



Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (Central & Corporate Functions)

Date: 7th September 2009

Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry - Consultant Engagement

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting on 8th June 2009 Scrutiny Board (Corporate and Central Functions) resolved to undertake an Inquiry into Consultant Engagement within the Council.
- 1.2 Members wished to review the process by which consultants are engaged and how they are evaluated. Members are concerned that engaging consultants provides a cost effective method of producing the required outcomes to a sufficiently high standard.
- 1.3 The Board is also interested in whether use of consultants reflects a perceived skills gap within the Council, or whether there is a necessary focus on core business which requires ad hoc engagement of consultants.
- 1.4 Members do not wish to begin the inquiry by assuming the use of consultants is either right or wrong. Clearly, there will be a case for buying in the necessary skills at different times. However, Members do wish to establish whether there is a consistent approach to the use of consultants and whether there is regular evaluation of the Council's required skills base. The agreed terms of reference for this Inquiry are attached as Appendix 1.

2.0 SESSION ONE EVIDENCE

- 2.1 Attached as Appendix 2 is a definition of expenditure on external consultants. This is accompanied by a break down of expenditure on consultancy services for 2007/08 and 2008/09.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 Members are asked to receive and consider the attached evidence.