

Item 7

19th March 2019



Glasgow City Council

**Environment, Sustainability & Carbon
Reduction City Policy Committee**

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhoods and Sustainability

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UPDATE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 17-18

Purpose of Report:

To update the Committee on the provision of additional resources to address enforcement and staffing issues.

Recommendations:

That the Committee notes the content of the Report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: No

consulted: Yes No

1. Background

- 1.1 Environmental Health encompasses aspects of the natural and built environment which affect human health. The public responsibility for much of the Environmental Health function in the UK rests with local authorities, and this function sits within Neighbourhoods and Sustainability.
- 1.2 Environmental Health covers a wide range of subjects – with an overarching duty to protect the public health, safety and wellbeing of citizens and visitors to the City.
- 1.3 Certain functions are subject to overview and/or audit by external agencies, including food hygiene and standards (Food Standards Scotland), health and safety (Health and Safety Executive) and commercial waste enforcement (Scottish Environmental Protection Agency).
- 1.4 The Elected Members Handbook on Environmental Health can be accessed at:
<http://connect.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=38168&p=0>
- 1.5 The Environmental Health Annual report 2017-2018 was tabled at the meeting of the Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction City Policy Committee on 6 February 2018 (see undernoted link). The Committee requested that an update be provided at a later date on progress with the provision of additional resources to address enforcement and staffing issues.

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=86760>

2. Key Challenges

- 2.1 There are approximately 10,000 business premises in the City which are regulated by Environmental Health. The Council has a statutory obligation to conduct inspections or interventions in these premises in accordance with Codes of Practice. The service saw a significant number of staff members leave under workforce reduction initiatives between 2009 and 2012. At the time of the previous report to Committee (February 2018), the resource shortfall experienced by the service was resulting in a failure to meet some of the targets set by the respective Codes.
- 2.2 It was clear that additional qualified staff would be required to be recruited to address the failure to meet some of the targets set by the respective Codes.

- 2.3 Audits of Local Authorities food law enforcement services are part of Food Standards Scotland arrangements to improve consumer protection and confidence in relation to food. These arrangements recognise that the enforcement of UK food law relating to food safety, hygiene, composition, labelling, and imported food is largely the responsibility of Local Authorities. These Local Authority regulatory functions are principally delivered through Environmental Health.
- 2.4 Food Standards Scotland audits assess Local Authorities' conformance against Regulation (EC) No 882/20041 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with food law and the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland) 2015. One of the key aims of the audit is to assess the capacity and capability of the Local Authority to deliver the food service and the provision of a means to identify under performance in Local Authority food law enforcement systems.
- 2.5 In light of the published Food Standards Scotland Audit Programme, it is likely that Glasgow City Council will be subjected to an audit in the next 12 months. Our staff are familiar with and have experience of the process of external assessment.

3. Mitigation Action

- 3.1 Efforts continue to be made to address the resource deficit. Since the submission of the Environmental Health Annual Report 2017-18, there has been a net increase of 5.5 FTE (Environmental Health Officers). This increase was achieved via an external recruitment exercise to attract additional suitably qualified and experienced staff into the service and was successfully completed at the end of 2018.
- 3.2 The additional resources have been deployed in the area of Food Law Enforcement, which was identified as the main area where failure to meet some of the targets set by the respective Codes was occurring.
- 3.3 The public health element of the service is currently being aligned to the new neighbourhood delivery model to provide an integrated area based approach to enforcement alongside our frontline operational teams.
- 3.4 The provision of a combined out of hours noise service across the city is being examined. Out of hours teams exist within community safety and environmental health providing a domestic and non-domestic noise service respectively.
- 3.5 Other measures to maintain performance include internal redeployment of officers who hold the requisite qualifications, analysis and streamlining of processes and the introduction of enhanced mobile working methods. To support these change activities, a lean project is being developed to review the way our information management systems are used and the associated workflow processes. This will be carried out in parallel with the roll out of mobile working to maximise the benefits it will bring.

- 3.6 Mobile working applications will be available to staff from April 2019, offering at least a 10% improvement in productivity due to the way that inspections will be recorded in the field and by automating certain processes.
- 3.7 Glasgow City Council is currently one of the leading local authorities working with Skills for Justice to develop a modern apprenticeship scheme in regulatory services. Skills for Justice are currently applying to become the awarding body.
- 3.8 Food Safety Technical officers have been supported to achieve an additional food standards qualification. Environmental Health staff participate in regional and national liaison groups where new legislation is reviewed and best practice is shared. Staff attend training courses and continual development days in conjunction with professional bodies.
- 3.9 It is anticipated that the impact of the aforementioned recruitment, process changes, mobile working methodologies, professional training and in the longer term the regulatory apprenticeship programme will enable the service to achieve performance levels much closer to those delivered before previous workforce reductions. Key priorities will continue to be monitored frequently and necessary changes made in service delivery in order to achieve relevant targets over the coming 3-year period. Performance against targets will continue to be monitored and reported to the Annual Service Plan and Improvement Reports.

4. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: The budget within Neighbourhoods and Sustainability has been realigned to accommodate the additional posts.

Legal: The Environmental Health function is largely delivered under key statutes including:

- Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974
- Food Safety Act 1990
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Public Health (Scotland) Act 2008
- Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
- Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005
- Control of Pollution Act 1974

Personnel: A healthy number of suitably qualified applicants from across the UK applied for the additional posts.

Procurement:

There are no relevant procurement issues arising from this report.

Council Strategic Plan:

The Environmental Health function supports the key themes of:

- **A Thriving Economy** - via Priority 6 (Supporting Businesses) and Priority 8 (Supporting the hospitality and events market).
- **A Vibrant City** – via Priority 18 (Supporting the events strategy).
- **A Healthier City** – via Priority 38 (Supporting services which deliver early, health-protecting interventions).
- **A Sustainable and Low Carbon City** – via Priority 64 (Improving the city’s cleanliness) and Priority 66 (improve the efficiency of our services).

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council’s Equality Outcomes 2017-22

Yes, for example enforcement of the prohibition of commercial waste receptacles in the public domain will benefit persons with impaired sight – as obstacles on footpaths will be removed in certain locations.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

No significant impact as determined by the EQIA screening. The EQIA screening can be viewed via the following link:
<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=44581&p=0>

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage.

The work of the Environmental Health function has an emphasis upon relieving adverse circumstances as they relate to the community as a whole. Such circumstances are most prevalent in areas of deprivation.

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental:

The work of the Environmental Health food enforcement function is linked to the enhancement of the City’s environment in that it protects the health of citizens and visitors by ensuring that the food offered for sale is safe and authentic.

Social, including Article 19 opportunities:

Environmental Health provides a direct service to the citizens of Glasgow and reacts in order to assist on a City-wide, community and individual basis.

Economic:

Environmental Health provides an expert and intensive service to significant numbers of Glasgow businesses whether permanent or event-related.

Privacy and Data Protection impacts:

None

5. Recommendations

That the Committee notes the content of the Report.