

Decision Under Delegated Powers

Officer Requesting the Decision

Nadine Buckland – Food Safety Manager

Officer Making the Decision

Alan Twells – Head of Regulatory Services

Recommendation

To approve the provision of additional Environmental Health Officer working hours to carry out 100 outstanding D rated food hygiene inspections, from 1st June 2022 to 31st March 23. This project will be funded via Cost Centre F205 and will be overseen by the Food Safety Manager, Regulatory Services.

Reason

Due to a staff resignation and temporary re-deployment for the Northgate project, staff resources within the Food Safety Team have reduced from 4FTE to 3FTE. Although this will be resolved over the long term via recruitment and recovery, the team's ability to ensure the minimum intervention requirements specified in the FSA Recovery Plan will be compromised. The additional EHO hours will provide staff resources to complete a proportion of the backlog of food hygiene inspections as required by the FSA's Recovery Plan.

Authority for Decision

Under Council Constitution under the Scheme of Delegation within section 8.2, point (6) under the delegation to the Head of Paid Service, "to agree changes to the establishment, within budget and without major operation disruption or interruption of services or involving a change from direct to indirect provision or visa versa or other policy implications". This has been sub-delegated to Strategic Directors and Heads of Service and this applies in this case. (DD002 2021)

Decision

Date

Background Information

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Food Standards Agency have instructed enforcement officers to deal with high-risk food safety interventions only and the majority of programmed food inspections have been put on hold. Consequently, local authorities now face a huge backlog of overdue inspections. In response to this, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) have published the Covid-19 Recovery Plan for the delivery of Food Law controls. All local authorities are expected to have regard to the guidance and advice in the Recovery Plan which applied from 1 July 2021 at which time it will supersede the guidance and advice provided in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that applied to 30 June 2021.

This plan sets out a framework for restarting the delivery of food interventions, taking a measured risk-based approach to ensure resources are targeted effectively. The Recovery Plan outlines the interventions that are the minimum local authorities need to undertake to fulfil their statutory duties. The FSA have urged local authorities to ensure that they provide resources necessary to meeting the associated targets.

The plan requires intervention work to be targeted against the risk categories of programmed inspections as well as high risk new businesses. During the last year the team received in excess of 200 new business registrations which require intervention. This is double the normal volume of new businesses that register within a 12-month period. The Recovery Plan also requires enforcement and reactive work to continue, according to risk.

Due to staff resignation and temporary re-deployment, staff resources within the Food Safety Team have reduced from 4 FTE to 3 FTE. Although this deficit will be resolved over the long term via recruitment and recovery, the team's ability to ensure the minimum intervention requirements specified in the FSA Recovery Plan will be compromised. Therefore, the provision of additional EHO working hours to resource the inspection of D rated food businesses, is needed to enable the team to fulfil their statutory obligations and comply with the FSA Recovery Plan targets.

The extra hours will be paid for as pre-agreed officer over time to undertake the work as a defined project, ending in March 2023. It will be funded via Cost Centre F205 based on inspections which have been costed on an officer overtime basis as follows:

1 inspection = 2.5 hrs @ £18.90 (£20 rounded) per hour = £50

100 D rated inspections at £50 per inspection = £5000 plus 44.41% on costs = £7,200 (rounded).

The project will be funded using salary savings within F205 from both current vacancies and additional budget carry forwards from 2021-22 to 2022-23 budgets, agreed by SLT and Cabinet.

Additional resources are also being allocated for additional backfill EHO hours, which is outlined in a separate Delegated Decision.

Comments from HR

HR Adviser: Anna Cairns (6/5/22)

Normal recruitment process/es should be followed either by CBC or via Recruitment Agency.

Financial Implications

As detailed above, this will be funded via Cost Centre F205 based on the backlog of D rated food hygiene inspections which have been costed on an officer overtime basis as follows:

1 inspection = 2.5 hrs @ £18.90 (£20 rounded) per hour = Approx. £50

100 D rated inspections at £50 per inspection = £5000 plus 44.41% on costs = £7,200 (rounded).

This is from savings from within F205 as a result of current vacancies and salary savings, as a result of a carry forward of budget from 2021-22 to 2022-23 budgets to support the implementation of the Northgate Assure Implementation.

Risk Management

List risks in table below or state that 'No specific risks have been identified with this report'.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
Failure to adhere to the FSA Recovery Plan minimum intervention requirements.	Med	high	Plan is in place to complete food hygiene interventions according to FSA Recovery Plan requirements via the provision of additional EHO working hours.
Rise in food poisoning outbreaks.			To ensure businesses within the Borough have implemented satisfactory standards of food hygiene and safety.
Damage to the Council's reputation.			To ensure businesses within the borough have implemented satisfactory standards of food hygiene & safety.

Key Decision: No

Date included on Forward Plan: N/A

Background Papers:



OFFICIAL+SENSITIV
E+LA+Recovery+Pla