

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title:	Monitoring Report on the Delivery of the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan
Meeting/Date:	Licensing and Protection Committee – 17 November 2016
Executive Portfolio:	Executive Councillor for Community Resilience – Cllr Steve Criswell
Report by:	Commercial Team Leader – Keith Lawson
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

The Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2016-17 was approved on 21 June 2016.

This is a progress report on the delivery of the Service Plan and covers the period from 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016. In general terms it shows that the service is on target to deliver the programmed work in the approved Service Plan.

Programmed work is delivered alongside reactive work, the volume of which by definition is impossible to predict. Therefore it is important to carry out this work according to risk in order to ensure that valuable resources are not diverted from the programmed work. Complaints and accident investigations are prioritised using risk-based selection criteria.

The increasing numbers of start-up businesses and the high turnover of ownership amongst some sectors of the food industry (especially takeaways) also place unpredictable demands on resources. New food businesses must be visited as soon as possible after they start to trade but those visits must not be at the expense of visits to high risk established businesses.

Corporate Performance Indicator PI20 refers to the percentage of newly registered food businesses which are inspected within 28 days of registration and the target for 2016-17 is 50%. The service is currently meeting this target and has already carried out 57% of the high risk premises inspections that were scheduled on 1 April.

Appendices 1 and 2 contain detailed information about the delivery of the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan. The report only contains headline information about the delivery of the Health and Safety Service Plan as Members requested that the detail be provided in a separate report.

Recommendation(s):

Members are requested to:-

1. Comment on the delivery of the Food Safety Service Plans for the period 1 April to 30 September;
2. Consider the need to receive further reports at future meetings.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. The report provides information about the delivery of the Service Plan for the period between 1 April 2016 and 30 September 2016.
- 1.2 It focuses on the Food Safety Service Plan but contains only headline information about the Health and Safety Service Plan as Members have asked for a separate report.

2. WHY IS THE REPORT NECESSARY?

- 2.1 At the meetings on 21 June and 19 July Members asked to be kept informed about the delivery of the work in the approved plans. At the meeting on 19 July Members were invited to accompany an officer on some routine visits and to contact the Commercial Team Leader to make the necessary arrangements.
- 2.2 Cllr Criswell and Cllr Conboy have since visited some premises with officers from the Commercial Team and this report will provide some context within which those visits can be considered.

3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES COVERED BY THE REPORT

- 3.1 Food Law Enforcement consists of these areas of work:
 - a) Planned activities such as routine inspections of food businesses, food and environmental sampling and the provision of food hygiene training courses;
 - b) Unplanned (reactive) work such as the investigation of customer complaints, dealing with requests for compliance advice and following up notifications of food poisoning;
 - c) Liaison with other departments in the interests of coordinated service delivery: in particular licensing and planning;
 - d) Supporting national strategies and the wider public health agenda.
- 3.2 Health and Safety regulation consists of these areas of work:
 - a) Planned activities such as unannounced inspections of high risk businesses and targeted interventions in line with the HSE's strategic aims;
 - b) 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);
 - c) The provision of compliance advice to businesses.

4. PROGRESS AGAINST THE APPROVED PLANS

- 4.1 Appendices 1 and 2 relate to the delivery of the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan.
- 4.2 Appendix 1 compares the recorded activity in each of the programmed work service areas with the predicted activity in the approved Service Plan.
- 4.3 The key activities of scheduled inspections, compliance revisits, inspections of new businesses and sampling visits are on target.
- 4.4 The provision of information, advice and training is an important part of the service. Business advice is an integral part of every inspection but there is an established programme of food hygiene courses aimed at people who work in food businesses and for whom appropriate training is vital to protect public health.
- 4.5 The service also uses social media to promote good practice, good news stories and to support the FSA's strategic aims.

- 4.6 Appendix 2 refers to the unplanned (reactive) work. Customer complaints and service requests are slightly ahead of the predicted numbers. However they are closely monitored and prioritised according to risk using publicly available selection criteria.
- 4.7 The Health and Safety Service Plan also contains a mixture of programmed work, reactive work and the provision of compliance information and advice. Several pieces of work have begun since the last meeting in July and this is reflected in the numbers of premises inspections.
- 4.8 The number of complaints received and the number of accident investigations are both higher than the predicted levels. Whilst it is impossible to stem the flow of complaints it is important that responses and investigations are proportionate to risk. The number of complaints is monitored closely and it may be necessary to introduce some selection criteria if the numbers continue to rise. Accident investigations are already selected according to established selection criteria.
- 4.9 Officers continue to witness serious health and safety problems whilst carrying out other duties. These are identified as “Matters of Evident Concern” (MEC). The frequency with which they are reported is an indication of the extent to which businesses fail to manage serious risks without our intervention.

5. RISKS

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. 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.

6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

- 6.1. These reporting arrangements support the wider corporate objectives to “*Improve the efficiency of service delivery and become more business-like*” and to “*drive service priorities*”.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Licensing & Protection Committee, on behalf of the Council, approved the Service Plan for 2016/17. At the time of approval, the resources allocated to the plan were considered to be sufficient to deliver the Plan in year. With the increased reactive activity demonstrated within this report Officers are satisfied that the Plan remains deliverable.

9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1. To keep Members informed about the delivery of the approved Service Plans.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Food Safety Service Plan: Programmed (proactive) Activity
Appendix 2 - Food Safety Service Plan: Unplanned (reactive) Activity

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