



ARTICLE NO:2B

**CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE:**

**MEMBERS UPDATE 2013/14
ISSUE: 4**

Article of: Assistant Director Community Services

Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (People and Places)

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SUBJECT: FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2013 / 14

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

1.1 To provide Members with information about the Food Safety Service Plan operating during 2013/14.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will be aware that the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is an independent Government department responsible for food safety and hygiene across the UK. The FSA works with businesses to help them produce safe food and with Local Authorities to enforce food safety regulations.

2.2 Food safety enforcement is primarily the responsibility of Local Authorities. Accordingly, this Council fulfils these duties through its Food Safety Service (the Service) which aims to ensure all commercial food production in the Borough is carried out safely and is fit for human consumption - thereby protecting the health of West Lancashire residents and the wider community.

2.3 One of the key roles of the FSA is to set and monitor enforcement standards within Local Authorities and to audit against these standards to ensure an effective and consistent approach. The FSA 'Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement' (the Framework Agreement) specifies the arrangements that should be established and maintained by a Local Authority to enforce food hygiene legislation. It is this document that requires the Council to formulate and implement a service delivery plan in accordance with FSA guidance.

- 2.4 Accordingly, the FSA places significant emphasis Food Safety Service Plans as a means to:
- Ensure Local Authorities address national priorities and standards, so these can be delivered locally;
 - Focus debate on key delivery issues;
 - Provide an essential link with financial planning;
 - Set objectives for the future and identify major issues that cross service boundaries; and
 - Provide a method of managing performance and making performance comparisons.
- 2.5 FSA guidance also states that Service Plans should have a common format. This enables the FSA to assess service delivery nationwide and allows Local Authorities to compare performance. Service Plans are also seen by the FSA as an expression of a Local Authority's own commitment to the development of its Food Safety Service.

3.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The Food Safety Service Plan for 2012/13 has been implemented. Performance against that Service Plan has been reviewed and the conclusions of the review are contained in the Food Safety Service Plan for 2013/14 (the Plan), which is attached to this update at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The distribution of the Plan for 2013/14 has been delayed for this year only as officers had invited representatives from the Food Standards Agency to the Council to review its approach to food safety management. The result of these meetings is that the format of future service plans will be amended to provide clearer and more succinct information. Accordingly, the service plan for 2014/15 (and future plans) will be distributed to Members at the beginning of the relevant year.
- 3.3 It is a requirement of the Framework Agreement that the Plan is submitted for appropriate Member approval. Accordingly, the Constitution requires the Plan to be approved by the Portfolio Holder for Health, Leisure and Community Safety and be submitted to the Corporate and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.
- 3.4 The Plan was approved by Portfolio Holder for Health, Leisure and Community Safety on 30 October 2013.
- 3.5 In order to provide local transparency and accountability, a copy of the Plan will be placed on the Council's website and sent to:
- (i) The Consultant in Health Protection for the West Lancashire area
 - (ii) The PHE Food, Water & Environmental Microbiology Network (Preston laboratory)
 - (iii) Lancashire County Analyst.

4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 4.1 The Plan provides an expression of the Council's commitment to the development of the Service, which contributes significantly toward improving the health of the local communities within West Lancashire.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs associated with production of the Plan and the work detailed in the Plan for 2013/14 can be met within existing resources.

6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The Plan describes the financial and resource implications for the Service. If adequate resources are not made available to deliver an effective food safety service as required by the FSA, the Council may be open to criticism and/or potential audit by the FSA.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The Article is for information only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members / and or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Annual Food Safety Service Plan 2013/14