

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL
AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 June 2020

Report by Clerk

CONSULTANCY EXPENDITURE AND RELATED LOG

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. Further to discussions at the meeting of the committee in January 2019 on consultancy expenditure, this report summarises discussions on this issue by the committee thus far and, as agreed then, provides feedback on consultancy expenditure following the end of the 2019/20 financial year as referred to in the log that has been created for this.

RECOMMENDATION

2. It is recommended that the committee considers the feedback provided and discusses if any further action is to be taken.

BACKGROUND

3. At the meeting of the committee in November 2018, the Chair referred to concerns he had expressed at the Council meeting in October 2018 regarding the extent to which external consultants were being used by the authority. Having heard him suggest it could be useful if the committee investigated this further, it was agreed to progress some work on departmental expenditure on external consultants, feasibility studies and possibly legal advice; the reasons for such expenditure; and which consultants had been used.

4. Having noted that during the previous Administration the committee had progressed work on expenditure incurred on consultants during 2013/14 and 2014/15 and related issues, it was agreed that, in the first instance and prior to further discussion, the Clerk would submit a report in January 2019 on that work.

COMMITTEE'S PREVIOUS WORK ON CONSULTANCY ISSUES

5 The report submitted by the Clerk in January 2019 on [Consultancy Expenditure](#) referred to a report prepared by the Deputy Chief Executive which the committee had considered in February 2014 on issues raised within the national [Audit Scotland Report on Scotland's Public Sector Workforce](#) which assessed if public bodies were effectively planning and managing workforce changes, and focussed on approaches used by councils between 2009 and 2013.

6. The Deputy Chief Executive's report ([ERC Report on Scotland's Public Sector Workforce](#)), had provided feedback on the local position, including changes to staff numbers and costs, and implementation of workforce changes and related planning. That report concluded that the Council was well positioned relative to the national report, and that the principles of good practice specified in it were supported locally, focusing on workforce and budget planning to match the authority's needs whilst ensuring that skills and expertise were

maintained and developed, and that good value for money was achieved. Other issues referred to in the Deputy Chief Executive's report included how the Council was seeking opportunities to deliver services differently, such as through service redesign and further joint working and collaboration.

7. Issues raised by elected Members during related discussion at the February 2014 meeting and subsequently included concerns held by some Members on the number of experienced officers leaving the authority and related loss of expertise. More specifically, it was agreed to seek clarification on whether or not the Council was making greater use of consultants than compared to the period before the time covered by the national report.

8. The report submitted to the committee by the Clerk in January 2019 detailed how the committee's previous work on consultancy expenditure for 2013/14 and 2014/15 had been progressed in two stages, and how its Members had agreed to define the expenditure in which interest had been taken. The types of information gathered and collated, and how issues relating to external legal services costs had been discussed were also commented on. More specifically it was clarified that the committee had agreed to seek feedback for the two years concerned on "*Any paid consultancy or advice commissioned directly by the Council from an external individual, company or organisation for a fixed period of time to assist the Council progress an issue, including in respect of the provision of legal services*". Information for 2013/14 and 2014/15 had subsequently been collated and reviewed on which individuals or organisations had provided consultancy services; the services provided; the length of time they were employed and related costs; and why consultants had been considered required in each case. Information on the extent to which expenditure was linked to spend to save initiatives; and if it was one-off or recurring expenditure was also collated and considered. The fully collated information for 2013/14 and 2014/15 gathered during the committee's previous work was attached to the report prepared by the Clerk in 2019.

9. The report explained that the committee ultimately agreed that the exercise it had progressed had been useful, and commented also on the importance of departments analysing such costs similarly on an ongoing basis. More specifically, it was suggested that the Chief Executive be advised of the committee's view that it was important for departments to conduct such exercises to identify and scrutinise trends and inform discussions and analysis on whether the use of externally engaged staff, including consultants, trainers and agency staff for example, continued to deliver Best Value. The need to encourage departments to code consultancy work appropriately, which had been commented on during the review, was also highlighted.

10. As the committee held the view that it had focussed on an issue of an operational nature, it did not consider the submission of a report to the Cabinet on the work it had done appropriate. Ultimately it agreed that a copy of the collated feedback be passed to the Chief Executive for her review and interest, together with a note of the observations made by the committee on the value of such analysis by departments on an ongoing basis to help ensure Best Value was always secured. It also agreed that Directors be asked to remind all appropriate employees of the importance of coding consultancy related expenditure appropriately to assist with such analysis. The latter was done through the Action Note issued to departments following the committee's meeting.

