

FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2014-15

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To allow scrutiny committee to review the 2014-15 food service plan and suggest any comments for inclusion in future plans.

2 Recommendations

That members:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the 2014-15 Food Service Plan
- 2.2 Make any relevant comments or suggest information for inclusion in future food service plans.

3 Supporting information

- 3.1 Under European food law the Food Standards Agency (FSA) are deemed to be the competent authority. To ensure these powers are exercised consistently across the country by local authorities the FSA has developed a framework agreement part of which includes the production by each local authority of a food service plan.
- 3.2 Services plans are seen as an important part of the process to ensure that national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally.
- 3.3 The details to be contained in the plan are specified by the FSA. Plans must contain the following information.
- Service Aims and Objectives
 - Background
 - Service Delivery
 - Resources
 - Quality Assessment
 - Review
- 3.4 The Aylesbury Vale Food Service Plan for 2014-15 is attached to this report as Appendix 1.
- 3.5 The key features of the plan are:
- There are 1713 registered food businesses in Aylesbury Vale
 - All premises are given a risk rating, A to E. Priority is given to using our limited resources to ensure that all higher risk premises (A, B, Non-compliant C and Unrated) are inspected in accordance with the FSA Code of Practice.
 - In 2013/14 96.7% of programmed inspections of A,B and C rated premises were carried out.
 - A new strategy for dealing with lower risk (D and E rated) premises was introduced in 2013/14 resulting in an increase in total interventions over the previous year of over 40%.
 - Improvements to the service identified in the plan include providing better information on the website for food businesses and investigating opportunities to allow businesses to complete information in relation to alternative enforcement strategy questionnaires on-line.

3.6 This plan is a development of the 2012/13 plan updated to reflect the current situation and legislative changes. The 2012/13 Food Service Plan was subject to a full audit by the FSA in October 2012 and found to be adequate.

4 Resource implications

4.1 The plan sets out the staff and financial resources required to deliver the programme of food inspections required to meet FSA targets.

Contact Officer
Background Documents

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Names of Background documents

APPENDIX1

Official Food Controls Service Plan Aylesbury Vale District Council 2014/15

1. Service Aims & Objectives

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The food controls service plan sets out Aylesbury Vale District Council's intentions for taking forward corporate and service level objectives in relation to food hygiene and safety in the Vale. The food controls service plan sits within the Aylesbury Vale District Council Corporate Plan 2011-2015 which sets out the following four core objectives:

1.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

Corporate plan core objective	The delivery of official food controls
Protecting and improving the living experience	Protecting the health of residents and visitors to the Vale by through inspection and interventions with food businesses, the investigation of infectious diseases and the investigation of food and food premises complaints.
Growing the local economy	Providing support and advice to new and existing food businesses in the Vale. Encouraging good food safety practice and improvement via participation in the National Food hygiene Rating Scheme.
Delivering efficient and effective services	Ensuring that official food controls are delivered in the most effective and efficient manner by regularly reviewing

	and adapting the service as required and targeting intervention on a risk prioritisation basis
Improving communication and interaction with our customers	Ensuring that we communicate effectively and clearly with businesses and those requirements are clearly understood and can be achieved as necessary. Ensuring that we provide clear and concise information and feedback to residents and visitors to the Vale regarding food safety messages. Providing advice on food businesses in the Vale via participation in the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

2. Background

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

Aylesbury Vale covers 350 square miles and makes up more than half of the County of Buckinghamshire in the centre of Southern England. It is located approximately 40 miles north-west of London and 65 miles south-east of Birmingham. Good transport links are provided via three major road routes – the M1, M25 and M40.

Aylesbury Vale has a population of approximately 174,000 of which approximately 78,000 reside in Aylesbury itself. Of the local population approximately 14% come from ethnic minority groups. Aylesbury Vale's population is based in the three major settlements of Aylesbury, Buckingham and Wendover and many mid to small rural parishes of which over half have less than 500 residents. As such the Vale has a mixed economic profile with large areas of predominantly agricultural activity as well as small hubs of commercial and industrial activity. Parts of Aylesbury Vale have been designated for their landscape quality, either as forming part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Areas of Attractive Landscape or Local Landscape Areas. Aylesbury is the administrative centre for both the District Council and the County Council.

