

Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee

Agenda

Members of the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee:

Cllr C Hudson (Chairman)
Cllr F Curson
Cllr T Holden
Cllr T Laidlaw
Cllr T Spruce

Cllr D Burrill
Cllr B Duffin
Cllr W Kemp
Cllr J Overton

Date & Time:

Wednesday 11 May 2022
2:00pm

Place:

Council Chamber at South Norfolk House, Cygnet Court, Long Stratton, Norfolk, NR15 2XE

Contact:

Leah Arthurton tel (01508) 533610
Email: committee.snc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk
Website: www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE:

If a member of the public would like to observe the meeting in person or to speak on an agenda item, please email your request to :
committee.snc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk, no later than 5.00pm Friday 6 May 2022.

Large print version can be made available

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance.

AGENDA

1. To report apologies for absence and identify substitute voting members (if any);
2. **Any items of business the Chairman decides should be considered as matters of urgency pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act, 1972.**
Urgent business may only be taken if, "by reason of special circumstances" (which will be recorded in the minutes), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency;
3. **To receive Declarations of interest from Members;**
(Please see guidance form and flow chart – page 2)
4. **To confirm the minutes from the meeting of the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee held on Monday 25 April 2022.**
(attached – page 5)
5. **Spark Transformation Programme Update;**
(attached – page 9)
6. **Broadland and South Norfolk Customer Panel;**
(attached – page 24)
7. **Licensing Services – Service Enhancement Options**
(attached – page 31)
8. **Food Safety Services – Service Enhancement Options**
(attached – page 41)

Agenda Item: 3

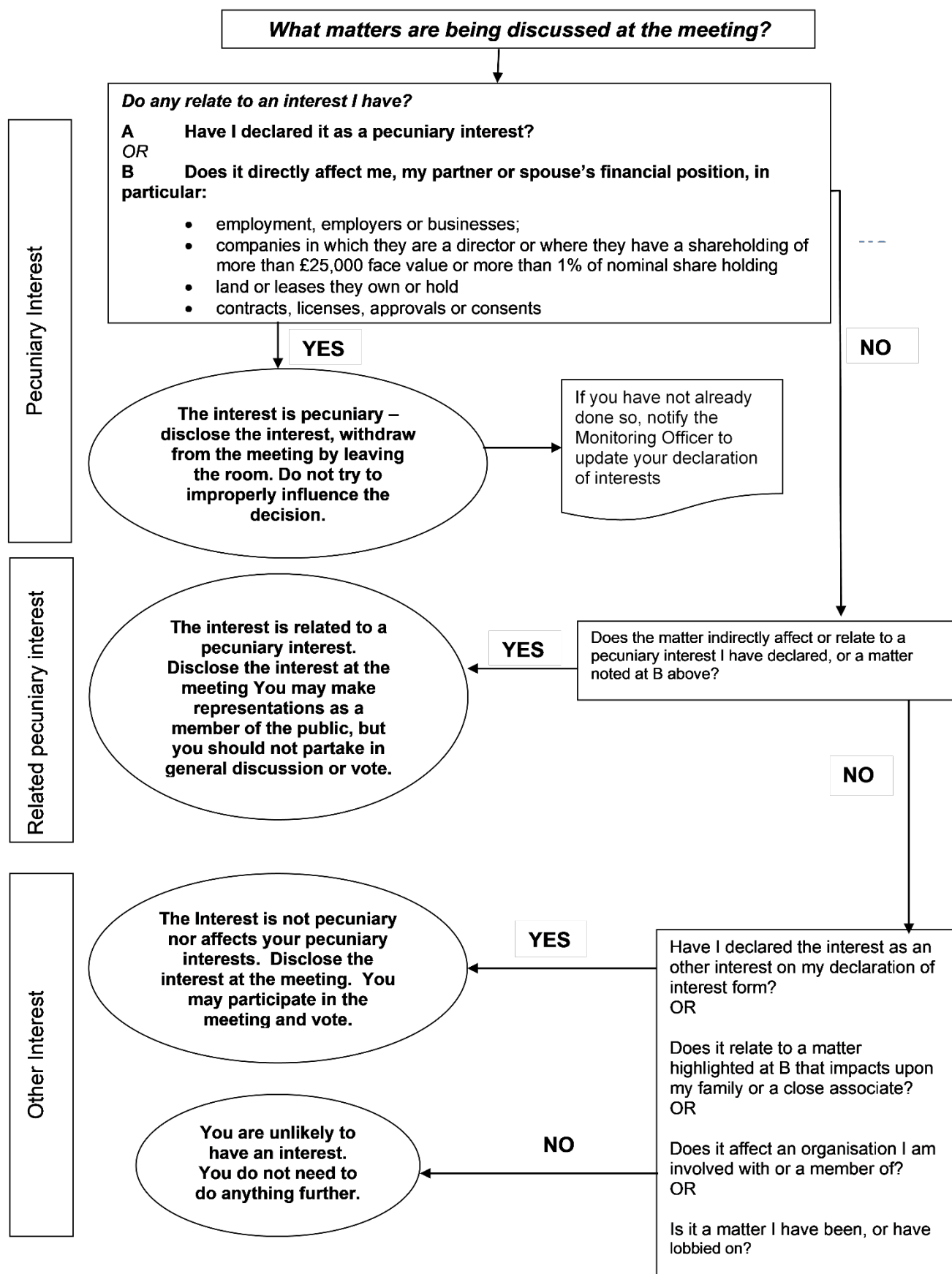
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

When declaring an interest at a meeting Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting. Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.

Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.
Does the interest directly: 1. affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position? 2. relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner? 3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council 4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own 5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary. Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.
Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above? If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but you should not partake in general discussion or vote.
Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an other interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.
Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

**FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF.
PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST
INSTANCE**

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF



Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee of South Norfolk Council held on Monday 25 April 2022 at 2.00pm.

Committee Members Present:	Councillors: D Burrill, T Holden, W Kemp, T Laidlaw, J Overton and T Spruce
Apologies:	Councillors: C Hudson and B Duffin
Substitutes:	Cllr Y Bendle (for Cllr B Duffin)
Cabinet Member in Attendance:	Councillor: R Elliott
Other Members in Attendance	Councillor: J Halls and A Thomas
Officers in Attendance:	The Director of Resources (D Lorimer), the Chief of Staff and Monitoring Officer (E Hodds) and Democratic Services Officer (JK)

45 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

In the absence of both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Cllr J Overton proposed Cllr W Kemp as Chairman for the meeting, which was duly seconded. In the absence of any other nominations, Cllr Kemp was duly appointed as Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr W Kemp be appointed as Chairman of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Kemp and Laidlaw both advised they were members of the working group considering the Accommodation Review.

47 MINUTES

Councillor Laidlaw queried the term stakeholder engagement and asked if the staff had been fully consulted, as they were the key stakeholders affected. The Director of Resources confirmed the staff had been fully consulted. The minutes of the meeting of the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee held on Friday 1 April 2022 were then approved as a correct record.

48 FUTURE OFFICE ACCOMMODATION PROJECT - APPRAISAL AND BUSINESS CASE

The Director of Resources introduced the report and explained that it addressed three key areas which members might want to explore before a recommendation was made to Cabinet. These were:

- The financial implications of a move to the Horizon building;
- The future use of the site of the Council office in Long Stratton and
- How the needs of residents in for example Diss, would be impacted by the move.

Members were reminded that in November 2021, the consultants had recommended the move to the Horizon building and advised of the benefits, such as a substantial annual reduction in running costs, an 84% reduction in the Council's carbon footprint, electrical vehicle charging points, sufficient car parking spaces, reduction in future capital costs and a significant move in cultural change as all staff would be under one roof.

In terms of accessibility for residents, although this was an issue, footfall was still extremely low at each current site with only approximately ten residents a day visiting at both current buildings. For two thirds of the residents of South Norfolk, the Horizon building was the same, or closer in distance for travel by car and for those in the further reaches of the district, options were being investigated to provide services in a site more convenient to them.

The Chairman then explored Option 2 around the potential development of Retirement/Supported Living accommodation, on the site at Long Stratton and in response to a query, the Director of Resources advised that the need for additional schools had not been mentioned, as that option was aimed at those over the age of 55.

A member of the Committee raised the issue of consultation and advised he felt it would have been helpful for staff, who were mainly affected, to have had the chance to visit the building and asked if the Horizon building specifically had been part of the consultation as anecdotally, he had heard it was not an attractive building in which to work. The Director of Resources reassured members that the Horizon building was specified in the consultation with an online video showing the exterior and interior and that groups of staff had visited the building and their responses had been very positive. In addition, several staff had previously worked at that site and would be happy to return. Although there were of course some officers who were against the move, for

example those living in Long Stratton, there had been more positive than negative responses from staff. One member of the Committee advised that his wife used to work there and would be very happy to return, as would her colleagues.

In response to a query as to whether a relocation allowance would be possible, the Chief of Staff advised that it would not as the current policy on relocation only applied to new members of staff having to move some considerable distance.

