

Introduction

Welcome to this report for the activities of the services provided by Environmental Health for the second quarter of 2022-23 covering 1 July to 30 October 2022.

The Environmental Health Service areas comprise a range of services that the council provides to the public, e.g. pollution control, food hygiene, health and safety, licensing and emergency planning.

The purpose of this report is to provide information to members about the activities carried out within the service area during the first quarter of 2022/23, with statistics for previous quarters shown for comparison where useful. The Environmental Health Service deals with a wide range of other activities, which are not included in this report.

In Memoriam of John Cornell

Before you commence reading this report I wish to pay tribute to our colleague John Cornell, a Technical Officer within the Pollution Team of Environmental Health who sadly lost a short battle with cancer in August. John will be greatly missed by the team as he was a consistently reliable and hardworking officer and was always driven to provide an excellent service to the customer. Many will have had dealings with John over the 31 years that he served the Borough; John began his career with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council in 1991 as a meat inspector before transferring over to the Pollution Team of Environmental Health. Throughout his career John served with professionalism and helped many members of the public with their needs related to noise nuisance, odours, smoke and caravan licensing. John made that difference we all in public service aspire to; he was regarded with great affection and as a friend by work colleagues in services across the council and by many he trained in the Environmental Health profession in his 31 years.



I hope that you will find the rest of this report useful and informative and as previously, if members have any issues they wish to raise please do not hesitate to contact us.

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COMMUNITY DIRECTION – Environmental Health - Pollution Services

Pest Control contracts

The Pest Control Service provides comprehensive pest control for a wide range of common pests including rats, mice, wasps and a range of other insects e.g. fleas and bedbugs. Demand for the pest control service remains strong with excellent customer satisfaction.

The value of the service to the customers of the Borough can be seen by the number of treatments undertaken in the last 5 years, as well as the public health benefits controlling pests brings.



Year	Rats	Mice	Bed bugs	Fleas	Wasps	Other insects
2017/18	496	38	18	28	187	25
2018/19	565	57	13	25	466	21
2019/20	539	43	11	24	297	18
2020/21	617	41	9	16	340	19
2021/22	579	49	12	26	285	16
TOTAL	2796	228	63	119	1575	99

The service is provided through a 0.2FTE in house pest control officer and the remaining service requests are passed to a private contractor, SDK, who undertake treatments for the customer at Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council rates and then charge the Council their additional fees. We have been working with SDK since 2014. SDK has over 20 years' experience in the pest control field and are one of the biggest providers of contracted pest control services to Local Authorities in the UK, providing services to over 50 Local Authorities. They are full members of the British Pest Control Association and The National Pest Technicians Association.

All pest control services attract a fee; however, we offer a reduced rate for customers who receive housing benefit, council tax support, income support or universal credit. The fees and charges set by the Council, excluding rats, are determined by periodic benchmarking with both the private sector and other Leicestershire authorities to ensure competitive charges to residents of the Borough. For rats, due to their public health significance, a decision was taken in 2015 to introduce a subsidised rate of treatment from April 2016, at £20 and a free service for those in receipt of the above benefits.

Members of the public do not have to use the Council's pest control which is a discretionary service, and they may seek a private pest control company. However, the £20 fee charged by the Council is significantly less than the average private pest control fee which for a rat treatment of 3 visits is in the region of £180.

The previous pest control contract ended on 31 March 2022 and the retendering process for a new 2 year contract was completed in January 2022 with SDK holding on to the contract.

The service also provides annual pest control contracts to both domestic and commercial premises. Currently we have 22 contracts which produce around £10,000 income per financial year. In addition, the service also provides a sewer baiting service to Severn Trent Water which generates an income of £3200 per year. At this time of year consideration is given to the level of wasp service requests that have been received. So far in 2022, 226 have been received which is below average when considering the numbers in the table above. Wasp numbers are mainly dominated by climatic conditions e.g. a dry/mild late winter and early spring can lead to early nest forming and then a period of cold or wet can destroy the nests and reduce numbers such climatic conditions also similarly affects the wasps food sources which in turn reduces numbers.

Caravan Site Licensing

Under the Caravan Site (Control of Development) Act 1960, the service licenses certain caravan sites to protect the health and safety of residents and to ensure the site and caravan standards are maintained to ensure a safe living environment for the residents. There are 38 sites that need inspecting on either an annual or a biennial basis; generally, all sites are well run within the Borough.

The Mobile Homes (Requirement for Manager of Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020 ("the Regulations"), introduced the need for a manager of certain licensed caravan sites to be a Fit and Proper Person. HBBC is accordingly required to introduce a fit and proper person test for certain mobile home site owners, or the person appointed to manage the site.

The fit and proper person test applies to operators of a "relevant protected site" only. A relevant protected site is a site, which requires a licence and which is not solely for holiday purposes or is otherwise not capable of being used all year round. Owner occupiers and family owned sites are exempted from the definition, whether they live on site all the year round or not. The Fit and Proper Person Test does not apply to any traveller sites within the Borough.

