

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Employment Committee  
**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016  
**Report for:** Information  
**Report of:** Director of HR

### Report Title

**Agency Spend for Period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**

### 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.
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 and that where a post is filled, the aim is to match to the vacancy in the first instance in a priority sequence; employees on notice from redundancy (redeployees), "at risk" staff (those employees where there is a real risk of redundancy) and apprentices.
- 1.1.1 Vacancies will then be subject to approval initially by respective Directorate Management Teams and subsequently the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), for advertisement initially to internal staff in order to minimise the

number of compulsory redundancies and the incurrence of additional spend on external resources, including agency fees.

- 1.1.2 There will be circumstances whereby there are immediate resourcing needs that are predominantly short term in nature and require access to time limited and/or specialist skills that cannot be found within the organisation, or where cover is required for day-to-day absences. For these reasons, access to temporary agency support is essential to meet critical gaps in service provision as outlined below.
- 1.2.2 The breakdown of agency spend over the previous financial year (from April 2015 to March 2016 inclusive) is provided in Appendix 1. It should be noted that the agency costs for the year have been met from within existing staffing budgets, whilst services have been restructuring, reshaping and recruiting to resultant vacant posts and ensuring that statutory obligations are met on a day-to-day basis.
- 1.2.3 Appendix 2 provides information on the length of tenure for those assignments that were still active as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

## **2. Directorate Overview**

### **2.1 Children, Families and Well-Being**

- 2.1.1 The majority of agency spend is due to the service discharging its statutory responsibilities for providing social care services for vulnerable children and adults. The interim staffing need is primarily required to cover staffing resource gaps, created as a result of short-term staff absences or whilst recruitment to permanent posts is underway and cover is critical to ensure that service users receive the appropriate level of care and support.
- 2.1.2 Spend activity primarily relates to the procurement of interim qualified Social Workers and Adult Support workers, which represents over 80% of the total spend for the Directorate. The remaining spend primarily relates to provision and support of childcare services where the Council has a statutory obligation to meet minimum staffing ratios.
- 2.1.3 In order to reduce both the need for and the cost of agency social workers and maintain continuity of service, a permanent, peripatetic team of children's social workers has been established. These experienced social workers are being deployed on short-term/time-limited placements in response to service demand.
- 2.1.4 In addition, the AGMA-wide adoption of standardised pay rates for children's and adults' agency social workers, which was led by Trafford Council,

continues to be effective at controlling costs and the principle of a rate 'cap' has now been broadened to 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.

## 2.2 Transformation and Resources Directorate (T & R)

2.2.1 Agency spend in this Directorate is due to the need to bring in specialist skills to provide transformational, technical and consultancy support to the organisation as it reshapes; and for those interim resources required to support core services in this Directorate whilst they go through their own transformation and staffing restructures, which will support the realisation of Directorate savings.

## 2.3 Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure

2.3.1 Spend in this area primarily relates to catering provision and interim technical support roles.

## 3. Summary Agency Spend Position

3.1 The total agency spend in 2015/16 equates to £1,979,261; this is a decrease in spend of £68,117 from 2014/15, when total spend equated to £2,047,378.

Directorate	2014/15 Total	2015/16 Total
CFW	£ 1,265,355	£ 1,171,785
EGEI	£ 142,013	£ 87,792
T&R	£ 640,010	£ 345,905
T&R CFW	n/a	£ 373,779
<b>All</b>	<b>£ 2,047,378</b>	<b>£ 1,979,261</b>

## 4. Conclusion

4.1 Agency spend will continue to be monitored on a regular 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.