

Questions from Finance & Resources Scrutiny Review to Heads of Service

Question	Response from Transport & Street Management
1. How would you define the term consultant?	Provider of specialist skills not available in-house: primarily called upon for capital projects where own skilled resource is limited. We have Term Consultancy agreements with 3 major providers: Amey (Highways / Major Projects) Halcrow (Coastal Protection) Atkins (Traffic / Transport).
2. What distinction do you use to define between consultant, agency and temporary staff?	Agency / temporary staff provide skills required to maintain services in the face of staff shortages.
3. How many temporary/agency or consultant staff have you employed for: More than 6 months over the last 2 years More than 12 months over the last 2 years	6M+ Client Manager – Highways PFI, Project Officer, Highways Design x 2 12M+ Client Manager – Highways PFI
4. Please list all those at 4 above and provide reasons for their employment	Project Officer – Highways Design: 08/09 when there was much more LTP work Project Officer, Highways Design: required to support capital projects Client Manager – Highways PFI: critical post filled during TSM restructuring. Interim control of PFI contract and Coastal Engineering.
5. How do you budget for temporary/agency/consultant staff?	Normally as part of capital project costs.. Client Manager’s costs were met from within TSM cash limit.
6. How do you evaluate the cost-effectiveness of using such staff rather than employ to these posts?	Projects delivered on time and to budget. Client Manager’s effectiveness was in maintaining service delivery including control of £25M PFI contract.
7. What is the impact on staff morale from using consultants or agency staff?	It is accepted that we lack certain skills and need to buy these in when needed. As budgets reduce the pressure to make more use of our own people increases.

Questions for Heads of Service

<p>8. What other options do you consider or are available?</p>	<p>Secondments and acting-up are increasingly employed</p>
<p>9. How do you determine the skills and abilities of your own staff to assist with providing cover for gaps in service provision, where you employ temporary/agency/consultant staff?</p>	<p>We are a professional service with a wide range of technical skills. There is an ongoing commitment to train and develop our people but we cannot hope to encompass within TSM every skill required to deliver major engineering projects. Traditionally there have been skills shortages within our industry (although that too is starting to change).</p>
<p>10. How do you determine the skills and abilities of staff across PCC to assist with providing cover for gaps in service provision, where you employ temporary/agency/consultant staff and are there any barriers to this?</p>	<p>We employ robust project management but the internal market makes PCC very restrictive when it comes to moving staff around. We have plenty of opportunities for PCC staff to work on our projects but usually end up operating within our own silo.</p>
<p>11. How much does it cost your service to provide cover for sickness/absence (excluding the cost of SSP)?</p>	<p>As a rule, nothing. Our major problem is in managing short-term sickness.</p>
<p>12. What time and money is spent on training and developing your own staff to fill "hard to fill" posts from within existing resources?</p>	<p>TSM has a good track record of developing staff and promoting from within. We have tried to safeguard T&D budgets but were recently obliged to accept cuts.</p>
<p>13. How many temporary/agency/consultants do you engage who cost more than £5k during the lifetime of their contract? Please list and advise of reasons for employment</p>	<p>See list.</p>
<p>14. Have you ever employed as a consultant – a member of staff from PCC who had previously been made redundant or retired? If so please provide details of contract and reasons</p>	<p>A former Head of Service – helped us with performance related issue relating to Lakeside development. More recently they has been assisting on Tipner. Both were business critical situations where buying in their expertise ensured the best outcome for PCC.</p>
<p>15. Please provide a breakdown of consultant and agency staff costs for 2008/09 and 2009/2010 for your service and a summary of how these were funded</p>	<p>See list.</p>