

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee

To: Councillors Aspden (Chair), D'Agorne (Vice-Chair), Hook and Douglas

Date: Monday, 15 August 2022

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: The Thornton Room - Ground Floor, West Offices (G039)

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on **5 August 2022**. The attached additional documents are now available for the following agenda item:

9. Council Agency Workers and Work with York Engagements (Pages 1 - 6)

This supplement contains a redacted version of the private report originally published for this item.

10. Working as One Programme (Pages 7 - 14)

This supplement contains a redacted version of the private report originally published for this item.

This agenda supplement was published on **24 August 2022**.

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**REDACTED
PUBLIC REPORT**

Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee

15 August 2022

Report of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

THIS REPORT INDICATES WHERE TEXT HAS BEEN REDACTED WHICH IS DEEMED COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Council Agency Workers and Work with York Engagements

Summary

1. This report provides a summary as requested by the Committee of the Council's arrangement in place with City of York Trading operating as Work with York (WwY) and more detailed information on the current number of agency engagements in place across the Directorates.

Recommendations

2. Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee are requested to
 - a. Note the Work with York arrangements in place to engage agency workers
 - b. Note the current recruitment market that the Council and WwY face giving rise to an increase in agency engagements, their cost and length of engagement
 - c. Note that there is currently an exercise being undertaken to reduce, challenge and review agency spend and the number of agency workers

