

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 the backfill of Environmental Health Officer (L211) (EHO) working hours via Cost Centre F205 D0501. The backfill hours will be 12 hours per week for an Agency EHO from the 13th June 2022 to 5th September 2022 (12 weeks) reporting to the Food Safety Manager, Regulatory Services. Review the contract at the end of 12 weeks.

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 backfill EHO hours will provide staff resources to assist with incoming reactive work and enable existing officers to deal with statutory food hygiene interventions 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 applies from 1 July 2021 at which time it will supersede the guidance and advice provided in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that applies to 30 June 2021. The FSA have urged local authorities to ensure that they provide resources necessary to meeting the associated targets.

This plan sets out a framework for 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 Recovery Plan also requires enforcement and reactive work to continue according to risk. However, as the hospitality sector has now fully re-opened, the amount of reactive work arising from complaints, requests for business advice and alleged food poisonings has also significantly increased.

Due to a recent 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; particularly if staff resources are further diluted due to having to respond to reactive work such as food poisoning investigations, business advice and food business complaints. Therefore, the provision of additional EHO working hours to primarily deal with reactive work will enable the team to fulfil their statutory obligations and comply with the FSA Recovery Plan targets.

This project will be funded via Cost Centre F205 D0501 as follows:

The cost of providing this post from 13/06/22 to 05/09/22 will be as follows:

12hrs per week at £40/hr plus oncosts (44.41%) = £693 per week,

12 weeks at £693 = £8,316 (£8,300 rounded).

This 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 CBC 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 via the CBC Recruitment process or Matrix (for Agency staff).

Financial Implications

As detailed above, it will be funded via Cost Centre F205 D0501 as follows:

The cost of providing this post from 13/06/22 to 05/09/22 will be as follows:

12hrs per week at £40/hr plus on costs = £693 per week

12 weeks at £693 = £8,316 (£8,300 rounded)

This 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 as part of the 2022-23 budget approval.

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 undertake food hygiene interventions according to statutory requirements via additional EHO working hours. To ensure businesses within the borough have implemented satisfactory standards of food hygiene & safety.
Rise in food poisoning outbreaks.			
Damage to the Council's reputation.			

Key Decision: No

Date included on Forward Plan: N/A

Background Papers:



OFFICIAL+SENSITIV
E+LA+Recovery+Pla