

Report

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Report to:	Community Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	30 June 2015
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Review of Official Food and Feed Controls during 2014/2015
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ advise the Committee of the official food and feed law controls delivered during 2014/2015
- ♦ advise the Committee of the outcome of the Food Standards Agency audit of official control delivery at Dairy Establishments undertaken in October 2014.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the contents of the Food and Feed Service Plan Review report be noted; and
- (2) that the contents of the Food Standards Agency audit report and action plan be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1 Environmental Health and Trading Standards are the designated enforcement authorities in respect of The Official Feed and food Control Regulation, Regulation (EC) 882/2004 and are responsible for the delivery of official food and feed controls (e.g. inspections, audits, sampling and analysis).
- 3.2 The Food Standards Agency, 'Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities', requires all authorities to produce an annual Service Plan which includes food and feed official controls and also conduct a performance review of the previous year's Service Plan.
4. Food and Feed Service Plan Review
 - 4.1 The Council's Food and Feed Service Plan is developed annually to ensure compliance with the Agency's Framework Agreement and is included within the Fleet and Environmental Services Plan for 2015\16.
 - 4.2 Service Plans must include a review of performance in order to address any variances from meeting the requirements of the service plan and identify areas for improvement. The performance review of the 2014\15 plan is attached as Appendix 1. The plan follows a set format set out in the Framework Agreement and provides background information as well as specific targets.

5 Food Standards Agency Audit

- 5.1 The Food Standards Agency carried out an audit of the Service in October 2014. The audit covered the delivery of official controls in relation to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs and Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin. The aim was to gain assurance that controls are being effectively implemented in approved milk and dairy establishments and to monitor that the key recommendations made by the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) following their audit of the UK controls relating to the safety of milk and dairy products in April 2013 are being complied with.
- 5.2 The findings of the audit highlighted good work in relation to the delivery of official controls, the need to update internal policy documents and in particular re-introduce internal review arrangements. An action plan to address the recommendations identified by the FSA during the Audit has been prepared and agreed with FSA. A copy of the audit report and agreed action plan is attached as Appendix 2.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1 There are no employee implications.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 Environmental Health is a statutory function concerned with the protection of the health of consumers. The management and delivery of the service relies primarily on sufficient numbers of suitably qualified and authorised staff. Lower staffing levels could result in an increased probability of these protective functions being compromised and could threaten the satisfactory implementation of the requirements of the Service Plan.

- 8.2 There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1 This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.
- 9.2. There is no requirement to undertake any consultation in terms of the information contained in this report.

Colin McDowall
Executive Director
(Community and Enterprise Resources)

16 June 2015

Link(s) to Council Objectives and Values

- Accountable, effective and efficient
- Support the local economy by providing the right conditions for growth, improving skills and employability

Link(s) to Council Objectives

None

Previous References

Community Services Committee 4February 2014

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:- Craig Brown, Environmental Services Manager

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APPENDIX 1

SECTION 1: SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Aims and Objectives

Provide a comprehensive food safety enforcement and advisory service to reduce the risk of food borne infection.

Undertake visits to producers and distributors of animal feedstuffs to ensure statutory compliance

Undertake visits to Primary Producers subject to Food Standards Agency (FSA) funding and Targets

1.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

The work of the Environmental Services in respect of food and feed safety links into the Council's Connect objective to improve and maintain health and increase physical activity.

Environmental Services partnership working with Health Board colleagues and other agencies continues to link into common objectives and joint plans to improve the health of those living and working within South Lanarkshire.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

South Lanarkshire is a mixed urban and rural authority and this is reflected in the range of food and feed businesses which operate locally. In addition to the retail and catering food businesses typically found in all local authorities, South Lanarkshire has a wide range of food manufacturing and processing businesses that produce food for local, national and international markets. The large rural areas of South Lanarkshire also give rise to a significant number of agricultural businesses involved in the primary production of food and feed and the areas still retains a large number of dairy farms and dairy product processors.

2.2 Organisational Structure

During 2014/15 the Service was structured along a generalist operating model for Environmental Health and Trading Standards. Environmental Services comprises of three area teams, each delivering a wide range of Environmental Health and Trading Standards functions. In addition a team comprising several discrete units operates across the whole of South Lanarkshire, delivering services aimed at protecting the environment, dealing with anti-social behaviour noise and community safety. All teams are based at Montrose House, Hamilton.

