

**Public**  
**Key Decision - No**

## **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Monitoring Report on the Delivery of the Food Law Enforcement and Health and Safety Service Plans .

**Meeting/Date:** Licensing and Protection Committee – 4 December 2019.

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Operations and Regulation – Councillor M Beuttell

**Report by:** Acting Operational Manager (Business).

**Ward(s) affected:** All.

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### **Executive Summary:**

The Food Law Enforcement Service Plan and Health and Safety Service Plan 2019-20 were approved by committee on 13 March 2019.

This monitoring report covers the period from 1 June 2019 to 30 September 2019. In general terms the monitoring report accounts for work undertaken by the Business Team within the defined period and compares this to the service plan to ensure that the service is on target to deliver the programmed work.

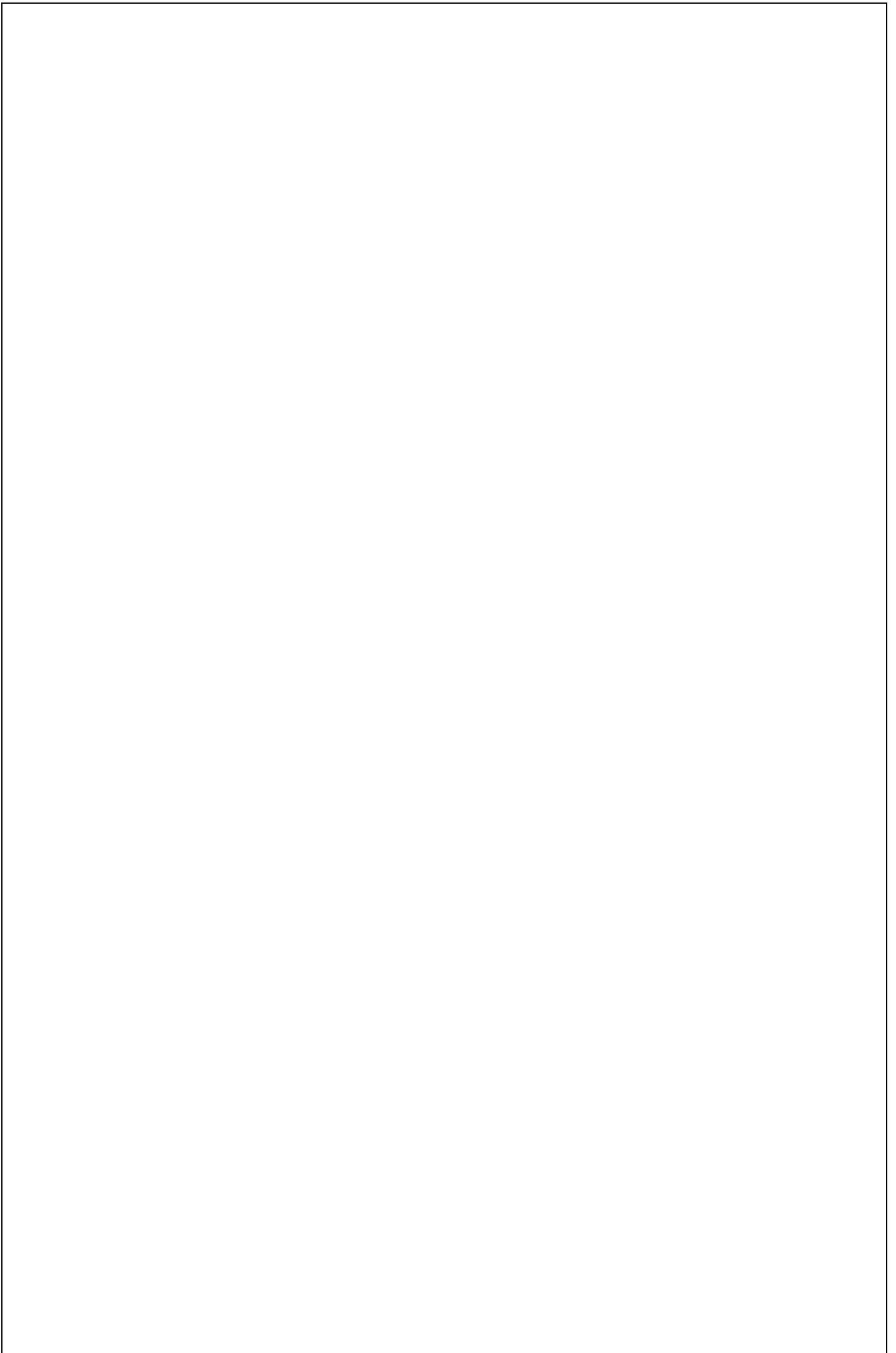
Programmed work is delivered alongside reactive work, the volume of which by definition is impossible to predict. This work is carried out according to risk. Complaints and accident investigations are prioritised using risk-based selection criteria, and the volume of work is reported here to attempt to identify any emerging risks in terms of resource provision.

Appendices 1 and 2 contain detailed information about the delivery of the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan. Appendix 3 contains detailed information about the delivery of the Health and Safety Service Plan.

### **Recommendation(s):**

Members are requested to:-

1. Note progress and provide any comments considered appropriate, on the delivery of the two Service Plans for the period 1 June to 30 September 2019.



## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1. The report provides information about the delivery of the two Service Plans for the period between 1 June 2019 and 30 September 2019.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY?**

- 2.1 Members have asked to be kept informed about the delivery of the work in the approved plans.

