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# **Food Safety Service Plan 2008/09**

## **Report by Head of Environmental & Community Health Service**

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Member endorsement for the Food Safety Service Plan for 2008/09. It is a requirement of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement 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.
- 1.2 This is the eighth annual report that has been submitted to Members. It details the work that the service has planned for 2008/09, 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.

### **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 and Community Health Services Division. The service is linked to the community aim of healthy living.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE IN 2007/08**

- 3.1 The Food Service was fully staffed for the whole of the financial year which ensured that 100% of high-risk and 99.5% of low-risk premises requiring an inspection were inspected. In total 1248 inspections and visits were carried out to food premises as part of programmed activity and in response to complaints and food alerts.
- 3.2 In April 2006 new EU and UK Food legislation was introduced. This has continued to have a significant impact on food business operators as they have to ensure that a fully documented food safety management system is in place. To meet the needs of the food business sector the service has had to provide considerable guidance and advice. This has increased the time spent at each premises during an inspection.
- 3.3 In order to assist businesses in understanding the new legislation and the methodology in producing a documented food safety management system, the FSA has produced a toolkit, titled Safer Food Better Business. The Food Service supports this initiative and in conjunction with other Councils in Cambridgeshire successfully applied to the FSA for grant funding which has enabled us to employ FSA-accredited consultants to deliver and organise local training courses and 1:1 coaching. During the period of funding 316 catering businesses within Huntingdonshire have been engaged in this process receiving group training and 1:1 coaching. It has been demonstrated that confidence in management and standards of hygiene and safety at these premises have improved as a result of this intervention. The service is committed to ensuring the sustainability of the scheme and further grant funding may be sought.
- 3.4 The preventative activity did not eradicate all food-borne illness and 255 cases were notified to the Council. The number of food poisoning cases has shown no significant change compared to last year and continues to marginally exceed national averages. The dominant pathogen is Campylobacter. All individual cases were investigated and analysis of the investigation findings show that the majority of food-borne illnesses reported by residents of the district were contracted abroad, outside Huntingdonshire or in a domestic setting and none of the cases investigated identified local food premises as being the likely source. No food poisoning outbreaks or unusual notifications were received this year.
- 3.5 There was one prosecution instigated for offences under the Food Hygiene (England) Regulation 2006. This resulted from dirty and unhygienic conditions being found at a food business. Conditions were so poor that the premise voluntarily closed until hygiene conditions had improved. The prosecution was successful and resulted in a substantial fine and significant media coverage. Full costs were awarded to the Council. A total of 22 Improvement Notices were served on 7 premises, all of which were complied with within the specified timescale. The enforcement action taken emphasises the point that if premises continue to ignore legal requirements or place the public health at risk then formal

action will be taken. However it should also be emphasised that our advice and education policy can produce results in most cases rather than having to resort to formal action.

- 3.6 Officers from the service provided specialist training and guidance for Public Health Registrars and Nurses from the Health Protection Agency in food safety and infectious disease control and regularly liaise with the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) on significant cases and events. Over 180 food and water samples were taken for analysis of which 43 were found to be unsatisfactory. Appropriate action was taken to resolve any problems.
- 3.7 In addition to these activities there has been a wide range of promotional events carried out within the district many involving local primary schools and community groups. The Hunts for Good Project which is managed within the food service was awarded Regional Food Champion Status by the Food Standards Agency. The service has now been nominated by the FSA, along with the six other Regional winners for the National Food Champion Award which will be announced in the House of Commons later in June.
- 3.8 In order to promote food safety and hygiene a wide variety of educational methods (including drama) was utilised. These events were evaluated and proved to be extremely successful and very popular. Over 500 children attended Safety Zone again this year with positive feedback received from both pupils and teachers.
- 3.9 Full details of the review are set out in Section 6 of the Service Plan.

