

## **Decision Under Delegated Powers**

### Officer Requesting the Decision

Vicky Spanovic - Food Safety Manager

### Officer Making the Decision

Lee Mansfield – Head of Regulatory & Community Safety

### Recommendations

To approve the provision of an inspection project using consultant Environmental Health Officers (L211) funded out of the Food Hygiene & Safety Services cost centre F205 D0501 using salary savings from the Licensing budget E205. This one-off project will run from 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and consist of 200 outstanding food hygiene inspections which will be carried out on a pay per inspection basis. The consultant EHOs will report to the Food Safety Manager, Regulatory Services.

### Reasons

Post pandemic the Food Safety Team were successful in ensuring all FSA priority inspections were completed & progress was also made with lower priority inspections. However, although significantly reduced, there remains a backlog of overdue food hygiene inspections which have been carried over into this financial year's workload.

The combined number of backlog and inspections programmed due during 2024-5 exceeds the Food Team's capacity, which leaves the organisation at risk of not meeting statutory targets, a risk to public health and Council reputation.

### **Authority for Decision**

Under Section 8.2, point (6) 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

I authorise the expenditure relating to the food hygiene inspection project



Lee Mansfield – Head of Regulatory & Community Safety

7 November 2024

## Background

Since the Food Standards Agency's Covid Recovery Plan ended in 2023, and FSA have required local authority statutory food hygiene inspections to be carried out in accordance with prescribed frequencies, in compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice.

The Food Team have been successful in significantly reducing the backlog of overdue higher risk inspections. However, there remains a backlog of overdue food hygiene inspections which have been carried over into this financial year's workload. The majority of overdue inspections are D category food businesses, which were excluded from inspection within the framework of the FSA Recovery Plan, as well as new businesses which have not received an initial inspection.

With current resources and pressures on the service, the combined number of backlog and inspections programmed during 2024-5 exceeds the Food Team's capacity. This leaves the organisation at risk of not meeting statutory targets, a risk to public health and Council reputation.

During the remaining 6 months of the year, the combined number of overdue & programmed inspections are as follows:

A-D inspections 284 + New Businesses 208 = Total **492**

It has been estimated that the team have capacity to deal with 211 of the highest risk A – C inspections and a variable number of D category and new businesses. This will enable officers to continue to be able to deal with reactive service demands including enforcement work, enforcement revisits, paid food hygiene rating revisits, infectious diseases, event management and consumer complaints. Additional resources will be needed to address the overdue D category & unrated new businesses as follows:

### Proposals to address inspection shortfall:

Outsource 140 D category inspections and 60 new business visits to a consultant EHOs on a pay per inspection basis over a 3-month period from 11<sup>th</sup> November 24 to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

### Costs

**PPI 200 x £85 + VAT each = £17,000 +VAT**

Funded via Cost Centre F205 D0501 and from salary savings from Licensing budget area E205.

### Comments From HR

HR Advisor: S Choudhury (28/10/24)

HR approval is not required as Charnwood are not recruiting directly and are instead using a contractor to carry out inspections.

### Financial Implications

As detailed above, this project will be funded out of cost centre F205 D0501 using salary savings from the Licensing cost centre E205:

- £12.3k post M220 Licensing Assistant 4months vacant hours (£37k full year)
- £2.7K from post L140 Licensing Manager (spc budget/actual difference).
- £2k review balance unused

The cost of this project (£17,000 + Vat) will be funded by a one off virement from budget code E205 A0101 to F205 D0501. This is in accordance with financial regulations and has been agreed with the Licensing Manger and Head of Regulatory Services & Community Safety

### Risk Management

<u>Risk Identified</u>		<u>Likelihood</u>	<u>Impact</u>	<u>Risk Management Actions Planned</u>
<u>Failure to adhere to the FSA statutory inspection targets.</u>		<u>High</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Additional inspections undertaken by agency and existing team members</u>
<u>Rise in food poisoning outbreaks.</u>		<u>Med</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Additional inspections undertaken by agency and existing team members</u>
<u>Damage to the Council's reputation</u>		<u>Med</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Additional inspections undertaken by agency and existing team members</u>

Key Decision: \_\_\_\_\_ No

Background Papers: \_\_\_\_\_ None