

CABINET – 22 NOVEMBER 2016**PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Member Question****Question from Mrs Hazel Watson (Dorking Hills):**

Over the last five years, please could you provide the figures for total and yearly spend on consultants.

Please also provide the figures for the highest hourly/day/monthly rate that Surrey County Council has paid out for consultancy work and to who/whom.

Reply:

This administration discourages the use of consultants, instead preferring to use the Council's own staff to undertake the work. There have been many examples of this over the last five years that have helped the council achieve nearly £400m of savings over this time.

There are a number of professions where we customarily use external resources to provide specialist technical expertise, such as architects, surveyors and engineers as well as legal opinion or advice. However, beyond these there are times when it is right and proper to use an external consultant to support our development as an organisation. This is where we do not have the relevant expertise and knowledge in house and it obviously makes sense to use a consultant in those cases. It would not be good value for money to employ such specialists on a permanent basis.

Prior to 2015, the figures included these broader external resources and it is not now possible to isolate them historically. However, I can report that in 2015/16 we spent £305k on such consultants, and so far this year we have spent £431k. I receive regular quarterly reports and all requests to spend more than £50k require my personal sign-off, enabling me to ensure there is proper control and continued commitment to minimise the use of consultants in this organisation, and I will only continue to use consultants where we need this expertise.

Unfortunately, due to the commercial nature of the request re. day rates it will not be appropriate to release this however typical day rates range from £350 to £1800 per day and due to the very nature of the consultancy market, assignment are short term.

Mr David Hodge
Leader of the Council
22 November 2016

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