A member of the Committee acknowledged there were very few residents visiting the buildings, however she required reassurance that more work would be done on improving other means of communication, for example the website and the telephone options as there were instances of poor customer service. The Director of Resources advised that the Council now had a Customer Service Lead looking at improving the phone service and website with phone champions in each area to improve the service, for example speed of response, quality of response and the introduction of new methods such as online chat.

Another member advised that they had consulted residents, and no one they had spoken to had ever visited the Council offices, and that they just wanted good communication channels.

In response to a query, the Director of Resources confirmed that all parishes had been consulted on the potential move at the beginning of the process.

A member raised an issue around a possible delay to redevelop the current office area as it was a commercial building, and therefore could not be developed for housing until after six months of attempting to sell it as a commercial enterprise. The Director of Resources confirmed that the Planning Service would be fully involved and all relevant planning guidance for change of use would be followed.

The local member commented that any new development should always come hand in hand with local employment, however, the proposed development did not, and could lead to a loss of local jobs. She felt that moving the Council offices could have a significant impact on local businesses and pointed out that a lot of staff lived locally. Another member agreed and raised a concern around the impact of any development on local businesses and shops and recommended consulting the local community in terms of any development. Members were advised that although it was not possible to be certain, with staff working more from home, it was likely that removing the office and providing more housing, would in fact provide more custom for local shops.

Following a show of hands, with the addition of a recommendation to specifically consult the local members on all aspects and impact of the potential redevelopment, it was

RESOLVED:

1. To recommend to Cabinet that it recommends that Council:
 - a) Agrees to purchase the Horizon Centre jointly.
 - b) Shares any future capital costs on an equal basis between both Broadband Council and South Norfolk Council if jointly owned.
 - c) Shares the revenue expenditure related to the Horizon Centre in accordance with the agreed apportionment model in place for that financial year.

2. To recommend to Cabinet that it agrees to:
 - a) Establish a Facilities Management Agreement between the two Councils that incorporates the governance arrangements and income in relation to the Horizon Centre; this is to be delegated to the Leader in consultation with the Director of Resources.
 - b) Explore the options recommended by the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee for the future of the South Norfolk House site.
 - c) Ensure that local members be fully consulted on all aspects and impact of the possible redevelopment of the Council office in Long Stratton.

(The meeting concluded at 3.05pm)

Chairman

Spark Transformation Programme Update

Report Author(s): Sinead Carey
Strategy and Programmes Manager
Sinead.carey@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk
01508 533661

Portfolio: Governance and Efficiency

Ward(s) Affected: None

Purpose of the Report:

This report provides the Committee with an update on the major projects that are currently being progressed as part of the SPARK Transformation Programme.

Recommendations:

1. To note the content of the report with regards to the progress made with the programme.

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an update on the major projects that are currently being progressed as part of the SPARK Transformation Programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 In July 2018, the Council agreed to the Feasibility Study to progress collaborative working with Broadland District Council.
- 2.2 The Council has been ambitious in its approach and over the last year and a half, has achieved significant progress including establishing the one joint team serving the two councils and beginning on the transformation journey. The SPARK Transformation Approach and Programme were established in January 2020 and work has been underway to progress and implement a range of transformational projects as referred to in **Appendix 1**.

3. Current position/findings

- 3.1 Positive progress is being made across the SPARK Transformation Programme as a whole. As can be seen, a large proportion of the projects that we are currently progressing are those which are corporate-wide and needed to build the base and infrastructure for further transformation of our services in the future e.g. IT Infrastructure. There are also a range of directorate transformation projects which are underway and being managed by each service area.
- 3.2 The document at **Appendix 1** provides an update on each of the corporate-wide projects (see below) which form the programme, including a RAG status and delivery milestones.

Table 1 - Overview of SPARK Transformation Programme

Project or Programme	Overview	Key Delivery Milestones
Joint email (Phase 2) Current RAG status – Amber (no change from previous report to committee)	Development of a single email system on the new domain (southnorfolkandbroadland) including a migration to o365	• P1 – Migration of users accounts and computers from legacy networks into new joint network (timeline TBC)
Domain migration Current RAG status – Green (RAG previously Amber but is now Green)	Migrating our systems and services onto the new domain name	• Target delivery date by December 2022. Dependent on the output of the audit.

One network Current RAG status – Amber (no change from previous report to committee)	A phased approach of IT infrastructure development to build a single network across the two Councils	• Since the last report to Members, further rescoping of the timeline has been completed based on delays and the revised target implementation date is now April 2022 instead of January 22. • A further phase is required for the migrations of existing servers onto the new infrastructure, of which the current timescales for completion are by end of June 2022.
Strategic approach to systems transformation Current RAG status – Amber (no change from previous report to committee)	Developing a strategy for our wider systems approach to replacement of future service systems.	• Initiation - Agree requirements/delivery partner/procurement/project team (Oct 20 complete) • Discovery -Methods review of key business systems (Nov 20 - Feb 21 complete) • Planning - Sign-off recommendations and plan delivery approach (Feb - Apr 21 complete) • Implementation - 4-yr programme of phased transformation (Apr 21 - July 23 ongoing)
Business Intelligence (BI) and Governance Current RAG status – Green (no change from previous report to committee)	Developing and implementing a business intelligence framework that develops the organisation into an insight and intelligence led culture of continuous improvement.	• P1 – Discovery and development of recommendations – Jan 21 (complete) • P2 – Agree BI Principles, Data Standards and Proof of Concept (Pilot) – April 21 (complete) • P3 – Implementation of outcomes from P2 – July 21 (completed) • P4 – Roll out to organisation in line with transformation programme – July 21 onwards (ongoing)
Future Office Accommodation Programme	This programme has been reshaped into the Future Office Accommodation Programme and covers the remaining	• P1 – Covers the period from CMLT approval of the Scoping Document through production of the Consultants Options

Current RAG status – Green (no change from previous report to committee)	projects of the New ways of working programme. This programme aims to secure approval for the recommended option to meet the two Councils future office accommodation needs. This programme comprised of 4 key projects: Future Office Accommodation (FOA) Project, Post and Scanning Project, Hybrid Working Model Project and Hub and Spoke Project.	Appraisal and Recommended approach to approval by the respective Cabinets/Full Councils (originally December 2021) • P2 – Undertake due diligence on the purchase of the Horizon Centre by commissioning a series of surveys and other work to fully understand the building and associated costs. (December 2021 to May 2022) • P3 - delivery (mobilisation) of the approved option. This could include a suite of projects some of which are live (Hybrid Working, Archiving and Scanning and Locality Working). Others have yet to be scoped and will depend on the approved option.
Review of Councils' Depots Current RAG status – Amber	Review of Council Depots Future Options Report to review whether they are fit for purpose moving forward, to look at alternative locations and to create a business case for any changes.	• Project plan with key milestones currently being developed.
Best in Class Housing Programme Current RAG status – Green	Enabling anyone in housing need to resolve their own accommodation needs, whilst focusing scarce resource on households in housing crisis to avoid homelessness and secure sustainable accommodation options, delivered within a sustainable service delivery model and an extensive partnership framework. The IT System and Allocation Policy element of this programme has now been completed.	• Delivery of new system in April 21 (complete). • Customer Journey – (P1 May 2022) • Temporary Accommodation and Private Sector Leasing – (P1 April 2022) • Rent and deposit scheme (RADs)
<new project> Digital Mail Solution Current RAG status – Green	Procure a contract to provide greater consistency, stability, and the opportunity to reduce outgoing post costs. Ideally, we would move to a single	• P1 – Agree specification and system requirements (April 2022)

	provider as the benefits will be greater than having contracts with two providers.	• P2 – Put the contract out to tender. • P3 – Award contract, test and implement system. To be delivered by April 2023.
Joint website	Development & Implementation of a single website across the two Councils.	<u>Project has been delivered.</u>
Telephony roll out	Implementation of a single telephony system across the two councils.	<u>Project has been delivered.</u>
Strategic Reporting	Development and implementation of the new strategic reporting cycle, covering risk, finance and performance to report against our in-year delivery plan.	<u>Project has been delivered.</u>
Best in class housing – policy and system	Upgrading the Housing IT system to fit with the best in class housing model and policy.	<u>Project has been delivered.</u>
Organisational Development Programme	A phased programme of work following on from the development of the OD strategy.	<u>Programme moved into business as usual.</u>
Joint email (Phase 1)	Development of a single email system on the new domain (southnorfolkandbroadland) including a migration to o365	<u>Phase 1 of project has been delivered.</u>
<newly completed project> Moving Towards a First-Class Customer Service	A phased project looking at how we can gather and utilise customer insight and feedback to improve our services for the future.	<u>Project has been delivered. (remaining actions to be picked up via business as usual service delivery)</u>
<newly completed project> Complaints approach	South Norfolk and Broadland Councils currently have different complaints policies and processes. This project will make proposals to align the processes, policies and systems to create a consistent and robust way of handling complaints across the two	<u>Project has been delivered. (3-month review of progress completed with project element now closed, this now moves into business as usual service delivery)</u>

	Councils to provide the right outcomes for our customers.	
<newly completed project> Broadland Procurement of Waste Contract	Project to procure the new contract for Broadland District Councils waste service.	<u>Project has been delivered.</u>

4 Other options

4.1 None.

5 Issues and risks

5.1 **Resource Implications** – these are managed by each project on a case by case basis.

