

FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN
(Report by Head of Environmental Health Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 It is a requirement of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement dated March 2001 (amended March 2002) that a Food Safety Service Plan be prepared in accordance with a format provided by the FSA. Under the Council's constitution this is part of the policy framework that has to be formally approved by the Council. The Licensing and Protection Panel endorsed the plan at their meeting on the 12 May 2004.
- 1.2 This is the fourth annual report which details the work that the service has planned for 2004/5, the staffing and financial resources required, the constraints that may prevent some of the tasks from being fulfilled and the priority of the tasks. It also includes a review of the previous year's performance and identifies where the Authority was at significant variance from the service plan and the reasons for that variance. The review is set out in Section 6 of the service plan on pages 35 to 43.

2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Huntingdonshire District Council is a Food Authority and as such it is responsible for enforcing specific food safety legislation, this work is carried out by the Environmental Health Services Division. The service is linked to the Council's corporate plan 'Growing Success' and the priority outcome of a healthy population.
- 2.2 Since 1 April 2000 Food Authorities have been subject to scrutiny by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). One of the requirements of the FSA's *Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement* is to require local authorities to produce a Food Safety Service Plan in accordance with guidance on content and format.
- 2.3 The aim of the Service Plan is to:
- ◆ provide information about the Food Safety Service;
 - ◆ identify the means by which the service will be provided;
 - ◆ identify the means by which the service will meet any relevant performance targets or performance standards;
 - ◆ enable performance to be reviewed by examining any variances from the Service Plan; and
 - ◆ demonstrate a balanced enforcement approach.
- 2.4 The FSA sees this Service Plan as a mechanism for local authorities to ensure that national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally as well as:
- ◆ focussing debate on key delivery issues;
 - ◆ providing an essential link with financial planning;
 - ◆ setting objectives for the future and identifying major issues that cross service boundaries; and

- ◆ providing a means of managing performances and making performance comparisons.

3. PERFORMANCE FOR 2003/4

- 3.1 The food section was fully staffed for the financial year. This has enabled 100% of all required inspections to have been carried out and all of the work planned for the year, including the service improvements, has been achieved
- 3.2 There were three successful prosecution cases brought this year for offences under the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995 as a result of dirty and unhygienic conditions being found in three food premises. These cases resulted in substantial fines and significant media coverage. In addition one food business was prosecuted for selling unfit food and also received a formal caution for offences under the Food Safety Act 1990. The resource implications in terms of officer time and legal costs in bringing these cases have been significant.
- 3.3 There were no major food-borne illness outbreaks. All individual cases of notifiable food-borne illness were investigated.

4. SERVICE PLAN FOR 2004/5

- 4.1 This document remains essentially unchanged from that of the previous year. The resources provided by the Council are currently sufficient to enable this Authority to meet the requirements that the FSA requires of Food Authorities. Included in the budget is a successful MTP bid for a contingency sum for additional staff and resources dependent upon the outcome of a Food Standards Agency review of food safety enforcement activity. In the event of difficulties arising that would prevent all the targets being met, priority would be given to the inspection of food premises. It is also possible that the FSA may redirect resources to meet the need of a major food safety concern.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The work and improvements set out in last year's plan have been largely completed and no major changes have been proposed.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Cabinet is requested to note the contents of the report, endorse the Food Safety Service Plan and to submit it to Council for approval.

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