

**Report of the Cabinet Member
Performance and Engagement**

I have been asked to report, by Councillor Hannan, as follows;

..... on Council Policy regarding the hiring of consultants and the recent discussion at Audit regarding adherence to the Policy.

Consultants/Interims – Audit report

This is the 3rd year of auditing this area of activity. Once again the audit highlights 'improvements required' as the sample of cases concluded that managers are not complying with the Council's policy for the hire of Consultants/Interims.

The sample of cases (10) used for the audit for this year revealed that 5 failed to comply with the policy and in 4 cases the paperwork was missing some information or the relevant authorisation. 1 case was fully compliant.

The use of consultants/interims is continuing to decline in 2016/2017. Currently there are 9. Importantly the non-compliance with the policy has not breached any taxation or HMRC requirements. The Council remains compliant in this respect.

We intend to begin a programme of communication and engagement with Senior Managers and other identified managers to improve their awareness of the requirements. The individual cases identified in the sample will be subject to discussion with the relevant managers. In future any applications received with incomplete information or missing approval signatures will not be processed.

The Council remains committed to reducing the numbers of Consultants/Interims/agency workers that are engaged whilst recognising that in some skill shortage areas this may not be possible in the short term. The engagement of such workers remains an area of performance that the Council knows it needs to improve and it will continue to audit on an annual basis to ensure compliance with the Council's policy and best value.

**Councillor Barry Parsons
Performance and Engagement**