

Decision Under Delegated Powers

Officer Requesting the Decision

Victoria Spanovic – Food Safety Manager

Officer Making the Decision

Alan Twells – Head of Regulatory Services

Recommendation

To approve the provision of additional working hours of Environmental Health Officer via Cost Centre F100 A0153. The working hours will initially be 22 hours per week for an agency EHO from the 5th July 2021 to 3rd September 2021, reporting to the Environmental Protection Manager, Regulatory Services.

Reason

As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown and workplace restrictions, the amount of reactive environmental protection work has increased significantly. Restrictions in the hospitality and leisure sectors, and the requirement for people to work and stay at home have resulted in a huge rise in domestic nuisance complaints associated with noise, rubbish accumulation, burning waste and antisocial behaviour. From March 20 the team has dealt with 1357 complaints, compared to the previous year's number of 858. Moreover, there is also a backlog of compliance inspections for permitted installations, with 45 outstanding compliance checks required for the most polluting businesses, as many were either required to close or were difficult to access due to covid risks. The Environmental Protection Team is now facing their busiest time over the Summer months when complaints historically increase, with complaints already 62% higher to June than pre-covid figures.

The provision of additional working hours will provide EHO resources to assist with responding to the increased number of complaints and overdue permit inspections, in accordance with service PIs.

Authority for Decision

Under Section 8 of the current Council Constitution the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) has delegated authority to agree changes to the establishment, within budget and without major operational disruption or interruption of services or involving a change from direct to indirect provision or vice versa or other policy implications. This has been further sub-delegated by the Chief Executive to Strategic Directors/Heads of Service in certain circumstances (DD 002 021 refers). These proposals fall within the limit of the authority of the relevant Head of Service.

Decision

Date

Background Information

The Coronavirus pandemic has resulted in significant additional workload pressures on Regulatory Services, which has experienced a massive increase in demands on the Environmental Protection Team.

Accordingly, the team has been unable to complete all statutory permitting functions and, due to the massive increase in service requests, is struggling to ensure complaints are dealt with according to service requirements. The provision of additional working hours will enable the team to deal with the increase in service requests and ensure the Council meet the statutory requirements to investigate statutory nuisance complaints.

Service requests, such as noise and nuisance complaints, also increase significantly during the summer months and with staff needing to take annual leave along with the overall increase in the number of requests this has put significant pressure on the service to respond to Statutory work.

The Contain Outbreak Management Fund is being used to facilitate on-going Covid enforcement work via the redeployment of EHOs and admin officers from Regulatory Services. Part of the associated salary underspends within F205 A0101 will be transferred over to F100 to cover the cost of additional working hours within the Environmental Protection Team.

This has been discussed and agreed in principal at the CBC Covid Monitoring Group meeting, attended by the Head of Regulatory Services, along with the Senior Leadership Team. The on-going costs linked to the Contain Outbreak Management Fund is monitored and reported by Financial Services to the Covid Monitoring Group.

The initial time period will be from 5th July 2021 to 3rd September 2021. This will then be reviewed to determine if any additional hours are required to assist the Team.

Comments from HR Advisor : Shaminul Choudhury (16/06/21)

Summary of Comments from HR: As management have made a decision to hire agency staff no HR input will be required.

Financial Implications

The provision of additional working hours will run from 5/7/21 to the 3/9/21 and fall within IR35 conditions. Costings are as follows:

Agency EHO to work 22hours per week at £50 per hour, for 9 weeks.

Total Project Cost = £9,900. This will be subject to review and may be extended.

The Contain Outbreak Management Fund is currently being used to facilitate on-going Covid enforcement work via the redeployment of salaried EHOs and admin officers from Regulatory Services. Part of the associated salary underspends within F205 A0101 will be transferred over to F100 A0153 to cover the cost of additional working hours within the Environmental Protection Team.

Budget Virement to be done:

Increase budget: F100 A0153

Decrease budget: F205 A0101

Amount: £9,900

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
Financial cost to the Council	High	Low	The use of the COMF money to facilitate the Compliance & Enforcement work along with dealing with outbreaks will enable salary savings to be used effectively to respond to other statutory work.
Failure to react to service requests and meet target performance indicators. Rise in corporate complaints being lodged against the council.	High	High	Plan is in place to complete overdue permitted installation inspections and ensure complaints can be reacted to within target timescales. To ensure businesses within the Borough have implemented satisfactory standards of local air pollution control as legally required.

Key Decision: No

Date included on Forward Plan: N/A

Background Papers:

None