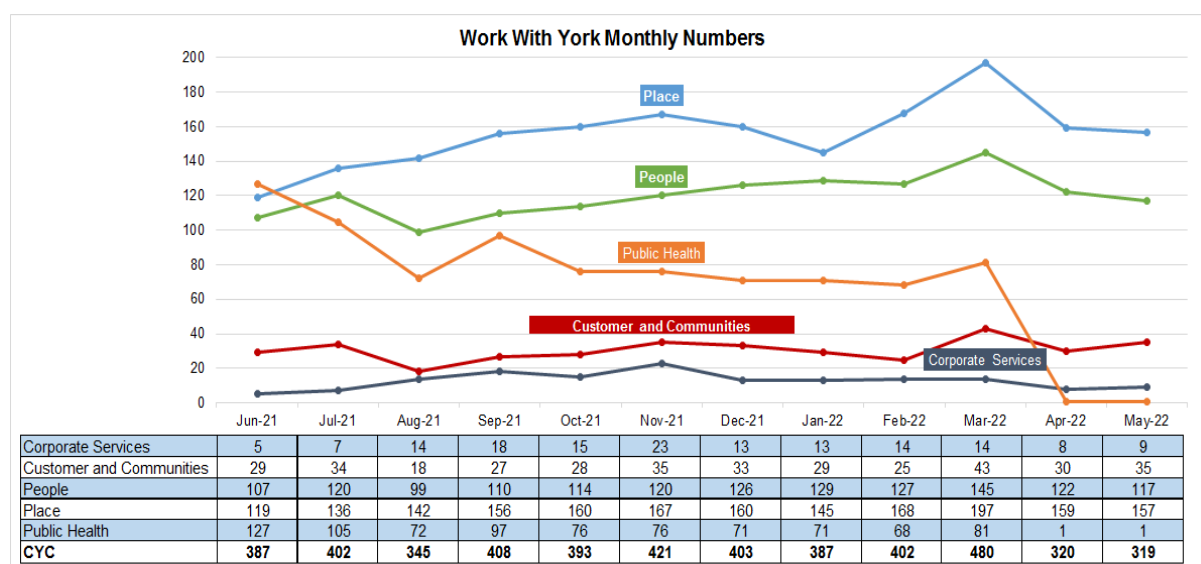
Background

3. The Committee receive a rolling year figure of total agency assignments engaged through WwY on a quarterly basis, including those who have been engaged for longer than 12 months.
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4. WwY are the preferred supplier for all agency engagements across the Council. Other arrangements can be made outside of this arrangement where WwY are unable to secure candidates for niche or specialist roles.
 5. WwY currently charge **REDACTED TEXT** on top of the current pay rate (as a minimum), there is a sliding scale of temp to permanent fees **REDACTED TEXT** should the Council want to directly employ an agency member of staff from WwY. WwY terms are generally more favourable to second tier agencies or those not associated with WwY. Recent exercises have been undertaken to directly employ waste agency staff and social workers which offer a saving to the Council and a permanent role for the agency staff member and employee status.
 6. There are advantages of engaging an agency workforce, and agency staff do offer short term resourcing solutions. The WwY charge is not too excessive when considering pension and NI costs.
 7. There is a robust arrangement in place to procure an agency worker and costs and numbers are monitored monthly by both Departmental Management Teams (DMT) and Corporate Management Team (CMT). Data provided gives an overview of the current patterns and levels of spend and DMT's role is to offer challenge as appropriate.
 8. Agency Workers should not normally be engaged for longer than 3 months unless there is a specific business case. In practice, and in part owing to the current recruitment market, the trend is to engage agency staff for longer than 3 months. Recruitment agencies report increasing difficulties to secure agency workers similar to other employers nationally.
 9. Engaging agency is usually for the following reasons.
 - a. Sickness absence cover (short or long term) for established employees
 - b. Cover between an employee leaving a post and new starter being recruited (should be short term)
 - c. Failure to recruit due to market conditions / pressure shortage of skills
 - d. Seasonal work or additional capacity for a short-term project over and above establishment structure
 - e. Maternity leave cover (up to 1 year)
 - f. Fixed term contract (for example funded opportunity)
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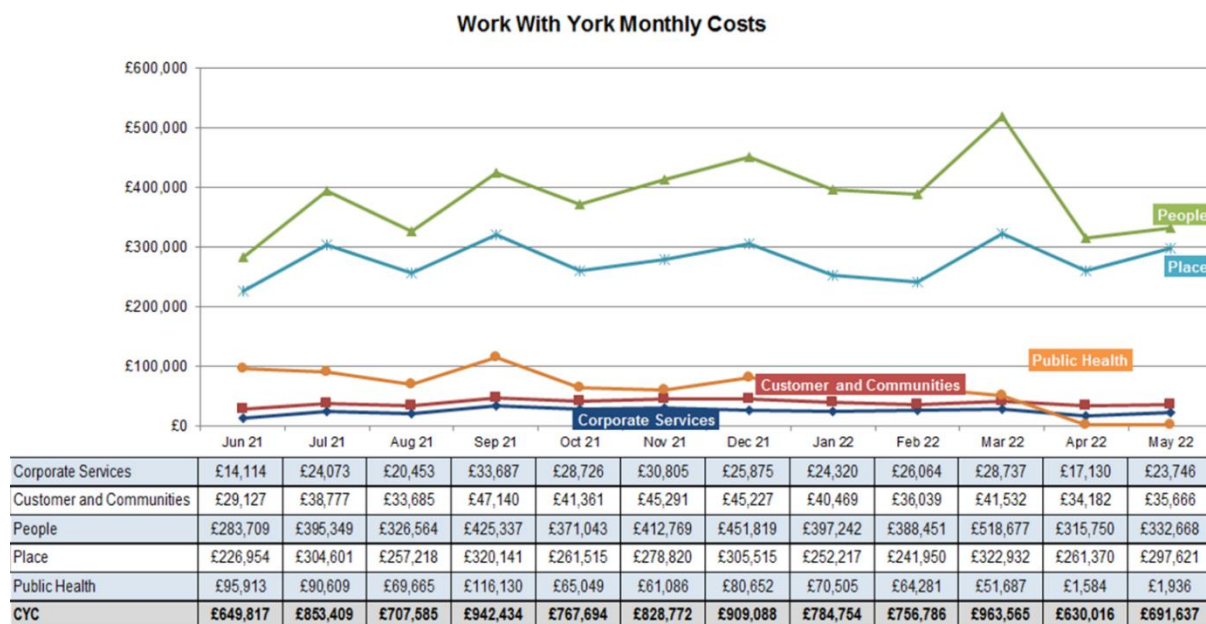
Agency Numbers and Spend

10. As at May 2022, there were 319 agency workers engaged through WwY. In April, 2022, there was a reduction of agency workers compared to March 2022, this is a common pattern as fixed term contracts associated with funding often cease as at 31st March. An example of this is the Covid funding and Government rule changes from 31st March 2022, which brought an immediate reduction of 80 agency workers in public health.
11. The Council have recently engaged a number of agency workers to assist with the Ukraine effort to support families to come and settle in York, again these are short fixed term contracts and limited by Government funding.
12. We have a number of agency staff engaged to fill established vacancies ahead of restructures being implemented.
13. Services such as customer services, business support and social care are active users of agency to deliver the key services to our community, these are also areas where there are specific recruitment challenges nationally. Other key areas which are facing on ongoing recruitment challenges include waste, public realm, highways and fleet, this includes LGV drivers' availability. Housing is also another area.



14. The cost of agency staff has been increasing over the last 12 months as such there is an exercise already underway for greater scrutiny and

challenge of both spend and agency numbers. It is felt that there is room for reducing agency spend and numbers in People services. We are soon welcoming the new Director roles in People in August and restructures at Heads of service level are also nearing completion to give the workforce greater stability and a reduction of agency reliance.



