

Work Package

- [illegible]

Act, the majority of which came into effect on the 7th of October 2016. The last remaining provision of the Act which requires underpinning secondary legislation is the food hygiene rating online display requirement (the online display provision was introduced at the Committee stage of the Food Hygiene Rating Bill (precursor to the Act) at the request of the members).

[A consultation on the draft Food Hygiene Rating \(Online Display\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2023](#) was launched in June 2022 and closed in Sept 2022. The purpose of the consultation was to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on the draft regulations, and the potential impact of mandatory online display of food hygiene ratings on food businesses and district councils. A total of 18 responses were received to the consultation and, on the whole, these were supportive of the proposed regulations. However, concerns were raised by some stakeholders (an online retailer and online aggregator platforms) regarding the proposed location and manner of display of the food hygiene rating. Reasons cited included the amount of 'competing information limiting the ability to provide consumers with a clear and informative browsing experience' and that it is 'unreasonable to expect restaurants to devote the most valuable online advertising space to a hygiene rating'.

In response to stakeholder comments FSA cited independently commissioned FSA research ([Understanding Northern Ireland consumer needs around Food Hygiene Rating Scheme \(FHRS\) information in online retail environments, TNS BMRB Research, June 2016](#)) however, in subsequent engagement with a respondent/stakeholder (remote meeting) the aforementioned research was deemed by the stakeholder to be out of date (2016 research) and did not address consumer prioritisation of the information available to them in a limited online space (NB: the 2016 research was undertaken to support the draft Food Hygiene Rating (Online Display) Regulations (NI) 2017. The 2017 draft regulations, which did not progress through the NI Assembly due to the collapse of the institutions in 2017, were reviewed, revised, and consulted on in 2022).

To address the issue brought to the attention of FSA, and to ensure the proposed legislation has a robust evidence base, it is proposed that FSA gathers insight on NI consumers' and consumers in England, information priorities when buying food online.

In addition to the 2016 NI research noted above, other previous research carried out by the FSA in this area is as follows:

1. FHRS Online display in Wales (2019): [Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Online Display in Wales: Executive summary | Food Standards Agency](#)
2. Food and You 2 - Wave 5 (2022-2023):
<https://www.food.gov.uk/research/food-and-you-2/food-and-you-2-wave-5>
3. Consumer research on food being sold online (three nations) (2022):
<https://www.food.gov.uk/research/qualitative-research-to-explore-consumer-attitudes-to-food-sold-online>

4. Value of FHRS (2023): <https://www.food.gov.uk/research/value-of-fhrs-consumer-research-executive-summary>

5. Understanding Northern Ireland consumer needs around Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) information in online retail environments TNS BMRB Research June 2016 https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/understanding-ni-consumer-needs-fhrs_1.pdf

6. Food and you 2, FHRS <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/Food%20Hygiene%20Rating%20Scheme%20%28FHRS%29%20Food%20and%20You%20%20Wave%206.pdf>

Objectives – please include:

- The research questions
- Any other aims from the research (for example, testing a new methodology, informing future research or filling gaps in wider evidence)

The scope of this research is Northern Ireland and England only. The aim of this research is to explore where consumers would like to see the Food Hygiene Rating (FHR) displayed, and what they think of the current position of the FHR (i.e. it being via a click through process) :

- How and where should the FH ratings information be signposted to maximise customer awareness and use?
- What are the best means of presenting the ratings so that consumers can easily access meaningful information that empowers them to make informed choices?
- What do consumers think about the current position of the FHR? (i.e. that there is a click through process).
- Are there any common misperceptions about FH online ratings. For example an assumption that only businesses with a FHR over a certain number are online?

Methodology – please include (if applicable):

- sampling considerations (who are you interested in doing research with?)
- recruiting considerations (identifying and recruiting your cohort)
- ethical considerations
- whether recontact is required (if you need to conduct further research with the same cohort in the near future)
- whether you have a specific methodology in mind, or are open to alternative methodologies (Ipsos to advise on different options)

We would suggest a methodology similar to the 2019 study on FHRS Online display in Wales done in (2019):

[Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Online Display in Wales: Executive summary | Food Standards Agency](#)

The sample population should include 40 consumers living in Northern Ireland and England who buy food online/have bought food online in the past six months and are familiar with the FHRS. It would be useful to have a range of age groups and a range of urban and more rural participants. We suggest a methodology of online focus group discussions. Stimulus the FHRS rating could be used to promote discussion during the groups or an online exercise prior to the groups.

We would also be interested in alternative methods that provide more insight into consumer views.

The research should be carried out in line with GSR ethical principles. Informed consent should be obtained from all participants. Data from participants should be treated confidentially and anonymised before being shared with the FSA.

Research process – please include:

- Who from the FSA will be working on the project, and their roles/responsibilities (e.g., review, sign-off, project management)?
- For each part of the project, what is FSA's role and what is Ipsos' role?
- Would the FSA like to observe any data collection?
- Will this need to be peer reviewed?

A researcher from FSA's Social Science Team will lead on project management. The relevant Policy team will also be involved throughout the research process and should be involved in sampling decisions, development of fieldwork materials and the sign-off of all key documents and outputs. Interview guides will be developed by Ipsos with input from FSA staff. If possible, FSA staff would like to observe the focus groups.

The project output will be internally peer reviewed by a member of FSA's Social Science Team who is independent from the project.

Analysis and review – please include:

- Any preferences for data analysis

Key themes and trends from the data should be extracted through qualitative thematic analysis. Any key differences by demographics should be reported.

Stakeholder involvement – please include:

- Who are the primary and secondary stakeholders for this research? (Please consider internal FSA, other Government departments etc)
- How will the stakeholders be involved in each stage of research? (e.g. sign-off, review)
- Who else might be interested in this research? (Please consider the public, non-government organisations, academics etc)

The FSA NI policy team are the primary stakeholders for this research and will be involved throughout the key stages of the research as stated above. FSA risk managers across policy and operations will also have a key interest in this work.

Industry stakeholders, district councils and consumers will be interested in and benefit from the research. The research may inform amendments that may be required to the draft Food Hygiene Rating (Online Display) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023 and therefore ensure FSA has a robust evidence base to support the proposals.

Outputs and key deliverables– (NB. all outputs must be in line with FSA brand guidelines and meet FSA accessibility requirements)

- What outputs would be needed for this project?
- Are different outputs need for each of the stakeholders identified?

The findings should be presented in a written report (in a 1-3-25 style with methodology and fieldwork materials in the annex), the contractor should expect two rounds of commenting from the FSA on the report. As well as the report a summary slide deck which may include figures or infographics to display data. A presentation/s of findings by the contractor should be delivered, via Microsoft Teams, to key stakeholders. All outputs should follow FSA brand guidance and FSA accessibility guidance.

Dissemination

- What are your plans for publication and dissemination of this research?
- How will the outputs be shared with the identified stakeholders, and who will be responsible for this?
- Which aspects of dissemination would you like Ipsos to support with?
- What platforms/activities do you plan to use to promote this publication?
When will each of these take place?

The report will be published online on the FSA's website and sent out to interested groups via email. We would encourage the contractor to share links to the published report via their own channels.

Timescale milestones – Using the template below as a guide, please outline any deadlines for this project, noting the reason for any hard deadlines (e.g. board meetings, which cannot be moved).

