

REPORT TO: LICENSING COMMITTEE

DATE: 16 NOVEMBER 2021

TITLE: FOOD SAFETY ACT 1990 SERVICE PLAN 2021/22

LEAD OFFICER: MICHAEL PITT, ENVIRONMENT AND LICENSING
MANAGER

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RECOMMENDED that:

- A** The Committee approves the Food Safety Act Service Plan attached as 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; and
 - 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 ongoing emphasis by the FSA on focusing interventions on high risk situations. This has meant 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.

6. The FSA has modified the expectations of Food Safety Authorities in recognition of the burdens imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

IMPLICATIONS

Environment and Planning

As contained within the report.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration

Finance (Includes ICT)

The service budget is set to meet the minimum required statutory service under the Framework Agreement. If any increase in the service provision was to be recommended this could only be implemented if the associated required increases in service budgets were incorporated in to the Councils annual budget setting process.

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

Housing

None specific.

Author: Andrew Murray, Director of Housing

Community Wellbeing (Includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

None specific.

Author: Jane Greer, Director of Communities and Environment

Governance (Includes HR)

The report and Plan effectively set out the Authority's response to its statutory duties.

Author: Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Support

Appendices

Appendix A – Harlow Council Environmental Health Food Service Plan 2021/2022

Background Papers

The Framework Agreement on official feed and food law controls by local authorities
– <https://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/local-authorities>

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

FSA – Food Standards Agency