to reflect actual employer costs. Hidden costs for annual leave, sickness and employment cases are not included in this calculation.