Please include any deadlines that occur after the project is complete (for example, known presentations, meetings or briefings that will use the findings).

Please also include a wash up meeting for feedback on the project.

Project timelines should account for annual leave/bank holidays, and enough time for relevant stakeholders to review/comment/sign off materials.

Project Milestone	Due date	Notes (please include who is responsible for each deadline, and any annual leave)

Project start	February 2024	
First draft report	April 2024	
Final deliverables	May 2024	
Wash up meeting	May 2024	



Supplier response — please provide a brief overview of your approach including a detailed methodology of how you will deliver the requirements, plus a dissemination plan for the outputs. Please include in the methodology section details of the analytical approach that will be taken and a justification for this.

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- A horizontal bar chart with two main categories on the y-axis: 'Age' and 'Gender'. Each category has three bars representing different levels of agreement: 'Not at all', 'Some', and 'A lot'. The x-axis represents the percentage of respondents, ranging from 0 to 100. The bars are color-coded: light blue for 'Not at all', medium blue for 'Some', and dark blue for 'A lot'.

Category	Not at all	Some	A lot
Age 18-29	15%	45%	40%
Age 30-49	25%	55%	20%
Age 50-69	35%	45%	20%
Age 70+	45%	35%	20%
Gender Male	25%	50%	25%
Gender Female	20%	55%	25%

