

Food Safety Service Plan 2021/22

Portfolio	Environment and Health
Ward(s) Affected:	All

Purpose

To consider for approval by the Licensing Committee the attached draft Food Safety Service Plan for 2021/22.

Background

- 1.0 In the United Kingdom Food Safety Law is enforced by officers employed by local authorities and port health authorities who are collectively known as Food Authorities. The enforcement of food safety law is one of the Council's statutory functions.
- 1.1 The national Competent Authority for the arrangement of food official controls is the Food Standards Agency (FSA). Statutory guidance on how official controls should be carried out is provided in the Food Law Code of Practice and this is supported by non-statutory guidance in the Food Law Practice Guidance. Further guidance is provided by the FSA with respect to the delivery of official controls by food authorities in the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement which also sets out the Agency's arrangements for food authorities.
- 1.2 The FSA requires all food authorities to have a Food Safety Service Plan to ensure that national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally. It is advised that the plan is submitted to the relevant member forum for approval to ensure local transparency and accountability.
- 1.3 The Surrey Heath draft Food Safety Service Plan 2021/22 is attached at Annex A. The drafting of the plan was delayed this year to enable the plan to take account of the FSA Covid-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan (2021) which sets out guidance and advice to LAs on delivery of official food controls in the period 1 July 2021 to 2023/24, in light of the impact of Covid-19 on the delivery of food safety services
- 1.4 The draft plan sets out how the Council will deliver the food safety service in accordance with the FSA requirements and provides information about the service, the means by which is provided and the means for monitoring and reviewing the service.

Key issues

2. 1.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the delivery of the food safety service and revised food safety work priorities for 2021/22 are set out in the draft service plan in accordance with the FSA LA Recovery Plan.

The headlines in the service plan are as follows:

- a. In Surrey Heath 706 food businesses are subject to inspection by the food safety service. This number has increased primarily due to the number of new home based food businesses registrations in 2020/21.
- b. Despite the disruption to the food inspection programme in 2020/21 due to Covid-19, the Food and Safety Team carried out 136 on-site food safety inspections and investigated 57 complaints about food or food premises and 75 food borne infectious disease cases. This was in addition to the new Covid-19 business restriction work that the Team was required to carry out. The service is well placed to meet the FSA instruction that food inspection programmes need to be fully realigned with the original required inspection frequencies by the end of March 2023.
- c. The food safety service contributes to the corporate priorities set out in the Council's Annual Plan 2021/22. The percentage of food premises achieving a Food Hygiene Rating 3, 4 or 5 (i.e. Satisfactory, Good or Very Good) and are therefore broadly compliant with food hygiene law is 96.6%, against the Corporate Success Measure target of 95%. The small percentage of business that are rated 0,1 and 2 (Urgent Improvement/Major Improvement/Some Improvement Necessary) are subject to written warnings, hygiene improvement notices or voluntary / emergency closure/prosecution depending on the severity of non-compliance.
- d. The service continues to support the Council's six Primary Authority Partnerships (PAPs) with local businesses. The PAP scheme entitles businesses or organisations which operate across local authority boundaries to ask for a Partnership with a Local Authority (LA). Those businesses are expected to work closely with the LA to ensure they comply with the Regulations that apply to them. This is expected to lead to greater compliance by the business, but also greater consistency and co-ordination of regulatory enforcement by LAs. The Council is able to recharge the businesses for the officer time spent on the partnership.
- e. The draft plan outlines how the performance of the food safety service is monitored to ensure all food safety interventions are of the correct standard and quality and regulation by officers is consistent and in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy.

Options

3. The options are to approve or to amend the attached Food Safety Service Plan for 2021/22.

Proposal

4. The proposal is for the Licensing Committee to approve the attached Food Safety Service Plan for 2021/22.

Resource Implications

5. There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.

Recommendation

6. The Licensing Committee is advised to resolve that the Food Safety Service Plan 2021/22 attached at Annex A to this report be approved.

Annexes:

Annex 1 Draft Food
Safety Service Plan
2021/2022

Background Papers:

Covid-19 Local Authority
Recovery Plan
(September 2021)

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