Within the borough the following are "relevant protected sites":

Springfield Park – Hinckley

Conifers – Ratby

Queen Street – Markfield

Croftersvale – Barlestone

The results of applications are placed on a public register and successful applications are usually renewed every 5 years. Applications can also be refused or granted subject to condition. Decisions made can be appealed to the First Tier Tribunal.

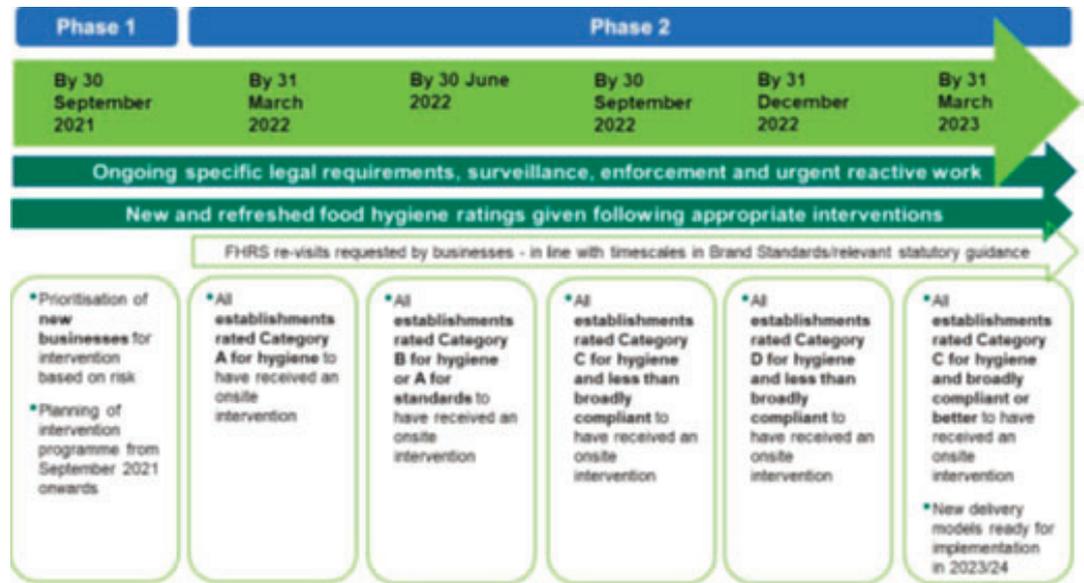
The application fee of £125.51 which has been calculated based on the amount of time that it is likely to take to process the application, as is required by the regulations.

In addition to the above, the travellers count is undertaken 2 times a year. An officer attends each site and counts the number of caravans and also notes if we are aware of any roadside encampments across the borough; this is then fed back to central government who use the data to develop traveller related policy.



Environmental Health - Commercial Services

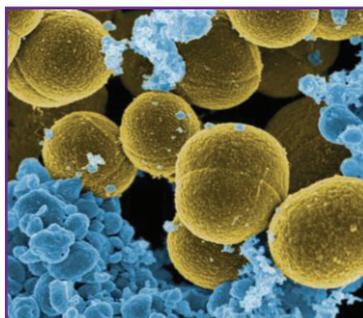
Last Quarter we reported on the Food Standards Agency's `COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan` which provided a framework for re-starting food hygiene interventions following the suspension of routine food hygiene interventions in March 2020 due to the Covid pandemic and how this plan had fed into the Team's Enforcement Service Delivery Plan put before Executive Briefing on 13 July 2022.



The service remains ahead of the Recovery Plans target dates having again met the 30 September 2022 deadline for all less than broadly compliant Category C and D premises (due 31 December 2022) ahead of schedule. The service is now concentrating on completing all Category C risk rated premises by 31 March 2023. In undertaking the recovery plan where in some cases high risk premises have not been inspected for 3 years the team are finding common issues emerging:

- Higher levels of noncompliance being seen
- Noted that businesses are quieter and suffering financially, leading to some cutting back on opening hours, equipment and power usage
- Businesses suffering recruitment issues

The Enforcement Service Delivery Plan also sets targets for 2022/23 for food safety and health and safety interventions. During the coming year for food hygiene the service aims to carry out 421 inspections. For health and safety the Service aims to carry out 204 interventions. So far in 2022/23, the team has achieved the following (next page):



Food Hygiene Inspections

	Apr - June 2022	July - Sept 2022 *	Total
Inspections	79	77	158
Alternative interventions	2	2	2
Re-visits	3	7	10
Total	84	86	170

(* preliminary figure, requires verification)

Health & Safety Inspections

	Apr - June 2019 *	July - Sept 2022 *	Total
Inspections	0	0	0
Alternative interventions	0	0	0
Advisory visits	21	48	69
Re-visits	1	1	2
Total	22	49	71

(* preliminary figure, requires verification)

The figures reveal a steady start towards achieving the targets.