2.2 Organisational Structure

Aylesbury Vale District Council has a governance structure which consists of the Leader of the Council and 8 Cabinet Members each with a specific portfolio area of responsibility broadly based on service delivery areas. The official food controls service reports to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Health. The Environmental Health and Licensing service consists of six teams:

- Environmental health
- Licensing
- Contaminated Land and Air Quality
- Private Sector Housing
- Environmental Health Customer Services
- Energy and Sustainability

The provision of official food controls rests with the Environmental Health Team. The Principal Environmental Health Officer (PEHO) is the Lead Officer for food controls and reports to the Environmental Health and Private Sector Housing Manager who in turn reports to the Environmental Health and Licensing Group Manager.

There are currently 3 District Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) covering all aspects of Environmental Health Work across the Vale, including the provision of official food controls. There is an additional EHO who is currently seconded and undertaking a corporate project regarding the Environmental Health service, however she is also still undertaking some food activity. The EHOs are supported by 4 Environmental Health Technical Officers (EHTOs) who cover all aspects of Environmental Health work excluding food safety inspection and audit because they are not suitably qualified as required by the Food Law Code of Practice. In addition there is a technical officer who is undertaking the qualifications to become an EHO, and is expected to qualify during this year. The level of food activity that she undertakes is dependant on qualification and experience.

In the last three years, due to restructure and the deletion of posts, it has been necessary to outsource some food controls to a suitably qualified contractor to

ensure that food service targets can be met. This will again be necessary during the period 2014-15 and budget has been allocated to resource this. Where contractors are used to carry out food controls competencies are assessed prior to food controls being allocated. In addition work carried out is appropriately monitored and audited by the PEHO to ensure that food controls are implemented effectively and a high standard of consistency for businesses is maintained as far as is possible.

During 2014/15 the whole of the Environmental Health and Licensing Service will be going through a review process, which will involve a reorganisation of the whole department. It may have some effect on the way in which the food plan is delivered from 2015/16 onwards. The review process will enable the Council to ensure that the service is delivered efficiently.

2.3 External contacts and provision

AVDC is a member of the Bucks Food Liaison Group which consists of the other Buckinghamshire local authorities; South Bucks District Council, Chiltern Borough Council, Wycombe District Council and Milton Keynes Council as well as Bucks County Council Trading Standards, Milton Keynes Council Trading Standards, a representative from the Food Standards Agency and a representative from the Public Health England, Colindale. The Bucks Food Liaison Group has agreed terms of reference with regard to the shared common interests of the provision of official food controls in Buckinghamshire.

As is required the Environmental Health team also work with the Thames Valley unit of Public Health England (PHE) and the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control. AVDC is a member of the Buckinghamshire Environmental Health Liaison Group which is chaired by Public Health England and consists of the other Buckinghamshire local authorities (as above, except Milton Keynes Council who attend a different group) and a representative from NHS Buckinghamshire.

Specialist services such as microbiological and chemical analysis of food and water samples are outsourced to UKAS accredited laboratories as required.

2.4 Scope of the Food Service

The food controls service is delivered by the PEHO and 4 EHOs alongside other aspects of proactive and reactive Environmental Health work which include health and safety, public health, statutory nuisance, licensing consultation and planning consultation and some housing standards advice.

The service is driven by a combination of demand (reactive), inspection (proactive), education and intelligence.

- Demand – e.g. investigation of food and food premises complaints, investigation of notifications of infectious disease, responding to food incidents and alerts, request for re-rating by food businesses under the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Inspection – e.g. programmed food inspections and interventions as required by the Food Law Code of Practice, maintenance of an annual sampling programme as agreed by Bucks Food Liaison Group
- Education – the provision of advice and support to new and existing food businesses in the Vale, the promotion of food safety to residents and visitors to the Vale at events and via the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Intelligence – responding to food incidents and alerts, participation in PHE led national sampling programmes, acting on food safety issues and trends as raised by the Food Standards Agency.

