Agency & Temporary Staffing Report

Committee: Finance & General Purposes
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1. Purpose

This report provides an overview of all current and forecasted agency and temporary staffing arrangements across the Council's operational and support service areas.

The information reflects the position as of October 2025 and identifies costs, purpose of engagement, and financial implications.

Data for Moredon Sports Hub to be compiled separately.

2. Detail

Agency and temporary staff continue to provide essential operational cover across key services, ensuring business continuity during periods of staff absence, annual leave, and service expansion.

All agency expenditure is VAT reclaimable, and the Council does not incur National Insurance or pension contributions for agency staff.

While the hourly charge rates are higher than directly employed equivalents, the absence of on costs and recoverable VAT means the net comparative cost is significantly reduced.

Agency Staff Cost per month.xlsx

3. Libraries

Lead Officer: Aaron Cripps

Purpose:
Agency staff are utilised to cover annual leave entitlement and sickness absence within the Library Service.

Current Position:

- 4 Perm positions (1 notice received October 2025)
- 1 Member of staff on recurring sick due to health complications.
- Outstanding staff annual leave to be covered during FY2025/26: **159 hours**.

Financial Summary (FY2025/26):

Description	Hours	Rate (£/hr)	Cost (£)
Required annual leave cover	420	Est	
Forecast remaining FY2025/26 spend	—	19.93	3,163.87
Unforeseen sickness cover to date	203	19.93	4,045.00
Forecast YE	400	19.93	**7,972.00**
Total projected FY2026/27 expenditure	420	—	**8,400.00**

4. Community Buildings

Lead Officer: Louise Whatley

Purpose:
Agency staff support the operation of community buildings (Pinetrees, Moredon Community Centre, and John Moulton Hall) through opening/closing, cleaning, and customer service duties.

Current Agency Provision:

Name	Typical Hours/Week	Location(s)	Notes
Employee A	15 - 25	Pinetrees & Moredon CC	Variable by bookings/sick cover
Employee B	10 - 20 (+5 recharged externally)	JMH & Moredon CC	Includes cleaning for MP's & Second Steps office
Employee C	7 - 16	Moredon CC	Variable
Employee D	3	Parkside Hub	Fixed cleaning hours

Example Week:
Employee A – 20 hrs
Employee B – 15.25 hrs (+5 recharged externally)
Employee C – 7.25 hrs
Employee D – 3 hrs

Total: 50.5 hrs (5 recharged externally)

Estimated Annual Cost (net of VAT):
Approx. £47,200, based on 45.5 chargeable hours per week at £19.93/hr.

5. Chapel Street (Cleaner – Employee E)

Purpose:
Routine cleaning provision for Chapel Street Toilets.

- **Hours:** 14 per week
- **Rate:** £19.01/hr
- **Weekly Cost:** £266.14
- **Annual Cost:** £13,839.28

6. Football Changing Rooms (Cleaner – Employee F)

Purpose:
Weekend cleaning and turnaround of football changing rooms and parks.

- **Hours:** 12 per week
- **Rate:** £18.3/hr
- **Weekly Cost:** £219.60
- **Annual Cost:** £11,419.20

7. Finance (Administrator – Employee G)

Lead Officer: Emma Till

Purpose:
Provide financial administration support during long term staff sickness absence.

Engagement:

- **Hours:** 20 per week
- **Rate:** £19.93/hr
- **Weekly Cost:** £398.60
- **Annual Cost:** £20,727.20

Notes:

- Cost coded to Finance cost centre.
- Engagement ongoing with no confirmed end date.

8. Parkside Hub Café (Assistant – Employee H)

Lead Officer: Aaron Webb

Purpose:
To provide customer service and catering support at Parkside Hub Café during operational hours.

Engagement:

- **Hours:** 16 per week
- **Rate:** £17.26/hr
- **Weekly Cost:** £276.16
- **Annual Cost:** £14,360.32

9. Youth Services (Youth Workers – Employee J & Employee K)

Purpose:
To provide youth work support during evening and weekend sessions.

Engagements:

Name	Role	Hours/Week	Rate (£/hr)	Weekly Cost (£)	Annual Cost (£)
Employee J	Youth Worker / General Assistant	7.0	17.26	120.82	6,282.64
Employee K	Youth Worker / General Assistant	3.5	17.26	60.41	3,141.32
Total		**10.5**		**181.23**	**9,423.96**

10. Moredon Sports Hub (MSH) – Agency and Sessional Staffing Update

Moredon Sports Hub has reduced to only one agency worker (Cycle Instructor). Other cycle instructors have now transitioned to self employed arrangements, invoicing the Council directly, with the costs then recharged to the Swindon Cycle Campaign on a cost neutral basis.

While income levels, particularly from the café and events, have performed above the original forecast, this has been accompanied by comparable increases in operational expenditure, including purchasing, staffing, compliance, and maintenance.

Additional temporary and agency expenditure earlier in the year related to:

- Extended cricket season operations, with matches running until late evening.
- Large scale community events such as Party @ the Pump Track, which attracted 300 - 600 visitors on site.

