

Agency Workers and Consultants

Synopsis

Member update on Consultants and Agency Workers activity and expenditure within the Authority during 2018/19.

1. Relevant Background Details

1.1 Analysis of the data reflects that overall spend has increased by 67.18% compared to 2017/18.

1.2 The biggest increase is within consultant's capital. Analysis of the data shows an increased expenditure of 209.50% compared to 2017/18.

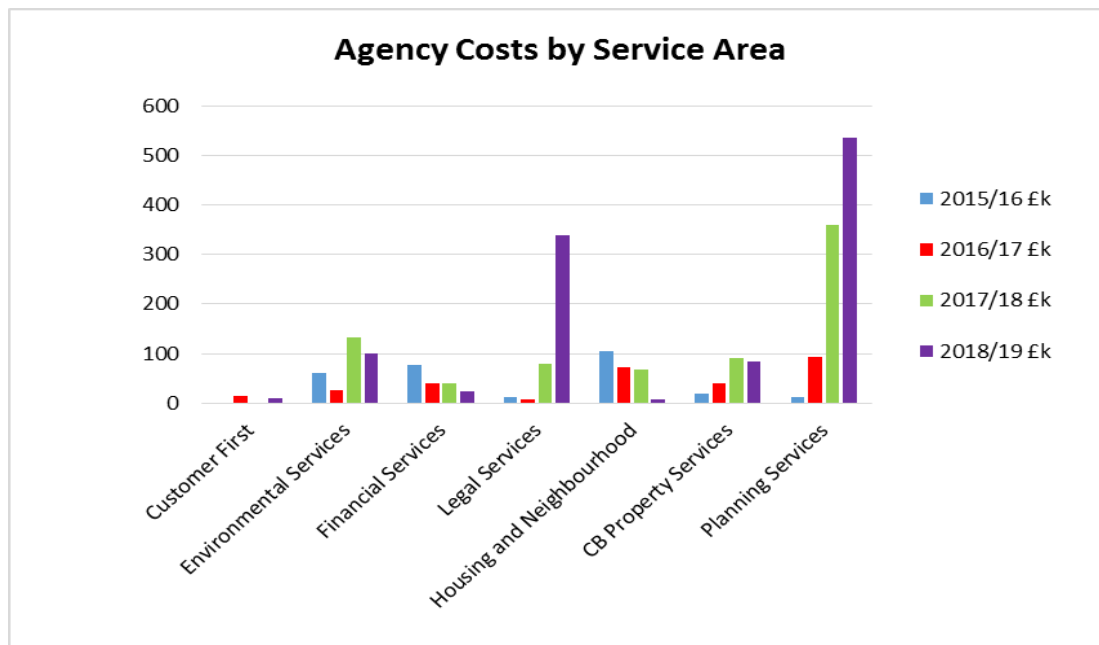
1.3 The following table shows expenditure on consultants and agency workers over the last 4 years.

| Category | Year 2015/16 | Year 2016/17 | Year 2017/18 | Year 2018/19 | % Variance to previous year (-dec/inc) |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Agency Revenue | 284,009 | 295,929 | 760,061 | 1,168,250 | 53.70% |
| Agency Capital | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21,896 | |
| Consultants Revenue | 213,399 | 70,617 | 98,441 | 190,676 | 93.70% |
| Consultants Capital | 110,803 | 127,403 | 38,244 | 118,364 | 209.50% |
| Total | 608,211 | 493,949 | 493,949 | 1,499,186 | 67.18% |

1.4 This report seeks to highlight Revenue and Capital expenditure for agency workers and consultants between the period 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019.

2. Agency Staff

2.1 Overall agency revenue staffing costs have increased by 53.70% on the previous year. Analysis of spend highlights that the majority of spend has been within Planning Services and Legal Services, as shown below:



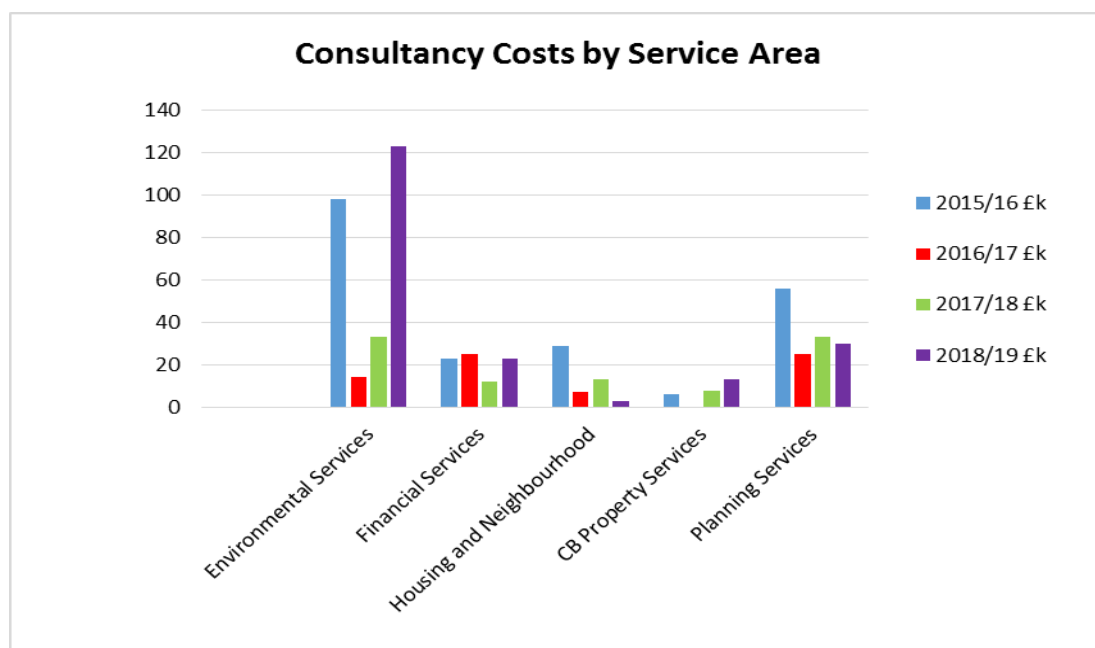
2.2 The increased costs can be attributed to interim support needed to help facilitate the reorganisation of teams within Planning and vacancy cover within Legal Services. A more general factor affecting this cost has been the impact of the impending local government reorganisation within Northamptonshire which has been an increasing obstacle to permanent recruitment. These costs were funded from salary savings in year and additional income.