2.3 Scope of Environmental Services

The scope of Environmental Services includes all Food and Feed Safety activities for which local authorities have statutory responsibility.

In addition the Service is also involved in the investigation of outbreaks of food borne illness in partnership with Lanarkshire Health Board and also deals with all public and private water supply issues.

2.4 Food Safety Demands

There are 2478 premises with the risk profile being as follows:

Food Hygiene Premises Risk Rating

Category A risk premises - 23

Category B risk premises - 289

Category C risk premises - 1128

Category D risk premises - 429

Category E risk premises - 609 (low risk)

Food Standards Premises Risk Rating

Category A risk premises - 15

Category B risk premises - 355

Category C risk premises - 2109 (low risk)

Low risk category premises are included in an Alternative Enforcement Strategy whereby businesses receive a focused inspection or receive a questionnaire and advice.

Overall the number in each category remained relative constant during 2014/15 which is a positive step in terms of maintaining food safety standards.

Feed Hygiene Premises

There are a total of 996 premises that are involved with animal feed, comprising:

Farms	953
Low – Medium Risk	551
Low Risk/still to be registered	402

Manufacturers 5 Medium - High Risk

Hauliers 7 Low Risk

Pet food manufacturers (low volume, no animal by product) 2 Low Risk

Food Manufacturers (surplus non ABP product for feed chain processing) 2 Low – Medium Risk

Retailers (surplus non ABP food for feed processing) 18 Low - Medium Risk

Feed suppliers/retailers/brokers 9 Low – Medium Risk Risk

SECTION 3: SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 Food and Feeding stuffs Premises Inspections

In accordance with policy, priority was given to ensuring that routine programmed food hygiene inspections were undertaken in accordance with at least the minimum frequency outlined within the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland).

A total of 3056 interventions were made to food premises last year. These included programmed inspections, re-visits, sampling, food complaints, food alerts and advisory visits. 86% of food businesses were found to be broadly compliant during 2014/15.

The visits are predominantly conducted on an unannounced basis and many are undertaken during the evenings when the business is operating.

35 feed inspections were carried out in 2014/15 to check compliance and 95% of establishments were found to be broadly compliant.

3.2 Food and Feeding stuffs Enquiries

A total of 1095 requests were received in relation to food and feed last year which was a 13% increase on the previous year. 86% of these enquiries were responded to within 48 hours of notification as detailed within the Service Plan.

3.3 Home Authority Principle

Home Authority arrangements remained unchanged and considerable work was undertaken to respond to enquiries and requests for information from local businesses mainly in relation to food labelling and the provision of export certificates.

3.4 Advice to Business

An important part of the work of the Service continued to be providing advice to food businesses. Advice is usually requested and given to assist food and feed business owners to meet their statutory responsibilities but some advice is also given on technical issues in order to prevent unnecessary expenditure. 96.0% of enquiries were responded to within the 2 day target specified in the Service Plan. The number of requests for advice was in line with the number of request received in 2013/14.

3.5 Sampling

425 samples from food premises were submitted to the laboratory last year and the majority of samples were subsequently reported to be satisfactory by the Public Analyst. Sampling is principally focussed on local products and/or as part of national sampling projects.

20 feed samples were taken during 2014/15; six were unsatisfactory and were followed up by inspections to check the procedures for producing the affected batch of feed.

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

A total of 105 cases of food poisoning were investigated last year which is slightly less than in the previous year, and within the target set by the Service Plan. Some of these cases related to persons returning from holiday abroad.

99.5% of cases were investigated within 24 hours of notification as detailed within the Service Plan.

One suspected food related outbreak was reported during 2014/15; investigation did not determine the source of the illness.

An Outbreak Control Plan to identify and control the spread of infection has been agreed with Lanarkshire Health Board and this is kept under review.

3.7 Food Safety Incidents.

This is a national electronic warning system whereby the Food Standards Agency can send details of food related issues to all local authorities for information purposes or for action, depending on the circumstances. A Food Alert for Action is issued where intervention by enforcement authorities is required. These notices and alerts are often issued in conjunction with a product withdrawal or recall by a manufacturer, retailer or distributor.