5.2 **Legal Implications** – considered with each project as appropriate

5.3 **Equality Implications** – considered with each project as appropriate.

5.4 **Environmental Impact** – considered with each project as appropriate.

5.5 **Crime and Disorder** – not applicable to this report.

5.6 **Risks** – risks are managed on a project basis and are escalated through to directorate risk registers and the strategic risk register if appropriate.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The report has been provided to the Committee as requested to ensure they are kept up to date with the key project work of the Council.

7 Recommendations

1. To note the content of the report with regards to the progress made with the programme.

Appendix 1 - Spark Transformation Programme

Highlight Report – Blue/Corporate Projects

Updates as of: 28 April 2022

New projects:

- Digital Mail Solution (see project 7 under the Corporate Hub section)

Completed and closed projects:

- Joint Website
- Telephony roll out to Broadland District Council users
- Strategic reporting approach
- Best in Class Housing – policy and system
- Organisational Development Programme (moved to business as usual)
- Joint Email (phase 1)
- <Newly completed project> Moving Towards a First-Class Customer Service (remaining actions to be picked up via business as usual service delivery)
- <Newly completed project> Complaints approach (3 month review of progress completed with project element now closed, this now moves into business as usual service delivery)
- <Newly completed project> Broadland Procurement of Waste Contract (phase 1, phase 2 now begins)

Corporate Hub

1 Joint Email (phase 2) Migration of users accounts and computers from legacy networks into new joint network.

RAG Status – Amber ● (no change since last report)

This project is currently Amber due to the timelines for Phase 2 still being in development.

Senior Sponsor – Corinne Lawrie

Business Lead – Angela Schug

Project Phasing:

- P1 – Migration of users accounts and computers from legacy networks into new joint network (timeline TBC)

Update:

- Positive progress has been made on the development of the initial stages of phase 2 of the project including:

- Security and Information Governance (within the new OneGov tenant) - Key principles shared with and signed off by Project sponsors.
- Adoption and Change Management – ‘show and tell’ sessions around Teams, SharePoint, OneDrive and OneNote have begun. Scope currently being agreed for Member training.
- External Project Manager appointed (via our 3rd party Partner Insight). Initial project meeting has taken place, with weekly updates diarised. First draft of the Project initiation Document reviewed by the project team.

Priorities:

- Scope, timelines and resources for completion of phase 2: Migration of users accounts and computers from legacy networks into new joint network will be progressed with our partners CommsCare and Insight.
- This will lead to a rescoping of the project to focus on the remaining work packages.

2 Domain Migration Migrating our systems and services onto the new domain name

RAG Status – Green ● (this was previously Amber but due to a Project Manager being identified and project initiation commencing, this has been changed to Green)

Senior Sponsor – Corinne Lawrie

Business Lead – Helen Doherty

Project Phasing

- Anticipated project delivery date December 2022 as previously agreed with Government Digital Services.

Update:

- Project plan created to outline the proposed steps to take to lead the organisation to a delivery date of December 2022. This will be dependent on the volume of identified material as a result of the audit.
- Sessions held with Management Teams across the Councils to raise awareness of the domain migration, what it means and what needs to happen next.
- Audits set up across teams to assess where our old domains are being used both internally and externally.

Priorities:

- Complete the audits, providing us with an overview of our current state of play.
- Work with our website editors internally to review website content.
- Rescope project plan and timescales based on the audit results.

3 One Network A phased approach of IT infrastructure development to build a single network across the two Councils, which includes physical infrastructure replacement.

RAG Status – Amber ● (no change since last report)

This project is Amber as the timeline was previously impacted by the global shortage of components (chips and switches) required for the delivery of the project, resulting in the delivery timescale for the new Infrastructure to be in place being originally pushed out to end of January 2022, instead of September 2021. Since the last report to Members, further rescoping of the timeline has been completed based on the delays as per above and the revised target implementation date is now June 2022.

Senior Sponsor – Corinne Lawrie

Business Lead – Mark Harris / Angela Schug

Project Phasing:

As per above, the physical implementation of the hardware timeline has been rescoped and now will be delivered by April 2022. A further phase is required for the migrations of existing servers onto the new infrastructure, of which the current timescales for completion are by end of June 2022.

Update:

- Our third party, Phoenix, commenced installation of the new infrastructure as planned on 29 November 2021 (supported by our internal resources).
- Phoenix resources arrived on site as planned (following Covid secure guidelines) and have commenced the racking and cabling of the new infrastructure.
- Core Hardware components installed prior to configuration.

Priorities:

- Phoenix resources will continue on site at South Norfolk House, Thorpe Lodge and remotely to complete the racking and cabling of the new infrastructure.
- The Rubrik back up will be implemented and handed over the team (with appropriate knowledge share). This was planned for late January but is being rescheduled as our suppliers (Phoenix and Rubrik) required additional time to agree scope and content for the Rubrik back-up workshop.
- The infrastructure implementation phase is set to complete by the end of April. There are 360+ virtual servers to migrate as well as a number of physical servers and network gateways. This is a complex exercise which requires careful planning and co-ordination with the business from a scheduling and testing perspective. Options for the migration of applications and data (from the legacy infrastructure to the new) are currently being assessed from a risk to service, resourcing, and expediency perspectives.

4 Strategic Approach to Systems Transformation

Developing a strategy for our wider systems approach to replacement of future service systems. The project will define and develop an architectural framework, governance and roadmap which will enable the IT team to balance the delivery of technology harmonisation and modernisation, whilst also enabling the wider transformation programme.

RAG Status – Amber ● (no change since last report)

This programme of work is currently Amber due to a slippage in the original timelines proposed by Methods and projects within the programme still being scoped.

Senior Sponsor – Debbie Lorimer

Business Lead – David French

Project Phasing

- Initiation - Agree requirements/delivery partner/procurement/project team (Oct 20 complete)
- Discovery - Methods review of key business systems (Nov 20 - Feb 21 complete)
- Planning - Sign-off recommendations and plan delivery approach (Feb - Apr 21 complete)
- Implementation - 4-yr programme of phased transformation (Apr 21 - July 23 ongoing)

Update:

- **HR/Payroll system:** The delivery timescales for this system has been revised and agreed with Suffolk County Council – go live is now scheduled for November 22. The timeline has slipped due to snags in the system being identified by Suffolk County Council when rolling out to the other Councils. Communications have been issued to all staff and members confirming the delay and a commitment secured from Suffolk that they will continue to provide the current HR/Payroll system and support at no additional cost to the Councils.
- **Finance system:** Preparation activities for BDC transfer to the new system completed. BDC system launched.
- **Income (Cash Receipting) system:** New joint system went live on 1 April.
- **Revenues & Benefits:** Business case for the new system has been approved at BDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee and both Cabinets (8/14/15 March)
- **Land & Property (Idox) system:** After some delay, Idox Work Order (contract signed) and Purchase Order approved, and Idox Project Manager onboarded. First draft of delivery plan shared - now awaiting revised version and confirmation of Idox data service resources. Data mapping activity underway across all services areas, with good progress across Planning/Land Charges and Housing and Warm / Green Homes.
- **Committee Services system:** Contract specifics not yet agreed by Procurement and this delay continues to prevent the contract with the new system provider from being signed. IT sign-off for system suitability completed.

- **Customer Relationship Management system:** Business case second draft has been received from our supplier and is currently in review stage before progressing through to Resources Coordination Group and the rest of the sign-off process.

Priorities:

- **HR/Payroll system:** Section 113 Agreement resolution and sign off. SCC granting system access to the PM to enable testing.
- **Finance system:** Post-implementation review and completion of any outstanding tasks.
- **Income (Cash Receipting) system:** Complete any outstanding training sessions for users and frontline staff. Post-implementation review.
- **Revenues & Benefits system:** Draft user requirement to be completed by Project Board. Consult with IT to establish any red lines for inclusion (by 20 April).
- **Land & Property (Idox) system:** Complete detailed project planning (delayed from mid-April pending Idox response). Initial internal resourcing concerns have reduced but expect to get a clearer indication of any pinch points by mid-May now that Regulatory and Economic Growth data mapping is underway.
- **Committee Services system:** Contract to be checked by Legal and signed-off by Director. Once contract formally signed and order placed, create implementation plan and agree with supplier and IT.
- **Customer Relationship Management system:** Review CRM business case and present to CMLT.
- **Other:** Firm-up ownership and project pathways for remaining Methods recommendations.

5 Business Intelligence and Governance Developing and implementing a business intelligence framework that develops the organisation into an insight and intelligence-led culture of continuous improvement.

