

Decision under Delegated Powers

Officer Requesting the Decision

Head of Regulatory and Community Safety

Officer Making the Decision

Chief Executive

Recommendations

1. To make available from the reinvestment reserve £50,000 to provide additional temporary resourcing to address the backlog of Food Safety inspections in 2023/24
2. To approve temporary additional working hours of the Food Safety Managers M286 and Environmental Health Officers L211 in cost centre F205. Additional hours will be taken on an ad hoc, basis and the weekly hours will not exceed 37hrs. No changes to the establishment are involved and all additional hours will be authorised on a monthly basis by Gareth Harvey for payroll purposes.

Reasons (1 and 2)

The Food Standards Agency's Covid Recovery Plan has come to an end and there is now an expectation that inspection works returns to pre Covid expectations and complies with the Food Law Code of Practice. Current resources can complete all inspection in risk categories A,B & C but this will leave 1050 inspection of new business and those in risk categories D and E that cannot be completed which leaves the organisation at risk of not meeting statutory targets, a risk to public health and Council reputation.

Authority for Decision

Under the Council's financial regulations the Chief Executive, as head of paid service, has authority to approve use of the Reinvestment Reserve up to £50,000.

Under Council Constitution under the scheme of delegation within section 8.2, point (6) under 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 interruption of

services or involving a change from direct to indirect provision or vice versa or other policy implications”.

Decision and Date



Robert Mitchell (he, him, his)

Chief Executive

07th July 2023

Background

The Food Standards Agency's Covid Recovery Plan has come to an end and there is now an expectation that inspection works returns to pre Covid expectations and complies with the Food Law Code of Practice.

With current resources and pressures on the service, the achievable target for programmed inspections inhouse for 23/24 would be all the high-risk A,B,C = 156 and approx. 130 new business visits = 286 programmed inspections. Assuming that Stuart Adkins, EHO will also be available to be brought back into the food team post June.

This will leave 419 D inspections and approx. 120 new business visits.
Total shortfall = 539 inspections.

The 511 E, low risk strategy inspections have not been dealt with for over 2 years due to resource issues. They will need addressing at some point in 23/24. The total number of hours required for this project would be 511hrs.

Reasons for shortfall:

- The food team is in a state of recovery since the pandemic. Inspections were put on hold for 2 years whilst the food team were diverted to assist with the pandemic.
- There is an increase in the number of service requests and reactive work relative to the resources currently available.
- Impact of enforcement and legal work due to increase in poor standards of food hygiene.
- Increase in the number of legal compliant revisits and FHRS business requests for revisits.
- Food team has been under persistent high pressure since the start of the pandemic and staff are in a state of fatigue. Currently just 2 officers in the field.

- Northgate/Assure project and diverted resources.
- Impact of new trainee Technical Officer on officer/manager time.

Proposals to address shortfall:

1. 200 D inspections as overtime project to inhouse EHO officer post L211.
2. Outsource 219 D inspections to agency EHO.
3. Outsource 120 new business visits to agency EHO.
4. 511 E premises low risk inspection strategy. Possibility for inhouse food team managers to carry out overtime on days off to complete strategy project.

This request was discussed at SLT on 14/6/23 with agreement that a fund of £50,000 be allocated from the re investment reserve to draw down on to cover the resourcing requirement and progress against the backlog is reported to SLT on a regular basis.

Comments from HR

HR Officer: Anna Cairns (20/6/23)

The normal recruitment process/es should be followed.

Financial Implications

Approx 200hrs overtime for post L211 Environmental Health Officer at a flat rate (within 37hrs pw) $(19.8498 \times 44.64\% \text{ oncost}) = 28.711 \times 200 \text{ hrs} = £5.7\text{k}$ (not including pay award).

Approx 511 hours overtime for food safety managers post M286 at a flat rate (within 37hrs pw) $(24.1276 \times 42.43\% \text{ oncost}) = £34.3649 \text{ hourly rate} = £17.6\text{k}$ (not including pay award)

Estimated pay award amount say c7% £1.5K

Leaving approx £25k for agency / outside consultancy work

All the above to be funded from Reinvestment Reserve upto £50K during 2023/24

Risk Management

Risk Identified		Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
Failure to adhere to the FSA statutory inspection targets.		High	High	Additional inspections undertaken by agency and existing team members
Rise in food poisoning outbreaks.		Med	High	Additional inspections undertaken by agency and existing team members

Risk Identified		Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
Damage to the Council's reputation		Med	High	Additional inspections undertaken by agency and existing team members

Key Decision: No

Background Papers: None