

Disclosure would promote transparency and accountability in how the council carries out its regulatory function. Such transparency could help to improve food hygiene standards by promoting good practice and highlighting businesses that need to make improvements. It may also improve the standards of inspections and decisions taken by the council.

Disclosure of information about businesses which do not meet the required standards enables the public to decide whether or not to use their services.

Balance of the public interest arguments:

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme provides the public with information about the hygiene standards in food premises. The rating is publicly available and therefore, to an extent, allows the public to make informed choices. This reduces the case for disclosure. We are therefore of the view that, in this case, the public interest falls in favour of maintaining the exemption.