11. In January 2019, the committee was asked to consider the report submitted by the Clerk and how it wished to proceed. Members of the committee were also reminded that in December 2018 the Council had agreed to reduce the threshold for allowing the Director of a procuring department to appoint consultants under Clause 19 of the Council's Contract Standing Orders from £50k to £10k, and to approve related logging arrangements.

12. During related discussion, issues commented on by Members included the challenges of defining consultancy, and the importance of appropriate account codes being used for such expenditure. Some concerns were also reiterated about experienced staff with expertise leaving the Council, such as through early retirement. Members also highlighted that, given its size, the Council did not always have sufficient officers in post with the appropriate skills to undertake some projects depending on their complexity, in respect of which the example of work on City Deal projects was referred to as was the inevitability of requiring consultants in certain circumstances.

13. It was suggested that it could be interesting to review what consultancy expenditure fell below the £10k log threshold and also the nature of it. In the first instance, it was agreed at the end of the 2019/20 financial year, to review the content of the consultancy log the Council established in December 2018 in relation to the appointment of consultants and discuss related issues.

14. Feedback on the content of the log was sought from the Chief Officer (Legal and Procurement) by the Clerk and a copy of this is appended. The log is also published on the corporate procurement section of the Council's website ([Consultancy Log](#)) and updated on a 6 monthly basis.

RECOMMENDATION

15. It is recommended that the committee considers the feedback provided and discusses if any further action is to be taken.

Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

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Background Papers:-

1. Reports on Scotland's Public Sector Workforce and related local feedback
2. Information provided by departments on the use and costs of consultants in 2013/14 and 2014/15 in accordance with the definition agreed by the committee
3. Reports submitted to the Committee on its previous work on consultants, including the meetings of the Committee held on March 2016 and January 2019
4. Consultancy Log on Council Website

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Contract Standing Orders
Clause 19 Contracts for the appointment of consultants

It is a requirement of Clause 19 that this log is completed within 14 days of the consultant being appointed. Please remember to update with the outstanding details required in Column F, actual spend incurred.