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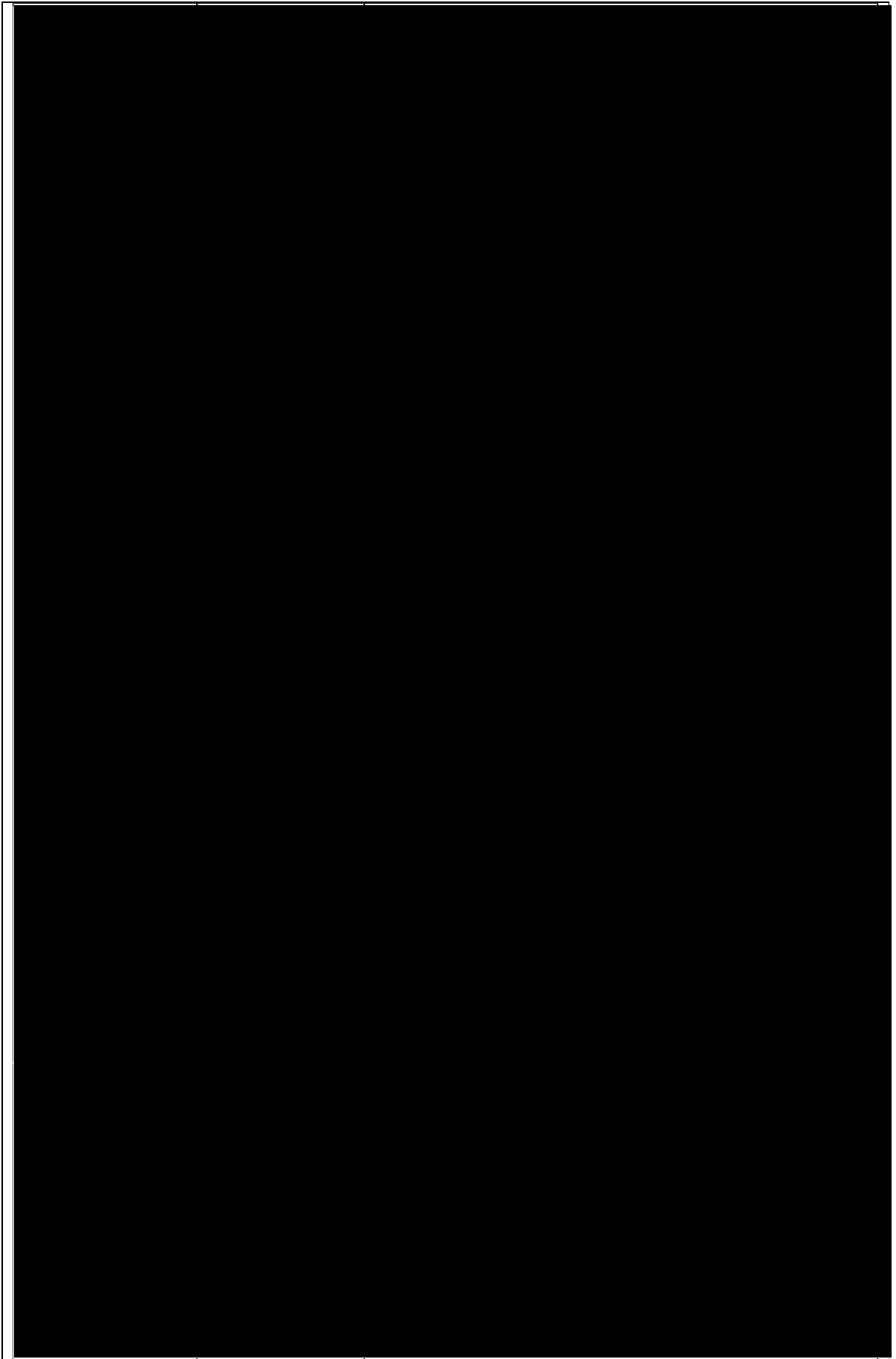
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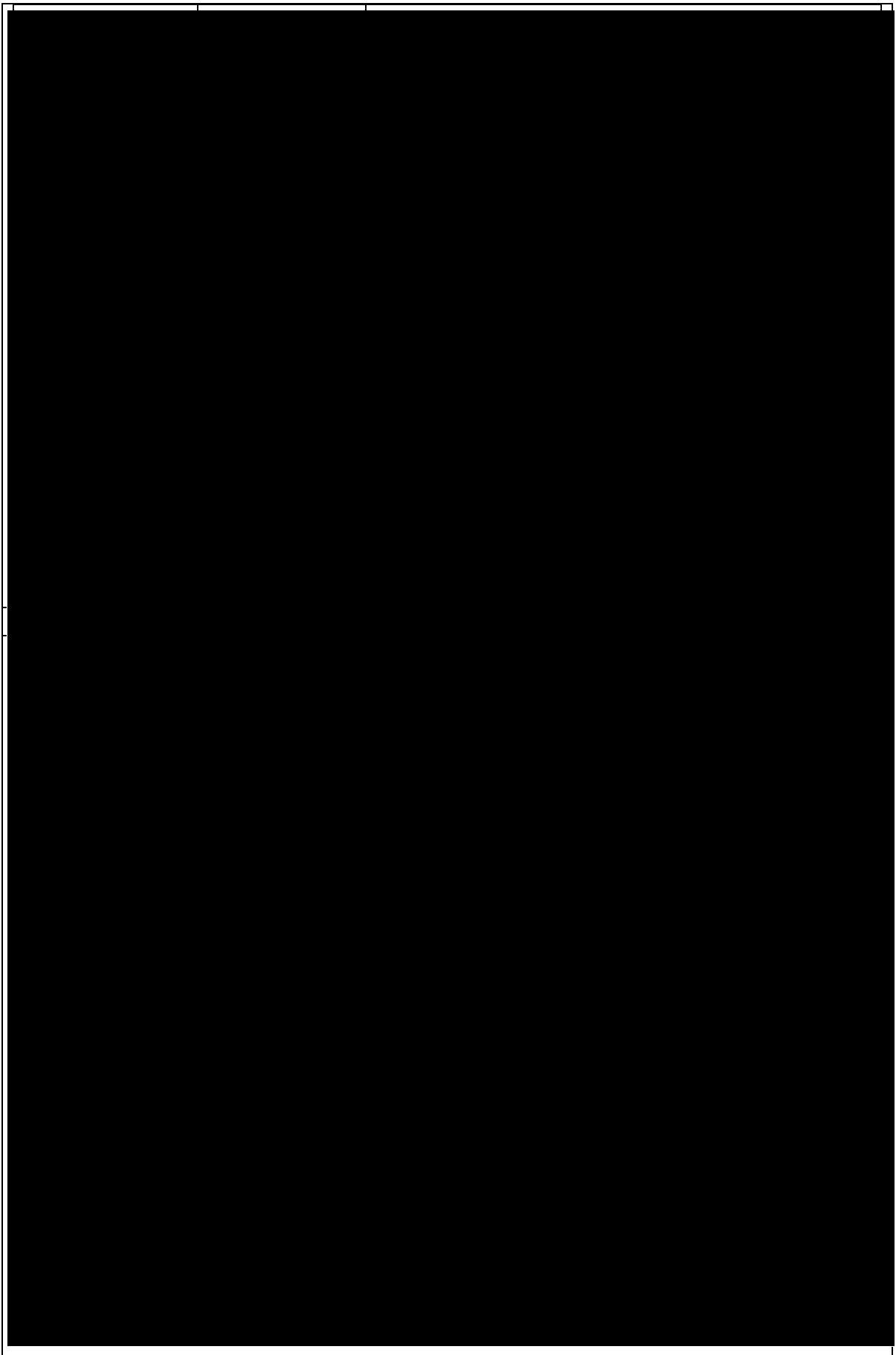
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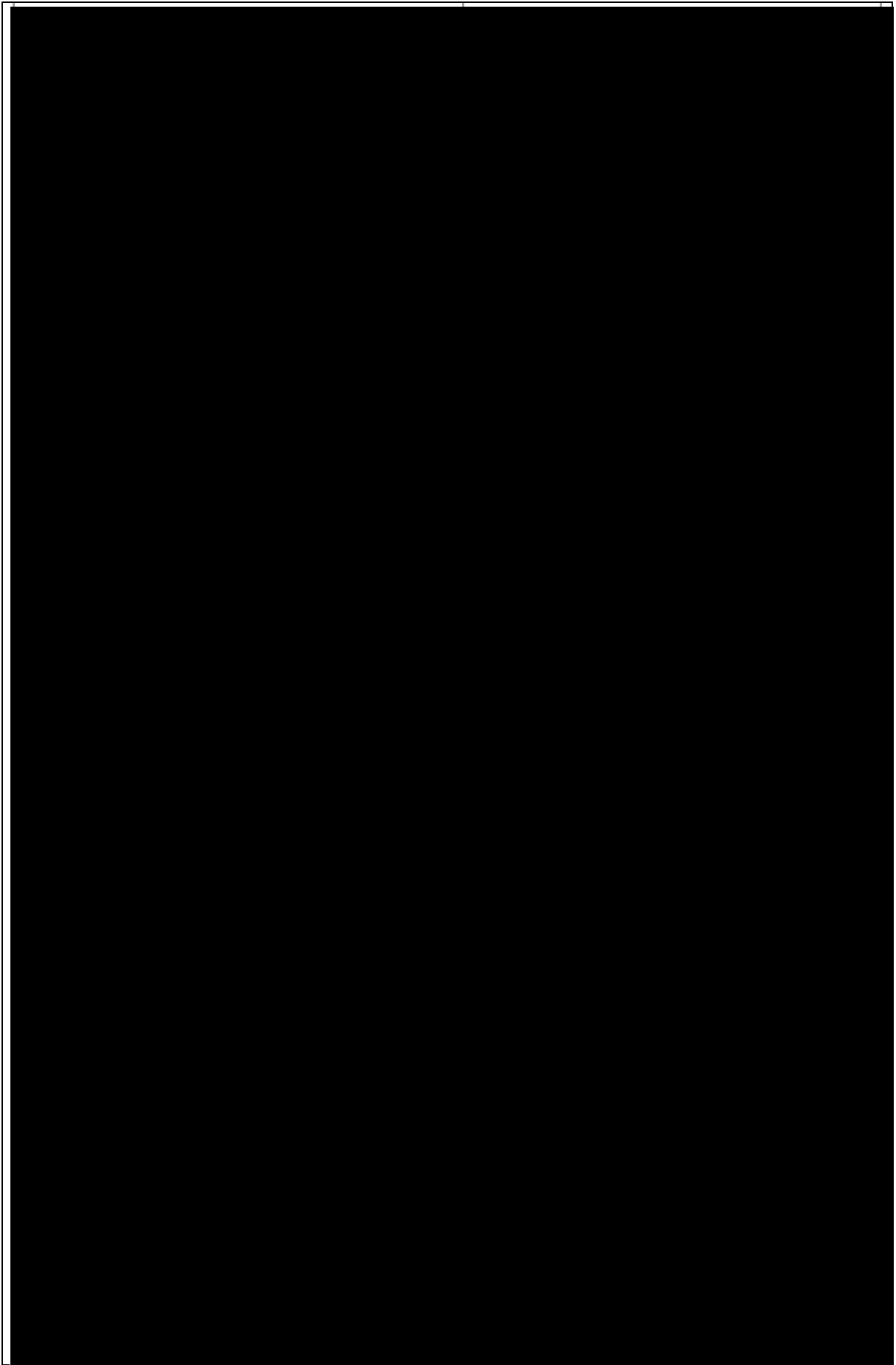
