

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Employment & Appeals Committee

**DATE:** 22 December 2022

**Subject:** Update on Temporary Workers

**Chief Officer:** Stephen Brown, Chief Executive

**Contact Officer:** Surjit Nagra, Associate Director HR / Dipak Mistry, Employee Relations & Policy Manager

**Ward(s):** All

**Exempt:** No

**Appendices:** **Appendix 1 - KPI Summary of performance**

### **1. Summary and Recommendations**

- 1.1 This report provides Members of the committee with an update on the Council's use of temporary / agency workers for Quarter 2 which covers the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 September 2022.

#### **Recommendations:**

The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report.

#### **Commissioner Review**

Commissioners noted the contents of this report on temporary workers and in particular the progress made.

### **2. Report**

#### **2.1 Introductory paragraph**

The Council are continuing to build its substantive workforce through on-going recruitment. Currently all vacant roles are advertised internally in the first instance to support the growth and retention of our existing workforce, helping to grow capability and capacity, whilst retaining organisation knowledge.

For roles where it is recognised that there is currently a capability gap within our internal workforce, we advertise externally concurrently, to allow us to recruit to these areas in a time efficient manner.

Staff turnover is particularly affecting our services that require specialist skills and expert knowledge. This skills gap relates to national and local skills shortages. For the past year the council has also experienced difficulties in attracting candidates due to the section 14 notice and financial position.




Where staff turnover, or capability gaps, continue to be a problem, we utilise temporary workers to allow us to continue to provide these important services.

The Council recognises the importance of employing local workers, whilst also understanding the need to widen the recruitment outreach for posts that require a specialist skillset or where there is a particular shortage of suitable candidates. Therefore, the Council has worked closely with its provider of temporary workers, Matrix, to ensure they are engaging with local suppliers of temporary labour as a priority, whilst also widening their outreach where required to ensure Slough has access to the best available talent.

### 3. Implications of the Recommendation

#### 3.1 Financial implications

The agency expenditure on temporary workers for quarter 2 (1 July 2022 – 30 September 2022) is £4.81 million. This quarter breakdown is as follows:

Quarter Period	Total expenditure	Increase - ↑ Reduction - ↓ Unchanged - ↔
July	£1,866,451	Increase from June 
August	£1,482,280	Reduction from July 
September	£1,455,217	Reduction from August 
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,803,948</b>	

The increase in July 2022 is attributed to Corporate Operations Directorate, where the significant usage in agency workers included:

- A number of Finance Specialist roles
- Increase in Customer Services Advisor roles to meet the high service demand and recruitment difficulties.
- Specialist IT roles due to lack of in-house expertise

Other areas to note also include:

- Housing and Benefits roles ranging from Senior Assessment Officers, Recovery Officers
- Administrative roles due to support additional project work and in-house expertise.

Although the information above follows a similar pattern as the previous quarters, all directorates have made significant reductions in agency spend during August and September 2022. This is supported by increased activity in recruitment that has commenced in October 2022.

The table below shows a total of 99 agency assignments that were reduced between July and September 2022 and the types of roles as follows:

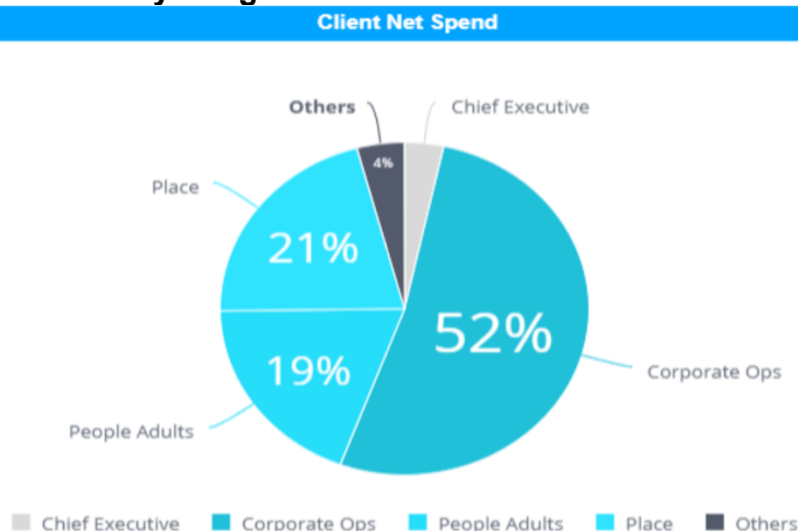
**Table 1: Agency reduction between July to September 2022**

Directorate	July	August	September	Total
Corporate Operations	5	13	14	32
People Adults	7	4	4	15
People Children	6	6	2	14
Place	8	16	14	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>99</b>
Summary Types of Roles	Financial Management Social Care and health Housing benefits Admin Clerical – Payments Facilities & Environment Planning Engineering & Survey Manual Labour	Financial Management IT Housing Revenues and Benefits Admin Clerical – Payments Engineering & Survey Manual Labour	Financial Management roles IT Housing Revenues and Benefits Planning Admin & Clerical Education & Early Years Engineering & Survey Manual Labour	

Notably during August and September 73 agency roles were reduced in the above job categories with Place Directorate with the most significant reduction due to turnover of agency in areas such as manual labour, planning. Also, Corporate Operations had turnover of roles in Finance, Management roles and IT. However, what is not known is how many new workers were engaged during this period which will come through in the next quarter.