Description of the services to be provided	Rationale for appointment	Supplier Name	Town/City	Contract Award Sum	Actual spend incurred	Start date	End Date	Department	Section	Dept Contact Name
Provision of consultancy and community engagement services	Consultant's expertise to support Auchenback Local Outcome Improvement Plan	Pidgin Perfect	Glasgow	£12,000.00	£12,000.00	20/12/2018	03/31/19	31/03/2019	Strategic Services	
Early Years Projects - Archaeological Surveys to Overlee Nursery	Specialist skills required that were not available in house	Guard Archaeology Ltd	Glasgow	£2,275.00	£2,275.00	01/01/19		Environment	Technical Services	Alan Hook
1 – Budget Challenge – line by line Departmental challenge – Environment Department plus Housing Services	Recognised experts in Public Finance were engaged to offer bespoke review and advice	CIPFA	London	up to 20,000	£19,500.00	10/01/19	13/06/2019	Environment	Housing	
Barrhead Park & Ride Redesign	Consultant's previous experience with project made their direct appointment, following a quotation from them, the rational way to proceed. All with the agreement of Procurement.	WSP UK Ltd	Edinburgh	£15,653.00	£15,762.00	11/01/19	01/06/19	Environment	Roads	
GPRS Survey Consultancy Service	Early Years Projects - Specialist ground penetrating radar surveys (GPRS) - Various Locations	Phase Site Investigations	County Durham	up to 50,000	£10,780.00	01/02/19		Environment	Technical Services	
Early Years Projects - Tree condition Survey at Glenwood FC	Specialist skills required that were not available in house	Ayrshire Tree Surgeons Ltd	Kilmarnock	£2,100.00	£2,100.00	01/02/19		Environment	Technical Services	Alan Hook
Structural & Civil Engineering Consultancy Services	Early Years Projects - Specialist skills required that were not available in house	Harley Haddow (Glasgow) Ltd.	Glasgow	up to 50,000	£24,815.00	01/02/19	01/08/19	Environment	Technical Services	
Strategic Support Partnership Services re Eastwood Park Campus	Contract was awarded to HubWest and subsequently managed by them through the Strategic Support Partnership to provide Specialist Services required not available in house	HubWest Scotland	Glasgow	£50,207.00	£50,207.00	01/02/19	01.09/19	Environment	Director	
Coal Tar Testing - Aurs Road	No in house experience for Coal Tar testing as this is not a service that requires permanent in house resource	MAT Test Site Services Limited	Glasgow	£7,880.00	£7,880.00	17/02/19	01/04/19	Environment	Major Capital Projects	
Topographical Survey - Aurs Road	No in house experience for Topographical Surveys as this is not a service that requires permanent in house resource	Malcolm Hughes Land Surveys	Livingstone	£3,600.00	£3,600.00	17/02/19	01/04/19	Environment	Major Capital Projects	
City Deal - Aurs Road and Boardwalk traffic management for Aurs Road closure	No in house resource available	Coneworx	Glasgow	£1,058.00	£1,058.00	17/02/19	01/04/19	Environment	Major Capital Projects	
Quantity Surveying Consultancy Services	Additional temporary QS Services required to deliver Barnes Street due to additional staff requirements from this project. Procurement was chosen through 3 quotations	Storrier & Donaldson	Glasgow	£4,960.00	£3,480.00	27/02/19		Environment	Technical Services	
Civil Engineering Consultancy services	Early Years projects - Specialist topographical surveys for Glenwood Nursery	Loy Surveys	Renfrew	£650.00	£650.00	01/03/19		Environment	Technical Services	
ELC 1140 Expansion update to Filemaker Database	Specialist knowledge of ERC policy and software used	Robert Tennent	Dunoon	£1,411.96	£1,411.96	04/03/19		Education	Central Admin	
To carry out audit of Adult Support and Protection work within East Renfrewshire HSCP	Independent Audit	Peter Jennow	Glasgow	£300.00	£300.00	20/02/2019	18/03/2020	HSCP	ASP	
Cost for STEM Working	Specialist knowledge of ERC schools and subject matter	Stuart Allison	Linlithgow	£3,600.00	£3,600.00	20/02/2019		Education	Central Admin	
To carry out audit of Adult Support and Protection work within East Renfrewshire HSCP	Independent Audit	Peter Jennow	Glasgow	£4,700.00	£4,375.00	21/01/2019	20/02/2019	HSCP	ASP	
Prep of Curriculum structures and timetabling. Software development. Prep of Training materials.	Specialist knowledge of ERC schools and timetabling	Robert Tennent	Dunoon	£15,840.00	£6,734.55	28/03/2019		Education	EMIS Unit	
Creating timetables for 7 schools. Software development. Training for EMIS staff in timetabling	Specialist knowledge of ERC schools and timetabling	Robert Tennent	Dunoon	£15,840.00	£5,555.88	28/03/2019		Education	EMIS Unit	
RECORD FROM THIS POINT FORWARD APRIL 2019 - 31 MARCH 2020										
Homecare review	Homecare consultancy	Dennis O'Donnell	Glasgow	£9,350.00	£9,350.00	01/04/19	01/11/19	HSCP	Homecare	Gayle Smart
Engagement activity in support of strategy development	To support engagement activity in support of strategy development	Thrive Associates Ltd	Edinburgh	£49,999.00	£38,749.37	01/07/19	01/07/19	HSCP	Commissioning	Kevin Beveridge
Consultant in Community Alarms, Home Care, Telecare and Telehealth	Support Improvement Activity in relation to TSA Quality Standards Framework (KPI's)	Doreen Watson	Newton Mearns	£3,000.00	£2,125.00	04/11/19	24/12/2019	HSCP	Homecare	Gayle Smart
Research and strategic development	Strategic Review	Matter of Focus	Edinburgh	£52,550.00	£52,550.00		28/02/2020	HSCP	Commissioning	Kevin Beveridge
Bluerock Consultancy	Specialist Service Support for Information Governance and Security	NVT	Glasgow	£2,375.00	£2,375.00	10.11.19	01.12.19	C & CS	ICT	Paul Lucas