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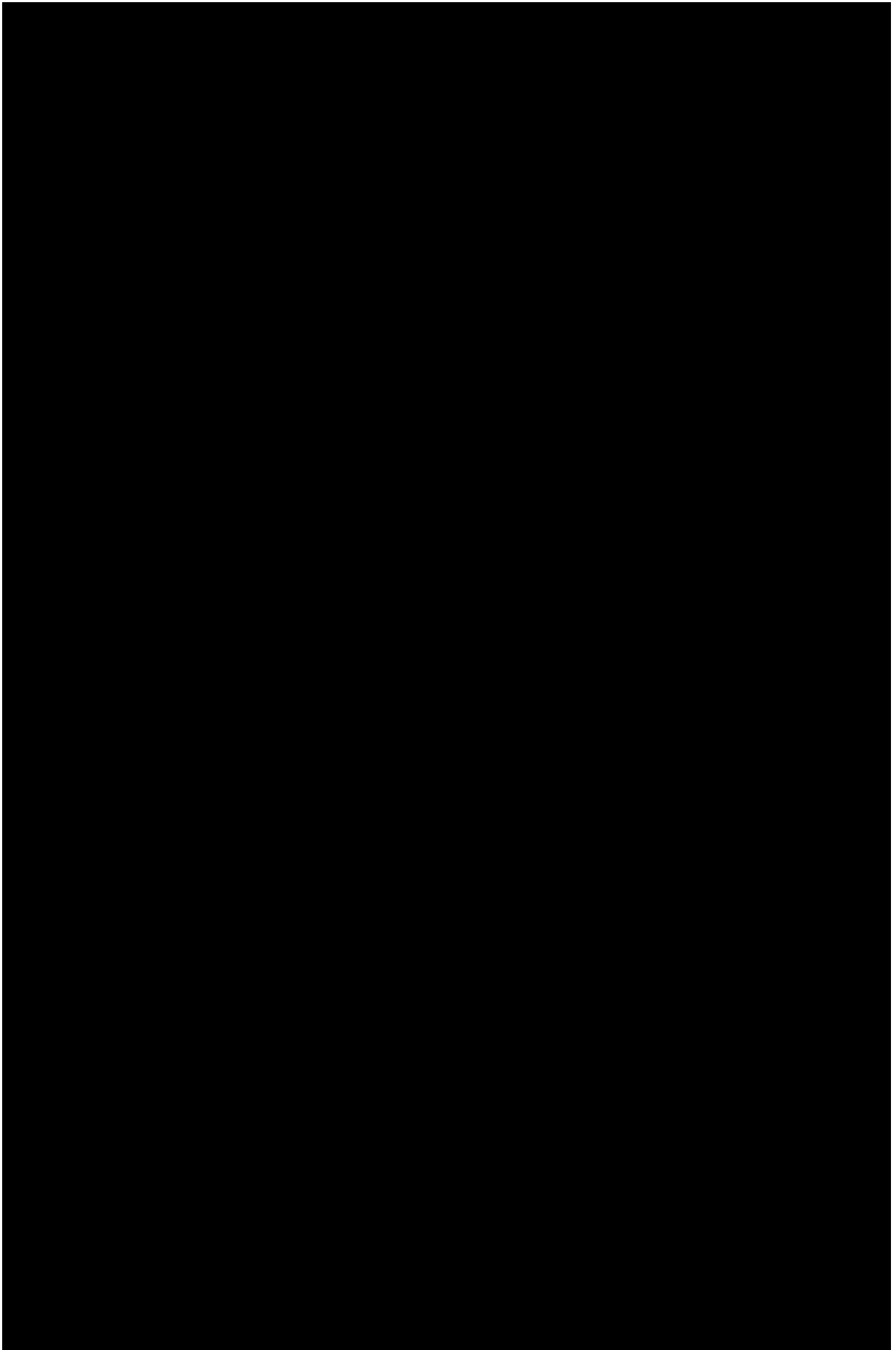
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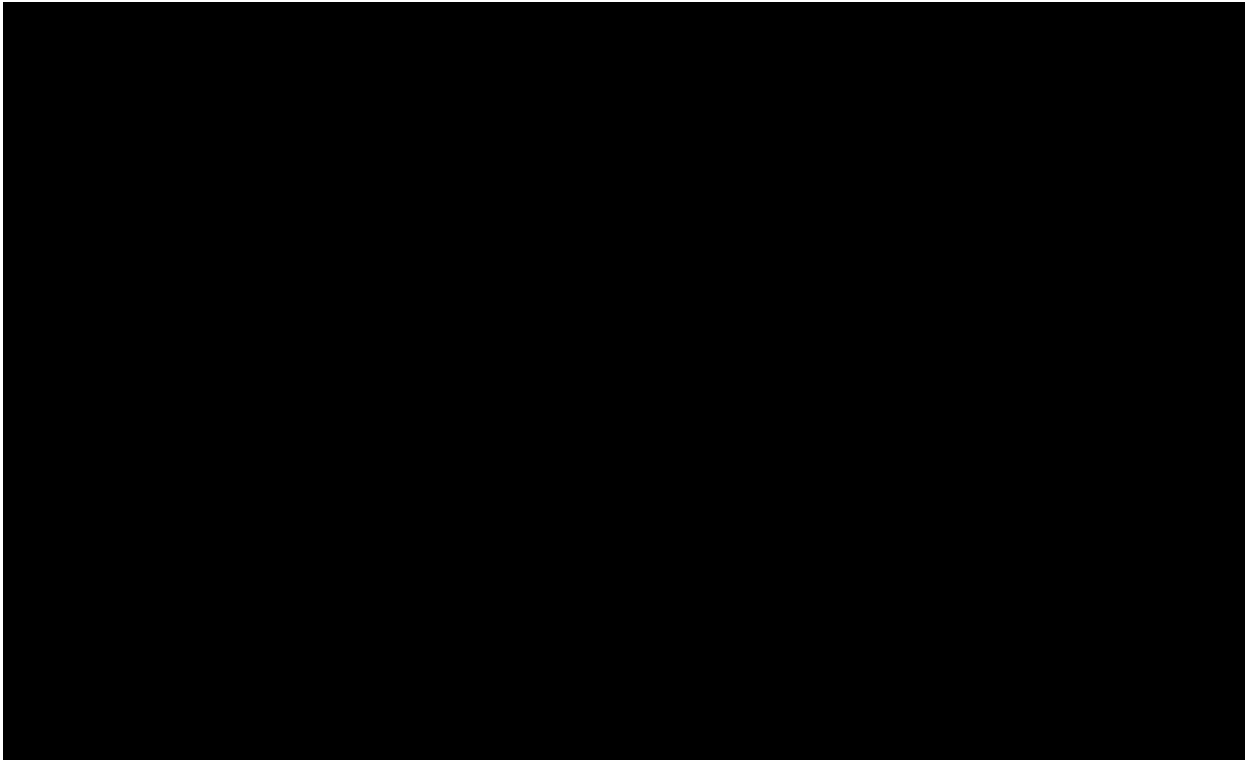
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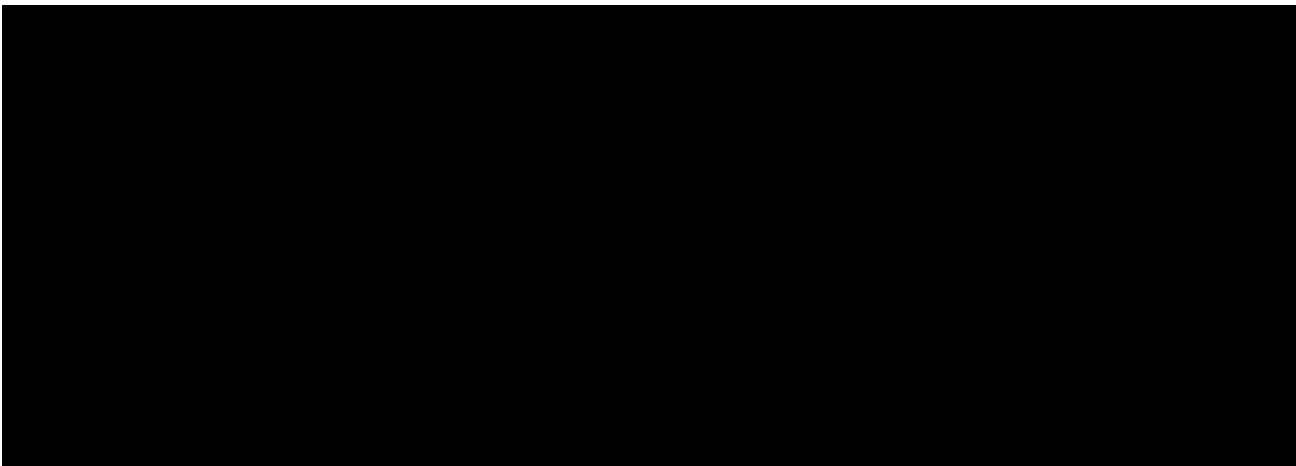
Total Cost – Please provide the total cost for this work package. **Please provide a detailed breakdown of costs in the financial template which is to be submitted alongside this Project Proposal Document. This should include payment milestones (where applicable)**