#### **4. SERVICE PLAN FOR 2008/09**

- 4.1 The format of this document remains essentially unchanged from that of the previous year. (An executive summary is attached at Appendix A.) The resources provided by the Council for this year should be sufficient to enable this Authority to meet the requirements of the FSA. However it is noted that the implementation of recent legislation continues to require officers to spend longer in food premises during each visit, in order to audit and evaluate the documented management systems that are now required. The service will continue to explore the use of alternative enforcement strategies and interventions for low-risk businesses and any time saved will be invested in inspecting high-risk premises and providing education and guidance.
- 4.2 In the event of unforeseen issues arising during the year that would hinder the achievement of all targets within the service plan, priority would be given to the inspection of food premises. It is also possible that the FSA may redirect resources, at any time, to meet the need of a nationally significant food safety concern.
- 4.3 Subject to Members' approval it is proposed to introduce a Scores on the Doors Scheme this year. This scheme will involve hygiene scores resulting from routine inspections being published on the Council's website in a star rating format which is easy for the public to understand. Businesses are awarded up to five stars, the higher the standard of compliance, the more stars are awarded. Very poor standards may be

awarded a no star rating. The scheme will also encourage food businesses to improve food hygiene standards by providing consumers with clear, jargon-free information, which will assist them in making informed decisions about where to eat. A report will be presented to members of the Licensing and Protection panel to explain this scheme in more detail outlining resource implications and other issues.

- 4.4 The 2008/09 service plan includes updated performance data and introduces new elements to the education programme. (See Appendix B.) The Food Services team is now part of the Lifestyles section which aims to improve the health of the people of Huntingdonshire by addressing food safety, diet, exercise etc in an holistic way. The increasing emphasis on education will be linked to partnership initiatives to address health inequalities and contributions towards keeping Huntingdonshire's population healthy. Relevant actions and targets have been included in the Sustainable Community Strategy which will help meet the strategy's desired outcomes

## **5. CONCLUSION**


- 5.1 Last year the team successfully inspected 100% of high-risk and 99.5% low-risk premises on its programme and delivered all of the initiatives outlined in the 2007/08 development plan. This year's plan includes sustainable development of the Safer Food Better Business training strategy, further development of the alternative enforcement strategy, implementation of the proposed Scores on the Doors scheme (subject to Member approval) and development of resources for schools. We will progress with our joint working with Trading Standards and the Health Protection Agency and continue to provide guidance and information to businesses on the implementation of the new food safety legislation. The plan also includes new elements to the education programme to provide a more joined-up approach to initiatives aimed at keeping the population healthy and reducing inequalities.

## **6. RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 Council is requested to note the contents of the report and adopt the Food Safety Service Plan 2008/9.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Food Safety Service Plan 2008/09  
FSA Framework Agreement  
FSA Code of Practice

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A full copy of the Food Safety Service Plan 2008/09 is available in the Members' Room. If you wish to have an individual copy, please contact the Environmental Health Admin Section on 01480 388302.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2008/9**

The overall objective of the Food Safety Service is to work with businesses and consumers to endeavour to ensure that food intended for sale 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.

The service is linked to the Council's corporate plan 'Growing Success' and the Community Aim of Healthy Living and the service objective is 'A high level of food safety within Huntingdonshire'.

The following key activities are identified within the performance management system and will be measured to determine the effectiveness of the listed activities and actions.

- Planned and reactive inspections of registered food premises
- Provision of training, advice to businesses and food hygiene promotion
- Taking food, water and environmental samples
- Investigation of food poisoning and cases/outbreaks of food-borne disease.

The service will seek to achieve this through a number of key actions that are identified within this service plan.

**Changes in resources from 2007/08 to 2008/09**

<b>STAFF</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Environmental Health Officers	3.6	3.6
Environmental Health Protection Officers	1.1	1.1
Lifestyle Manager	0.3	0.3
	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>
Admin Support Staff	1.75	1.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.75</b>	<b>6.75</b>

<b>FINANCIAL</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Direct Costs (Employees)	£272,350	£285,640
Overheads	£185,440	£179,110
Other Direct costs (specialist equipment legal fees and sampling)	£32,000	£13,670
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£489,890</u></b>	<b><u>£478,420</u></b>
<b>Income</b>	<b><u>-£600</u></b>	<b><u>-£600</u></b>
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b><u>£489,290</u></b>	<b><u>£477,820</u></b>

## ACTIONS AND TIME ALLOCATIONS

All calculations assume 1 x FTE = 1290 hours per year (215 working days x 6 productive hours per working day). All estimates include revisit activity. Time does not include administrative support.