RAG Status – Green ● (no change since last report)

Senior Sponsor – Corinne Lawrie

Business Lead – Shaun Crook

Project Phasing

- P1 – Discovery and development of recommendations – Jan 21 (complete)
- P2 – Agree BI Principles, Data Standards and Proof of Concept (Pilot) – April 21 (complete)
- P3 – Implementation of outcomes from P2 – July 21 (complete)
- P4 – Roll out to organisation in line with transformation programme – July 21 onwards (ongoing)

Having delivered the Proof of Concept, timelines will be reset for the roll-out of the Business Intelligence Service once the detailed resourcing and funding model has been approved.

Update:

- Detailed resourcing and funding model (and supporting timeline) was considered and discussed by CMLT on 5 April 22 who requested some additional actions ahead of final agreement.

Priorities:

- Project team to work through the recommended actions from CMLT and define next steps.

6 Future Office Accommodation Programme This programme aims to secure approval for the recommended option to meet the two Councils future office accommodation needs. This programme comprised of 4 key projects: Future Office Accommodation Project, Post and Scanning Project, Hybrid Working Model Project and Locality Working Project.

RAG Status – Green ● (no change since last report)

Senior Sponsor – Debbie Lorimer

Business Lead – Leigh Booth

Project Phasing

- Phase 1 – Covers the period from CMLT approval of the Scoping Document through production of the Consultants Options Appraisal and Recommended approach to approval by the respective Cabinets/Full Councils (originally December 2021)
- Phase 2 – Undertake due diligence on the purchase of the Horizon Centre by commissioning a series of surveys and other work to fully understand the building and associated costs. (December 2021 to May 2022)
- Phase 3 - delivery (mobilisation) of the approved option. This could include a suite of projects some of which are live (Hybrid Working, Archiving and Scanning and Locality Working). Others have yet to be scoped and will depend on the approved option.

The overall project plan period has been extended to enable due diligence to be undertaken prior to a formal decision on the outcome of the project.

Update:

- Joint Member Working Group considered:
 - Horizon Centre Mechanical and Electrical Condition Survey, Horizon Centre Acoustic Survey, Horizon Centre Carbon Footprint Report, New Build costs, Basic Spatial Planning designs and costs.
 - Horizon Centre surveys, and an analysis of the cost of purchasing.
 - Outstanding queries and agreed recommendations to Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee (BDC) and Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Committee (SNC).

Priorities:

- Proceed with the report through to Members in April – May.

<new project> 7 Digital Mail Solution The purpose of the project is to procure a contract to provide greater consistency, stability, and the opportunity to reduce outgoing post costs. Ideally, we would move to a single provider as the benefits will be greater than having contracts with two individual providers.

RAG Status – Green ●

Senior Sponsor – Corinne Lawrie

Business Lead – Craig Moore

Project Phasing

- P1 – Agree specification and system requirements (June 2022)
- P2 – Put the contract out to tender (July – August 2022)
- P3 – Award contract, test and implement system (September – November 2022)

To be delivered by April 2023.

Priorities:

- Complete Phase 1 - Agree specification and system requirements.

People and Communities Hub**1 Broadland Procurement of Waste Contract** (phase 1)

RAG Status – Green ●

Senior Sponsor – Simon Phelan

Business Lead – Sarah Bruton

Project Phasing

- P1 – Pre procurement Sept – Oct 2020 (completed)
- P2 – Selection stage Dec – Feb 2021 (completed)
- P3 – Invitation to submit initial tender Feb – April 2021 (completed)
- P4 – Negotiation – May – June 2021 (completed)
- P5 – Decision to award September 2021 (completed)
- P6 – Implementation of contract – by end of March 2022 (completed)

Update:

- Contract Manual completed and staff received training from Eunomia.
- Admin Team received training on web system which integrates with the InCab technology.

- Vehicles arrived for start of contract 1.4.22 with the exception of food waste vehicles which will arrive in August 2022 – existing vehicles will be utilised until then.
- Letter of Intent signed by BDC and Veolia until Contract documents have been completed and signed.
- Development of Joint webform for Bulky Waste collections and Garden Waste orders tested and Live to integrate with Flare and new payment system.
- Contract commenced with effect from 1.4.2022

Priorities:

- Project for procurement has now closed (phase 1). The team will now focus on working with Veolia to implement full roll out of food waste from 1st October 2022 across the district to those households that don't currently receive the service following Cabinet Decision (phase 2).

2 Redevelopment of the local authority waste depots to review whether they are fit for purpose moving forward, to look at alternative locations and to create a business case for any changes.

RAG Status – Amber ●

Senior Sponsor – Simon Phelan

Project Phasing

Project plan with key milestones currently being developed.

Update:

- BDC - Various actions to be completed arising from the meeting with Veolia – clarification of electricity availability with National Power Networks, initial discussions with Planners and Veolia to revise costings and timeline etc. Late indication is works may be completed by September 2023, subject to Planning approval.
- BDC Cabinet approved 26/04/22 the waving of the Council's procurement standing orders to allow the appointment Veolia to project manage the redevelopment of the depot.
- SNC – Ongoing discussions being held with relevant partners and stakeholders on availability of sites.
- Confirmation from NCC that the former household recycling centre at Ketteringham is now on longer available to the Council.

Priorities:

- BDC – Further report to be brought to Cabinet to agree final specification for the redevelopment of the Frettenham Depot.

- SNC – Further work to be done looking at site options.
- Report to be presented to Management Team reviewing the draft proposals and high-level cost plans.

3 Best in Class Housing Programme Enabling anyone in housing need to resolve their own accommodation needs, whilst focusing scarce resource on households in housing crisis to avoid homelessness and secure sustainable accommodation options, delivered within a sustainable service delivery model and an extensive partnership framework. The IT System and Allocation Policy element of this programme has now been completed.

RAG Status – Green ● (no change since last report)

Senior Sponsor – Mike Pursehouse

Business Lead – Louise Tiernan

Project Phasing

- Delivery of new system in April 21 (complete).
- Customer Journey – (scope complete, Phase 1 – May 2022)
- Temporary Accommodation and Private Sector Leasing – (Phase 1 – Summer 2022)
- Rent and deposit scheme (RADs)

Update:

- Customer Journey – phase 1 work continues, this includes customer journey mapping, contact data and customer feedback.
- Temporary Accommodation and Private Sector Leasing Project continuing to work through Phase 1, including demand data, forecasting, and modelling alongside process mapping.
- Rent and Deposit Scheme – options paper is currently being worked on within the team.
- The property that we were considering for purchase for Temporary Accommodation in Broadland will not proceed as the owner has refused our offer and accepted another, the property has now been sold subject to contract.

Priorities:

- Continue to progress phase 1 of the Temporary Accommodation and Private Sector Leading projects which includes journey mapping, data collection and forecasting.
- Completion of phase 1 of the Customer Journey project and development of the recommendations and report.
- RADS – continue work on the options and develop a streamlined, easy, and effective solution for Broadland and South Norfolk residents.
- Housing Allocations Policy changes to be implemented on 3rd May 2022, including training and system updates.

Agenda Item: 6
Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Policy Committee
11 May 2022

Broadland and South Norfolk Customer Panel

Report Author(s): Julia Tovee-Galey
Customer Experience and Insight Lead
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Portfolio: Richard Elliot - Customer Focus

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of the Report:

This report provides an update on the commitment made by South Norfolk Cabinet in July to create a customer panel as part of the Moving towards a First-Class Customer Service strategy for Broadland and South Norfolk.

Recommendations:

1. To note the creation of a Customer Panel as agreed in Moving Towards a First-Class Customer Service strategy.
2. To note the planned external communication plan.

1. Summary

- 1.1. Our Strategic Plan sets out our vision “to work together to create the best place for everyone, now and for future generations.” To achieve this vision, we’re committed to putting the customer at the heart of everything we do and continuously improving and evolving our services to fit with future demands of both residents and businesses.
- 1.2. In July, South Norfolk Cabinet agreed to adopt the customer strategy, Moving Towards a First-Class Customer Service. A key principle outlined in the strategy was the introduction of a consistent mechanism for our customers to engage with us and provide feedback that helps to shape our services through the creation of a customer panel.
- 1.3. The creation of a customer panel is one of many mechanisms that can help us develop our approach to embed the customers’ voice into our services as a value-driven approach based on the principle that those who are affected by a service are best placed to help design it.
- 1.4. It is proposed to create a customer panel made up of customers. Participants will be invited to share their views and feedback on how best to provide and improve services to meet needs.

2. Background

- 2.1. The customer strategy, Moving Towards a First-Class Customer Service was agreed by South Norfolk Cabinet in July 2021.
- 2.2. The strategy analysed our current approach to customer service and insight. Workshops were held with staff across the council to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in current customer service provision and to gather their ideas on how to transform the way customers are served in the future. It was recognised that there is a need across all services to understand more about how customer behaviour and customer expectations are changing.
- 2.3. The Customer Strategy focused on three principles to drive improvement:
 1. Introducing a customer charter which sets out what customers can expect from us and what we expect from them
 2. Introducing a consistent mechanism for our customers to engage with us and provide feedback that will help us to design and shape our services
 3. Introducing and publishing customer service performance data to show how we are doing.
- 2.4. The value of customer panels to local authorities has been increasingly recognised in recent years as many as 60% of local authorities have or are

developing them, although some have been in existence for many years for example, Enfield Council created their panel in 1999.