15. The review also extends to reviewing agency engagements over 12 months. As at May 2022, 99 WwY assignments exceeded twelve months. The majority of these are in Place Services and can be accounted for in terms of turnover of key services and specialist roles, however, challenge will be provided. Of the 99 agency staff who have been engaged over 12 months, some of these are specialists, others are called on only for specific cover – for example public health engage with one specialist agency worker for annual leave cover or peaks in service requirement when needed and this engagement is sporadic over the year on and as and when basis which suits both the service and the individual. Similarly in Place some agency workers are engaged to carry out inspections in trading standards on an as and when basis again not employed on a full time basis.

Work with York Assignments exceeding 12 months	
Public Health	1
Corporate Services	1
Customer and communities	10
People	29
Place	58
Total	99

Council Plan

16. The engagement of the agency staff are key to delivering council services and therefore, assist in the delivery of the Council Plan.

Implications

17. The following implications are for noting;

- **Financial** – the use of temporary staffing can be a cost effective, value for money solution in some services. However, the reduction of agency spend is one of the key challenges to reducing staffing costs for directorates. Spend continues to put pressure on the Council budget and Medium-Term Finance Plan (MTFP) and plans are in place to review and challenge spend.
- **Human Resources (HR)** The Council's strategy is to reduce the agency spend but being mindful that there will never be a position where the Council will not have any agency workers as they provide a valuable temporary workforce that assists services to meet the needs of achieving the Council plan and objectives. HR are working with managers to consider options and alternatives to using agency.
- **Legal** – there are legal protections for agency workers including the Agency Worker Regulations 2010 which is a general framework for the protection of temporary agency workers and the regulations provide certain rights for agency staff. The Council ensures that agency workers have access to the terms and equal treatment rights as specified by the Regulations. This extends to key elements of pay and other entitlements such as annual leave after 12 weeks in the same job. There are also regulations associated with successive contracts protecting agency workers of which the Council review.

There are no known **equalities, crime and disorder, information technology, property** and other implications.

Risk Management

18. There are no risk management issues known

Contact Details

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Ian Floyd
Chief Operating Officer

**Report
Approved**

Yes

Date 28th July
2022

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Janie Berry – Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer
Debbie Mitchell – Chief Finance Officer and s151

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All Yes

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes:

None



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PUBLIC REPORT**

Staffing Matters and Urgency

15th August 2022

Report of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

THIS REPORT INDICATES WHERE TEXT HAS BEEN REDACTED WHICH IS DEEMED EITHER COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE, CONTAINS SECURITY INFORMATION REGARDING CITY OF YORK'S WORKFORCE ARRANGEMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Working as One Programme

Summary

1. This report gives an update on the Working as One (Wa1) programme (the Council's hybrid working programme).

Recommendations

2. Staff Matters and Urgency are asked to;
 - a. Note the benefits and aims of the programme and the achievement to date and the ongoing initiatives as the programme continues to progress.

Background

3. There are a number of aims of the Wa1 programme, some of which were borne from the recent pandemic and the way in which we adapted our services to meet the needs of our community. These ways of working now present opportunities for how we can work for the future without compromising on meeting our community and customer needs. Delivery of good customer service remains at the forefront of how we shape our services to ensure that nothing will be done which could impact on the service that our community receives.

4. Another key aim of the programme is to ensure that York like other Council's, have a modern and attractive hybrid working offer for applicants and employees. Hybrid working allows efficiencies in the ways that we work, for example, less travel for our workforce and more productive attendance at meetings and training with online offers. A hybrid working offer also means that York is attractive to a wider net of applicants than those in the immediate employment market area. Hybrid working also reports an increase in wellbeing for many employees, but allowing connectivity for teams for professional and peer support.
5. The programme is also delivering on significant financial benefits as part of commercial letting of space at West Offices.
6. The workforce who have worked on a hybrid basis have welcomed the opportunity to work in a different format and in a flexible way that gives them the opportunity to work round other commitments including family, personal interests as well as reduced commuting times and the cost of commuting. Managers have also adapted to different management styles on a hybrid basis but also using face to face time to check in in terms of mental health and emotional resilience of team members on an individual and team basis which was difficult to do in the lock down periods. There has been a number of engagement sessions with staff as part of the ongoing working as one programme and how we have implemented new technology, ways of working and reconfigured our office environment. This is an ongoing journey too that we are continuing to develop. There is no blueprint for what is right and wrong but engagement has been key and it is working well. Where there has been concerns raised these have been addressed and worked on with employees. Hybrid working is now the 'norm' offer for employment for roles that can work in this way and to be able to promote our Grade AA standard offices is an asset to the Council and an attractive offer for new applicants.
7. The Working as One programme, identified three groups of workers:
 - office based workers - those staff who need to be in an office full-time as their work can only be done from a council building, or they have requested to work in the office

- community based workers - those who work out in the community, none of their role is able to be undertaken from home
 - hybrid workers - those whose role can be undertaken from different locations and who want to combine home and office working
8. The requirement to work from a council building is driven by the needs of the service and the role being undertaken, therefore, we have not specified how often hybrid workers are required to be in the office, again this is an attractive offer for new applicants and existing employees. Some services operate a rota where staff need to be in a few days a week, whereas others may only need to come in to cover a particular type of work or to attend team meetings or training, others will be office based full time. Employees can also attend and work in offices should they not have an appropriate set up at home, or if they need contact with colleagues or are simply more productive in the office.