Assistance is sought from an experienced individual/supplier to work with East Renfrewshire Council to review and refresh our Digital Strategy, ensuring it is fit for the future, taking account of new and emerging technology, and has ambitious targets and actions which will deliver on our significant ambitions across the next 5 years and beyond.	Required short term expertise of Digital strategy work and Digital expertise to cover the vacant Digital Programme Manager post	Gunn Stewart Solutions	Glasgow	£30,520.00	£24,979.00	01.11.19	31.03.20	C & CS	PMO	Lesley Anne Neil
Structural survey and repair solution for weighbridge at Greenhags waste transfer station	A full building survey indicated there may be excess corrosion to structural beams which may have significant Health & Safety implications – DBA are well known in this field and were able to assist within 24 hours.	Dougall Baillie Associates	East Kilbride	£10,000.00	£8,835.70	01.11.19	01.03.20	Environment	Neighbourhood Services	John Buchanan
Examination analysis and Timetabling preparation.	Specialist knowledge of ERC Schools and timetabling.	Robert Tennant	Dunoon	£15,840.00	£16,224.12	18.09.19	31.03.20	Education	Schools	Mark Ratter
7 2hr Learning and Teaching sessions for Sciences	Specialist knowledge of ERC schools and subject matter.	Stuart Allison	Linlithgow	£2,100.00	£2,100.00	16.10.19	31.03.20	Education	Schools	Mark Ratter
Structural Engineer Consultancy - Hub West Scotland Framework Agreement	ERC has no in-house capacity but regularly requires structural advice	Cowal Design Consultants Ltd via sub-consultancy agreement with HubWest Scotland	Glasgow	£55,000.00	£22,950.00	11.12.19	9-12 months	Environment	Strategic Services	Alan Hook
Partnering Services in connection with Eastwood Park Campus Agreement: Framework Agreement - Hub West NQ71-ERC-01	Ongoing resource to an existing Hub West project including move from masterplan level area assessments and diagrams for buildings and open spaces to development of schedules of accommodation and plan diagrams which establish key briefing considerations.	Stallan Brand	Glasgow	£41,350.00			21.11.20	Environment	Strategic Services	Andy Cahill
Planning application consent for quarrying works at Floak Quarry	ERC have no experience in carrying out these works	Ironside Farrar	Bellshill	£1,200.00				Environment	Planning	Ian Walker
Advice and Analysis of Compensation Events on the Balgraystone Road Project.	Assistance required to assess Compensation Events that had arisen on site. Advice and analysis required by NEC Contract specialist.	GLEEDS	Glasgow	£5,500.00	£5,500.00	20/01/2020	31/07/2020	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	James Mullen
Due to project contract being extended, continue with on-site support for Ecology at Balgraystone Road.	Supplier was appointed to supervise Ecology on site during works. Project faced delay and Contract Completion date was pushed out so supervision being provided required to be extended to cover new completion date.	Mott MacDonald	Surrey	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	01/04/20	01/06/20	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	James Mullen
Options Analysis for roundabout position on Aurs Road.	Debate existed as to the best position of a new roundabout on Aurs Road in relation to potential development of adjacent land. Peter Brett Associates are the designers of Aurs Road so they were asked to consider various location options and report back on findings. Appointment made through Scotland Excel Engineering and Technical Consultancy Framework - Direct Award.	Peter Brett Associates	Glasgow	£7,857.00	£7,857.00	05/04/19	05/06/19	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	James Mullen
Update Ardochrig SUDS Design, Flood Risk Assessment, independent certification and B of Q.	Update previous work completed 2016/17 to take account of proposed design changes.	Dougal Baillie Associates	East Kilbride	£4,050.00	£0.00	22/01/2020	TBC (work substantially complete)	Environment	Strategic Services	Nick Prower
Consultancy Services associated with Balgray Reservoir water safety audit.	To support the development of recreation and infrastructure proposals associated with Aurs Road and Balgray Reservoir.	RoSPA	Birmingham	£3,020.00	£3,020.00	11/10/19	12/02/19	Environment	Strategic Services	Stephen McHenry
Consultancy services for commercial and economic viability for proposals at Dams to Darnley Country Park.	Another supplier had previously prepared study so wanted a fresh look and sense check of project undertaken (concerns that previous study was out of date and heavily caveated). EKOS were familiar with project due to background work on SBC and OBC's for City Deal M77 Corridor Programme.	EKOS Limited	Glasgow	£6,050.00	£6,050.00	12/07/19	08/11/19	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Marie Mullen
Holmes Miller to revisit masterplan sketch from the Balgray Wake Park Feasibility report dated October 2017. To provide updated scheme proposals and costs.	Supplier had previously won tender competition to design new Wake Park. Wake Park was now being reallocated to opposite side of reservoir to sit alongside proposed Visitor Centre. Work was being undertaken to scope and assess Visitor Centre project and masterplan sketch was required to consider options. Holmes Miller were knowledgeable of both projects.	Holmes Miller Architects	Glasgow	£9,600.00	£9,600.00	25/09/2019	02/10/19	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Marie Mullen
Landscape design at Fairweather Park, Project Initiation, Surveys and Concept Design (RIBA 1 & 2), Detailed and Technical Design (RIBA 3 & 4), Implementation & Close out (RIBA 5-7)	Project funded through the Town Centre Regeneration Fund with contract to be awarded by the 31st March 20. Permission to proceed given at the end of November 19. AMEY, who were ranked first on the South Lanarkshire Consultancy Framework were approached but confirmed that they were unable to meet our timescales. Ironside Farrar, who were ranked second, were then approached and confirmed that they could meet the timescales.	Ironside Farrar	Edinburgh	£9,750.00	£0.00 Still to be invoiced	01/12/19	Design works have been completed but End date at present unknown until lockdown is lifted and contractor can be appointed	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Jeanne Black
Road safety and active travel study at Glasgow Road, Eaglesham, Project Initiation, Surveys and Concept Design (RIBA 1 & 2), Detailed and Technical Design (RIBA 3 & 4), Implementation & Close out (RIBA 5-7)	Project funded through the Town Centre Regeneration Fund with contract to be awarded by the 31st March 20. Permission to proceed given at the end of November 19. T,P & E had previously provided work of a similar nature at another location and confirmed that they could meet the very tight timescales.	T, P & E	Glasgow	£9,065.00	£6,185.00 paid to date	01/12/19	Design works have been completed but End date at present unknown until lockdown is lifted and contractor can be appointed	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Jeanne Black
Design works have been completed but End date at present unknown until lockdown is lifted and contractor can be appointed	Continuity of work - AECOM are the consultant for the STAG 1 Transportation appraisal for Barrhead South	AECOM	Glasgow	£4,950.00	£4,950.00	05/01/20	31/03/2020	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Jeanne Black