3.0. The Proposal

3.1. This report proposes that Broadland and South Norfolk create one customer panel representative of each council's population and demographics to provide valuable customer insight that when gathered effectively and used as a strategic tool can reshape services and improve the experience we deliver to our customers.

3.2. The customer panel sets out to:

- Provide a basis for understanding and anticipating customer needs and the value drivers of satisfaction
- Greater engagement with customers and feedback on their current experience, and the opportunities to improve services using customer journey mapping
- Gather Insight to inform decision-making and shape service re-design through testing and iterating new ideas and concepts to deliver effective and efficient services
- A stimulus for collaboration, innovation and coproduction that presents opportunities to deliver services differently and balance demand through better understanding of customer expectations
- Build our brand of 'One Team, Two Councils' through greater customer engagement to increase customer satisfaction
- Greater engagement in Public Consultations.

3.3. The panel will be an organisation-wide tool that can be utilised by service areas on specific projects, service redesign or an ongoing scheduled basis. The following outlines some activities that a typical customer panel will participate in, this is by no means an exhaustive list:

- Surveys
- Focus groups and user testing groups
- Customer journey mapping and coproduction activities
- Snap polls
- Consultation responses

3.4. It is proposed that any resident over the age of 18 will be eligible to join the panel. The panel membership will be reviewed every two years, but the scope and role of the panel is likely to evolve throughout this time.

4.0. Schedule of Events

4.1. Many panels of this nature operate on a planned four event per calendar year model (one every three months). This is proposed as an initial commitment from panel members so as not to overburden them.

- 4.2. The table below gives an indicative schedule and can be adjusted to take account of additional activities and consultations requested by service areas.

Panel Events	Proposed schedule
Recruitment	January – July 2022
Event 2	October 2022
Event 3	January 2023
Event 4	April 2023
Event 5	July 2023
Event 6	October 2023

5.0. Panel Recruitment

- 5.1. Customer panels are established from an initial recruitment exercise. From this, a random sample of prospective members (assuming sufficient are available) are invited to join.
- 5.2. Panel members can only be selected from those who respond, with the aim that overall membership is structured to ensure that it is as representative as possible of the customer population. The demographic details (age, gender, postcode, etc) collected at recruitment can then be used for the purpose of sub-group analysis when research is carried out, as well as being used to check how representative respondents are. The members of the panel can be selected due to their district area to participate in activities relevant to each council areas.
- 5.3. Members of the panel will be recruited to be broadly representative of the wider population of the area in terms of socio-demographic profiles and geographic distribution. Distribution of panel members (assuming sufficient volunteers) between Council areas should reflect population distribution.

District	ONS mid-year population estimates 2020	Percentage required for a numerically representative panel
South Norfolk	143,066	52%
Broadland	131,931	48%

Total	274,997	100%
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- 5.4. Consideration to existing forums and community groups and their participation will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the needs of the activity.
- 5.5. It is hoped that recruitment will be strong enough to not need payment incentives to encourage participation. However, there will be prize draws throughout the year related to participation. The approach to incentivisation may need reviewing as we begin to create the panel and establish engagement levels.
- 5.6. Contact with panel members will be by regular email newsletters. This feedback mechanism is crucial for keeping response rates up – making sure that the members of the panel can see the outcomes of participation. These newsletters will feature results of engagement activity and updates on future engagement opportunities.

6.0. Panel Communication

- 6.1. An effective recruitment campaign is key to the success of a customer panel. The opportunity needs to be disseminated widely and as accessibly as possible to secure a representative cross-section of participants. The recruitment process will consider access to, and confidence with, digital content and therefore, must include ‘traditional’ media and access methods.
- 6.2. The recruitment campaign and channels are listed below.
- 6.3. **Digital publicity:** Website homepage updated to include customer panel carousel banner encouraging participants to sign up to join the customer panel.
- 6.4. **Paper publication:** A press release which includes a link to sign up to the Customer Panel.
- 6.5. **Social Media publicity:** social media posts such as, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- 6.6. **Broadland News and South Norfolk Link** - Space is reserved in the June edition, and will include a link, QR code, and phone number for initial launch of the customer panel
- 6.7. **Posters and flyers** - A selection of A3 and A4 posters to be sent to Parish Councils, libraries, and doctors’ surgeries encouraging residents to sign up to the customer panel. These will include a link, QR code, and phone number.
- 6.8. **Launch publicity – external providers.** Adverts in the local press can be placed via several local providers:

- Archant – EDP (all of Norfolk)
- Mercury (Diss, Wymondham, and nearby towns covering most of South Norfolk)
- Just Regional – local free magazines delivered to major towns in Broadland

7.0. Costs

- 7.1. We anticipate initial launch costs relating mainly to external publications to be minimal. These have been accounted for in the existing marketing budget.

8.0. Other options

- 8.1. Running concurrent to the approach above, research is underway to explore if an external customer research provider could support our approach to growing a successful customer panel.

9.0. Issues and risks

- 9.1. The latest mid-year population estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that South Norfolk and Broadland have a heavily weighted older population, with the median age of the population for South Norfolk being 46 years of age and Broadland 48 years of age. For online recruitment activities, it is expected that take-up rates will be between 1 in 5 for older residents (45+) and lower rates of around 1 in 15 for younger residents (under 35's). There is a risk that the panel members will not be representative due to the take up within certain age groups. so additional targeted promotions may be required.
- 9.2. Most panel questionnaires and surveys often utilise self-selection methodologies. This can lead to a bias. Should we be unable to recruit a representative panel membership we would look to engage with a customer research provider to support in its development.
- 10.1. **Resource Implications** – within existing Council resources of Customer Services and Communications:
- 10.2. **Legal Implications** – All data obtained through the Panel feedback will comply with GDPR and our privacy policies set by Broadland and South Norfolk Councils.
- 10.3. **Equality Implications** – The value of the Customer Panel depends on its representative nature. All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure as wide a participation in the Customer Panel as possible.
- 10.4. **Environmental Impact** – None.
- 10.5. **Crime and Disorder** – None.

11.0. Conclusion

- 11.1. The creation of the customer panel is a core deliverable set out in our customer strategy, Moving Towards a First-Class Customer Service. This report has been provided as an update on the progress towards the creation of the customer panel as one of many initiatives to bring us closer to delivering the customer experience that our customers expect of us.

12.0. Recommendations

- 12.1. To note the creation of a Customer Panel as agreed in Moving Towards a First-Class Customer Service strategy.
- 12.2. To note the planned external communication plan.

Background papers

Moving Towards a First-Class Customer Service

Agenda Item: 7
Commercial Trading and Customer Focus Committee
11 May 2022

Licensing Services – Service Enhancement Options

Report Author(s): Leigh Chant
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Portfolio: Clean and Safer Environment

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of the Report:

To enable Cabinet to consider the service enhancement proposal and options for the provision of licensing-related advice and support to businesses, in connection with licensing products and their associated costs.

Recommendations:

1. Cabinet to authorise the piloting of enhancements to Licensing services in 2022/23 and the mainstreaming of successful service enhancements in 2023/24, at full cost recovery.
2. Cabinet to agree the reinvestment of income generated from service enhancements to licensing activity into the Council's regulatory licensing service, so as not to impact on regulatory service capacity.
3. Cabinet to delegate to the Assistant Director Regulatory the setting and review of Licensing fees for the service enhancements.

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Regulatory service with responsibility for licensing aims to provide additional service enhancements. Starting in quarter 3 of 2022/23, by testing and piloting options for enhanced licensing support and bespoke advice to our local licensees or prospective applicants (attached at Appendix 1). Successful products would then be taken forward as an enhancement to mainstream licensing services in 2023/24.
- 1.2 The proposal to put forward service enhancement options is a supportive offer to our local businesses. It is not intended to be profit-making but to develop a sustainable offer of advice and guidance (currently provided ad-hoc and free of charge), for those businesses that wish to take that advice to a higher level and see advantages to their business planning to do so.
- 1.3 The proposed service enhancements make good use of the council's trusted technical and regulatory expertise, would offer businesses support and advice beyond the limits and capacity of statutory service delivery, which could only be offered on a cost recovery basis. This requires the associated costs to be borne by the service user at the point of service take-up, rather than as an additional cost to the Council and, in part, funded by residents and Council Tax payments.
- 1.4 The officer resource needed in order to deliver the service enhancements would be drawn from the Council's Regulatory function and any income derived would be re-invested into that service. This would be essential to avoid a shortfall in the delivery of the statutory licensing function and objectives.
- 1.5 The provision of the service enhancements would be complementary to our new pilot Business Regulatory Support Hub that works to maximise the benefit of our standardised information and advice (at first point of contact). The benefits include securing higher Licensing compliance standards, protecting the public whilst supporting businesses and furthering economic success and prosperity.
- 1.6 The proposed services and corresponding fees, calculated at prevailing rates and subject to change, are detailed in full at Appendix 2 and are summarised below:

Licensing Products	Cost
Pre-application or Application Advice (includes a half-hour option for Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Vehicle licences)	£25.00 (chargeable by 0.5 hour appointments)
Pre-application Advice and Visit	£125.00
Bespoke Licensing Advice/Visit (including pre-application Safety Advisory Group advice [large events/5,000+ attendees])	£50 per hour

Check And Send Full Variation/Grant/Club Premises/Provisional Statement	£100.00 (2 hours)
Check And Send Personal Licences/Temporary Events/Transfers/Change of Designated Premises Supervisor/Interim Authority/Minor Variations	£25.00 (chargeable by 0.5 hour bookable appointments)

Comparison of fees against other local authorities are included at Appendix 3.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council is a licensing authority with a statutory duty to regulate and enforce the requirements of various aspects of licensing law. The overarching duty is for the Council to promote the four licensing objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, ensuring public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm. An element of this work includes the provision of support and advice to licensees, with the purpose being to achieve compliance by education rather than formal enforcement.
- 2.2 The traditional offer of support and advice is mainly restricted to signposting to licensing information, promoting self-help tools and giving advice for new applicants and existing licensees during face-to-face inspection visits. Whilst the current level of support and advice is free-of-charge, it is mostly of a general nature and requires the licensee to subjectively interpret and then apply it to their business activities/premises, coupled with periodic regulatory inspections.
- 2.3 The provision of advice and support is fundamental to the Council's Strategic Plan and the key strategic priority of Growing the Economy, by supporting all sizes and types of businesses in our areas to grow. The introduction of commercial food safety services is proposed in the Delivery Plan 2022-2024 and this is the enabling report.
- 2.4 The council has adopted a Commercialisation Strategy and the proposals in this report are in accordance with that strategy.

3. Current position/findings

- 3.1 The current provision of licensing support and advice to licensees does not take an entrepreneurial approach. The Council's current adopted fees and charges do not afford the flexibility to offer such services in a more dynamic way and deliver products that may offer a competitive advantage to our businesses.

- 3.2 There is scope to utilise the council's expertise in our competent licensing professionals i.e. Licensing & Enforcement Officers to provide an enhanced offer of licensing support and bespoke advice. However, this approach requires a much greater commitment of resource than can be allocated to the face-to-face provision of support and advice. It would not be sustainable as a free service and the additional strain on capacity would put the Council at risk of being unable to carry out its statutory duty and licensing objectives.

4. Proposed action

- 4.1 As the pressure on council budgets increases, service areas are having to re-examine the functions offered, and identify those that must be undertaken; the statutory functions, and those that are discretionary. With regards to discretionary fees, the Council needs to decide whether they can be operated in a way that does not continue to present a cost to the authority with the future challenge of competing resources. This can be achieved by taking a decision to offer the proposed services on a full cost-recovery basis.
- 4.2 The proposed enhanced services are not 'official controls' and would be discretionary. Businesses choosing not to take up these additional fee-paying services would be unaffected. Section 93 Local Government Act 2003 allows local authorities to recover the costs of providing services or improvements to services that they might not otherwise have been able to justify providing or been in a position to provide.
- 4.3 The provision of service enhancements (support and advice) does not replace the existing provision of free-to-access but remote, standardised support and advice responding to enquiries. This will continue to be offered on request to all businesses, including new start-up and existing licensed premises from the Business Regulatory Support Hub, via telephone, email or online requests for licensing advice on the council's website.

5. Other options

- 5.1 Cabinet could do nothing – continue with the Council's existing provision of good quality but relatively limited, standardised licensing support and advice and allow market forces to operate where licensees and prospective applicants wish to procure consultancy services (from the private sector). The Council then misses out on the benefits outlined in this report and loses control linked to the quality of that advice when obtained from unknown sources and licensees are at risk of paying for more support than they need, or higher rates.
- 5.2 Cabinet could alternatively seek to recognise the value but to externalise the provision of licensing support and advice. The provision of approved consultants would be at high cost, subject to uncertain and limited levels of demand, and introduce additional administrative costs around procurement. It would also introduce resource implications for quality assurance, monitoring and supplier audit to protect the reputation of the council, which could arise when promoting a Council-approved list of licensing consultants. The Council then loses control

linked to the quality of that advice from third parties and licensees risk paying for more support than they need.

6. Issues and risks

6.1 Resource Implications – there are potential resource implications for the Licensing Team and a Licensing Service Review is planned for spring/summer 2022. Piloting the service enhancements in the Licensing Team would not commence until that review was completed, however some preparatory work could helpfully take place in the meantime.

6.2 Legal Implications – the service enhancement options will be delivered from within the existing staffing and expertise Regulatory service area; there is no proposal to set up a separate trading arm or seek legal advice to do so.

Care needs to be taken to ensure that the council does not double-charge – covering advisory costs in our overall licensing fee and then charging again, as part of this new service. This will be looked at, as part of a review scheduled for Summer 2022.

6.3 Equality Implications – the proposed service enhancements are unlikely to have an impact on any individuals/groups on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief, sex or sexual orientation.

6.4 Environmental Impact – the proposal will mostly have a relatively neutral effect, with some potential for a positive impact on the local environment where support and advice may encourage a reduction noise breakout from licensed premises and events. Following licensing support and advice, mitigation may be put in place for the prevention of noise disturbance.

6.5 Crime and Disorder – checks carried out in the early stages of providing support and advice, may have a positive impact by highlighting a previous criminal history that could filter out unsuitable applicants before time is spent making further checks (with the Disclosure and Barring Service). There may also be an opportunity to allow for the incorporation of appropriate conditions on premises licences to mitigate risks of increased crime and disorder linked to licensed premises.

6.6 Risks – In the event of unforeseen circumstances, it could be necessary to suspend the delivery of commercialised products and divert the council's licensing staffing resource to public health and higher priority statutory licensing duties.

7. Conclusion

7.1 By offering businesses the opportunity to 'buy-in' purchase enhanced support and advice services from the licensing authority, the service enhancement proposals support both the Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan 2022-2024, around growing the economy and protecting the public. It also supports the recovery of the hospitality

and entertainment sector, which was badly impacted during Covid-19 lockdowns and Government/Public Health restrictions.

- 7.2 The proposed service enhancements outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 are within the scope for delivery, based on existing licensing officer skillsets and capabilities. However, recruitment and team capacity of licensing professionals remains an area of concern and a Licensing service review is proposed. This demonstrates that the council is using our licensing resources wisely, and is adding complementary services, whilst not losing sight of our statutory duties.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Cabinet to authorise the piloting of enhancements to Licensing services in 2022/23 and the mainstreaming of successful service enhancements in 2023/24, at full cost recovery.
- 8.2 Cabinet to agree the reinvestment of income generated from service enhancements to licensing activity into the Council's regulatory licensing service, so as not to impact on regulatory service capacity.
- 8.3 Cabinet to delegate to the Assistant Director Regulatory the setting and review of Licensing fees for the service enhancements.

Background papers - none

Appendices

1. Service Enhancement Options – Licensing
2. Service Enhancement Fees & Charges – Licensing
3. Local Authority Fee Comparisons – Licensing

Appendix 1 – Service Enhancement Options – Licensing

The following service enhancements / products are proposed.

Licensing Products
Pre-application or Application Advice This advice is provided by the Licensing Team to help applicants determine which licence they require tailored to their needs, giving advice on drawing up plans to accompany the application, and on licensing operation and conditions. This includes a pre-arranged meeting at the Council office between the applicant and a licensing officer and advising individuals or businesses on what licences they need for their business and help them successfully complete and submit licensing applications. By being bookable in half-hour units of time, this widens the option for Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Vehicle licence advice. The forms will be ready to process.
Pre-application Advice and Visit This advice is provided by the Licensing Team to help applicants determine which licence they require tailored to their needs, giving advice on drawing up plans to accompany the application, and on licensing operation and conditions. This includes a pre-arranged on-site meeting by a licensing officer advising individuals or businesses on what licences they need for their business and helping them successfully complete and submit licensing applications. The forms will be ready to process. This service is designed for premises where their main activity is the provision of alcohol and entertainment, or pavement licensing.
Bespoke Licensing Advice/Visit (including pre-application Safety Advisory Group advice [large events/5,000+ attendees]) This provides a fee option (per hour) to offer early Safety Advisory Group advice and/or attend early scoping site visit. [Table continues on the next page]

Check And Send

Full Variation/Grant/Club Premises/Provisional Statement

This involves checking applications to ensure that they are valid and have been completed correctly. The Licensing Team will submit the application on the applicant's behalf to the licensing and responsible authorities and provide an acceptance date so that the relevant consultation period commences immediately from that date. This service also assists you with the completion of the statutory and press notices. The completed copies of the required notices will also be provided if applicable.