## **3. A DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES COVERED BY THE REPORT**

- 3.1 Food Law Enforcement consists of the following areas of work:

- a) Planned activities such as routine inspections of food businesses, food and environmental sampling and the provision of food hygiene training courses;
- b) Unplanned (reactive) work such as the investigation of customer complaints, dealing with requests for compliance advice and following up notifications of food poisoning;
- c) Liaison with other departments in the interests of coordinated service delivery: in particular licensing and planning;
- d) Supporting national strategies and the wider public health agenda.

- 3.2 Health and Safety Regulation consists of these areas of work:

- a) Planned activities such as unannounced inspections of high risk businesses and targeted interventions in line with the HSE's strategic aims;
- b) Unplanned (reactive) work such as the investigation of notifiable accidents, prescribed diseases, complaints and dealing with serious risks that are identified during other activities (Matters of Evident Concern);
- c) The provision of compliance advice to businesses.

## **4. PROGRESS AGAINST THE APPROVED PLANS**

- 4.1 Appendices 1 and 2 relate to the delivery of the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan.

- 4.2 Appendix 1 compares the recorded activity in each of the programmed work service areas with the predicted activity in the approved Service Plan. All activities bar two are rated as green. Alternative enforcement strategy has been delayed but a plan is now in place to bring this back to green status. Due to staffing related issues no sampling was completed in Q2 which whilst not an issue at this time needs to be kept under review.

- 4.3 The current focus of the team is to continue to reduce the number of outstanding category C and D premises requiring an intervention as well as those which remain unrated, temporary recruitment has taken place to pursue this. An outstanding prosecution against a food business was

resolved during this period with the food business operator pleading guilty to preparing food in an area which lacked adequate natural or artificial lighting.

- 4.4 Appendix 2 refers to the unplanned (reactive) work undertaken by the service. The number of customer complaints and service requests is driven by demand, so they are closely monitored and prioritised according to risk using publicly available selection criteria. Any intelligence emerging around trends can be used to inform proactive work through education or enforcement action. There continues to be a number of reports concerning suspected food poisoning where the affected individual has not consulted the GP for a diagnosis. Such reports are generally used for intelligence gathering.
- 4.5 Due to the tragic passing of Sue Walford, work is currently on hold with the Primary Authority pilot with signpost-2-grow and neighbouring authorities to link business with a regulator who is able to delivery primary authority services but will be picked back up again in the near future.
- 4.6 The Better Business for All partnership continues and a set of video animations across a range of regulatory areas is almost complete and will be launched in the New Year. This is aimed to promote the programme, part of the Government's national agenda to use positive regulation and business support services to boost business growth. Partners include the District Council regulators, the Growth Hub, trading standards and fire services from the County Council. Together we are looking to develop and deliver against 3 work streams
- Listening to businesses and adapting our regulatory approach accordingly
  - Making our advice services more accessible and easier to navigate for businesses
  - Offering a more holistic business support service through signposting to other business support partners
- The launch in May looked to bring everyone up to speed with the services each deliver so that whenever and wherever we speak to business, officers are confident to refer them on for complimentary support and compliance advice. The animated production delivers the message to business on how they can engage and what we can deliver.
- 4.7 The Food Standards Agency Register a Food Business service is ready to roll out to local authorities. In addition to being a legal requirement, registration is the foundation of data that is used by everyone delivering official food controls. Information needs to be captured in an accurate and consistent way and the online process captures enhanced data from food business operators, improving the consistency, efficiency and effectiveness of registration. Over the next few months we will be making a decision about when and how we will adopt this system and integrate it into our current process.

- 4.8 The Food Standards Agency is also progressing work on National Inspection Strategies and has produced draft standards to inform the development with primary authorities and partner food businesses. This will mean greater consistency for businesses such as multi-site retailers as all local authorities will need to consider the inspection strategy when undertaking official controls. Further work in the Regulating our Futures programme includes the ongoing review into a new delivery model for food standards for which consultation events were held earlier in the year. Feedback was positive and the FSA are now considering the options to be carried forward.
- 4.9 The Health and Safety Service Plan also contains a mixture of programmed work, reactive work and the provision of compliance information and advice. In line with the national agenda the number of proactive inspections carried out is down. The focus is on working with business to simplify the approach to Health & Safety whilst maintaining control of the risks. We have submitted a bid to the Health & Safety Executive to hold an event for business, explaining what they need to do to be compliant and how this can be achieved by an in-house safety culture.
- 4.10 Accidents reported and investigated within the area over Q2 show an increase that whilst high, shows no particular pattern and will be kept under review.

## **5. RISKS**

- 5.1 Text. The failure to monitor the delivery of the approved Service Plans could invite criticism from the Food Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Executive in their capacities as the national regulators.
- 5.2 Members have asked to be kept informed about the delivery of the approved Service Plans in order that they can comment on the way in which the service is provided as well as the available resources.

## **6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN**

- 6.1 These reporting arrangements support the wider corporate objectives to
- Create, protect and enhance our safe built environment
  - Support people to improve their health and well-being
  - Accelerate business growth and remove barriers to growth.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The failure to report the delivery of the approved Service Plans may prejudice the Council's ability to provide the necessary resources.

**9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None.

**10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

10.1 To keep Members informed about the delivery of approved Service Plans.

**11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1 – Food Safety Service Plan: Programmed (Proactive) Activity

Appendix 2 – Food Safety Service Plan: Reactive Activity

Appendix 3 – Health and Safety Activity

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