SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Employment & Appeals Committee

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WARD(S):   All

PART I
FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION

TEMPORARY WORKERS

1   Purpose of Report

1.1   This report provides Members of the committee with an update on the Council's spend and use of temporary / agency workers for the financial year 2021/22.

2   Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

2.1   The Committee is requested to note the report.

Commissioners Review

Commissioners have reviewed this report.

3   Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy and the JSNA

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   Future reports will focus on the links with and the outputs from the ongoing work on responding to the directions and the recovery plan.
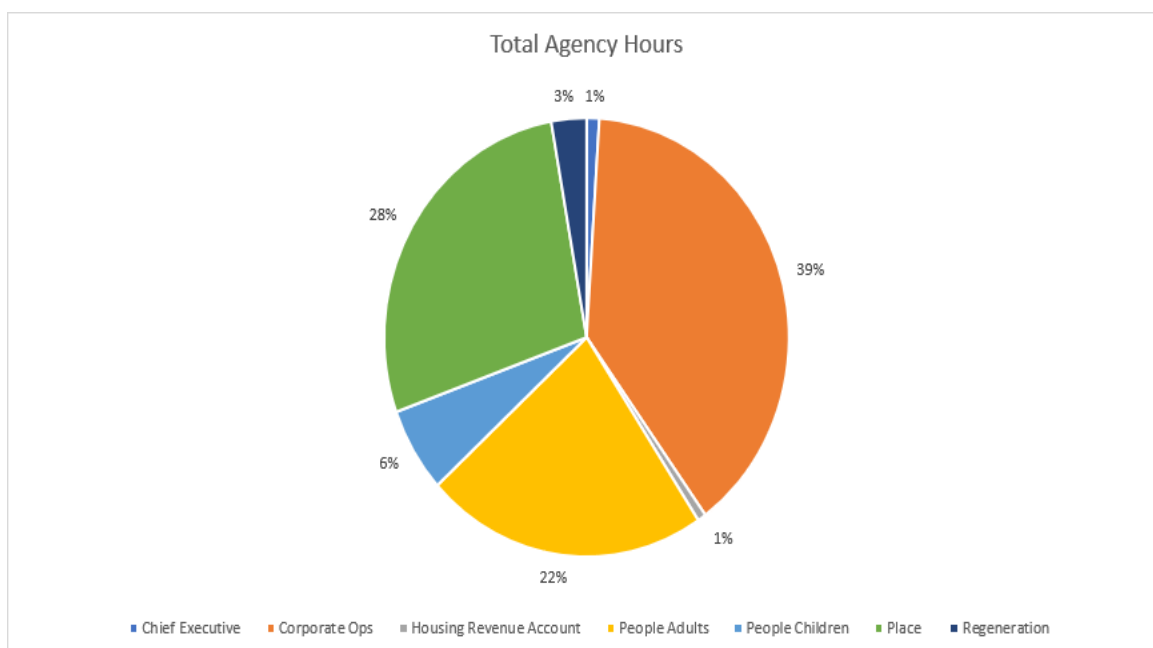
4   Other implications

(a) Financial

The expenditure on agency and temporary workers for the budget year 21/22 was £15 million. This is a reduction from the previous year's overall spend (£15,570,246) of £505k. The full year breakdown of each quarter is as follows:

Quarter Period	Total expenditure	Increase - ↑ Reduction - ↓ Unchanged - ↔
1 – April – June 2021	£3,917,935	↑
2 – July to September 2021	£3,458,870	↓
3 – October to December 2021	£3,705,442	↑
4 – January to March 2022	£3,982,993	↑
Total	**£15,065,240**	↓

The above spend for the financial year 21/22 ended with a reduction of £505k. The key outlier was Corporate Operations for this budget year. Chart 1 below summaries particular areas of usage, followed by a more detailed review of impact on spend in section 5.

