

**TITLE OF REPORT: Review of the work of the Environmental Health team within Development, Transport and Public Protection**

**REPORT OF: Strategic Director, Communities and Environment**

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## **SUMMARY**

The report provides details to the Care, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, of the work carried out by Development, Transport and Public Protections, Environmental Health team during the last year.

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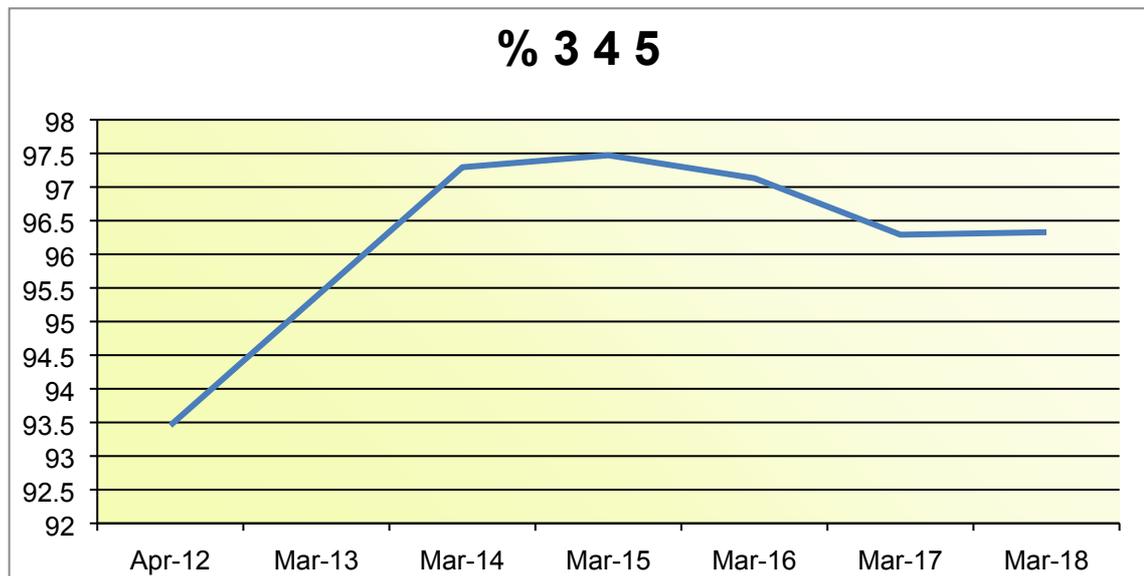
### **Background**

1. During 2017/18 the Environmental Health Team within Development, Transport and Public Protection have responded to over 800 accidents, food poisonings and service requests and undertook over 1500 interventions in a wide range of premises to build stronger, healthier, prosperous and sustainable businesses.
2. The team produces a service plan each year, which details the activities that the team must undertake in the coming year. This includes the number of interventions in each of the risk categories for food hygiene, food standards and health and safety, the number of service requests that are expected to be received, the number of accident investigations to be undertaken, the number of food samples to be taken and all other work that the team undertakes. Within the plan there is an estimate of the amount of resources in officer time that will be required to undertake all the activities and compares it to the officer time available, based on 220 days per officer.
3. The number of food premises on the team's database at the start of 2017/18 was 1600 and health and safety premises was 3000.
4. Under food safety legislation it is a requirement to visit all new food businesses with 28 days of opening. Within 2017 we had 120 new businesses register with the team. New businesses receive an enhanced questionnaire, so that the team can prioritise inspections so that the highest risk businesses are inspected quicker than lower risk premises.
5. At the start of 2017/18 it was estimated that there was a deficit in officer days and this was compounded by that fact that the Technical Officer post was vacant for much of the year because of ill health
6. In 2017/18 the team was required to undertake 1101 food hygiene interventions, 1018 food standards interventions and 1433 health and safety interventions. The team achieved 100% of interventions to high and medium risk food hygiene premises. The low risk premises that didn't receive an

intervention will be prioritised for an intervention during the coming financial year. We also carried out 43 accident investigations and responded to 218 service requests.

7. The team has introduced complaint selection criteria which highlights complaints of public health significance. All complaints are recorded against the relevant premises and where multiple complaints are received close together then a visit will be undertaken, even if the complaint does not fall within those we would normally investigate. During the year 2 prosecutions were undertaken and 3 simple cautions issued. We were also involved in a major investigation into the sale of DNP. DNP is a chemical which typically has industrial applications including fertiliser. It is used by some bodybuilders to strip remaining bodyfat prior to completion. DNP causes the cells within the body to heat up and there have been a number of deaths associated with its use due to multiple organ failure. The investigation involved coordinating 3 local authorities' actions and liaising with the National Food Crime Unit, The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and local Police forces. The investigation also involved agencies in the USA. The investigation was equivalent to a major prosecution in terms of resources.
8. Figure 1 shows the percentage of premises receiving a Food Hygiene Rating Score of 3 or better for each year and shows how the percentage of premises has fallen since 2015, but stabilised this year.

Figure 1



9. We have introduced a charge for FHRS reratings and although we have only had 5 requests, these do take a significant amount of time as it equates to a new inspection. These have generated £800 in income.
10. We have generated approximately £6500 from registering skin piercing activities throughout the year. We have also provided 6 export certificates at a cost of £75 each, for a total of £450.

11. The team have been granted permission to recruit a new full time EHO and it is expected that the new officer will commence work in May 2018.
12. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have carried out a desk top audit of the food safety service during the year following the annual return for last year. This involved forwarding our service plan and an action plan to reduce the backlog of inspections and achieve 100% of inspections due. The action plan included the appointment of a new Technical Officer, the use of a contractor to inspect our outstanding C category food hygiene inspections, and the proposed recruitment of a new EHO to the team.

### **Conclusion**

13. In 2017/2018 the team has continued to undertake a wide range of interventions, both proactive and reactive. however, while 100% of high and medium risk interventions were achieved, only 25% of the total number of interventions were achieved. The appointment of a Technical Officer and an EHO is anticipated to improve this performance in the coming year. The decline in level of the Food Hygiene Rating Score in previous years has stabilised, showing that food premises are generally maintaining standards.

### **Recommendation**

12. The Committee is asked to OSC give its views on the work of the team and progress made against the service plan.

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