2.5 Demands on the Food Service

Food premises profile in Aylesbury Vale by risk category:

Business Type	Premises Risk Category						Total
	A	B	C	D	E	U (unrated)	
Primary Producers	1	0	3	4	14	2	24
Manufacturers/Packers	1	7	9	4	8	3	32
Importers/Exporters	0	0	0	1	3	1	5
Distributors/Transporters	0	0	3	3	18	3	27
Retailers	1	3	34	40	148	55	281
Restaurants/caterers	3	28	436	261	439	177	1344
Total no. of food premises	6	38	485	313	630	241	1713

Within the premises profile there are 12 approved establishments. This is an increase of 5 from 2013/14. The new approved premises range from egg packing centres to a milk processing centre (the worlds largest fresh milk facility). The approval of the Arla milk processing centre has taken a lot of officer resource during 2013/14, in order that the site could gain its approval. Approved establishments are food premises that prepare and handle foods of animal origin for sale or supply to other businesses. Theses premises must meet additional legislative food safety requirements and will generally require greater officer resource than other food premises.

There are several annual events that take place in Aylesbury Vale that require additional resource. These include the Moto GP and British Grand Prix at Silverstone, Bucks County Show and ad hoc markets, licensed large scale (ie music events) and community events.

The Environmental Health Service is delivered from the Council Office at The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury during Council opening hours of 08.45 – 17.15 Monday – Thursday and 08.45 – 17.00 Fridays. There is no out of hours

service provided by Environmental Health however it is recognised that Officers may sometimes need to work outside of these hours where food premises open solely in the evening or where an incident occurs.

2.6 Regulation Policy

The Council has adopted the Government's 'Enforcement Concordat' on the principles of good enforcement. The Environmental Health & Licensing department operates to an Enforcement Policy Statement and Divisional Enforcement Policy (QPEMS-04) which aims to ensure a clear and consistent approach to enforcement within the department, including in the delivery of the food service.

The enforcement policy adopts a tiered approach to enforcement and the action that will be taken by the Council to secure compliance with legislative requirements. The Policy applies the principles of proportionality in applying the law and securing compliance, consistency of approach, targeting of enforcement action and transparency about how we will operate and what the duty holder may expect. The enforcement policy is operated with regard to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

The Policy was reviewed in 2013/14, however it was not implemented due to the publication of the Regulators' Code which was due in April 2014 by Central Government (Department for Business Innovation and Skills). This Code is a statutory Code and needs to be incorporated in the Enforcement Policy.

3. Service Delivery

3.1 Interventions at Food Establishments

Interventions undertaken at food establishments result from a mixture of proactive programmed interventions (inspections or other interventions scheduled to be undertaken during 2014/15 generated from the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice Annex 5 risk rating process) including food sampling and reactive interventions. Reactive interventions may result from a complaint from an employee or member of the public, from unsatisfactory food sampling results or from

intelligence received from another food authority or the Food Standards Agency e.g. in relation to a Food Alert.

Number of interventions due by risk category 2014/15 as of 1st April 2014

	Total	A	B	Non-comp C	Comp C	Non-comp D	Comp D	E
Programmed food interventions 2014/15 (inc outstanding interventions 2013/14)	641	6	39	12	183	3	273	125
New unrated premises interventions (excl low-risk categories)	56							
Total	697	6	39	12	183	3	273	125

In addition to the numbers specified above the authority receives between 15 and 20 new food business registrations a month throughout the year. These numbers also have to be factored into the inspection allocation for these periods.

There is a backlog of 56 new unrated premises awaiting inspection. In the 2012/13 period a new procedure for dealing with low risk new premises registering with the authority was introduced to try and target the limited resource available towards premises more likely to be involved in higher-risk food activities. As a result in 2014/15 in line with this procedure, childminders that do not prepare or handle open high-risk foods, small-scale domestic cake-makers (some of the cake makers indicate making less than 5 cakes per month, or supplying mainly friends and family) and halls and sports clubs for community use/hire will not receive an inspection from the authority unless information or intelligence is received that justifies the need to do so. Should a complaint be received regarding one of these premises then this is likely to trigger an inspection or intervention.