Check And Send

Personal Licences/Temporary Events/Transfers/Change of Designated Premises Supervisor/Interim Authority

This involves checking applications to ensure that they are valid and have been completed correctly. The Licensing Team will submit the application on the applicant's behalf to the licensing and responsible authorities and provide an acceptance date so that the relevant consultation period commences immediately from that date. This service also assists with the completion of the statutory and press notices. The completed copies of the required notices will also be provided if applicable.

NB: An Officer visit can be made if necessary and charged at the hourly rate of £50 inc. VAT. This service may be useful where responsible authorities' consultations may present additional non-mandatory conditions for the applicant to consider. (This would only really be applicable to Temporary Event Notices – and then only occasionally)

Appendix 2 – Service Enhancement Fees & Charges – Licensing

The following fees are proposed, subject to review, as proposed in the report.

The full cost-recovery is to be based upon the 2022/23 payscale (Grade D – Licensing and Enforcement Officer), comprised of direct salary, plus service cost, service on-costs and overhead on-costs to calculate an hourly rate at £50.00/hr.

Where costs associated with a visit are stated, this includes time for travel. For complex or multiple licensing activities or expansive sites, there is the option to bolt-on additional hours at the hourly rate for bespoke licensing advice.

Licensing Products	Cost
Pre-application or Application Advice (includes a half hour option for Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Vehicle licences)	£25.00 (chargeable by 0.5 hour appointments)
Pre-application Advice and Visit	£125.00
Bespoke Licensing Advice/Visit (including pre-application Safety Advisory Group advice [large events/5,000+ attendees])	£50 per hour
Check And Send Full Variation/Grant/Club Premises/Provisional Statement	£100.00 (2 hours)
Check And Send Personal Licences/Temporary Events/Transfers/Change of Designated Premises Supervisor/Interim Authority/Minor Variations	£25.00 (chargeable by 0.5 hour bookable appointments)

Appendix 3 – Local Authority Fee Comparisons – Licensing

Local Authority	Pre-application or Application Advice	Pre- application Advice and Site Visit	Bespoke Licensing Advice/Visit	Check And Send Full Variation/ Grant/ Club Premises/ Provisional Statement	Check And Send Personal Licences/ Temporary Events/ Transfers/ Change of Designated Premises Supervisor/ Interim Authority/ Minor Variations
South Norfolk Council (proposed)	£25.00 (chargeable by 0.5 hour appointments)	£125.00	£50 (per hour)	£100.00 (2 hours)	£25.00 (chargeable by 0.5 hour bookable appointments)
Cheltenham Borough Council	£70/hr			£70 small premises, £130 large/medium	£40
London Borough of Bromley	£76 (up to 2 hrs)		£44	£178	£44
South Somerset District Council	£80 to £775		£80		
Redbridge London Borough Council		£132.60		£44.40 to £132.60	£12.60 to £38.10
Dacorum Borough Council	£48 (1 hour)	£96 (2 hours)			

Information was obtained from local authorities promoting commercial / service enhancement products on The Licensing Guru forum for licensing professionals (<https://www.lguru.co.uk/guruforum/>).

Agenda Item: 8
Commercial Trading and Customer Focus Committee
11 May 2022

Food Safety Services – Service Enhancement Options

Report Author(s): Leigh Chant
Food, Safety and Licensing Manager
01508 533999
leigh.chant@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

Portfolio: Clean and Safer Environment

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of the Report:

To enable Cabinet to consider the service enhancement proposal and options for the provision of food safety-related advice and support to businesses, in connection with food safety products and their associated costs.

Recommendations:

1. Cabinet to authorise the piloting of enhancements to Food Safety services in 2022/23 and the mainstreaming of successful service enhancements in 2023/24, at full cost recovery.
2. Cabinet to agree the reinvestment of income generated from service enhancements to food safety activity into the Council's regulatory food safety service, so as not to impact on regulatory service capacity.
3. Cabinet to delegate to the Assistant Director – Regulatory the fee setting and review of Licensing fees for the service enhancements.

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Regulatory service with responsibility for food safety aims to provide additional service enhancements. Starting in quarter 2 of 2022/23 by testing and piloting commercial options for enhanced food safety support and bespoke advice to our local food businesses (attached at Appendix 1). Successful products would then be taken forward as an enhancement to mainstream food safety services in 2023/24.
- 1.2 The proposal to put forward service enhancement options is a supportive offer to our local businesses. It is not intended to be profit-making but to develop a sustainable offer of advice and guidance (currently provided ad-hoc and free of charge to a limited number of businesses), for those businesses that wish to take that advice to a higher level and see advantages to their business planning to do so.
- 1.3 The proposed service enhancements make good use of the council's trusted technical and regulatory expertise, would offer businesses support and advice beyond the limits and capacity of statutory service delivery, which could only be offered on a cost recovery basis. This requires the associated costs to be borne by the service user at the point of service take-up, rather than as an additional cost to the Council and, in part, funded by residents and Council Tax payments.
- 1.4 The officer resource needed in order to deliver the service enhancements would be drawn from the Council's Regulatory function and any income derived would be re-invested into that service. This would be essential to avoid a shortfall in the delivery of food safety 'official controls' (i.e. food inspection programme, food sampling programme etc).
- 1.5 The provision of service enhancements would be complementary to our new pilot Business Regulatory Support Hub that works to maximise the benefit of our standardised information and advice (at first point of contact). The benefits include securing higher food safety compliance standards, protecting the public whilst supporting businesses and furthering economic success and prosperity.
- 1.6 The proposed services and corresponding fees, calculated at prevailing rates and subject to change, are detailed in full at Appendix 2 and are summarised below:

Food Safety Products	Cost
New Business Start-up Support	£169.50
Pre-Inspection 'Gain or Retain'	£169.50
Bespoke Food Safety Advice	£67.80 per hour
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – re-score revisit	£165.50
Food Import / Export Advice	£67.80 per hour

Export Health Certificate	£80.00 (includes certificate and first hour of officer time) £67.80 per hour (each additional hour)
Training workshops	£67.80 per hour (tutor cost), plus room hire charge
Safer Food Better Business Pack	£25.00

Comparison of fees against other local authorities are included at Appendix 3.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council is a competent food authority with a statutory duty to regulate and enforce the requirements of food law. The overarching duty is for the Council to carry out 'official controls' and ensure that food being produced, distributed and/or offered for sale in the district is safe for human consumption. An element of this work includes the provision of support and advice to food business operators, with the purpose being to achieve compliance by education rather than formal enforcement.
- 2.2 The traditional offer of support and advice is mainly restricted to signposting to food safety information, promoting self-help tools and giving advice for new food business start-ups and existing food businesses during face-to-face inspection visits. Whilst the current level of support and advice is free-of-charge, the statutory priorities are a limiting factor in terms of how many contact hours can be offered in that way. The regulatory approach is one of enabling and still requires the food business operator to interpret and then apply the law and advice received to their food business activities, coupled with periodic regulatory inspections.
- 2.3 The provision of advice and support is fundamental to the Council's Strategic Plan and the key strategic priority of Growing the Economy, by supporting all sizes and types of businesses in our areas to grow. The introduction of commercial food safety services is already proposed in the Delivery Plan 2022-24 and this is the enabling report.
- 2.4 The council has adopted a Commercialisation Strategy and the proposals in this report are in accordance with that strategy.

3. Current position/findings

- 3.1 The current provision of food safety support and advice to food businesses does not take an entrepreneurial approach. The Council's current adopted fees and

charges do not afford the flexibility to offer such services in a more dynamic way and deliver products that may offer a competitive advantage to our businesses.

- 3.2 Some of the proposed products are intended to improve both the level of compliance with food legislation by our local food businesses and optimise their Food Hygiene Rating. The latter is the published mechanism that can demonstrate to their customers that they are 4-Rating 'Good' or 5-Rating 'Very Good', which is a marketable selling point for a food business that achieves an independent regulator-verified compliance score above a 3-rating 'Satisfactory' (or lower).
- 3.3 There is scope to utilise the council's expertise in our competent food safety professionals i.e. Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) to provide an enhanced offer of food safety support and bespoke advice. However, this approach requires a much greater commitment of resource than can be allocated to the face-to-face provision of support and advice. It would not be sustainable as a free service and the additional strain on capacity would put the Council at risk of being unable to carry out its statutory duty and other official controls (e.g. food premises inspection programme).

4. Proposed action

- 4.1 As the pressure on council budgets increases, service areas are having to re-examine the functions offered, and identify those that must be undertaken; the statutory functions, and those that are discretionary. With regards to discretionary fees, the Council needs decide whether they can be operated in a way that does not continue to present a cost to the authority with the future challenge of competing resources. This can be achieved by taking a decision to offer the proposed services on a full cost-recovery basis.
- 4.2 The proposed service enhancements are not 'official controls' and would be discretionary. Businesses choosing not to take up these additional fee-paying services would be unaffected. Section 93 Local Government Act 2003 allows local authorities to recover the costs of providing services or improvements to services that they might not otherwise have been able to justify providing or been in a position to provide.
- 4.3 The provision of service enhancements (support and advice) does not replace the existing provision of free-to-access but remote, standardised support and advice responding to enquiries. This will continue to be offered on request to all food businesses, including new start-up and existing food businesses, from the Business Regulatory Support Hub, via telephone, email or online requests for food safety advice on the council's website.