Creation of a brand for Greenlaw (The Greenlaw Works), layout and furniture selection	Expertise in business centre interior design for Greenlaw. Recommendation for similar services obtained from Clyde Gateway.	Graven Images	Glasgow	£9,900.00	£9,900.00	01/10/19	31/01/2020	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Catherine McKay
Cartography	Update Site Maps	Peel Land Surveys	Sheffield	£1,000.00	£950.00	01/11/19	31/03/2020	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Nick Prower
Advice on service charges for Greenlaw Business Centre	Property agent practice familiar with the building	Savills	Glasgow	£200.00	£200.00	01/05/19	31/08/2019	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Alan Robertson
City Deal Business Boost Business Plan update	Provided previous Business Plan advice	EKOS Limited	Glasgow	£9,500.00	£8,500.00	01/07/19	31/08/2019	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Alan Robertson
Advice on operating costs and income for Greenlaw Business Centre	Experience of business centre finances	CJM Accountancy	Kilmarnock	£9,500.00	£2,625.00	01/03/19	31/07/2019	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Alan Robertson
Preparation of fire strategy plan for Greenlaw Business Centre	Recommendation of Greenlaw building surveyor	BB7 Fire & Security Consulting	Glasgow	£5,000.00	£1,850.00	01/06/19	31/08/2019	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Alan Robertson
Design work & CDM plan for new pedestrian crossing, Capelrig Road, Newton Mearns	Consultant familiar project/locale	Ian Routledge Consultants	Upper Poppl	£4,600.00	£4,300.00	01/12/19	31/08/2019	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Alan Robertson
Design work & CDM for new signalised junction, Barrhead Road, Newton Mearns	Consultant familiar with project/locale	Ian Routledge Consultants	Upper Poppl	£8,800.00	£8,500.00	01/12/19	31/08/2019	Environment	Economy & Infrastructure	Alan Robertson

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