Proactive Tasks	Level of activity		Hours	FTE
	Actual 2007/08	Estimated 2008/09	Estimated 2008/09	Estimated 2008/09
Planned Food Hygiene inspections	721	681	3287	2.55
Revisits	123	120		
Inspection of new, mobile and temporary premises	170	180		
EC approved manufacturing plants	23	20		
Food safety promotion	Provision of food hygiene training courses, (for English and non-English speaking food handlers) development of newsletters, leaflets, website. Promoting food safety week, safety zone etc (this resource is in addition to those identified in advice to businesses).		500	0.38
Liaison with other organisations	Maintenance and development of existing links and initiatives both internal and external.		150	0.12

Reactive Tasks	Level of activity		Hours	FTE
	Actual 2007/09	Estimated 2008/09	Estimated 2008/09	Estimated 2008/09
Food related complaints – estimate complaints re premises and food	179	180	400	0.31
Food inspection and sampling - estimate food, water and environmental samples to be taken	184	160	100	0.07
Infectious disease control - estimate notifications of food poisoning	255	260	150	0.12
Food Safety Incidents - estimate receipt	53	60	30	0.02

<b>Reactive Tasks</b>	<b>Level of activity</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Advice to business enquiries	Provision of guidance on the implementation of relevant and new legislation. Alternative Interventions to specific business groups with seminars and newsletters. Promotion of the FSA Safer Food Better Business toolkit to all relevant food business. Advice given at the time of each inspection plus an estimated further 200 enquiries from the public and businesses on food safety matters, including Home Authority Principle.	833	0.65
Staff development and training	Internal and external training courses, peer review exercise, research and development of special projects and initiatives.	500	0.39
Service management	Overall supervision and management of service, policy and procedural development. Responding to central government consultations and audits.	500	0.39
<b>Total</b>		6450	5.0

The budget for 2008/09 represents a decrease of 2.3% on the previous financial year. This decrease is largely as a result of a reduction in direct costs (equipment, sampling legal fees) allocated to the service and the relocation of some of the overhead costs. It is hoped that the reduced budget will be sufficient to meet the demands of the service but in the event of a complex legal case or the introduction of sampling charges then additional funds will have to be sought. There has also been a loss of income (£3,000) from the national butchers licensing scheme and game dealers licensing (both of which were repealed in 2006/7). This loss of income to the service has not been recuperated and an MTP bid submitted last year was unsuccessful.

The administrative support workload includes the production of detailed post-inspection letters, data entry to Flare, taking and recording of enquiries, service requests and collating data on infectious diseases, collation of information for FSA, CIEH returns, internal PI monitoring and EU directive compliance.

A balanced workload has been proposed for the 2008/09 year which incorporates a full range of enforcement actions including food safety education. The plan has been based upon the service being fully staffed. If staffing levels are not maintained due to staff leaving or long-term sickness then the service will be under-resourced to meet the requirements of this service plan. If this happens then enforcement work (routine inspections and dealing with complaints) will take priority and other activities will have to be reviewed.

## **DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2008/09**

During 2008/9, the following areas of improvement are planned. This work is in addition to existing food enforcement and promotional work being undertaken as identified in this service plan.

In partnership with other LA's in the County review the sustainability of training and coaching for the Safer Food Better Business food safety management toolkit for food business operators and develop and action plan. Where appropriate seek further external funding.

