

**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 – 29 June 2022

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Customer Services – Cllr S Ferguson

**Report by:** Claudia Deeth – Interim Community Service Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### **Executive Summary:**

The Food Law Enforcement Service Plan and Health and Safety Service Plan 2021-22 were approved by committee on 10 March 2021.

The report provides information about the delivery of the two Service Plans for Q3 and Q4 of 2021-22, the period 1 October 2021-31 March 2022 and it also provides cumulative figures for the year between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

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.

The Food Standards Agency permitted all planned food safety inspections to resume mid June 2021 and activities are being completed in line with the Food Standards Agency Recovery Plan.

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:**

**The Committee is asked to review progress and provide any comments considered appropriate on the delivery of the two Service Plans for Q3 and Q4 of 2021-22, the period 1 October 2021-31 March 2022.**

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

- 1.1 The report provides information about the delivery of the two Service Plans for Q3 and Q4 of 2021-22, the period 1 October 2021-31 March 2022 and it also provides cumulative figures for the year between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND**

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

## **3. SERVICE AREAS COVERED BY THE REPORT AND ANALYSIS**

- 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.

- 3.2 Appendix 1 and 2 provide details of the number of proactive and reactive activities that have taken place throughout the year compared to the number of activities predicted.

- 3.3 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.

- 3.4 Appendix 3 provide details of the number of activities that have taken place throughout the year compared to the number of activities predicted.

## **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 TAKEN AND PROGRESS AGAINST THE APPROVED PLANS**

### **5.1 Food Safety Service Plan**

5.1.1 The service plan for 2021-22 was approved during the Covid 19 pandemic without knowing what the impact of Covid 19 would be throughout 2021-22 and what restrictions there would be food businesses operating and officers undertaking inspections.

5.1.2 The Food Standard Agency permitted all planned food safety inspections to resume mid June 2021, prior to this all inspections were suspended. It is also noted that there was not a full compliment of authorised officers at this time and the service was not fully staffed until October 2021. These are the main reasons why the number of inspections completed was less than anticipated and remains as Red status in Appendix 1. Since inspections restarted they have been undertaken in line with the Food Standards Agency Recovery Plan focussing on the highest risk (A and B rated premises) and new businesses first. The Food Standards Agency Recovery Plan

5.1.3 Appendix 1 shows that the alternative enforcement strategy is currently at red; this is not however an immediate concern as these are our very low risk premises therefore considered appropriate to be assessed by other means than visits.

5.1.4 Appendix 2 refers to the number of unplanned, reactive activities undertaken. The number of customer complaints and service requests is driven by demand which was unpredictable throughout the pandemic, however, as businesses reopened over twice as many complaints and service requests were received in Q3 and Q4 compared to Q1 and Q2.

5.1.5 The food hygiene training programme remains suspended in a classroom format although training is available online through the Council's website. The team will be investigating the viability, and demand for, the reinstatement of classroom training courses in 2022-23.

### **5.2 Health and Safety**

5.2.1 Over the last year, the Service's health and safety interventions have been impacted by Covid-19 in that most proactive inspections and non-inspection interventions, including face-to-face contact and visits, were suspended unless there was a significant cause for concern, in accordance with Government guidance. Where non-inspection

intervention visits were requested, most were dealt with by telephone and via photographs rather than undertaking face-to-face visits.

5.2.2 However, we continued to support businesses and work collaboratively with colleagues and agency partners to raise awareness of Health & Safety matters, providing advice and guidance on compliance, numbers of activities are shown in Appendix 2.

## **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 are 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

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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