The total cost based on the assumptions outlined in our response will be £46,000 +VAT.

Have you attached the financial template?: Yes

Completed by: 

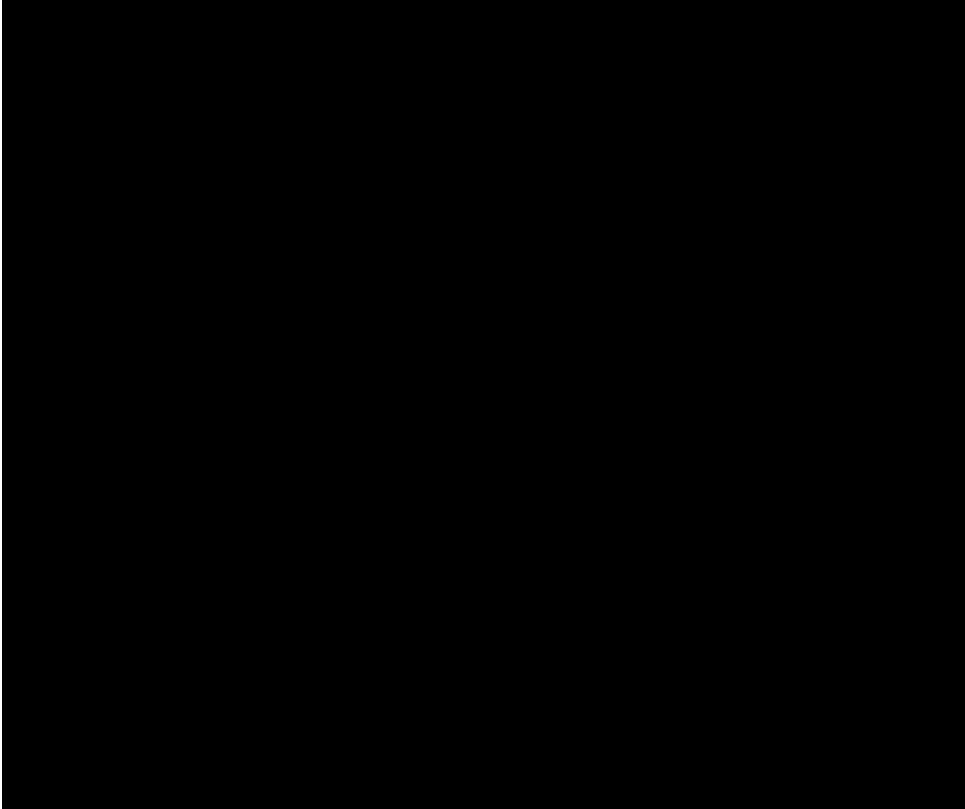
Date: 25/01/2024



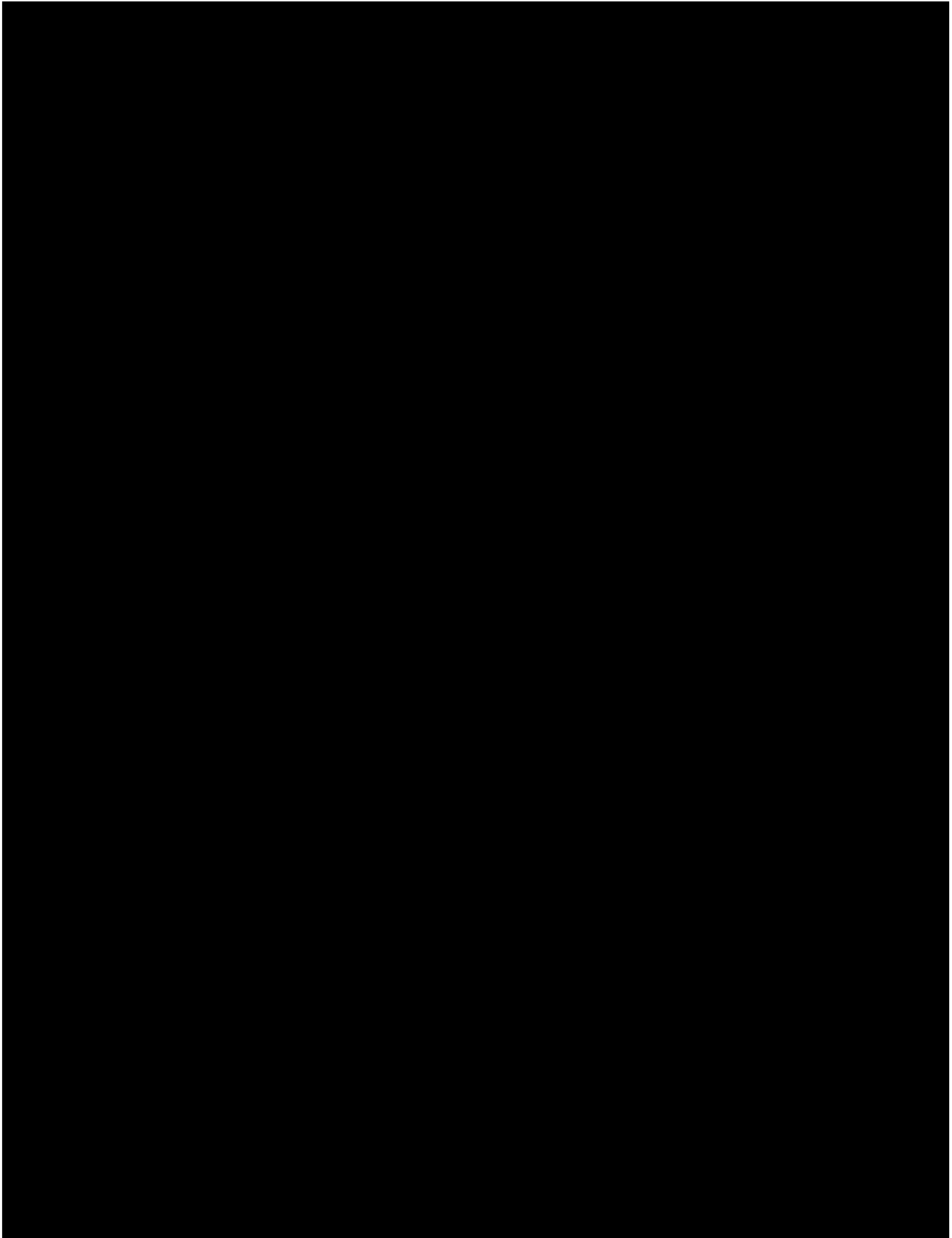
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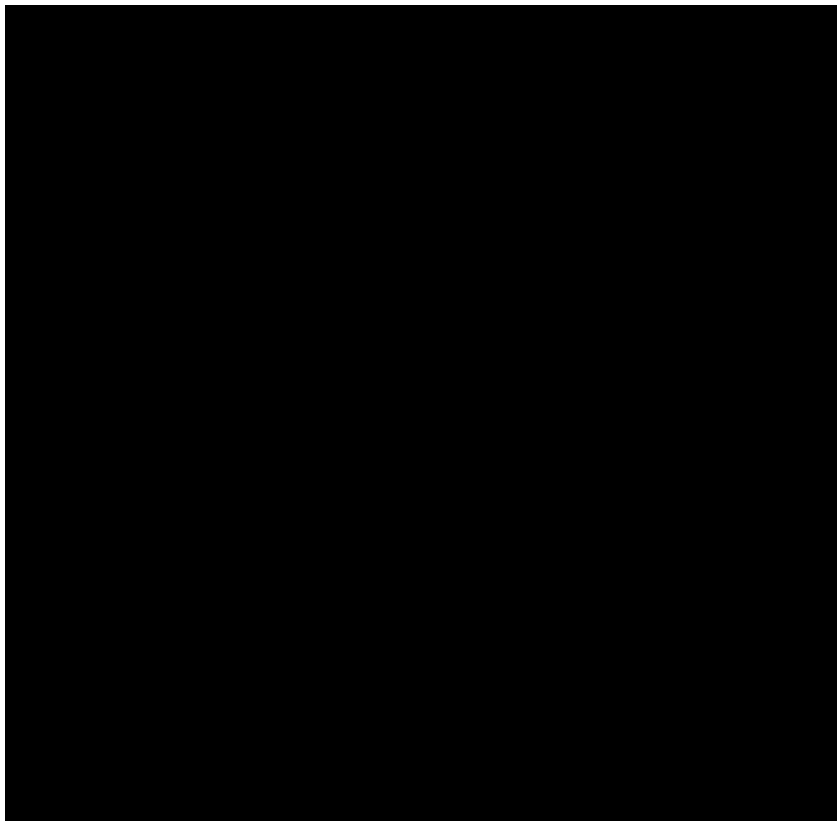
Following signature, the FSA will arrange a Purchase Order to be sent to Ipsos.
Work on this work package can commence on receipt of a Purchase Order

