

Licensing and Protection Committee – 18 June 2026

Report by: Kate Penn
Public Protection Manager –
Environmental Health
Head of Service: Clara Kerr

Lead Cllr: Councillor Nathan Hunt
Executive Councillor for Resident
Services and Corporate Performance



Wards
All

Open / Exempt
Open

Key Decision?
No

Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement 2026-27

Executive Summary:

Huntingdonshire District Council has responsibility for most food safety and hygiene enforcement functions within the district. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the Central Competent Authority and National Regulator for food safety and hygiene issues within England and it requires every local authority (food authority) to outline how it will fulfil its duty to deliver official food controls within the district. The arrangements detailing how and at what level the official controls will be delivered must be laid down in the form of a Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement ('Service Plan') and approved by the Council.

The purpose of the Service Plan is to explain how that enforcement function will be delivered. It also details the resources required to deliver it.

Recommendations

- 1.1. Comment on, and if in agreement, approve the Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement 2026-27 in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- 1.2. Request quarterly progress reports to be circulated to the Committee via email by the end of the month following the end of each quarter.

Key Corporate Plan Priorities

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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.

Report Author

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1** The report formally presents the Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement 2026-27 (Appendix 1) to the Licensing and Protection Committee. It invites the Committee's comments and their approval of the Plan. This enables the Council to discharge its duty as an enforcing authority for food safety and hygiene.
- 1.2** The Council's Constitution requires the Licensing and Protection Committee to consider and approve this Service Plan.

2. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- 2.1** Huntingdonshire District Council has responsibility for most food safety and hygiene enforcement within the district. The Food Standards Agency (FSA), as England's Central Competent Authority and National Regulator for food safety and hygiene requires every local authority to outline how it will fulfil its duty to deliver official food controls within the district. The FSA requires local authorities to lay down details of the arrangements in the form of a Service Plan, specifying how and at what level the official controls will be delivered. This requirement is formalised within the FSA's 'Framework Agreement on Official Controls by Local Authorities', which was developed in consultation with local authorities, the LGA and other professional organisations, the FSA's Food Law Code of Practice (England) and the FSA's Food Law Practice Guidance (England).
- 2.2** The food safety and hygiene enforcement function is one of the services provided by specialist officers in the Environmental Health team within the Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection service area. The officers providing the service also deliver the statutory functions for health and safety and infectious disease control. The team aims to support business to comply with the legislation by using a range of enforcement tools including advice, training, promotional campaigns and social media.
- 2.3** The purpose of the Service Plan is to explain how that service relating to food law enforcement will be delivered.
- 2.4** The food safety service covers a wide range of regulatory duties including:
 - Programmed and intelligence led food hygiene interventions
 - Revisits to premises following inspections where significant issues found
 - Carrying out assessments and updating data for the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
 - Issue approvals to food businesses subject to that requirement
 - Investigation of complaints relating to food hygiene, or food prepared and sold in the district
 - Infectious disease investigation
 - Responding to food alerts issued by the FSA
 - Responding to planning and licensing applications in relation to food premises
 - Sampling
 - Provision of advice and information to food businesses
- 2.5** On 1 April 2026 there were 1580 food businesses registered in Huntingdonshire. Food businesses are inspected according to their inspection rating category. The

highest risk businesses (category A) are the subject of an inspection, partial inspection or audit at least every 6 months whereas the lowest risk businesses (category E) are monitored using alternative enforcement approaches. Unannounced inspections are carried out at businesses in categories A, B, C and D unless they are based in a domestic premises. There are 464 interventions due in Category A – D premises during 2026-27.

- 2.6** Predicted levels of work such as complaints and export certificates are included in the Appendix to the Service Plan.
- 2.7** The Service Plan requires formal approval to ensure compliance with the Council's Constitution, and provide transparency and accountability in the delivery of statutory food law enforcement, and confirm that appropriate resources and priorities are in place to protect public health. It is recommended that that Service Plan is approved.
- 2.8** Traditionally quarterly reports on progress against the Service Plan have been delivered to Licensing and Protection Committee, however, due to meetings dates these are often provided some time after the end of each quarter. Therefore, it has been recommended that to provide data in a more timely manner and to increase efficiency reports showing progress against the predicted activity are circulated to the Committee via email by the end of the month following the end of each quarter.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED & NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 N/A.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.1 N/A

5. POST-DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 The Service Plan will be delivered during the 2026-27 financial year.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

6.1 Council Key Priorities and Performance

6.1.1 The work covered by this service plan largely sits under Priority 3, and consequently a measure of operational performance has been identified in the Corporate Plan as 'The number of programmed food hygiene inspections undertaken (cumulative year to date)'. Monthly data is reported on this Corporate Performance Indicator.

6.2 Financial Implications

6.2.1 The Service Plan will be delivered using existing approved budgets.

6.2.2 Discretionary fees, previously approved for 2026/27, are applied to some work areas which generates a small income, it is estimated that for 2026/27 this will be c.£13,500. Income in 2025/26 was £14,800.

6.3 Policy Implications

6.3.1 N/A

6.4 Legal & Constitutional Implications

6.4.1 It is set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution that one of the functions of the Licensing and Protection Committee is to approve this Service Plan.

6.4.2 The FSA has a key role in overseeing official food controls undertaken by local authorities. Powers enabling the Agency to monitor and audit local authorities are contained in the Food Standards Act 1999 and the Official Feed and Food Controls Regulations.

6.4.3 The authority has a duty to comply with the Food Standard's Agency Framework Agreement. These duties include requirements for the planning, management and delivery of the local food law enforcement service.

6.5 Community Impact

6.5.1 N/A

6.6 Environment & Climate Change Implications

6.6.1 N/A

6.7 Equality & Diversity Implications

6.7.1 N/A – The Service Plan sets out how statutory food hygiene and safety duties will be delivered in accordance with national statutory guidance. The plan applies equally to all food businesses and is based on risk and compliance with legal requirements. As such, it does not differentially impact individuals or groups with protected characteristics, and no equality and diversity implications have been identified.

6.8 Implications on Resources

6.8.1 N/A - The Service Plan will be delivered using existing resources.

6.9 Health & Wellbeing Implications

6.9.1 N/A

6.10 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications

6.10.1 N/A – There are no LGR implications arising from this plan. It relates to the delivery of statutory functions during the 2026/27 financial year within existing organisational structures and does not propose or depend upon any changes associated with LGR.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The failure to produce and have approved a Service Plan could invite criticism from the FSA in their capacity as national regulator.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS– LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

8.1

Document List	Custodian	File Location
Food Law Code of Practice (England)	Food Standard's Agency	Food Law Code of Practice (England)