- Subject to Member approval further develop and implement a 'scores on the doors' initiative or local food hygiene award scheme for caterers and other food businesses.
- Continue to identify and develop opportunities for joint working with Trading Standards Officers.
- Develop action plan to implement the findings of the Equality Impact Assessments in accordance with corporate policy.
- Continuously upgrade the Flare database to improve quality and detailed information available to managers, officers and the FSA.
- Develop and enhance the existing established mechanism to work in partnership with the Huntingdonshire PCT and other partners to devise food hygiene and nutrition awareness training to young people, community groups and vulnerable groups.
- Review and Implement the relevant outcomes arising for the FSA revised Code of Practice for Food Law Enforcement with particular regard to Alternative Intervention Strategies for businesses.
- Working with the Cambridgeshire Business Partnership promote the role of the Food Safety service in supporting businesses with compliance.
- Develop a peer review exercise for all food team officers focusing on enforcement outcomes, consistency and good practice.
- Review existing food safety information available for nursery schools and reception years and where appropriate develop supportive educational resources.
- In the light of the Better Regulation Agenda and the new Regulators Compliance Code carry out a review of the services Enforcement Policy.
- Working in partnership with other services in the Council and local businesses organise and promote food safety and healthy eating initiatives as part of the Huntingdonshire Food Festival Education Zone.



## APPENDIX B

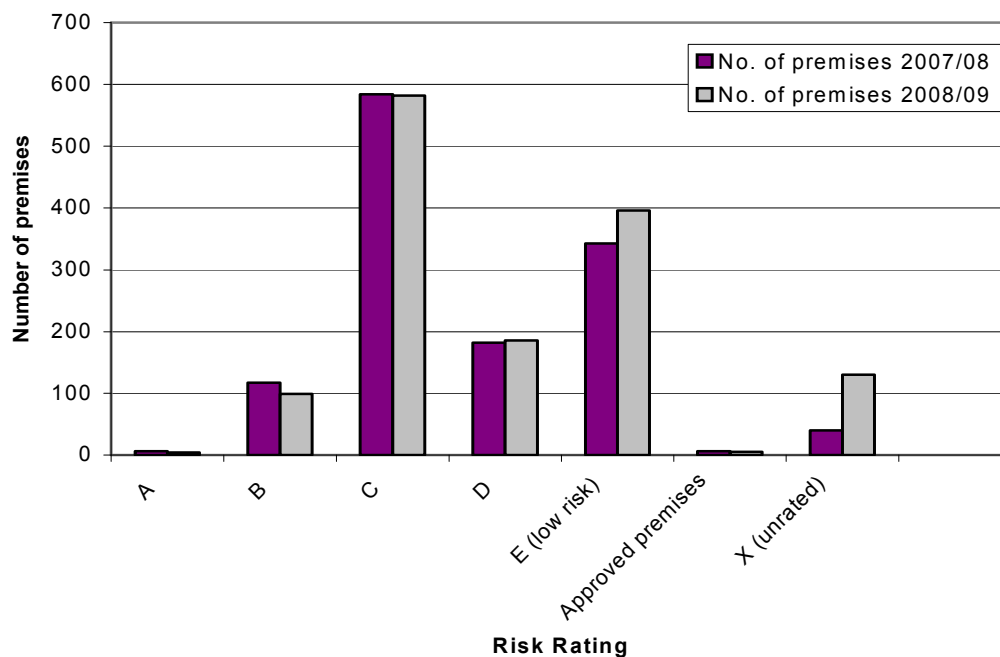
### CHANGES TO THE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMME 2008/2009

#### Food Hygiene Inspections

As of 1 April 2008 a total of 1402 food premises are subject to programmed food hygiene inspections. This is an increase of 126 premises on previous year. The breakdown of premises by types as identified within the Food Standards Agency monitoring report form is as follows:

<b>Food Producers (A)</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Slaughterhouses (B)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Food Manufactures/processors (C)</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Food Packer (D)</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Importer/Exporter (E)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Food Distribution/Transporters (F)</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Food Retailer (G)</b>	<b>339</b>
<b>Food Caterer (H)</b>	<b>951</b>
<b>Food Manufacturer selling retail (J)</b>	<b>40</b>

The profile of risk categories, as defined by the revised FSA Code of Practice issued under the Food Safety Act 1990 is shown below. 130 new premises (mainly market stall operators) are currently waiting to be rated (annotated as X) and will receive an inspection within two months of their opening date or when appropriate. It is estimated that around 80% of the premises rated as E (low risk) may be subject to the Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES). (See paragraph 3.2.3 of report.) Subject to receipt of guidance to be issued by the FSA later in the year a number of D and E risk premises may also be subject to Alternative Interventions.



