

Decision Under Delegated Powers

Officer Requesting the Decision

Beverley Green – Environmental Protection Manager

Officer Making the Decision

Alan Twells – Head of Regulatory Services

Recommendation

To approve the provision of an inspection backfill project using an agency Environmental Health Officer funded via Cost Centre F100 A0153.

This one-off project will run from 23rd August 21 to 29th October 21 (10 weeks) and consist of 37 compliance inspections for permitted installations which will be carried out on a pay per inspection basis. The agency EHO will report 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.

This project will enable EHO resources to be directed to respond to the increased number of complaints and ensure that overdue permit compliance inspections are completed, 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. Consequently, there is now a backlog of compliance inspections for permitted installations.

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 principle 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.

This one-off project will include the completion of 37 compliance inspections on a pay per inspection basis, over a time period running from 23rd August 21 until 29th October 21. Total project cost will be £6060. See Financial Implications for costings breakdown.

Comments from HR

HR Adviser: Shaminul Choudhury (13/08/21)

As management are looking to appoint agency HR will not be required to be involved in the recruitment process.

Financial Implications

Agency EHO to carry out 37 compliance inspections on a pay per inspection basis and the contract will inside be IR35.

15 lower permit category compliance inspections at £140 per unit = £2,100

22 standard permit category compliance inspections at £180 per unit = £3,960

Total Project Cost = £6,060

Virement to action: DB: F205 A0101 CR: F100 A0153 = £6,060

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

