

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

meeting date: THURSDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2022
title: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SECTION UPDATE
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide the Committee an update as to where the service is in terms of staffing levels and operational work levels.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – To improve the health and wellbeing of people living and working in our area / To provide a high-quality environment, keeping land clear of litter and refuse and reducing the incidents of dog fouling.
- Corporate Priorities - To help make people's lives safer and healthier / To protect and enhance the existing environment and quality of our area.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The last departmental report was submitted to committee on the 18 March 2021 and titled 'Review of the Work of the Environmental Section'.

This report provides up to date statistical figures of the work undertaken by environmental health staff in both financial year 2021 and financial year 2022 (to date) and the current filled and vacant employment posts.

3 ISSUES

3.1 Since the last report was drafted, the department has suffered with depleted staff numbers and this continues to date. The real impact of this is that non statutory functions such as dealing with waste related issues i.e. bins on streets, becomes secondary whilst the primary statutory functions are prioritised i.e. food inspections, statutory nuisance investigations.

However, it must be acknowledged that the service is not completely up to speed in fulfilling all its primary functions, for example, some private water supplies need risk assessing/sampling, some industrial permitted operations need inspecting.

4 STAFF UPDATE

4.1 Below is information on staffing numbers.

4.2 The following positions are filled by Council employed staff.

- Head of Environmental Health (Appointed 5 September 2022)
- Environmental Health Officer (Housing) (Previous acting head, returned to operational post 5 September 2022)
- Dog Warden
- Pest Control Officer
- P/T Environmental Health Officer (Food Safety)
- Cemetery and Grounds Maintenance Officer
- Clerical officer (job share 2 x P/T)
- Emergency Planning Officer (P/T)
- Market Officer (P/T)
- Housing Officer (half a day per week)

4.3 Locums are being employed to cover the following positions:

- Senior Environmental Health Officer (P/T Lead Food Officer).

This position is currently being advertised as a full-time lead food officer post, closing date for applications is the 28 October 2022.

- Environmental Protection (1 day a week)
- Animal Licencing (1 day a week)
- Planning and Licencing Consultations (as and when)

4.4 The current vacant posts are:

- Environmental Health Technician (Food/Health and Safety)
- Environmental Health Technician (Pollution)
- Environmental Health Officer (Pollution)

This position will be filled on the 31 October 2022 as a new officer has been appointed.

- Emergency Planning Officer (P/T)

5. **Statistical Breakdown of Environmental Health Service Requests**

Service Request Action	Financial Year 2021	Financial Year 2022 (To date)
Waste (Bins/Fly tipping, Litter)	21	21
Dog warden	200	79
Abandoned Vehicles	37	39
Pest Control Services	192	206
Air Pollution	66	30
Domestic Noise Complaints	88	44
Commercial Noise Complaints	69	46
Dust Nuisance Complaints	4	2
Artificial Light Nuisance Complaints	13	3
Accumulation Complaints	25	9
Odour Nuisance	10	8
Drainage	37	8
Public Health Funerals	0	1
Environmental Permitting	4	4
Caravan Van Sites Licencing and Complaints	135	60
Beauty Therapy/ tattoo Licencing	6	7
Animal Welfare Licencing	47	20
Licencing Consultations	173	107
Planning Consultations	187	62
Food Hygiene Visits/Inspections	304	167
Infectious Disease Notifications	109	66
Private Water Supplies	0	0
Health and Safety Interventions/Visits	30	7
Housing (Condition Inspections, Illegal Evictions etc)	56	27
TOTAL	1813	1023

6 CONCLUSION

To their credit, the current staff have done an excellent job in keeping the department buoyant over the recent years and fulfilling the majority of statutory duties.

During this time period the country has been through the Covid pandemic and as a consequence environmental health practitioners have been involved with undertaking public health functions relating to the outbreak which has further impacted resources.

The primary focus over the next 12 months is to attempt to get all the vacant Environmental Health positions filled and achieve all statutory functions.

It must be acknowledged that the current economic climate and cost of living crisis is likely to have an impact on public health and environmental health resources. For example, damp and mould growth/ excess cold housing complaints are likely to increase due tenants struggling to heat their homes; food safety complaints may increase as food operators' lower food safety standards to offset higher operational costs i.e. substitute higher cost products for lower cost products.



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