Current position

9. From May 22 the request to return process for West Offices and Hazel Court, which had operated during the pandemic, was removed. All staff can now use the council offices.
10. The percentage of employees working on a hybrid basis is 66% (approx. 1600) community-based workers 29% (approx. 700) and office-based workers 5% (approx. 150)

West Offices Changes

11. REDACTED TEXT for security reasons

12. We already have partners in West Offices **REDACTED TEXT** and we are still considering commercial interest in using other parts of the building **REDACTED TEXT**, in recognition of the fact that the majority of staff in West Offices have moved to hybrid working.

Desk Booking system

13. A desk booking system went live in West Offices in June 22. Hybrid workers can now book desks, collaborative spaces and pods. This facility guarantees staff a work setting when they come into the office.

14. Office based workers have been allocated fixed desks and do not have to use the booking system.

15. REDACTED TEXT for security reasons

16. Meeting rooms continue to be booked through our facilities management team for the immediate future but this may change.

17. The launch of the booking system went smoothly, and usage has been high.

ICT

18. All hybrid workers have been issued with a laptop which they can use at home, and in the office. A standard ICT kit and furniture list has been agreed for the 3 work styles, and officers can request other equipment should they need them for accommodate reasonable adjustments.

19. Reconfiguration of ICT desk equipment at West Offices has been completed - there is now a 50/50 split between docking stations, where hybrid workers can link laptops to screens, and desktop computers, this maximises the use of laptops issued to hybrid workers.

20. Improvements have been made to the WiFi at West Offices and Hazel Court and is currently underway at the York Registry office and Explore library sites.

Lockers & Business Storage

21. All the lockers, business storage cupboards and wardrobes have been emptied and reorganised as part of this change. Day lockers are now available for use on the ground and first floors at West Offices.

Communications

22. Fortnightly Wa1 emails are being issued to all staff to update them on progress. All staff information sessions were held in April and June, to providing updates and question and answer opportunities. There are also further sessions planned in the future.

23. A dedicated Hybrid Working page is now available on the intranet covering the latest information as the programme progresses, it provides guidance for managers on how manage hybrid workers,

support and training for staff to help them get the best out of the new ways of working.

24. We have also produced a range of short educational videos to help staff understand the changes, topics include connecting to ICT equipment, returning to the office and hybrid working.

Health & Safety and Security

25. Where staff have not been in the building for some time, we have re-familiarised staff with key health and security arrangements
REDACTED TEXT

Consultation

26. Our unions are working with us to implement the Working as One programme, fortnightly meetings are held to consult on changes and provide progress updates.

Next Steps

27. In the Autumn the programme will start to focus on the ICT and booking system requirements for Hazel Court, the use of community hubs as dropdown places to work, pool car provision and embedding the new ways of working and culture change across the council.

Council Plan

28. The Council Plan identifies three priorities, four of which are relevant:
 - good health and wellbeing
 - well paid jobs and an inclusive economy
 - an open and effective council

Implications

29. The following implications are for noting;
 - **Financial** – spend associated with the programme is within existing budgets and funds from commercial use of the unused areas of West Offices following reconfiguration of office space. All spend is approved via a programme board. The commercial income from letting West Offices and the introduction of hybrid working is delivering significant financial benefits.

- **Human Resources (HR)** - while we are trialling our hybrid arrangements, we have not made any changes to our contractual arrangements and there is requirement to attend work base for some of the time, however we have implemented guidance to support hybrid working ensuring that performance is maintained and managed, employee wellbeing is not detrimented and service objectives are delivered.
- **Equalities** - Wherever an employee is working, they will be given access to the same: support – including access to their representatives (for example, a recognised trade union), opportunities – for training, development and promotion. Reasonable adjustments continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis
- **Information Technology (IT)** – Increased demand in the market for ICT equipment and consumables is causing supply chain issues and some delays to equipment ordered

There are no known **Legal, Crime and Disorder, Property** and **Other** implications

Risk Management

27. There are no known specific risks outstanding, however the programme board are made aware of operational programme risks as part of scheduled management updates.

Author:

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Ian Floyd
Chief Operating Officer

Report
Approved

 Yes

Date

28th July
2022

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Janie Berry – Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

Debbie Mitchell – Chief Finance Officer and s151

All

 Yes

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

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Background Papers: None

Annexes: None

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