

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 – 22 October 2025

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Resident Services & Corporate Performance – 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 2025-26 were approved by committee on 6 June 2025.

The report provides information about the delivery of the two Service Plans for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2.

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 2025-26.

Recommendation(s):

The Committee is asked to review progress and provide any comments considered appropriate on the delivery of the two Service Plans for Q1 and Q2.

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 Quarters 1 and 2 2025-26.

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 and inspected every six months. Most restaurants, pubs and catering businesses are Category C or D and will be inspected every 18 or 24 months. 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 2025, with the data from 31 March 2024 as a comparison:

Category	Number of Premises 31 March 2024	Number of Premises 31 March 2025
A	3	1
B	79	70
C	340	362
D	460	474
E	645	745
Unrated	58	115

- 5.1.2 In Quarter 1 there were 205 food hygiene inspections carried out and in Quarter 2 there were 201 food hygiene inspections carried out which gives a total of 406 for the first half of the year. This exceeds the level of activity predicted.
- 5.1.3 In Quarters 1 and 2 there were 131 new food business registrations received, this shows the continuing flux of food businesses. 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. The service is still finding that some businesses are registering a long time before they intend to open and this has been fed back to the Food Standards Agency.
- 5.1.4 In Quarters 1 and 2 there were 19 compliance checks undertaken, these are revisits to check compliance where the food hygiene inspection has uncovered issues that need attention. This is in line with the expected activity.
- 5.1.5 We are finding if businesses receive a low food hygiene rating (e.g. 0,1 or 2) they are becoming increasingly quick to request a rescore to improve their rating. This is largely driven by the minimum rating required to stay

on online food platforms such as Just Eat as well as the businesses reputation. In Q1 and Q2 we received 20 rescore requests.

- 5.1.6 The process for sending out questionnaires to Category E premises due for inspection under the Alternative Enforcement Strategy is now fully embedded, digital questionnaires are being sent out quarterly to the lowest risk businesses.
- 5.1.7 Appendix 1 also shows that requests for export certificates was slightly higher than anticipated based on previous years data. It is noted one business has requested more certificates than previous years.
- 5.1.8 Officers have continued to take part in UK Health Security Agency's sampling study, the topics for Q1 and Q2 were Ready To Eat Dried Fruit Nuts and Seeds; Root Vegetables and Fresh and Frozen Raw Chicken. However, the laboratory stopped accepting routine samples for a significant period of the Q1 and Q2 for operational reasons which is why sample numbers are slightly lower than anticipated.

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 There was one Food Alert For Action in June 2025 relating to Jolly Rancher Sweets, this was because the products were unsafe and did not meet UK market requirements. The team contacted relevant businesses to make them aware of it and advised them to immediately stop sales, withdraw and recall products inline with the requirements of the Food Alert For Action.

5.2 Service Plan for Health and Safety Regulation

- 5.2.1 The majority of health and safety work in Quarters 1 and 2 was reactive, there were 27 accidents reported of which 8 investigations commenced. The selection of accidents for investigation is founded upon the risk-based criteria in Local Authority Circular (LAC) 22/13. There were 68 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 There were 35 skin piercing registration applications made for premises and practitioners within the district. The new legislation around this area of work is still outstanding although the government has recently announced there will be a licensing regime for non-surgical cosmetic procedures, however, timescales are not known.

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 – Doing our core work well - 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 2025-26

Appendix 2 - Health and Safety Activity 2025-26

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