

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Monitoring Report on the delivery of the Service Plans for Food Law Enforcement and Health and Safety Regulation

Meeting/Date: Licensing and Protection Committee – 25 January 2024

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

Report by: Kate Penn – Environmental Health Service Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The Service Plans for Food Law Enforcement and Health and Safety Regulation 2023-24 were approved by committee on 28 June 2023.

The report provides information about the delivery of the two Service Plans for Quarters 2 and 3.

For both service areas programmed work such as food hygiene inspections 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 Service Plans for Food Law Enforcement and Health and Safety Regulation 2023-24.

Recommendation:

The Committee is asked to review progress and provide any comments considered appropriate on the delivery of the two Service Plans for Q2 and Q3.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report provides information about the delivery of the Service Plans for Food Law Enforcement and Health and Safety Regulation for Quarter 2 and Quarter 3.

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

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement is to ensure that food placed or intended to be placed on the market for human consumption which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or purchased within Huntingdonshire is without risk to public health or the safety of the consumer. This is fulfilling our statutory duty under the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Food Hygiene and Safety (England) Regulations 2013. There are several key objectives which contribute to the delivery of the overall aim.

- The delivery of a programme of inspections and other interventions in accordance with the FSA's Code of Practice
- To respond to complaints and requests for service in accordance with any internal service standards
- To respond to any FSA Food Alerts for Action (FAFA) subject to available resources

- 3.2 The overall aim of the Service Plan for Health and Safety Regulation is to work with businesses and employees to protect all people, including members of the public, from unsafe working conditions by fulfilling the council's statutory role as a 'Health and Safety Enforcing Authority'

4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 4.1 The main risk of not carrying out the work on these plans would be to the health, wellbeing and safety of those who live, work or visit the Huntingdonshire area. They could be exposed to unsafe food or unsafe working conditions.
- 4.2 The failure to monitor the delivery of the approved Service Plans could invite criticism from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in their capacities as the national regulators.
- 4.3 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. PROGRESS AGAINST APPROVED SERVICE PLANS

5.1 Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement

5.1.1 The main focus of this service plan is the planned routine inspections of food businesses. All food businesses are risk rated category A to E with A being the highest risk. The risk rating mechanism is provided in the Food Law Code of Practice (England) and considers the consumers at risk; the level of current compliance with statutory obligations and any relevant industry codes of recommended practice in relation to the hygiene and structure of the premises; and the confidence in management/control processes in place. For example, a care home or nursery may be Category A due to their consumers being in a vulnerable group. Most restaurants, pubs and catering businesses are Category C or D. Category E are the lowest risk premises and will include small retailers selling pre-packed food and home caterers making cakes only.

The table below shows the categorisation of food businesses in Huntingdonshire on 31 March 2023:

Category	Number of Premises
A	6
B	63
C	290
D	542
E	720
Unrated	53

There are 66 food business outside the rating programme

- 5.1.2 In Quarter 2 there were 143 food hygiene inspections carried out and in Quarter 3 there were 176 food hygiene inspections carried out. 29% of these inspections were with new businesses or new Food Business Operators. In total 504 inspections have been undertaken so far this year which shows that the predicted activity should be met.
- 5.1.3 In Quarters 2 and 3 there were 116 new food business registrations received, this what was anticipated based on previous data. A new business registration can occur when an existing business changes hands and a new food business operator takes over or an entirely new business starts up.
- 5.1.4 Progress against the Alternative Enforcement Strategy remains at Red status, however, I can report that 157 businesses have been contacted to see if they are still operating and their records updated to show which need inspecting and which have ceased trading so work on this area has started.
- 5.1.5 In Quarters 2 and 3 a total of 17 compliance checks were undertaken, these are revisits to check compliance where the food hygiene inspection has uncovered issues that need attention. It is likely that the level of predicted activity will be slightly exceeded for compliance checks.

- 5.1.6 Appendix 1 also shows that requests for export certificates remains a little lower than anticipated based on previous years data, this is something that as a service we cannot influence and is determined by what manufactures are exporting where. The predicted income has been adjusted accordingly.
- 5.1.7 Requests for rescores continue to be higher than anticipated in Quarter 2 meaning that at the end of Quarter 3 we had received the number of requests predicted for the whole year. This shows how businesses are keen to ensure they receive the highest possible rating of 5 by request a rescoring inspection and providing details of how they have addressed any matters outstanding at their programmed inspection.
- 5.1.8 Officers have continued to take part in UK Health Security Agency's sampling study, topics were 'Ready to Eat (RTE) Salad and salad components from Retail and Catering' and 'Cooked Ready to Eat (RTE) Sliced or Cut Meat from retail and catering premises'. Where samples were unsatisfactory notification was provided to the Food Standards Agency and additional visits have been undertaken to provide advice and guidance to businesses and further samples carried out to check for improvement to the required standard.
- 5.1.9 The level of activity with regard to infectious disease control has increased slightly due to there being a cluster of Cryptosporidium cases in the East of England and the UK Health Security Agency requesting questionnaires were carried out with all cases area to see if a link to any other cases in the area could be found.

5.2 **Service Plan for Health and Safety Regulation**

- 5.2.1 The majority of health and safety work in Quarters 2 and 3 was reactive, there were 26 accidents (14 and 12 respectively in each Quarter) reported of which 9 investigations commenced. The selection of accidents for investigation is founded upon the risk-based criteria in Local Authority Circular (LAC) 22/13. There were 75 other service requests responded to and the majority of these were licensing consultations where a new premises, street trading or pavement licence had been applied for by a business in the district.
- 5.2.2 Proactive visits were made to two large events within the District during the summer and officers attended a number of Safety Advisory Group (SAG) meetings to provide advice to event organisers and promote public safety at events within the district.
- 5.2.3 In Quarter 2 and 3 there were 17 skin piercing registrations issued for premises and practitioners within the district.
- 5.2.4 The number of premises inspections and interventions is less than anticipated, this is driven by what service requests come in and whether inspection or intervention would be considered to be a proportionate regulatory intervention inline with the Health and Safety Executive's statutory guidance.

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

- 6.1 The work covered by the two Service Plans largely sits under Priority 3 - Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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

8. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 - Food Activity 2023-2024

Appendix 2 - Health and Safety Activity 2023-2024

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