This quotation for the above mentioned Work Package has been agreed between the Food Standards Agency and Ipsos under the terms and conditions of the call-off contract
FS900269 Social Research

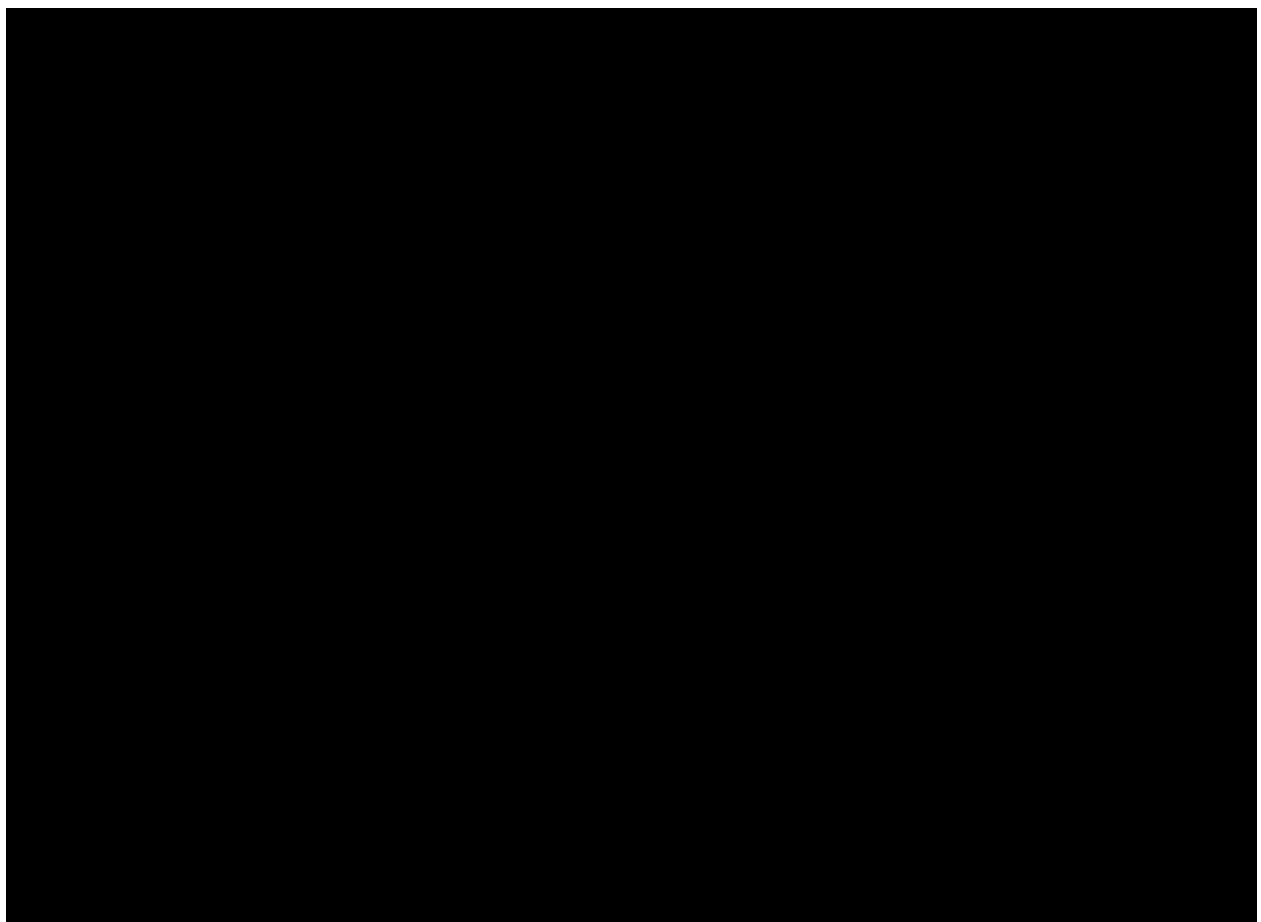


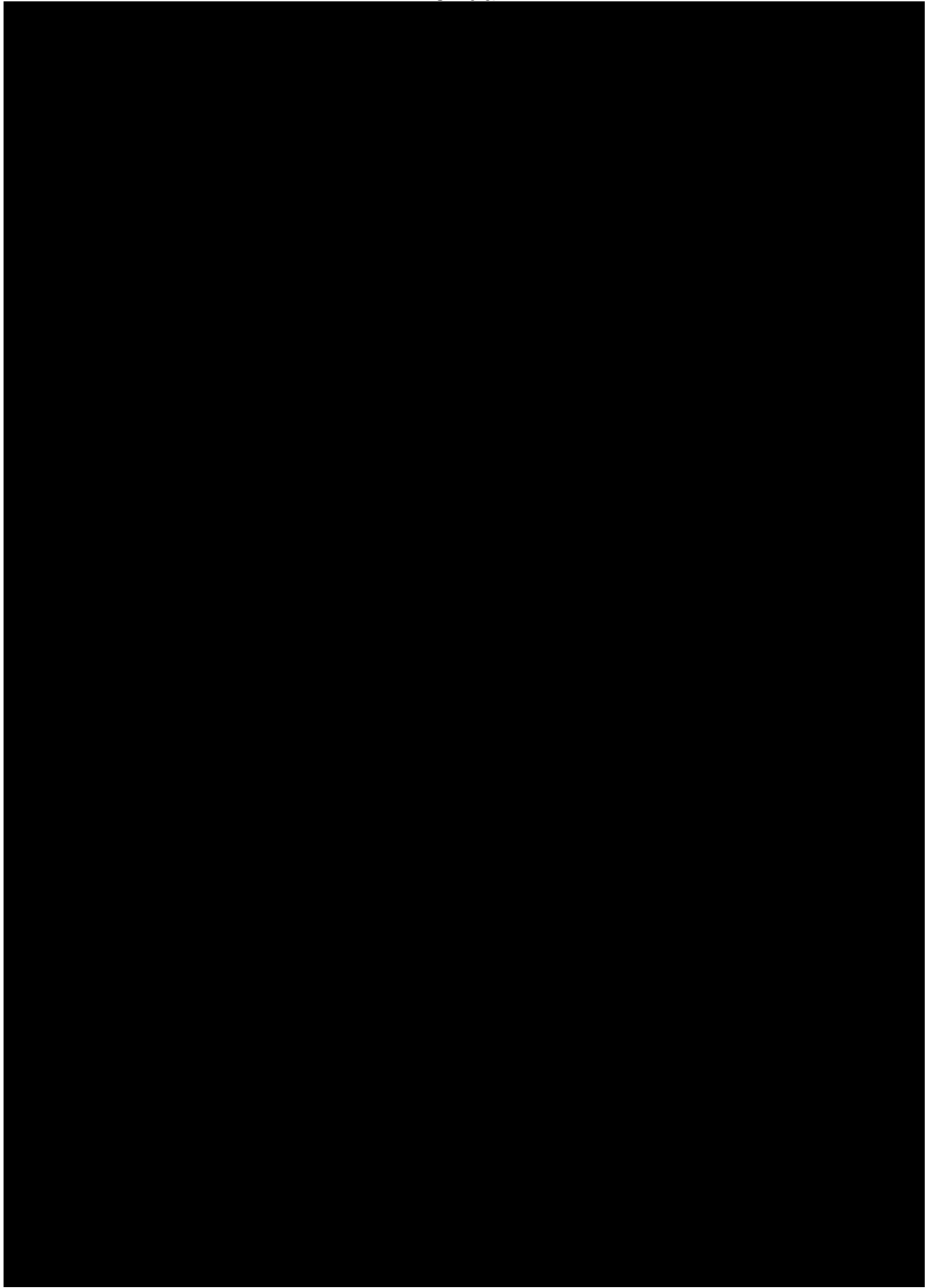
Annex 1 – Financial Template

