

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Employment Committee
Date: 7th March 2016
Report for: Information
Report of: Acting Director of HR

Report Title

Agency Spend for Q3 - Period 1st October to 31st December 2015

Recommendations

That the content of this report is noted.

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	These proposals align with the council's Corporate Priorities in respect to 'Low Council Tax and Value for Money' and 'Reshaping Trafford Council'.
Financial	The cost of using agency workers is carefully managed and monitored through existing budgets and budget management frameworks.
Legal Implications:	Agency assignments are carefully monitored to ensure that they are legally compliant and any employment liability is mitigated.
Equality/Diversity Implications	None
Sustainability Implications	None
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	The use of agency workers supports critical resourcing gaps.
Risk Management Implications	See Legal Implications section.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	None
Health and Safety Implications	None

1. Background

- 1.1 A robust vacancy clearance process is in place that ensures that posts are only filled where there is a compelling case to do so; where a post is to be filled, the aim is to match the vacancy in the first instance in a priority sequence; employees on notice of redundancy (redeployees), "at risk" staff (those employees where there is a real risk of redundancy) and apprentices.
- 1.2 Vacancies are subject to approval initially by respective Directorate Management Teams and subsequently the Corporate Management Team (CMT), where the request is to recruit from beyond these groups e.g. wider internal recruitment. This is in order to minimise the number of compulsory redundancies across the Council and reduce spend on external resources, including agency fees.

2.0 The Use of Agency Staff

2.1 There will inevitably be circumstances whereby resourcing needs are short term in nature, urgent and require access to time-limited and/or specialist skills that cannot be found within the organisation. For these reasons, access to temporary agency support is essential to meet critical gaps in service provision.

2.2 The breakdown of agency spend for Q3 of 2015/16 (October – December 2015) is attached at Appendix 1. The number of active assignments by post title is provided for each month in the quarter, together with the number of people covering these assignments. An assignment is defined as a 'role'/piece of work and may either be for an agreed continuous period or may be on an ad-hoc, as required basis.

2.3 Children, Families and Well-Being Directorate

2.3.1 In the third quarter of 2015/16, spend in this area totalled £311,521; as at the end of December 2015, there were a total of 46 active assignments across the Directorate. The majority of this spend was due to the service discharging its statutory responsibilities for providing social care services for vulnerable children and adults. The interim staffing need was primarily for cover whilst recruiting to vacancies as a result of maternity leave, long-term sickness absence and vacancies that have arisen as a result of internal appointments, promotions and secondments.

2.3.2 Spend activity primarily relates to the procurement of interim qualified Children's and Adults' Social Workers and Support workers; these groups of workers represented 94% of the total spend for the quarter. The remaining spend primarily relates to the provision of business support to support these workers, in particular the Social Workers.

2.3.3 In the Q2 report it was noted that there were costs relating to a number of new Social Care roles that were being incorrectly coded to T&R. The costs for these roles have now been re-coded to CFW.

2.3.3 In order to significantly reduce spend on the use of agency children's social workers, a business case was agreed in respect to the recruitment of a peripatetic team of permanent social workers, in order to reduce both the need for and the cost of some of the agency social workers and maintain continuity of service, in the future. These resources are being deployed on short-term/time-limited placements in response to service demand.

2.3.4 In addition, the AGMA-wide trial of standardised pay rates for children's and adults' agency social workers, which was led by Trafford Council, has been

successful and has now been implemented for the longer term. Furthermore, AGMA's model has been championed by children's and adults' service leads and North West Employers and has been implemented across the North West. This collaborative arrangement avoids authorities competing for agency social workers, which previously resulted in prices being driven upwards and ensures the market is managed / controlled.

2.4 Transformation and Resources Directorate (T&R)

2.4.1 In the third quarter of 2015/16, the total agency spend in this Directorate equated to £189,088 and as at the end of December 2015, there were 20 active assignments. 59% of spend in the quarter specifically related to the need to bring in specialist skills to provide transformational, technical and consultancy support to services across the organisation as it reshapes. In addition, the remaining 41% spend covered a number of interim resources required to support core services in this Directorate as they go through their own transformation and staffing restructures, which will support the realisation of Directorate savings.

2.4.2 Of the total £189,088 spend in T&R, £76,956 is directly related to the CFW transformation programme. This spend is reflective of the size and scale of this transformation programme and the significant associated savings. These costs are shown separately in Appendix I.

2.4.3 If the CFW Transformation programme costs are removed, the true spend in T&R for Q3 is £112,132.

2.5 Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure

2.5.1 In the third quarter of 2015/16, the total agency spend in this area equated to £8,843 and as at the end of December 2015, there were 4 active assignments. Spend during the quarter primarily related to catering provision.

3.0 **Comparator Data**

3.1 The total agency spend in the third quarter of 2015/16 equates to £509,452; this is an increase in spend of £15,446 from Q2, when total spend equated to £494,006.

3.2 For the same quarter in 2014/15, spend was £466,030. This represents an increase in spend of £43,422.

3.3 Trafford's spend year-to-date (1st April 2015 to 31st December 2015) compared to other AGMA and associate AGMA authorities on the HAYS Managed Service Contract is as follows:

Authority	Total Spend (Rounded)	Rank
A	£4.4m	1
B	£3.6m	2
C	£2.9m	3
D (Associate)	£2.2m	4
E	£1.5m	=5
F	£1.5m	=5
G	£1.5m	=5
H - Trafford	£1.5m	=5
I	£980k	9
J	£950k	10
K (Associate)	£800k	11

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Agency spend will continue to be monitored on a monthly basis and regular reports will be presented to Employment Committee, for information.
- 4.2 Employment Committee is recommended to note the content of this report.