

Wiltshire Council

Council

25 February 2014

Item 10 - Questions from Councillors

From Councillor Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division

To Councillor Keith Humphries, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Protection Services, Adult Care and Housing (excluding Strategic Housing)

Question 6

Recently the West Yorkshire public analyst reported that almost 40% of 900 food samples they tested were not what they were advertised, or were mislabeled in some way. He is quoted as saying:

“We are routinely finding problems with more than a third of samples, which is disturbing at a time when the budget for food standards inspection and analysis is being cut.”

He is also quoted as suggesting that budget cuts increase the risk that mislabeled or fake food will be left unidentified by council-run labs.

- a. What was this Council's budget for food testing and analysis in each of the last two years and what will it be for 2014-15 if the budget proposed today is approved?
- b. What are the Wiltshire percentages equivalent to those reported in West Yorkshire?

Response

- a. The budget for food standards testing and analysis in 2012- 2013 and 2013 – 2014 was approximately £30,000 and £26,000 respectively.

In the financial year 2014 – 2015 the budget will remain unchanged at £26,000. The team are also currently bidding for funding from the Food Standards Agency in conjunction with the South West Trading Standards Partnership to carry out additional food sampling.

- b. The West Yorkshire public analyst was reporting on 900 food samples taken across a number of local authorities. The number of food samples in Wiltshire

will therefore be lower. In 2012/13, 225 food samples were taken by officers in the Public Protection Service, of which 34% were reported as unsatisfactory.

The Food and Safety Team have taken 93 food samples at present in this financial year and have received 29 unsatisfactory results; however they are still awaiting reports on over half of the samples submitted.

Question 7

How many trading standards and / or environmental health staff and /or public protection officers with qualifications in food standards and inspection have left the Council's employment in this Financial Year and in each of Financial Years 2012-13 and 2011-12?

Response

There are currently 8 Trading Standards Officers and Public Protection Officers within the Public Protection Service who are qualified to carry out food standards sampling and inspections.

In addition, there are a further 10 Environmental Health Officers and Public Protection Officers who hold the appropriate qualifications as required under the Food Law Code of Practice. They require a period of structured practical update training before undertaking food standards inspections and this is programmed to take place in the next few months.

In 2012- 2013 there were 12 Trading Standards Officers/Public Protection Officers qualified to carry out food standards inspections and in 2011 – 12 there were a total of 14 officers qualified to undertake the role.