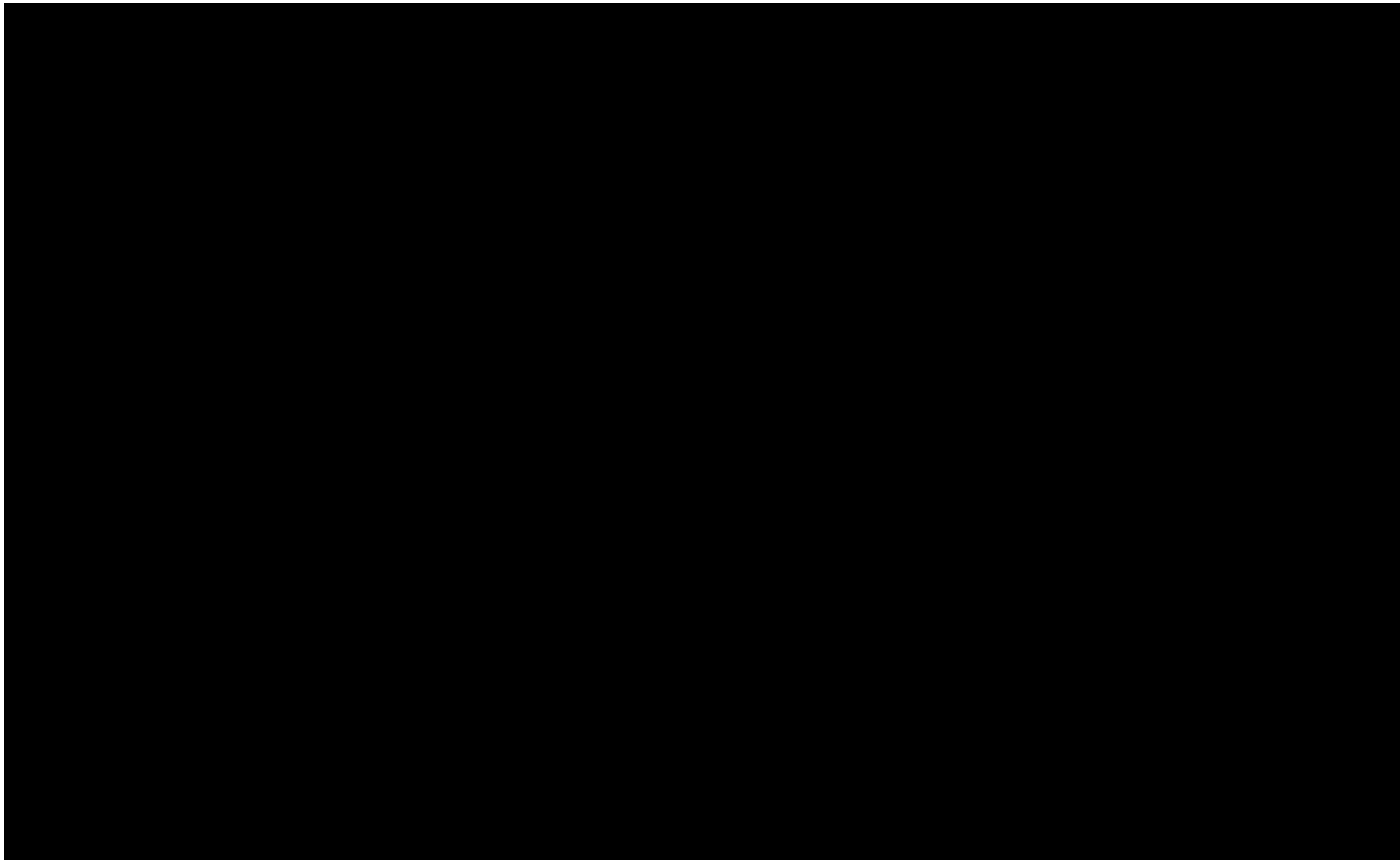


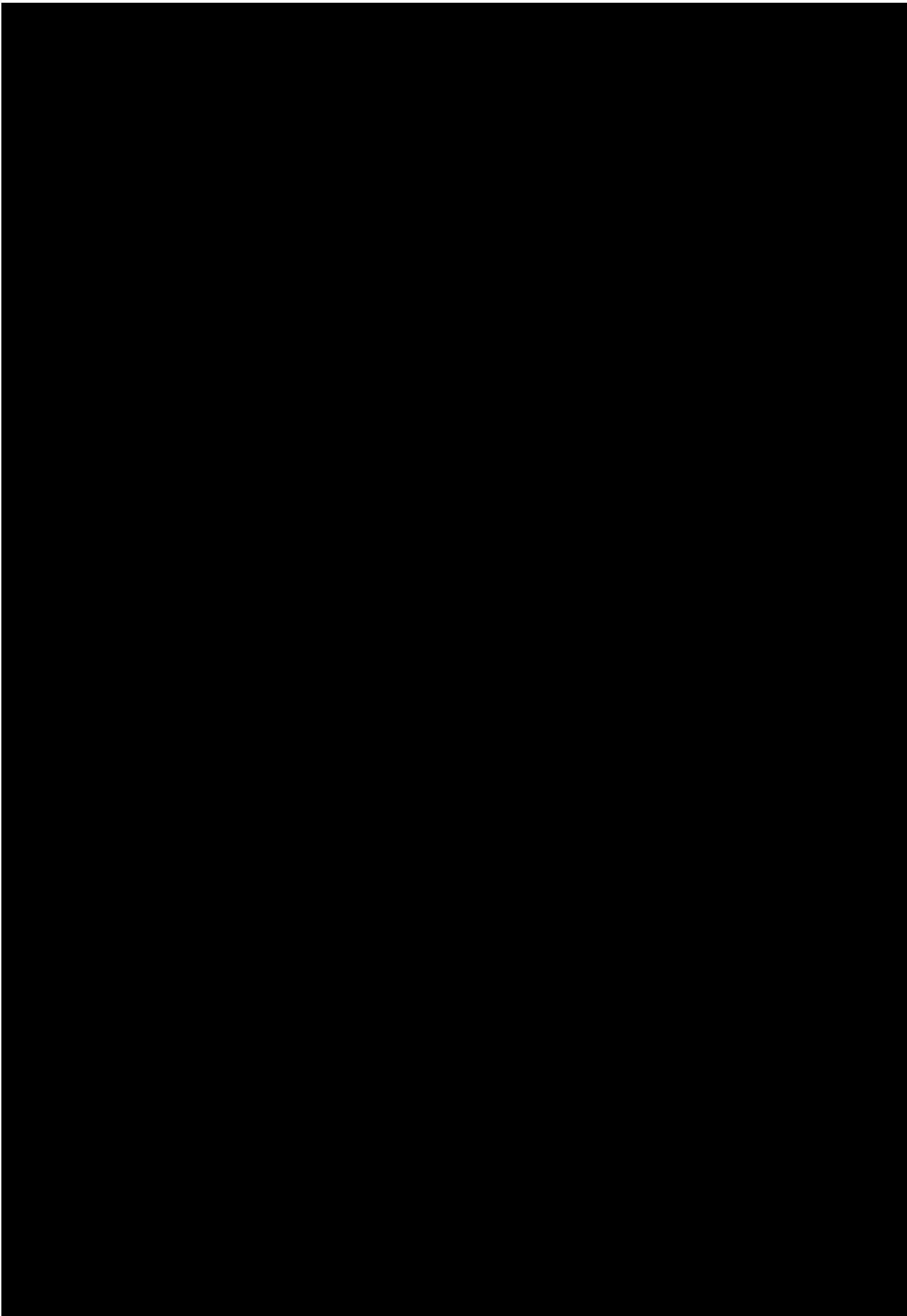


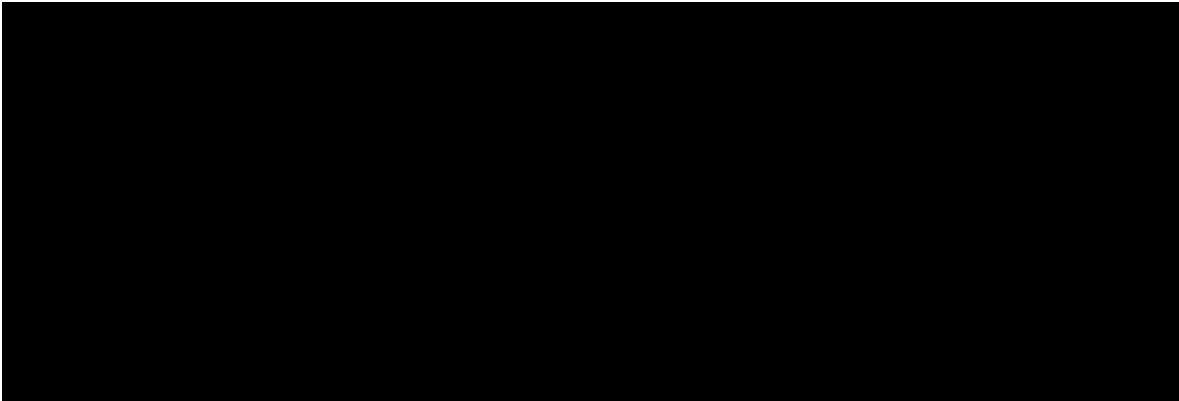
Total Project Costs (excluding VAT) **	£ 46,000.00
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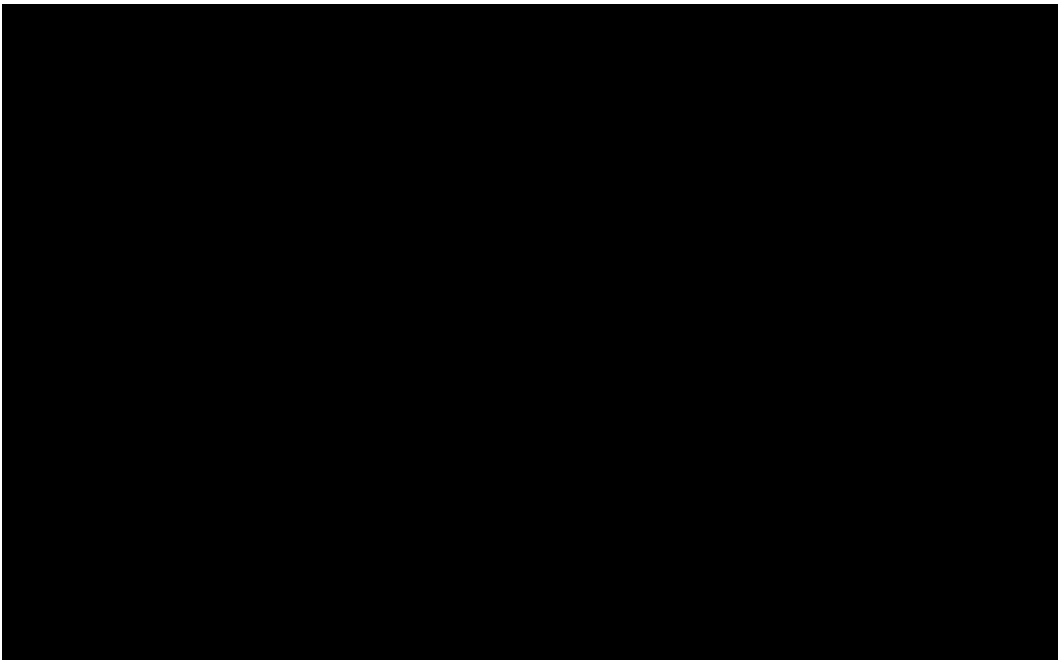








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