

**REPORT TO:** LICENSING COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 19 NOVEMBER 2019

**TITLE:** FOOD SAFETY ACT 1990 SERVICE PLAN  
2018/2019

**LEAD OFFICER:** MICHAEL PITT, ENVIRONMENT AND  
LICENSING MANAGER (01279) 446114

**CONTRIBUTING OFFICER:** SALLY HAGGERSTONE, PRINCIPAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER  
(01279) 446165

**RECOMMENDED that:**

- A** The Committee note and approve the Food Safety Act Service Plan as set out in Appendix A to the report.

**BACKGROUND**

1. The Council has a statutory duty to enforce the Food Safety Act and in doing so to have regard to the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement which constitutes statutory guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The Service Plan is produced in compliance with the Framework Agreement and represents a Team Plan within the Council's own performance management framework

**ISSUES / PROPOSALS**

2. The plan sets out:
  - a) Food safety objectives detailing the Council's responsibilities as set out in legislation, associated statutory codes of practice and national Guidelines
  - b) The current work programme within the Service
  - c) The Council's policy on food safety, sampling, provision of information to business, investigation of complaints and allegations of Food Poisoning, response to Food Safety Alerts and infectious disease control.
3. The current Framework Agreement reflects an on-going emphasis by the FSA on focusing interventions on high risk situations, with the effect that the number of inspections required for a compliant programme has reduced in comparison with historical approaches. The Council has allocated its resources to reflect this.

4. Whilst there is discretion to increase activity above the requirements set by the Framework Agreement, the desirability of doing so is balanced by financial considerations and sensitivity to the additional burden on business which additional regulation might represent.
5. The plan as currently drafted is considered to represent the minimum practicable level of activity to fulfil the requirements of the Framework. The plan identifies the Council's establishment in terms of numbers of full-time equivalent posts available. It should however be noted that not all posts within the team are filled. Qualified Environmental Health Officers are acknowledged to be difficult to recruit under current circumstances. The Council has completed one recruitment cycle without success. Efforts to fill vacant posts will continue. In the meantime the team will dynamically reassign available resources to the work of highest priority and where available make use of suitable contractors within the existing service budget. Nonetheless vacancies within the team may if ongoing have some adverse impact on achievement of the work programme set out in the Service Plan.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Environment and Planning (includes Sustainability)**

As set out in the report.

**Author: Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning**

### **Finance (Includes ICT)**

None - The action plan will be implemented using existing and planned resources.

**Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Deputy to the Chief Executive**

### **Housing**

None specific.

**Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing**

### **Community Wellbeing (includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)**

Failure to approve a food safety which adheres to guidance from the Food Standards Agency could influence or have implications for the health and wellbeing of the community

**Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing**

### **Governance (includes HR)**

Aligning the Service Plan to the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement allows resources to be targeted effectively and in a robust and defensible way.

**Author: Amanda Julian, Legal Services Manager on the behalf of Simon Hill, Head of Governance**

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Harlow Council Environmental Health Food Service Plan  
2018/2019

### **Background Papers**

The Framework Agreement on official feed and food law controls by local  
authorities:

[https://signin.riams.org/files/display\\_inline/45532/frameworkagreementno5-18122017.pdf](https://signin.riams.org/files/display_inline/45532/frameworkagreementno5-18122017.pdf)

### **Glossary of terms/abbreviations used**

FSA – Food Standards Agency