- Grounds maintenance support, including goal painting, pitch repair, and litter collection.

Since August 2025, agency use has been reduced, and staffing levels are now at the minimum viable point for safe delivery.

The site remains within its wider operational targets and continues to mature as a new facility. Budget adjustments for FY2026/27 should aim to reflect the true ongoing cost of operation rather than initial startup assumptions. Any agency or self employed costs linked to externally funded programmes (such as British Cycling or Swindon Cycle Campaign) should be recorded separately and offset in future financial monitoring.

11. Finance

- **VAT:** All agency costs are reclaimable, and therefore the reported figures represent net cost to the Council.
- **On Costs:** Agency rates include employer liabilities; no National Insurance or pension contributions are payable by the Council.
- **Budget Coding:** Agency expenditure is spread across multiple cost centres. Work is ongoing to ensure consistent coding and transparency in financial reporting.

12. Strategic Use of Agency Staffing (Replacement of Vacant Posts)

In some cases, the Council has opted to utilise agency staffing in place of permanently recruiting for certain vacancies. This approach has been adopted where:

- Roles are parttime or variable hour posts.
- Service demand fluctuates seasonally or by facility booking levels.
- Flexibility and cost control are priorities.

e.g:

- **Pat (John Moulton Hall):** Following Pat's departure, cover was provided through agency staff rather than recruiting directly. This ensured flexible deployment of hours across JMH and PTCC, matched to bookings and events.
- **Denroy (Chapel Street Toilets):** On departure, the cleaning function was moved to an agency arrangement, providing consistent standards with improved responsiveness and ongoing employment liability.

Benefits of this approach include:

- Reduced on costs (no employer NI, pension, or holiday pay).
- Greater flexibility to scale hours up or down depending on need.
- Simplified management of short term or seasonal posts.
- Easier transition between cover arrangements during absences or restructuring.

This model is proving cost effective and operationally efficient for smaller, part time roles or those with variable demand patterns, and should be considered as part of future workforce planning.

13. Offsetting & Grant Funded Agency Costs

It is important to note that not all agency costs are borne directly by the Council's core budget.

A proportion of expenditure, particularly within Youth Services, has been offset by external grant funding, including allocations from the Youth Investment Fund (YIF).
These funds have been used to:

- Support delivery of additional youth sessions.
- Cover staff and agency costs linked to programme expansion.

However, these offset amounts are not shown as a contra to the overall agency costs within the budget report.

Future financial monitoring should look to separately identify and net off grant funded agency spend, to provide a more accurate picture of the Council's overall staffing costs.

14. Summary of Current Agency & Temporary Staffing (as at October 2025)

Service Area	Weekly Cost (£, net VAT)	Annual Cost (£, net VAT)	Notes
Libraries	—	7,200	Annual leave & sickness cover
Community Buildings	907	47,200	Variable by bookings
Chapel Street (Cleaner)	266	13,839	Recurring weekly
Changing Rooms (Cleaner)	220	11,419	Recurring weekly
Finance	399	20,727	Long term sickness cover
Parkside Hub Café	276	14,360	Recurring weekly
Youth Services	181	9,424	Sessional cover
Subtotal (Current Data)	**2,249/week**	**124,200/year**	*Excluding Moredon Sports Hub*

15. Overview

- Total identified agency and temporary staffing cost currently stands at approximately £124,000 per annum (net of VAT).
- Agency staffing is concentrated in frontline operational services and temporary cover for sickness or leave.
- With VAT recovery and no on costs, the net budget pressure is lower than direct employment equivalents, though reliance remains high in several service areas.
- A full Staffing & Agency Review is recommended before 2026/27 to explore permanent resourcing solutions where agency use has become structural.
- The Moredon Sports Hub data will further increase total agency cost once confirmed and should be factored into 2026/27 budget setting.

16. Next Steps

1. Review and budget Moredon Sports Hub separately.
2. Refine cost centre coding for accurate service level reporting.
3. Present updated agency expenditure to the Finance & General Purposes Committee alongside 2026/27 budget setting.

17. Recommendations

1. Agency budget lines are split into defined categories within each cost centre, such as:
   - Operational Cover (sickness / leave)
   - Vacancy or Interim Cover
   - Facility Support / Cleaning Services
   - Programme or Project-Based Agency Staff

2. Spend is tracked proportionally across these categories throughout the financial year to highlight trends, overspend risk, and opportunities where permanent recruitment may offer better value.

3. Quarterly financial reporting should be introduced, showing agency expenditure by department, cost centre, and category against prior-year comparatives.

4. Finance and service managers should jointly review agency expenditure and coding accuracy to ensure alignment between financial monitoring and operational activity.

5. A full staffing structure and agency review should be undertaken across the Council and Moredon Sports Hub.
   - This review should assess staffing levels, role duplication, agency dependency, and cost effectiveness.
   - It should make recommendations on where agency arrangements should be converted to permanent or fixed term posts, where further flexibility is needed, and how the organisation’s workforce can best support operational delivery and financial sustainability.