

Report to Management and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee by Jonathon Seed – Member on the Agency Staff Board

For the past six months I have been the nominated Member of the Management and Resources O&S Select Committee on the Agency Staff Board. The Agency and Contract Staff Board meets on a monthly basis and I have been afforded the full cooperation and assistance of the lead officers and this included very helpful one to one briefings.

During the transition to One Council and also during the first few months of the Council it became apparent that there was a culture amongst senior management of accounting for agency and consultancy staff out of their own budgets as a general resource. This removed both procurement and accounting visibility from the HR management team and more importantly SAP. This should be understood in the context that the Agency staff budget this year is likely to be in excess of £7million.

Once raised, the accounting and control problem was quickly recognised as a serious issue by the Cabinet Member for Resources, John Noeken and he gave immediate attention to developing a solution. The enthusiasm for developing proper visibility and control measures was also joined by Barrie Pirie, Head of HR; Mike Swabey; Head of Procurement and Nicky Griffiths the lead officer on Agency and Contract staff. Policy development was rapid and is expressed in the Cabinet paper which Members will have seen with their agenda and which Cabinet approved on 23 February 2010.

At the Agency Staff Board Meeting of 23rd March it was reported that a complication concerning legal aspects of employment issues for Agency and Contract staff had arisen and a meeting with Martin Donovan, Chief Finance Officer, Barry Pirie and Mike Swabey is to be arranged to look at funding options for this legal support. We also may have a difficulty in bringing BANES into our partnership within the agreed timescale due to delays in their Cabinet approval but that on the meantime we would press ahead with the expectation that Banes will join us in due course.

My opinion is that there were serious issues with the employment and accountability of Agency and Contract staff but that these have been gripped by the management team and brought under control.

Jonathon Seed
Member
Agency and Contract Staff Board