Chart 1 – Summary Usage

This chart shows the highest percentage of use of temporary / agency workers has been in Corporate Operations with 39% in Finance, IT and Customer Services, showing the most significant use of agency. Followed by Place (28%) with spend in departments such as DSO, Commercial, Housing, Council Tax. In Adult Social Care (22%), the departments with high usage are Social Workers, OT's, Public Health (Contract tracing). Finally, People - Children Services, the key department with significant usage is Early Years due to national shortage of Early Years Practitioner's.

(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 have been developed which outline proposals to realign services to secure permanent resources.

(c) Legal Implications

There are no Legal implications.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The council does not hold equalities data on agency or temporary workers as they are not council employees. In schedule 2a of the Matrix contract requires monitoring of agencies are required to sign and upload, to Matrix CR, a copy of Matrix's Supplier Addendum and Diversity Policy, which will also include adherence to any specific policies the council holds. Section 19.7 of Matrix contract complies with requirements of Equality Act 2010. This will be reviewed at the next Matrix contract review meeting in June 2022 in response to the Corporate Plan. Annually agency workers will be encouraged to engage with SBC's Staff Survey.

(e) Workforce

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

5. **Background**

5.1   The 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. Services are also seeking expression of interest in the service of any staff member who wishes to 'act up' into a vacancy that occurs as part of the commitment to give development opportunities to staff.

The turnover of staff continues to be a cause of concern as this is affecting services with key specialist skills / knowledge requirements. See **Appendix 3** for Leavers Information over the past 12 months. The data in the appendix evidences the impact of the transformation programme on staff. Staff have either left as a direct consequence of the programme or have left as they have not felt they did not know the direction the Council was moving in. On top of this the S114 and the current financial pressures are also now cited as a reason for leaving. Staff are leaving to join organisations which can offer security for the long term, which due to the increase in the cost of living is important for staff.

In addition, the data collated provides positive comments supporting that the council has a good working environment that is equally inclusive and diverse place to work, as well as being an employer of choice.

The areas for focus on retention include management developing improved ways of engaging and listening to improve staff confidence as well as focussed career conversations to improve retention.

The previous point has resulted in the need to engage additional temporary / agency workers to cover posts in order to maintain 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 most employers are attempting to source high knowledge/skilled employees in an increasingly competitive market.

5.3   The national ONS labour market data indicates the number of job vacancies in January to March 2022 rose to a new record of 1,288,000. However, the rate of growth in vacancies continued to slow down. Over the quarter the number of vacancies increased by 50,200 with the largest increase in health and social work.

6.   Monthly Live placements temporary / agency workers

Table 2 below illustrates the number of monthly 'live; placements of temporary / agency workers within the organisation during the months between November 2021 to March 2022, showing the number agency workers reduction by 1%.

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	25%	⬆
March 2022	251	24%	⬇

7.   Up-date on Matrix

The contract is managed in line with the agreed key performance indicators in **Appendix 2 – Performance KPI's.** Monitoring meetings are held with Matrix monthly to review compliance; with the KPI against our contract this includes discussion on KPI 'measures as outlined in **Appendix 2**; review of specific challenges in hard to recruit roles or those requiring specialist roles. This includes specific discussions on reducing fees by transferring agency workers to CDL contracts to further reduce fees and where roles could be converted to fulfil permanent approved vacancies, where savings could be explored.

Data from monitoring meetings with Matrix is shared with HR Business Partnering team to explore the need for agency usage and consider benefits of alternative options vs agency usage and business need.

7.1 **Key activity to reduce agency spend**

To address the reduction in agency spend across the organisation the following work is on-going:

a. To reduce spend in Corporate Operations the Finance Department is due to launch a Finance restructure and consultation, scheduled for launch in June 2022. Once the restructure is completed and in place it should contribute to reduction in agency spend as we appoint to the permanent new structure.

b. As above the IT Department is currently preparing for restructure and consultation which is planned for July 2022 to support the reduction in spend. Similarly, the HR function review will follow.

c. Each month work continues within each directorate to encourage agency workers to move into permanent vacant positions where posts have received approval to recruit.