**3.2** The Chart below shows a summary of the usage of temporary workers across the council for quarter 2. (Please note that the data reflects the structure in place at the time.)

## Chart 1 – Summary Usage



It can be seen that Corporate Operations Directorate had 52% of agency workers, which was an increase of 8.6% from previous quarter. The reasons for the increase has already been outlined in section 3.1.

In Place there is a reduction in the agency usage by 7.3% from previous quarter as outlined in Table 1 resulting from business-as-usual recruitment to the manual workforce in the DSO.

In People Adults there has been a reduction 1.9% and in People Children's a reduction of 1%. In People Adults the reduction has occurred due to a consultation in Reablement Service and recruitment has commenced to fill permanent roles. The reduction in People Children has occurred due to the reduction in Early Years roles usage where some children's services are closed during the summer period.

**3.3** Table 2 below provides information about permanent employees who have left the council.

**Table 2 – Substantive Employee's Leaver's data for July to September 2022**

No. of Leavers	Category for leaving	Reason for leaving
1	Dismissal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary Dismissal <b>(1)</b></li> </ul>
6	End of fixed term contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expiry Of Fixed Term Contract <b>(6)</b></li> </ul>
1	Redundancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compulsory redundancy <b>(1)</b></li> </ul>
8	Retirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ill-health Retirement <b>(1)</b></li> <li>Early Retirement (below State Pension Age) <b>(1)</b></li> <li>Normal Retirement (at or above State Pension Age) <b>(6)</b></li> </ul>
3	Transfers (TUPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transfers (TUPE) – Out <b>(3)</b></li> </ul>
3	Unsuccessful Probation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsuccessful Probation <b>(3)</b></li> </ul>

40	Voluntary resignation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Health (3)</li> <li>• Resigned during Management process (1)</li> <li>• Career change (11)</li> <li>• Career progression (13)</li> <li>• Carer responsibilities (1)</li> <li>• Change in industry/sector (3)</li> <li>• Change in personal circumstances (7)</li> <li>• Moving away (1)</li> </ul>
<b>62</b>	<b>Total</b>	

The main category is voluntary resignations, and the details for the reason for the resignations are career progression, career change, personal circumstances, and retirement. A further exploration of the 40 voluntary resignations, found that 16 Exit interviews which were requested by the employee were undertaken by either managers or HR.

In addition, to the reasons for leaving already provided in Table 2 and 3, leavers also raised the following points during their exit interview:

- Better salary and laid out organisational structure with more support
- Job security, career progression
- It was great working at SBC in the beginning but lately it is not doing anything for my mental and physical health.
- Supervision was not as expected, which is needed especially due to the role.

In the exit interviews leavers were also asked for any suggestions they had for improvement. The following are some of those suggestions:

- Review current structures and talk to staff before making decisions
- Assess staff capabilities and give opportunities for staff development
- Invest in your employees, encourage professional development.
- The council does well to recruit locally for lower positions, but all senior and management roles appear to be filled by people with only management experience, limited knowledge of procedural operations and no understanding of the needs of the town's population, and don't reflect the community they serve.
- Make people feel valued in a meaningful way

The exit interview feedback is now being looked at as part of the culture change programme, to ensure this evidence is fed into the work of the programme.

**3.4** Table 3 provides details of the types of roles that have contributed to the increase in the usage of temporary workers in different services.

Table 3 supports the points raised in section 3 for the July spend, based on the types of leavers and posts required to be filled with agency support due to skill loss in key functions the Corporate Operations Directorate. Within the Place Directorate the key positions highlighted are types of roles with consistent movement of staff, requiring agency fill, due to business-critical functions.

