

## **Briefing Paper for the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee on the Use of Agency Workers within the Environment Directorate**

### **Background and Introduction**

At its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015, the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee requested a briefing paper on the rationale for the use of Agency Workers within the Environment Directorate.

This document sets out the reasons for Agency Worker use within the Directorate on a service by service basis and also the associated budgets for 2014/15. The out-turn spend against budget for the 2014/15 period was not available at the time this briefing paper was prepared (mid April 2015).

### **Waste Collections**

Agency Workers are used in the Waste Collections services for two primary reasons:

1. To cover absences due to sickness, holidays, training, cover staff undertaking other duties. At the current time, all front line staff absences are backfilled to ensure that the Council's waste collection schedules are adhered to, thereby minimising service delivery disruption and corresponding complaints, and also loss of income from commercial customers, and
2. To cover vacant posts. The resource level required on a daily basis to collect waste across the city varies between 183 and 208 frontline staff with an average daily requirement of 195. It would be inefficient to employ staff above the lowest daily requirement as some staff would then have no work on certain days of the week. Agency Workers are therefore used to provide the required additional front line resource as required. There are currently 34 front line vacant posts, and 165 employees in post. Recruitment has recently been undertaken to fill a number of these vacancies, although the Service will not be fully resourced to its current minimum requirement due to changes that are planned to take place this financial year.

It should be noted that because of the relatively high sickness level within the Waste Collections Service, it is more cost effective to use Agency Workers than creating and using Pool Operative posts.

### **Street Cleansing**

As part of the budget savings implemented in 2013/14, the Agency Worker budget for Street Cleansing was deleted. Frontline absences are therefore no longer backfilled,

instead, resource allocation is appropriately adjusted on a daily basis according to the Service priorities.

Agency Workers will occasionally be used to cover priority vacant posts, for example, mechanical sweeper drivers.

### **Waste Treatment and Disposal**

This service area covers the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF), Waste Transfer Station (WTS), Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC's) and Landfill.

Agency Workers are used in the Waste Treatment and Disposal for two primary reasons:

1. To cover absences due to sickness, holidays, training, cover staff undertaking other duties. At the current time, all front line staff absences are backfilled to ensure that the Council's statutory requirements are fulfilled, thereby minimising service delivery disruption and corresponding complaints and also loss of income from commercial customers and materials sales.
2. To cover vacant posts until new recruits are completed. A number of long term vacancies have occurred in the MRF due to the uncertainty of the operations. This has since been resolved and a recruitment process is currently underway to fill all vacancies.

### **Lamby Way Depot Management**

This service manages all of the waste collections, street cleansing and waste treatment and disposal operations facilities. This work did not transfer to Facilities Management. A long term agency provision has been in place for a depot assistant. Due to the continued need, it is proposed that a permanent post is created to resolve this position. Agency cover would then only be used as cover for sickness and holidays. The service also manages the sites security through three depot coordinators rotating on a shift pattern covering the 7 days operations. The staff are based at Lamby Way Depot but through remote CCTV systems, monitor the external HWRC's. Again agency staff are used to cover holidays, sickness and training to maintain a presence on site.

### **Waste Strategy, Education and Enforcement**

Agency Workers are not generally used in Waste Strategy, Education and Enforcement. Resource allocation is adjusted on a daily basis according to Service priorities to address short term absences. Longer term absences (e.g. because of maternity leave) are covered through temporary in-house appointments. Agency workers will only be used if no suitable internal candidates are sourced.

Agency workers are sometimes used for externally funded projects on an adhoc basis.

## Business Support

Cardiff Works staff are used to cover vacant posts.

## Regulatory Services – Food Safety Inspections

The Food Law Code of Practice sets out the minimum service levels expected in respect of food hygiene inspections which effectively equates to the minimum statutory service required. In recent years, particularly 2014/15, the undertaking of the inspection programme has been a challenge as result of: the number of food businesses in Cardiff increasing on an annual basis without a corresponding increase in staff resource, and a high number of vacancies in the team which haven't been filled because of the ongoing Regulatory Services collaboration project.

Without mitigation action being taken, the end of year performance in respect of the 'high risk inspection programme' was anticipated to be 40%. Historically performance across Wales including Cardiff has been 100%. Therefore, in November a decision was taken to use appropriately skilled staff resourced through Comensura to assist in undertaking the required inspections. As a result the end of year position was much improved at 83% of target.

The temporary resources were mainly funded from the vacant posts but there was also some external funding provided by the Food Standards Agency.

## Regulatory Services – Pest Control and Dogs Home

Occasionally, Agency Workers are used to cover vacant posts in Pest Control. They are also used at the Dogs Home to ensure adequate welfare facilities are maintained for the dogs at times of staff absence.

## 2014/15 Agency Worker Budgets

Service	2014/15 Budget
Waste Collections	1,110,120
Street Cleansing	0
Waste Disposal	294,660
Lamby Way Depot Management	35,070
Waste Strategy, Education and Enforcement	0
Business Support	0
Regulatory Services	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,439,850</b>