The Agency issued 2 Food Alerts for Action during 2014/15. The main purpose is to ensure that food products which may be unsafe or not meet statutory requirements are withdrawn from sale as quickly as possible.

Allergy alerts are also issued to highlight issues relating to the composition of a product which may not be properly included in the list of ingredients and where one of these may cause an allergic reaction which can be very serious in some instances for example the presence of nuts in a product.

3.8 Liaison with other Organisations

South Lanarkshire continued as an active member of the West of Scotland Food Liaison Group the authority is also represented on the Scottish Fish Hygiene Working Group.

The Environmental Services Manager is currently the chairman of the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee (SFELC).

Regular meetings also take place with NHS Lanarkshire to which a representative from Scottish Water is normally invited.

In relation to feed South Lanarkshire continued to be an active member of the West of Scotland Feed Group and also attend the national SFELC Feed Sub-committee.

3.9 Food and Feedingstuffs Safety and Standards Promotion

During 2014/15 South Lanarkshire Council participated in the national Food Hygiene Information Scheme and launched the scheme in time for the Commonwealth Games. This had some similarities to our previous Food Hygiene rating system but it has the additional benefit that PASS or IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED certificates can be displayed in food premises which will assist consumers in deciding which premises they wish to support with their custom.

The Service continues to work in partnership with the Food Standards Agency regarding their Eat Safe initiative. In South Lanarkshire 85 food businesses have achieved the required standard and it is proposed to continue promoting the award.

An important partnership continues with the Healthy Living Award scheme. The main focus of this scheme is to encourage and recognise food premises which provide food of which over 50% meets specified minimum nutritional requirements. In addition the premises have to meet certain criteria in regard to food hygiene standards which are regulated by Local Authorities. In January 2015 there were 24 local businesses with the Healthy Living award and a further 9 in the process of applying for the award.

SECTION 4: RESOURCES

4.1 Financial Allocation

The financial allocation for the Service was sufficient in order to provide the resources necessary for the Council to meet its Service Plan commitments.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

The move to a generalist operating model has reduced the amount of time officers spend on food safety duties; however the estimated FTE in 2014/15 was 11.95 which was 0.82 higher than the previous year. The Service continued to recruit staff to fill funded vacancies on the establishment and the FTE allocation is anticipated to be slightly higher in 2015/16.

Sufficient resources are available to deliver feed hygiene official controls and in 2014/15 0.425 FTE officers were involved in this work.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

A Performance Review and Development Scheme has been implemented for all staff and is generally working well and is linked into the Service Plan through the key work objectives. It has been challenging for officers to meet the CPD requirements of the Code of Practices for Food and Feed. However, staff from the service attend external training events when they arise and the Service delivered in-house training sessions in relation to the Food Hygiene Information Scheme and the new food labelling legislation..

SECTION 5: REVIEW

5.1 Review against the Service Plan

The Service Plan was reviewed on a quarterly basis at Environmental Services Management meetings. The Environmental Services Manager also reviews the performance with the Head of Service on an ongoing basis.

5.2 Identification of any variation from the Service Plan

There were no significant variations of the 2014/15 Service Plan

5.3 Areas of Improvement

The Service will implement the action plan associated with the Food Standards Agency Dairy Establishments audit. This will benefit the food service overall in respect of updated policies and procedures and through improved internal monitoring.

5.4 External Audit

The Service was audited by the Food Standards Agency in respect of our official control delivery at Dairy Establishments and an action plan has been prepared in response to the items raised at the audit. The Service is making good progress implementing the action plan. During the year the feed hygiene audit from 2012/13 was closed off.

SECTION 6: PERFORMANCE PLANNING

6.1 Performance Plan

The majority targets detailed within the Service Plan were achieved and it was demonstrated that resources were targeted at the areas of highest risk.

6.2 Performance Indicators

The percentage of "broadly compliant" food premises which generally achieved satisfactory food safety standards remained relatively constant at 86% during 2014/15. This reflects very well compared to other performance figures elsewhere in Scotland.