

Individual Decision

Title of Report:	Food Enforcement Plan		
Report to be considered by:	Cllr Geoff Findlay	on:	10th October 2005
Forward Plan Ref:	ID1087		

Purpose of Report: **Seek approval for the 2005/6 Food Enforcement Plan.**

Recommended Action: **To Approve the Plan**

Reason for decision to be taken:

- The Council is required by the Food Standards Agency under the provisions of the Local Authority Enforcement Framework Agreement to produce a plan and have that plan considered by the relevant Member forum

List of other options considered:

- None

Key background documentation:

- Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement

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1. Background

The Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement

1.1 In October 2000 the Food Standards Agency issued its 'Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement' (the Agreement). The Agreement was designed to enable the FSA to be proactive in setting and monitoring standards in terms of local authority food enforcement. The key requirement of the Agreement is that local authorities produce an annual 'Service Plan' outlining their planned activity in the field of food law enforcement for the forthcoming year. Service plans are required to:

- focus debate on key service 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

1.2 To assist local authorities in producing a plan guidance was issued regarding the format. This would also help the FSA to compare plans and approaches. This central guidance became known as 'The Standard'. Whilst there is some scope for locally defined objectives the basic format is to be followed by all local authorities. 'The Standard' requires local authorities to give information in their Food Plans about:

- the services they provide in relation to food enforcement;
- the means by which they will provide those services;
- the means by which they will meet any relevant performance targets; and
- how they intend to review performance and address any variance.

1.3 The guidance states, 'we expect local authority enforcers to adopt a balance of techniques and approaches in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the public and the environment and not to rely on one method'.

1.4 The Standard recognises that most local authorities already have in place a framework of service planning which may include corporate objectives, annual reports, service plans and best value plans. The Food Plan is to be seen as a natural extension of the existing process. That is the starting point. In summary, the Standard requires that the Food Plan follow the following format:

Section 1 – Service Aims and Objectives

Section 2 – Background

Section 3 – Service Delivery

Section 4 – Resources

Section 5 – Quality Assessment

Section 6 – Review

In addition to information on food safety (hygiene) and food standards (quality and labelling) the Plan is also required to examine the councils enforcement programme in relation to the enforcement of legislation relating to animal feedingstuffs. The reason for this being that food eaten by farmed animals will eventually enter the human food chain.

2.0 The West Berkshire Food Plan

- 2.1 This is the fifth Food Plan produced by the Food, Agriculture & Animal Health Team. The Plan has been amended to make it more appealing to a wider audience with financial information and figures presented in pie charts or graphs.
- 2.2 We pride ourselves on our joint work with all our internal and external partners. This helps us set and deliver the Plan. It is also helps us access all available additional funding to deliver key projects. This year we have made a joint bid with other Berkshire Authorities for £450,000 from the FSA to implement a 'Safer Food, Better Business' project which should help smaller businesses prepare & comply with new legislation coming in to force in 2006.
- 2.3 We have also secured a £10,000 Community Education grant for local Food Hygiene & Nutrition initiatives aimed at disadvantaged families with pre school age children and other vulnerable families.
- 2.4 The Plan shows a balanced approach to protecting the food chain through a combination of inspection, advice, audits, sampling and education & training. Our overall aim is that the public should have confidence in the safety and quality of the food prepared and sold in the District and the reputable business are not disadvantaged by those that choose not to comply.
- 2.5 The intention, of course, is to closely follow the plan and to complete all planned activities. However, events, out of the control of the service, such as the introduction of new legislation, major incidents such as human or animal infectious disease outbreaks and food hazard warnings can occur which significantly affects any planned work.
- 2.5.1 In considering the Plan, attention is drawn to the need to cross-reference with the other work performed by the Food & Trading Standards Team. Many of the staff are called upon to perform a variety roles outside their Team; such as support for large investigations, management of CCTV, and assisting with the meeting of the additional targets set out in the Trading Standards Performance Plan. In 2004/5 there is now the additional pressure of the new Animal Health Framework Agreement with DEFRA.

Appendices

Appendix A – 2005/6 Food Enforcement Plan

Implications

Policy:	Strategic Priority S2d- Linked through targeted sampling of economy food to tackle food poverty. Strategic Priority 3a- Linked through targeted education in food hygiene for children in key stage 2
Financial:	All financial implications are met through existing budget provision.
Personnel:	None
Legal:	Enforcement of Food, Agriculture & Animal Health legislation is a statutory requirement.
Environmental:	Elements of food chain enforcement have environmental implications eg monitoring pesticide usage and disposal of waste food & animal by-products.
Equalities:	Education & training is available in a range of languages, as are many of the advice leaflets. Those groups identified as being more vulnerable to food poisoning and those vulnerable to food poverty have been considered when drafting the Plan.
Partnering:	None
Property:	None
Risk Management:	None
Community Safety:	None

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council:	Cllr Graham Jones
Select Committee Chairmen:	Cllr Webb
P&L Committee Chairman:	N/A
Ward Members:	N/A
Opposition Spokesperson:	Councillor Keith Woodhams
Advisory Members:	N/A
Local Stakeholders:	Trading Standards South East Liaison Group
Officers Consulted:	Officers in Food & Trading Standards Team.
Trade Union:	None