**Table 3 – Types of Permanent employees leaving the council**

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Types of post</b>	<b>Reason for leaving</b>
People Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Early Years Officer</li> <li>• Youth Workers</li> <li>• Group Manager</li> <li>• Educational Psychologist</li> <li>• Music Teacher</li> </ul>	Due to Voluntary resignation and Retirement
Corporate Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payments Officer</li> <li>• Business Support Officer</li> <li>• Commercial and Development, Housing Development Finance Manager</li> <li>• Political Group Officer</li> <li>• Recruitment Officer</li> </ul>	Due to Voluntary Resignation, End of FTC Contract, Dismissal, and unsuccessful Probation
People Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reablement Assistant</li> <li>• Business Support Administrator</li> <li>• Social Work Assistant</li> <li>• SEND – Finance Manager</li> <li>• Purchasing and Personal Health Lead</li> <li>• Purchasing Officer</li> <li>• Social Worker</li> </ul>	Due to Voluntary resignation, Redundancy, TUPE, Retirement and End of Fixed term Contract
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highway Maintenance &amp; Drainage Services Manager</li> <li>• Libraries and Culture Customer Assistant</li> <li>• Senior Temporary Accommodation Officer</li> <li>• Tenancy Sustainment Officer</li> <li>• Transport Escort – As &amp; When</li> <li>• Assistant Housing, Enforcement Officer</li> <li>• Working Supervisor – Waste Street scenes</li> </ul>	Due to Retirement, End of Fixed term Contract and voluntary Resignation

#### **4. Key Actions**

**4.1** In the October EAC, members requested further information on the types of positions that leavers were leaving from, which is outlined in the above - Table 3 of this report.

- Members also requested detail on key activities taking place to reduce the agency spend. This detail is outlined in section 5 of this report.
- Members also requested details on the training spend by each department on training temporary workers. Below are some examples of this.

- A temporary agency staff in customer services will receive receive a minimum of 5 days training, which includes customer services skills, use of software packages, systems, and training on to deal with aggressive customers on the phone. Some of these workers will receive an additional 5 days training to deal with specialist calls such as revenue and benefits.
- In the DSO, the workers will mainly be operatives working as loaders, drivers, grounds, and street teams. They will receive Toolbox talks will be given on health and safety procedures for example PPE, correct use of equipment along with standards of conduct required when dealing with members of the public. Also training on dealing with aggressive and violent people.
- In People Adults, agency staff are given training in accordance with the type of role they are performing, this includes manual handling (care related activities), Safeguarding, and Management of challenging behaviours.
- Standard training given to all agency workers joining the council includes any Mandatory training that is also provided to permanent staff. Justification is if agency workers were not compliant and an accident or incident occurred, this would create liability for the council.
- For managerial placements the key additional training includes:
  - Managers Agresso Training
  - Performance management

Members further asked for a comparison of overall expected spend for this financial year against last years.

Financial Year	Total Spend
2020 - 2021	£14.4m
2021 - 2022	£15.1m
2022 – 2023 - forecast	£16m - 18m

The full year forecast for total spend on agency is estimated between £16m to £18m. **Please note the above is an estimated forecast based on the current usage.** The council is committed to reducing the agency spend, by continuing to recruit to the permanent positions in particular Finance, IT and Reablement Services that have recently undergone consultations. We hope to ensure successful recruitment campaigns for the above hard to recruit positions which would assist in reducing the estimated forecast.

## 5. Key activity to reduce agency spend

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

- Following the closure of the consultations in Finance and ICT work has commenced to fill the vacant roles in the new structures. However, with the national challenges of recruitment and retention we may still need to continue to engage agency workers until permanent staff are recruited to the vacant posts.
- Directorates will continue to receive their agency spend reports and review these with their Finance & HR Business Partners to discuss opportunities for saving and reducing spend to support the corporate plan.
- Agency worker requests for new orders and renewals of current placements, is continuing to be scrutinised and challenged at Expenditure Control Panels, this is done through a presentation of a business case, which needs approval prior to the engagement.
- Scrutiny of leavers information (in section 3 of this report) and exit data to consider trends in business-critical services or roles that are hard to recruit vs the recruitment data continues to be reviewed.
- Review of the recruitment process to ensure we have a strong brand, and streamlined processes.

## **6. Up-date on Matrix**

**6.1** The contract is managed in line with the agreed key performance indicators in **Appendix 1 – Performance KPI's**. Monitoring meetings continue to be held with Matrix monthly to review compliance; with the KPI against our contract this includes discussion on KPI 'measures as outlined in **Appendix 1**. This quarter our monitoring data demonstrates that we are 100% achieved on all targets.

## **7. Risk Management**

**7.1** 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. Fully costed recovery plans have been developed which outline proposals to realign services to secure permanent resources.

## **8. Legal Implications**

There are no Legal implications.

## **9. Equalities Impact Assessment**

**9.1** 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 during contract review meetings.



## **10. Workforce**

**10.1** 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.

## Appendix 1 - KPI Summary of performance

Measurement	Target Service Level	Frequency of Activity/Monitoring	Sep-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%
<b>Urgency</b>	<b>Timescale</b>		
<b>Within 4 hours</b>	<b>Within 30 minutes</b>		
<b>Within 24 hours</b>	<b>Within 1 hour</b>		
<b>Within 3 working days</b>	<b>Within 4 hours</b>		
<b>Otherwise</b>	<b>Within 48 hours</b>		
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%