BEST VALUE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

REVIEW OF THE USE OF AGENCY STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

MONITORING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

(These recommendations were approved by the Cabinet with the proviso that any new procedures be delegated to the Director of Strategic Resources and must be sufficiently flexible and responsive to allow for prompt hiring when necessary)

Reported to Committee on 20 November 2006

Rec No.	Recommendation	Progress
1.	That a centralised list of consultants used by the Council should be maintained.	As part of the implementation of the Business Change Programme, the Council is implementing a new version of the Oracle IT system. This includes new improved and tighter central procedures in respect of approved contracts. As part of this, work only contracts that exist with approved suppliers will be maintained on the system. Any changes must be approved in advance and therefore appropriate Contract Standing Orders procedures must be followed to add a new supplier e.g. consultant to the list.
2.	That when there is a need to appoint someone for a time limited piece of work, the Council's policy should be to look within existing staff first to see if anyone has the required skills.	The proposal is actively considered by departments and is a necessary requirement of ensuring that the Council maintains spending within the approved cash limits. This has been particularly useful in areas such as preparation for CPA corporate assessment where members of the "Futures Group" were seconded to the Assistant Chief Executive's department to support the work. The development of a skills database of all employees is part of the business plan for the Human Resources division.
3.	When the use of consultants is being considered, a full assessment on the risks of not undertaking the work should be carried out.	As part of the Council's business planning process each department has an agreed set of objectives to deliver within the overall resources allocated to it as part of the budget process. These are reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. To ensure that these are delivered and key performance indicators are achieved each service must ensure the most appropriate form of delivering the work to be considered. As recognised in the original Policy Overview Committee report this will have regard to legislative matters. In particular the Council's programme management arrangements will consider business cases for specific projects. This includes the proposed resources (and forum) for delivery.
4.	When a contract comes to an end, a full review of the work and a view on the value for money should be undertaken. These should be kept centrally so that there is a corporate record of the suitability of consultants.	These are kept by individual departments but will be centralised in 2007/08 as part of the Oracle implementation and construction of the new contract management system.

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5.	There should be a clear process and procedure in place for deciding whether or not to appoint a consultant and this should form part of the Council's Constitution. This should include levels of authorisation e.g. Cabinet Member, Director, Head of Service, Senior Manager and when the tender process should be used for obtaining the services of a consultant. This will ensure that there is a clear audit trail for the whole appointment process.	There is currently a review of Contract Standing Orders being undertaken which will be reported to Council in December 2006. These recommendations have been incorporated within this review.
6.	Each project should be assessed individually and a reasoned decision made as to whether or not to appoint a consultant. No additional pieces of work should be given to a consultant without this process having been gone through.	
7.	Full terms of reference for each appointment should be drawn up and approved by the relevant Director or Head of Service.	
8.	The relevant committee should monitor the work of the Programme Boards to ensure that the new project management processes are being implemented in all areas of the Council's work.	The effectiveness of the Council's programme management arrangements is monitored and reviewed by the Corporate Programme Board of which the Leader is a member. An All Party Policy briefing on arrangements was given in October 2006.
9.	Guidance on the use of agency and temporary staff, including the full implications of employing such staff, should be developed and provided to all managers.	
10.	That all managers are made aware of the proposed changes to the legislation regarding agency employees and that its impact should be considered before employing such staff, if the changes are introduced.	A draft policy has been produced covering temporary labour and agency staff. The next step is for the policy to be agreed and communicated to line managers with guidance notes.
11.	The use of agency staff for engagements longer than three months should be discouraged.	

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12.	That the monitoring of the use of agency staff should be centralised so that the number of agency staff employed by the Council is known, along with how long they have been employed for and which departments use agency staff regularly.	The moratorium on recruitment has raised issues concerning temporary agency staff and controls will be put in place through this project.
13.	That HR progress their work on succession planning and recruitment quickly to enable the Council to move forward as an employer of choice.	The job evaluation projects will drive out generic job roles which is an essential building block to the achievement of succession planning.

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