

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 –
24 June 2020

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Communities – Cllr K Prentice

Report by: Acting Operational Manager (Business) – M Bebbington

Ward(s) affected: All.

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 year end figures from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. 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):

Note progress and provide any comments considered appropriate, on the delivery of the two Service Plans for the period 1 April to 31 March 2020.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. The report provides information about the delivery of the two Service Plans for the cumulative figures for the year between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020.

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. DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES COVERED BY THE REPORT

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

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

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

- Planned activities such as unannounced inspections of high risk businesses and targeted interventions in line with the HSE's strategic aims;
- 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);
- The provision of compliance advice to businesses.

4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.

5. ACTIONS AND PROGRESS AGAINST THE APPROVED PLANS

- 5.1 Appendices 1 and 2 relate to the delivery of the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan.
- 5.2 Appendix 1 compares the recorded activity in each of the programmed work service areas with the predicted activity in the approved Service Plan. The key activities of compliance revisits, approved premises inspections and other proactive visits are all green. Inspections of premises within the risk-based programme are at red, although the highest risk based premises A-C are all up to date, this is owing to the impact of vacancies within the team and a higher number of new food business registrations coming through. The alternative enforcement strategy is currently at red; this is not however an immediate concern as these are our very low risk premises that are assessed by means other than visits and will be followed up throughout the remainder of the year.
- 5.3 The focus in the last quarter has been to target new business registrations and interventions which has been successful and moved from Amber to Green. Official controls have been undertaken in all high-risk premises (A and B) bar one, due to Covid 19, has been completed.
- 5.4 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. Any intelligence emerging around trends can be used to inform proactive work through education or enforcement action. Officers anticipate that these figures will prove volatile in 2020-21 as a result of Covid 19 due to most reports of food poisoning traditionally being from food consumed at home
- 5.5 The food hygiene training programme has not been delivered to the level the team would like, however of the three courses held they have had a very high success rate. It remains a commitment by the team to re-establish these as soon as possible. We continue to be open to enquiries regarding primary authority, following a successful pilot with Regulatory Delivery the section of government responsible for the primary authority regime. This work seeks to establish effective collaboration with signpost-2-grow and neighbouring authorities to link business with a regulator who is able to delivery primary authority services.
- 5.6 The Health and Safety Service Plan also contains a mixture of programmed work, reactive work and the provision of compliance information and advice. The number of inspections carried out is down with reported accidents being higher than envisaged and taking resources.
- 5.7 Officers continue to witness serious health and safety problems whilst carrying out other duties. These are identified as “Matters of Evident Concern” (MEC), The frequency with which matters of evident concern

are reported is an indication of the extent to which businesses fail to manage serious risks without our intervention. The team saw a rise at the end of year due to Covid 19 issues relating to distancing in the workplace.

6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 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 wellbeing
 - Accelerate business growth and remove barriers to growth

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 No consultations required as part of this report

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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

10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

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

12. 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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