Broadly Compliant Food Businesses

The number food premises which are broadly compliant with food safety legislation is seen by the Food Standards Agency as a useful measurement of performance of local authorities. It also provides the council with a useful indicator as to the overall food hygiene levels in businesses in the borough.

The service has seen a consistent and substantial percentage of broadly compliant premises in the borough in recent years, usually around 95%. However, during the pandemic, due to the large number of newly registering food business in this period which were not inspected as to their compliance level, the number of broadly compliant food businesses fell substantially to 84% by July 2021. It is therefore pleasing to note that the latest figures at the end of September 2022, indicated that the number of broadly compliant food business had risen to 94%, ahead of our target of achieving this level by 31 March 2023.

To add context to this achievement during the pandemic the service had seen the number of food businesses registered in the borough rise to in excess of 1200 premises, an increase of over 20%. This is believed to have arisen during the pandemic with individuals looking at their futures, particularly those who have been furloughed or made redundant and have set up their own businesses, many home based food businesses. Whilst the sustainability of these businesses may be in doubt, as a small number are already found to be no longer trading (down to 1172 – September 2022) the service worked through these new businesses in order to rate their level of compliance and ultimately achieve the improved number of broadly compliant food businesses in the borough.

Emergency Planning

This past quarter has seen work being carried out on ensuring suitable ongoing and sustainable training for designated council staff on resilience issues. In a recruitment campaign to attract more emergency centre volunteers from the Council's staff a short briefing to borough staff in a recent Chief Executives update session was delivered. This has led to few more people coming forward to volunteer to provide help and support at an Evacuation Centre to members of the public who may find themselves evacuated from their homes during a major incident.

The service has also been involved in 3 notable incidents this past quarter:

1. Operation London Bridge – advice and support were given over arrangements following the monarch's death.
2. East Leicester disturbance – whilst this Major Incident did not have direct consequences to the Borough area, support and involvement was required at Strategic and Tactical coordinating groups from all local authorities.
3. Wildfire issues in the summer – Leicestershire Fire and Rescue declared a major incident at one stage over the summer due to stretched resources which needed a Tactical Coordinating Group setting up and support from all local authorities.

Due to the nature and concerns regarding the potential for Cyber-attacks and crime gaining more prominence we are working closely with the Chief Executive on an in-depth exercise in November with the Council's senior staff members and those in the ITC Partnership.

Both of the Tier 1 Emergency Centres (Hinckley and Green Tower Leisure Centres) have been re-inspected to ensure they are still fit and ready in case of a large scale evacuation due to a major incident. It was pleasing to note their continued readiness and recently up dated incidents plans have been circulated to them. Ongoing work is continuing with Tier 2-4 centres to update their contact and facility details and ensuring their readiness should a local small scale major incident occur.

Unfortunately a major national 2 day exercise, FloodEx22, was postponed in September due to being within the Monarch's mourning period. The exercise is designed to test the multi-agency response to a flooding incident, particularly reviewing the approach to evacuations of areas at risk of flooding and consider how community resources such as community response plans, community store schemes and flood wardens are part of the wider multi-agency flood response.

The exercise is now scheduled for 15/16th November.



LICENSING

Licensing Compliance Visits – Licensing Act 2003

It is the role Licensing Authority to protect the public from any harm that might arise from the provision of licensable activities at licensed premises. As part of this role licensing officers conduct visits to licensed premises to monitor compliance with the requirements of the premises licence and ensure the promotion of the four licensing objectives.

We aim to visit all premises licensed under the Licensing Act 2003 in accordance with an allocated risk rating. The premises risk rating is based on factors such as the nature of the premises, the range of licensable activities authorised, the times of activities and confidence in the management of the business.

We strongly recommended that those responsible for the day-to-day management of licensed premises carry out regular licence compliance checks. To ensure compliance levels, we ask licensees to consider the following matters:

- Is the listed designated premises supervisor (DPS) current?
- Has the DPS authorised staff in writing to sell alcohol on their behalf?
- Do you have a written age verification policy?
- Are your staff familiar with, and trained in licensing requirements?
- Can you show records of relevant staff training?
- Are your staff training records up to date?
- Is your Part B (licence summary) prominently displayed at the premises?
- Is the premises plan accurate/up to date?

We do not work in isolation and our officers also undertake planned inspection visits to premises with colleagues in the Police, Environmental Health, and Trading Standards where information or intelligence suggests that standards have fallen or if the business is considered a priority for intervention due to the potential risk posed.

Local Licensing Service Delivery

The licensing service issued 272 licences, permits, and notices this quarter

Alcohol, Entertainment & Gambling	July 2022 to Sept 2022
Pro-active compliance checks	31
Rural inspections	6
Service requests	1
Gambling premises	0
Licensing hearings	0

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing	July 2022 to Sept 2022
Service requests	1
Licensing hearings	0