## **Profile of Food Premises Risk Rating**

### **Education Programme**

- In 2007/08 we ran 10 programmed CIEH Level 2 food hygiene courses for local food handlers with 115 people passing and receiving certificates. Three courses were run free of charge for voluntary groups. This year it is planned to run another 10 foundation food hygiene courses and some additional low cost training to voluntary groups, schools, luncheon clubs and those catering for vulnerable groups.
- In addition to the Food Hygiene training we also ran 6 CIEH Level 2 healthier foods and special diets nutrition training courses with over 60 people passing and receiving certificates. These courses will educate individuals on diet, nutrition and menu planning and help to promote and encourage healthy eating. Free training was provided to voluntary groups, schools, luncheon clubs and those catering for vulnerable groups. For 2008/9 it is planned to run 2 further courses.
- The primary focus of the education programme this year will continue to be the provision of guidance and information to businesses on the implementation of new food safety legislation and advising duty holders on the development of food safety management systems. A successful bid to the FSA for grant funding has enabled us to employ FSA-accredited consultants to deliver and organise 17 local training courses and 1:1 coaching. A total of 316 catering businesses within Huntingdonshire engaged in this process and the confidence in management and standards of hygiene and safety at these premises have been significantly improved as a result of this intervention. Now that the funding has run out we will seek to ensure the sustainability of the project and may seek further grant funding.
- It is planned to continue to work in partnership with Huntingdon PCT through the Hunts for Good Food Project. The Hunts for Good Project, which is managed within the Food service, was awarded Regional Food Champion Status by the Food Standards Agency. The service has now been nominated by the FSA, along with the six other Regional winners for the National Food Champion Award which will be announced in the House of Commons later in June.
- The service will assist with the organisation and development of the Huntingdonshire Food Festival and will lead on the organisation of the Education Zone which will promote healthy eating, food safety, food knowledge and the work of local community groups.
- It is planned to review all food safety information and leaflets available through the service, including the website maintenance and development of the Food Service web site which is currently receiving over 10,000 visits per year with many food safety advisory leaflets and documents being regularly downloaded.
- We will work with the Cambridgeshire Business Partnership to promote the role of the Food Safety service in supporting businesses with compliance. A major event is being planned for Huntingdonshire in September 2008.

- In addition to these activities there will continue to be a wide range of promotional events carried out with local community groups, and primary and nursery schools using a wide variety of educational methods to promote food safety and hygiene in the home.

**For comparison, the table below shows the enforcement activity carried out in previous years.**

	<b>2006/7 Actual</b>	<b>2007/8 Actual</b>	<b>2008/9 <u>Estimated</u></b>
Food inspections carried out	804	721	681
- high risk	544	514	446
- low risk	152	174	235
-AES and Alternative Interventions	108	108	120
Revisits	212	123	120
Other visits (new premises, events, sampling and advisory)	304	404	380
Total number of inspections and visits	1218	1248	1181

	<b>2006/07 Actual</b>	<b>2007/08 Actual</b>	<b>2008/9 <u>Estimated</u></b>
Percentage of high risk premises requiring an inspection that were inspected	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of low risk premises requiring an inspection that were inspected	98.8%	99.5%	100%
Number of letters/inspection reports	1190	898	1200
Improvement notices	12	22	15
Formal cautions	0	0	0
Food complaints	108	87	90
Food Premises	89	92	80
Prosecutions	0	1	1
Food samples (total)	136	184	160
Unsatisfactory food samples	17	43	25
Export certificates issued	59	64	70

	<b>2006/07 Actual</b>	<b>2007/08 Actual</b>	<b><u>2008/9 Estimated</u></b>
Infectious diseases	267	255	260
Food alerts (hazard warnings)	74	53	60
Customer Satisfaction	100%	99%	99%