

Food Standards Agency Audit

Portfolio:	Community
Ward(s) Affected:	All

Purpose: This report is to advise members of the findings of the Food Standards Agency's recent audit of the Council's Food Law Enforcement Service.

1. Background

- 1.1. Since the introduction of the Food Standards Agency in April 2000, the Agency has set minimum standards of performance, both quantitative and qualitative, which all local authorities carrying out food law enforcement are expected to meet. The quantitative aspects are monitored by way of quarterly and annual returns submitted to the Food Standards Agency. The local authority audit scheme which was launched in April 2001, is the process by which the Agency conducts a qualitative assessment of local authority performance.
- 1.2. The audit of Surrey Health Borough Council's food service carried out on 8th – 9th July 2015, was a focussed audit. The audit focused on controls that the LA had in place to deal with Incidents and Alerts with reference to the Framework Agreement and the Food Law Code of Practice (FLCoP). This included organisation and management, resources, development and implementation of appropriate control procedures, receipt of and response to alerts, reporting of incidents, advice enforcement and sampling, premises database, training and authorisation of officers, liaison and internal monitoring.
- 1.3. The Food Standards Agency's report of this audit is attached at Annex A.

2. Findings of the Audits

- 2.1. The Food Standards Agency does not operate an audit scoring system. The Agency considers that the detailed audit report, which includes an Executive Summary and specific recommendations for improvement, provides a more accurate indication of the performance of the authority.
- 2.2. The findings of the audit are summarised in the Executive Summary on page 4 of the attached audit report and this reiterates the very positive feedback delivered by the auditors during their visit. The summary states that 'The Authority was found to be delivering a range of food law enforcement activities in accordance with the statutory obligations placed on the Authority as a competent food authority. These were generally delivered according to prescribed timescales by experienced professional staff.'
- 2.3. The Food Standards Agency recommends four items for improvement that the Authority has agreed together with a realistic timescale to complete these.

These form the basis of a short action plan. See Annex A within the audit report.

3. Post Audit Action

- 3.1. The Environmental Health Manager has completed two of the four items identified within the action plan and has submitted this to the Food Standards Agency for their approval.
- 3.2. The Food Standards Agency may, at any time in the future, seek further evidence of the Council's adherence to its internal monitoring procedure and external review arrangements for the food service. It is important that these monitoring and review arrangements continue to be fully implemented, not only to meet the Agency's requirements, but also to ensure that the Council continues to deliver its food law enforcement service to a high standard.
- 3.3. The Agency has placed a copy of the report on their website at www.food.gov.uk/enforcement and in the libraries of the Houses of Parliament, the British Library and the Copyright Library.

4. Proposal

- 4.1. The Food Standards Agency expects the audit report to be brought to the attention of Members.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1. There are no resource implications arising from the audit report

6. Recommendation

- 6.1. It is recommended that Members note the content of the audit report

Background Papers: Annex A - Audit of Local Authority Service Delivery, Controls for Incidents and Alerts.

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