5. Other options

- 5.1 Cabinet could do nothing – continue with the Council's existing provision of good quality but relatively limited, standardised food safety support and advice and allow market forces to operate where Food Business Operators wish to procure

consultancy services (from the private sector). The Council then misses out on the benefits outlined in this report and loses control linked to the quality of that advice when obtained from unknown sources, and food business operators are at risk of paying for more support than they need.

- 5.2 Cabinet could alternatively seek to recognise the value but to externalise the provision of food safety support and advice. The provision of approved consultants would be at high cost, subject to uncertain and limited levels of demand, and introduce additional administrative costs around procurement. It would also introduce resource implications for quality assurance, monitoring and supplier audit to protect the reputation of the council, which could arise when promoting a Council-approved list of food safety consultants. The Council then loses control linked to the quality of that advice from third parties and food business operators risk of paying for more support than they need.

6. Issues and risks

- 6.1 **Resource Implications** – there are no immediate resource implications, provided that the service enhancements are delivered on a full cost-recovery basis and that the resultant income can be ring-fenced back into the team to backfill any impact upon Regulatory capacity to carry out the statutory duty of a competent authority for food safety.
- 6.2 **Legal Implications** – none, aside from managing risks associated with potential conflict of interest addressed at paragraph 6.6. The service enhancement options can be delivered from staffing and expertise within the existing Regulatory service area; there is no proposal to set up a separate trading arm or seek legal advice to do so.
- 6.3 **Equality Implications** – the proposed service enhancements are not likely to have an impact on any individuals/groups on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 6.4 **Environmental Impact** – the proposal will be generally neutral in effect on environmental quality, with some potential for a positive impact on the environment, where support and advice relate to a reduction in food waste, or responsible disposal of such waste from food businesses.
- 6.5 **Crime and Disorder** – whilst the introduction of enhanced support and bespoke advice would reduce the likelihood of serious food safety/food crime offences, there are no implications under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 linked to these service enhancement proposals.
- 6.6 **Risks** – the Food Law Code of Practice for England (issued by the Food Standards Agency) requires that competent food authorities must have procedures and/or arrangements in place to ensure that staff performing official food controls are free from any conflict of interest. In order to mitigate this, in advance of offering service enhancement products, Conflict of Interest

arrangements would be put in place. This is so that the Council and its officers can operate in a transparent, open way and be accountable in all its activities. An example approach may be drawn from another local authority to benefit from their experience.

In the event of unforeseen circumstances (e.g. seasonal peaks of Covid-19 in the future), it may be necessary to suspend the delivery of service enhancement products and divert the Council's food safety staffing resource to public health and higher priority Regulatory duties.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 By offering businesses the opportunity to 'buy-in' purchase enhanced support and advice services from the regulator, the service enhancement proposals support both the Strategic Plan and the Delivery Plan 2022-2024, around growing the economy and protecting the public.
- 7.2 The proposed service enhancements outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 are within the scope for delivery, based on existing environmental health officer skillsets and capabilities, without needing to incur additional recruitment costs. This demonstrates that the council is using resources wisely, it is adding complementary services, whilst not losing sight of our Regulatory duty.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Cabinet to authorise the piloting of enhancements to Food Safety services in 2022/23 and the mainstreaming of successful service enhancements in 2023/24, at full cost recovery.
- 8.2 Cabinet to agree the reinvestment of income generated from service enhancements to food safety activity into the Council's regulatory food safety service, so as not to impact on regulatory service capacity.
- 8.3 Cabinet to delegate to the Assistant Director – Regulatory the setting and review of Licensing fees for the service enhancements.

Background papers - none

Appendices

- 1. Service Enhancement Options – Food Safety
- 2. Service Enhancement Fees & Charges – Food Safety
- 3. Local Authority Fee Comparisons – Food Safety

Appendix 1 – Service Enhancement Options – Food Safety

The following service enhancements / products are proposed.

Food Safety Products
New Business Start-up Support New food businesses start up all the time, and we receive frequent enquiries and new registrations. However, it can be a serious challenge getting to grips with food law compliance (especially those where it may be their first food business). Equally, expensive mistakes can be made when setting up a new business. Our pilot Business Regulatory Support Hub works to maximise the benefit of our standardised information and advice. Our specialist regulatory officers work closely with food businesses, mostly during inspections and food complaint investigations, yet currently have limited capacity alongside statutory work to offer bespoke advice. The aim of this start-up support service, operating on a full cost-recovery basis, is to enable close and effective assistance to be offered helping a new business owner to start up smoothly and safely, knowing how to comply with food legislation and fully protect their customers and their businesses (for example, concerning food allergens). On request, one of our officers will be assigned to offer a start-up advice product and to address any business-specific questions and compliance needs.
Pre-Inspection ‘Gain or Retain’ This service relates to the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and is for those food premises and Food Business Operators that wish to remain as a highly complaint 5-rating ‘Very Good’ or are interested in being above a 3-rating and basic compliance, as higher ratings can offer a commercial advantage and have value for food business operators. They are willing to have a pre-inspection ‘health check’ service to pick up on any slippage in standards before it impacts their rating during the next regulatory food inspection (or want to know how to improve on their last rating in the meantime)
Bespoke Food Safety Advice Per hour

[Table continues on the next page]

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – re-score revisit

These re-score revisits are currently undertaken free-of-charge, but that approach introduces a 3-month standstill period (for the date of the food inspection) before a food business can apply (even if they carried out the necessary improvements straight away). However, the Brand Standard for the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, allows for applications for ‘paid for’ re-score revisits to be carried out straight away and for multiple applications to be submitted per inspection cycle. This allows the business to seek a revisit sooner (in the hope that their score will improve once remedial action has been taken). This prevents food businesses from being blighted by an unrepresentative rating. Food businesses are removed from platforms such as ‘Just Eat’, when a business receives a rating below 3-rating ‘Satisfactory’. This can cost South Norfolk food businesses thousands of pounds in lost turnover during a 3-month standstill period.

Food Import / Export Advice

Food imports are becoming increasingly difficult, linked to EU Exit and traceability (particularly where intermediaries are used, such as import agents or food brokers). This hourly rate prevents the food officers from being used as a free vetting service for the advanced declaration of food products coming to Great Britain.

Export Health Certificate

Currently, the corporate fees and charges includes as a flat fee of £73. However, post-EU exit has introduced significant complications when it comes to the additional length of time it takes to carry out consignment checks, including an on-site visit now being required in many instances. Previously, the paperwork could have been carried out within an hour for routine exports, without need for a site visit for a previously inspected premises, with a good history of compliance. For this reason, an hourly rate is added for each additional hour. The exporter or their agent can keep costs at a manageable level by assisting with the provision of consignment information up-front.

The increased initial hourly rate for the first hour reflects the cost of preparing the Export Health Certificate.

Training workshops

To be based on an hourly rate (per tutor cost) plus room hire costs (if applicable). Restrict to a maximum number of 20 delegates (or safe room capacity, if lower than 20)

Safer Food Better Business Pack - Printed

Food Standards Agency Pack, One Team branding added. Content to be supplemented with food diaries and allergen tools

Appendix 2 – Service Enhancement Fees & Charges – Food Safety

The following fees are proposed, subject to review, as proposed in the report.

The full cost-recovery is based upon the 22/23 payscale (Grade F – Environmental Health Officer), comprised of direct salary, plus service cost, service on-costs and overhead on-costs to calculate an hourly rate at £67.80/hr.

Where costs are stated at £169.50, this is based on 2.5 hours and includes time for travel and issuing a 'report of visit' or new Food Hygiene Rating within that 'paid-for' time period. For complex food activities or expansive sites, there is the option to bolt-on additional hours at the hourly rate.

In terms of charging an hourly rate, this is per hour (or part thereof).

Food Safety Products	Cost
New Business Start-up Support	£169.50
Pre-Inspection 'Gain or Retain'	£169.50
Bespoke Food Safety Advice	£67.80 per hour
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – re-score revisit	£165.50
Food Import / Export Advice	£67.80 per hour
Export Health Certificate	£80.00 (includes certificate and first hour of officer time) £67.80 per hour (each additional hour)
Training workshops	£67.80 per hour (tutor cost), plus room hire charge
Safer Food Better Business Pack	£25.00

Appendix 3 – Local Authority Fee Comparisons – Food Safety

Local Authority	New Business Start-up Support	Pre-Inspection 'Gain or Retain'	Bespoke Food Safety Advice	Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – re-score revisit	Safer Food Better Business Pack
South Norfolk Council (proposed)	£169.50	£169.50	£67.80/hr	£165.50*	£25.00
Cheltenham Borough Council		£210	£75/hr	£170	£22.50
London Borough of Bromley				£177	
Redbridge London Borough Council		£70/hr (min 2 hours)			
Cornwall Council		£292	£73/hr	£180	
Norwich City Council	£160	£160		£160	
Breckland Council				£196	

*Included in Corporate Fees & Charges for 2022/23