2.3 Overall, agency capital costs have risen from no cost in 2017/18 to nearly £22k in 2018/19

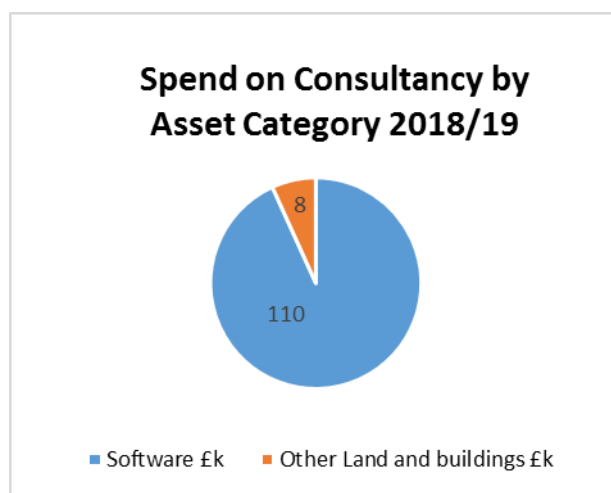
2.4 The increased spend is exclusively due to costs related to Disabled Facility Grants.

3. Consultants

3.1 Overall consultant revenue staffing costs have increased by 93.70% on the previous year. Analysis of the Spend highlights that 2/3 of the spend has been within Environmental Services, as shown below:



- 3.2 There were 2 main reasons for the majority of the increased spend. Firstly, it was due to implementation of the street scene shared service and a need to fill vacancies on a temporary basis. Secondly, there were one-off consultancy costs required to formulate an energy master plan.
- 3.3 Capital expenditure on consultants, to the end of March 2019, was £118,364 (compared to £38,244 for the same period in 2017/18). The majority of the spend was centred around the implementation of the new housing management system. By its very nature, capital expenditure is project based in which expenditure can be attributed to the procurement of specialist skills, that are unavailable in house. These skills sets are only required on a temporary, time sensitive, basis.



4. Issues to be taken into account

4.1 Policy Priorities

It is recognised that the use of Agency Workers can provide an effective and efficient way to supplement skill shortages or provide temporary resource to deal with peaks in volume of work or specialist projects.

4.2 Financial

Expenditure on Agency Workers and Consultants must be accommodated within existing Service Area budgets. The total cost of Agency Workers and Consultancy, for both revenue and capital as at the end March 2019, has increased compared to the previous financial years spend. One off expenditures had been factored into the budgeting process accordingly or funded from salary savings and additional income.

4.3 Legal

Agency Worker regulations came into force in October 2011. The regulations provide equality around basic employment working conditions such as pay and annual leave for all agency workers meeting the pre-qualifying 12 weeks continuous service.

4.4 Performance Information

There are no performance indicators relating directly to this issue.

4.5 Best Value

The Council seeks to engage in the most competitive agency deal possible, subject to meeting the required technical expertise.

4.6 Human Rights & Equalities

The Council as an employer has a duty of care for its entire workforce, including those not directly employed by the Council but working on the Council's behalf/on Council premises.

Procurement of agency workers/consultants is driven by the need to meet short term peaks in work or for the provision of specialist skills. Hays will provide Corby Borough Council with data analysis relating to the provision of agency workers.

5. Conclusion

Corby Borough Council's preference is for directly employed, well trained, highly valued employees. However, the use of Agency workers, where appropriate, provides for a flexible workforce to meet peaks and troughs in service demands or the procurement of specialist knowledge and skills.

The use of consultants is an important means by which the authority gains/supplements specialist knowledge in order to fulfil its duties. Procedures have been developed for authorising and monitoring the use of consultants and agency staff, to ensure that this expenditure is properly controlled.

Justification and budgeting provisions for the use of Consultants and Agency Workers remains the responsibility of budget holders and Heads of Service. Costs must be accommodated within existing Service Area budget provisions or external funding.

6. Recommendation

That Members note the information contained in the report

Background Papers

Working papers held within the EnCor Financial Services

Descriptions data administered by Human Resources

External Consultations

None

Wards

All

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