



Report of: Executive Manager Community Services

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Fowler

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SUBJECT: FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2009 / 10

CAB35/CAL

Borough wide interest

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek agreement to the proposed Food Safety Service Plan for 2009/2010.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the proposed Food Safety Service Plan for 2009/2010, attached as an Appendix to this Report, be approved.

2.2 That in future years, the approval of the Food Safety Service Plans be delegated to the Executive Manager Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Health.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is an independent food safety watchdog set up by an Act of Parliament in 2000 to protect the public's health and consumer interests in relation to food.

3.2 The FSA provides advice and information to the public and Government on food safety from farm to fork, nutrition and diet. It also protects consumers through effective food enforcement and monitoring.

3.3 Food safety enforcement work is primarily the responsibility of Local Authorities and this Council works to fulfil these duties and protect the health of residents and the wider community by ensuring that all commercial production of food in the Borough is carried out safely and is fit for human consumption.

3.4 The Food Standards Agency has, as one of its key roles, responsibility for setting

and monitoring standards and auditing Local Authorities' enforcement activities in order to ensure this activity is effective and undertaken on a consistent basis.

3.5 The FSA sees Food Safety Service Plans as an important part of the process to ensure local authorities address national priorities and standards and deliver them locally. It sees the Food Safety Service Plans will also:

- 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 means of managing performance and making performance comparisons.

3.6 In their guidance, the FSA has requested such plans have a common format. This enables it to assess local authorities' delivery of service but also enables local authorities to analyse and compare their performance with each other as part of the Best Value agenda. Service Plans are also seen by the FSA as an expression of a local authority's own commitment to the development of the food service.

3.7 Past Food Safety Service Plans have been submitted to and agreed by Members each year since 2002.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The Food Safety Service Plan for 2008/2009, as agreed by Members last year, has been implemented. Performance against that Service Plan has now been reviewed and the conclusions of the review are contained in the draft Service Plan for 2009/2010.

4.2 Once again, the Service achieved 100% of all food premises inspections that were due in 2008/2009 for both high and low risk premises. This compares with a Performance Target of 100%.

4.3 This is the sixth consecutive year where the Service has undertaken 100% of all food premises inspections which have been required. This level of consistency over the six years is the best in Lancashire.

4.4 The draft Food Safety Service Plan for 2009/2010 has been developed and is attached to this report as an Appendix and consists of the following details:

- | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------|
| Section 1 | - | Service Aims and objectives |
| Section 2 | - | Background |
| Section 3 | - | Service Delivery |
| Section 4 | - | Resources |
| Section 5 | - | Quality Assessment |

- 4.5 The draft Food Safety Service Plan provides a detailed view of the work of the Food Safety Service. It shows how the Service's aims and objectives are linked into the Council's corporate priorities and values. It details the services provided and used, along with the demands that are made on the Service.
- 4.6 The Plan highlights the fact that additional intervention visits to premises were required during 2008-2009. These were required, to undertake final verifications following 'Safer Food Better Business' mentoring which took place following a successful joint bid to the Food Standards Agency by this Authority, three other local councils and Food North West. Finance from the bid allowed approximately 100 businesses in West Lancashire to receive the mentoring which enabled those businesses to implement food safety management systems using the 'Safer Food Better Business' model. .
- 4.7 A full breakdown is then provided of the proposed Premises Inspection and Intervention Programme for 2009/2010, the Food Sampling Programme and the proposed responses to a range of requests for service.
- 4.8 As well as reviewing performance for 2008/2009, the Service Plan also details proposed areas for improvement and changes for 2009/2010.
- 4.9 The FSA is currently looking to introduce fundamental changes to the whole approach to food law enforcement by Local Authorities. The aim is to provide Local Authorities with a suite of flexible interventions for improving business compliance.
- 4.10 To develop, this work, the FSA's Enforcement Division is leading a major policy review called the Changes to Local Authority Enforcement (CLAE) project.
- 4.11 The CLAE project is overseeing four policy reviews which have been set up to implement ideas from the Hampton Review, and from a paper which identifies the top 5 priorities for enforcement in the Agency. These reviews relate to:
- the review of Enforcement Policy, to introduce the Policy of interventions
 - the review of monitoring
 - the review of audit arrangements
 - the review of the Framework Agreement
- 4.12 By completing these reviews, the FSA aims to provide Local Authorities with a sweeping revision of the approach to food law enforcement in food premises – described by the FSA as the "New Vision".
- 4.13 The FSA published its new Code of Practice in June 2008 and this has been implemented by the Council. However, the supporting Guidance has not yet been published and circulated to Local Authorities.
- 4.14 The Code of Practice is seen by the FSA as enabling Local Authorities to focus their resources on the areas and premises which pose the greatest risk, thereby using those resources more effectively. A key feature of this approach will be

working with businesses to achieve compliance, very much in line with this Council's existing approach.

- 4.15 In order to provide local transparency and accountability, in addition to the draft Food Safety Service Plan being submitted to Members, copies will also be sent for comment to the Consultant in Health Protection for the West Lancashire area, to the HPA Food, Water & Environmental Microbiology Network (Preston laboratory) and to the Lancashire County Analyst.
- 4.16 Once the Service Plan has been finalised a copy will again be put onto the Council's Web-site for public information and with an opportunity for comments to be made on the content of the Service Plan. Existing Customer Surveys involving the Food Safety Service will again continue and give members of the public a further opportunity to comment on the work of the Service.

5.0 ISSUES

- 5.1 The FSA 'Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement' specifies the arrangement to be put in place and operated by a local authority for the enforcement of food hygiene legislation.
- 5.2 One of the requirements of the Framework Agreement document is that a local authority shall draw up, document and implement a service delivery plan in accordance with the FSA guidance. There is also a requirement that the service delivery plan is submitted for appropriate Member approval.
- 5.3 By submitting the draft Food Safety Service Plan to Members it is hoped to provide local transparency and accountability, as well as fulfilling the requirements of the FSA Framework Agreement.

6.0 PROPOSALS

The draft Food Safety Service Plan for 2009/2010 is being submitted to Members to seek agreement for the Service Plan to be implemented for 2009/2010.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 7.1 The Food Safety Service Plan provides an expression of the Council's commitment to the development of the food safety service. This Service contributes significantly towards improving the health of the local communities within West Lancashire.

8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The costs associated with production of the Food Safety Service Plan have been met from existing budgets.
- 8.2 The Plan describes what work will be carried out by the Service. The costs of this work will be met from existing budgets.

9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 The Food Safety Service Plan describes the financial and resource implications for the Food Safety Service, which will be met from existing budgets. If adequate staffing resources were not available, the Council may not be able to deliver an effective food safety service as required by the FSA.

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 Agreement to the Food Service Plan for 2009/2010 will confirm the Council's commitment to fulfilling its responsibilities for food enforcement work.

Background Documents

The following background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing this Report.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Document</u>
12.03.2001	Food Standards Agency 'Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement'
June 2008	Food Standards Agency "Food Law" Code of Practice
March 2006	Food Standards Agency "Food Law" "Guidance"
	The Council's Corporate Performance Plan for 2008 – 09
	Food Safety Service – Food Sampling Policy
	Food Safety Service – Food Sampling Programme for 2009/10
	The West Lancashire Profile

Equality Impact Assessment

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – DRAFT ANNUAL FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2009-10