d. Agency worker renewals continue to be monitored requiring a business case approval at the Directorate Expenditure Control Panels to enable relevant scrutiny and challenge, with directorate discussions at the panel to reduce the spend.

e. The HR Business Partnering team continue to work with each of the directorate managers to review their current usage of agency workers to ensure the need to continue with the placement.

f. Scrutiny of leavers information (in Appendix 3) and exit data to consider trends in business-critical services or roles that are hard to recruit vs the recruitment data is being cross referenced.

g. A recruitment and retention strategy is being developed to consider the national picture of recruitment problems and retention. This will link to the planned organisational change programmes due to take place in many directorates across the council to support the Corporate plan and review of functional capability assessments to address workforce challenges facing the council.

8. **Background Papers**

None

9. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Summary of specific types of roles of all agency/temporary workers
Appendix 2 – Performance KPI'S
Appendix 3 - Leavers Information (Employees) 12 months

Appendix 1 – Summary of specific types of roles of all agency/temporary workers at March 2022

Job Title	Job Category	Services	Directorate
Qualified Social Worker (Level 7)	Social & Healthcare Qualified	Adult Social Care Operations	People (Adults)
CONTACT TRACER COVID-19	Public Health	Public Health	People (Adults)
Long-term Occupational Therapist OT Standby Level 7	Social & Healthcare Qualified	Adult Social Care Operations	People (Adults)
Early Years Practitioner	Education including Early Years	Children, Learning and Skills	People (Children)
Housing Benefits	Housing, Benefits & Planning	Building Management	Regeneration
Planning Officer (Level 7) (Housing)	Planning	Planning and Transport	Regeneration
Project Officer/Implementation Officer	Planning	Place	Place
Project Manager- Capita Implementation (Level 9)	Housing, Benefits & Planning	Housing	Place
Project Officer/Implementation Officer	Housing (People) Services	Place & Development	Place
Operative (DSO)	Manual Labour	Direct Service Organisation	Place
Housing Revenue; Housing	HRA Housing Development	Management	Place
Structural Checking Engineer	Facilities & Environmental Services	Place	Place
IT Server Engineer	IT	Digital and Strategic IT	Corporate Operations
IT Project Manager	IT	Digital and Strategic IT	Corporate Operations
IT Infrastructure Engineer	IT	Digital and Strategic IT	Corporate Operations
Desktop Support Analyst	IT	Digital and Strategic IT	Corporate Operations
Digital and Strategic IT Support	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	Corporate Operations
Customer	Revenues / Benefits	Housing, Benefits & Planning	Corporate Operations
Principal Financial Analyst	Finance	Finance	
Finance Business Partner, Lead; Financial Assessment, Commercial; Financial Assessment	Executive - Covering Vacancies	Finance	Corporate Operations

Appendix 2 – Performance KPI'S

Measurement	Target Service Level	Frequency of Activity/Monitoring	Apr-22
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% excluding Early Years 85%
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	100%
The Service Provider will satisfactorily close all complaints within 28 working days of receipt.	100%	Monthly from start of contract	100%

Appendix 3 - Leavers Information (Employees) 12 months

Below the data shows that SBC had a total of 259 leavers from **1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022** and provides the reasons for leaving and the types of posts that recorded as leavers.

Number of leavers 1/4/21 to 31/3/2022 TOTAL = 313	Reasons for leaving
156	**Voluntary Resignations**
8	**Dismissals**
21	**Retirement**
16	**End of FTC**
109	**Redundancy**
2	**Settlement**
1	**TUPE**
EXIT Interview feedback overall summary and no of responses (16)	
Environment - It was a good environment to work in	12 responded Yes, vs 3 responded no
Communication - I was kept up to date with OD via internal comm.	14 responded Yes, vs 1 response no
Employer of Choice - I would recommend SBC as an employer(T)	8 responded Yes, vs 8 responded no
Culture of SBC - How would you describe the culture of SBC?	Top responses: Inclusive and welcoming and Diverse