

Report to:	LEVELLING-UP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Steve Thompson, Director of Resources
Date of meeting:	8 November 2023

ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANTS ANNUAL REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report

1.1 To consider the annual report, detailing consultancy spend across all Council services during the 2022/23 financial year.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 To note the annual spend paid to external consultants during 2022/23.

3.0 Reason for recommendation(s)

3.1 To provide a level of understanding of third party spend paid to external consultants during 2022/23.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered

4.1 The report is for information only.

5.0 Council priority

- 5.1 The relevant Council priority is:
- ‘Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience’

6.0 Background and key information

6.1 At their meeting on 15 December 2016 the Tourism, Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee confirmed their approval to a revised approach for the reporting of consultancy spend. This annual report sets out details of payments made to external consultants across the whole Council in 2022/23 relating to both business and technical

services.

- 6.1.1 The report indicates that a total of **£2,931,123.82** was spent across the Council with external consultants during 2022/23. A detailed analysis is provided at Appendix 9a.

Compared with the 2021/22 figure of **£3,107,097.06** the above figure shows a decrease in spend with external consultants.

- 6.1.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of appendices

Appendix 9a – External Consultants Spend Analysis 2022/23 (Over 25k)

Appendix 9b – External Consultants Spend Analysis 2022/23 (under 25k)

8.0 Financial considerations

- 8.1 The consultancy spend was contained within the 2022/23 approved budget and in some cases subject to external grant funding.

9.0 Legal considerations

- 9.1 All Council expenditure over £250 is already published as part of Transparency Code requirements and therefore the provision of the data in this format should not breach any data protection requirements.

10.0 Risk management considerations

- 10.1 Due to limited resources and capacity, the Council would be unable to fulfil all of its statutory requirements and deliver its capital programme without the advice and support from external consultants.
- 10.2 For some projects, the use of consultants is critical, in some instances the funding we receive from external agencies can require the Council to engage third party expertise to ensure the security of the funding. Because these services are project specific, demand is not constant; employing these experts on a full-time basis would not be cost effective.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people

- 11.1 Considerations for equalities and the impact on children and young people, will be taken with each individual engagement.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations

12.1 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations will be taken with each individual engagement. Some of the appointments detailed in Appendix A relate to the provision of support on these matters.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken

13.1 This report has been produced jointly by Internal Audit and the Corporate Procurement and Projects Team.

14.0 Background papers

14.1 N/A