New unrated premises currently awaiting inspection (as of 1st April 2014)

Total no. of unrated food premises awaiting inspection	216
Child-minders awaiting inspection	82
Low-risk premises awaiting inspection (church halls etc.)	29
Low-risk domestic premises cake-makers awaiting inspection	49
Total no. of remaining unrated premises awaiting inspection (excluding categories above)	56

The authority aims to reduce the number of new unrated premises awaiting inspection in 2014/15 by employing the services of a qualified contractor to assist with these inspections. There has been budget allocated for this period to resource this.

In order to target resource where the risk to health is the greatest premises are inspected in accordance with a risk prioritisation scheme specified within the Food Hygiene Intervention Policy and Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) (QPMS-59) which was introduced in the 2012/13 period. The aim of this is to allow the Council to target a limited resource where the risk to public health is likely to be the greatest. In 2014/15 programmed interventions are to be carried out in accordance with date due and in the following priority order;

- 'A' rated,
- 'B' rated,
- non-compliant 'C' rated
- new unrated businesses awaiting inspection
- compliant 'C' rated
- non-compliant 'D' rated
- complaint 'D' rated
- 'E' rated

A business that receives a score of more than 10 for any of the three risk rating areas; food hygiene and safety, structure and confidence in management, at the time of risk rating is considered to be a 'non-compliant' premises. A business that

receives a score of 10 or less in in each of the three risk rating areas is considered to be a 'compliant' premises. This is in line with the FSA definition of 'broadly compliant' with regard to food law requirements and with Annex 5 of the Food Law Code of Practice.

Compliant 'D' rated and 'E' rated premises will be subject to an Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) which will involve a mixture of inspection/audit and other interventions including the use of self-assessment questionnaires. The FSA Code of Practice was revised in April 2014 and within it there were changes to the Annex 5 scoring system. This has meant a number of what were C rated premises have now become D. The FSA advised that the new scoring was implemented from April 2014 and not post inspection.

There is a backlog of 56 new premises (excluding low risk categories) in Aylesbury Vale who have registered with the Council but not received an intervention. It is the Council's view that these premises should take priority for intervention in 2014/15 in line with the risk prioritisation scheme (as outlined above). This is because without any knowledge of the processes and activities going on within these businesses we cannot make risk judgements about them. These new premises will be prioritised over our compliant 'C' rated premises which are those premises that we know from our previous interventions are 'broadly compliant' with food law requirements and are less likely to pose a significant compliance or health risk. There are also on occasions a number of food businesses who register with us early in the process of setting up a new businesses and these will remain as an uninspected premises until they are, or are close to trading.

3.2 Childminders

In January 2014, changes made at a national level concerning the registration of childminders as a food business with environmental health departments. There is now an agreement between the Food Standards Agency and Ofsted that information will be supplied to environmental health departments by Early Years Departments regarding childminders who register with them as an early years provider. Due to this change there is no longer a need for childminders to directly register with district

councils. For Aylesbury Vale information should be supplied to us by Buckinghamshire County Council.

All childminders that the Council is made aware of receive a questionnaire at the time of registration which allows us to collect information about the number of children they look after and the type of food they prepare and provide to children in their care. In accordance with the Food Hygiene Intervention Policy and Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) (QPMS-59) childminders that only provide low-risk snacks such as fruit, biscuits and cereal are not identified as requiring inspection by the authority and are instead risk rated on the basis of the information they provide. Those that prepare and provide higher risk foods are identified as requiring inspection and added to the list of new unrated premises awaiting inspection.

3.3 Outstanding Inspections from 2013/14

There are 47 overdue interventions from 2013-14 which are made up of B rated (2) (one of these premises does not open regular hours, and the officers did not want to make an appointment, so a number of no access visits occurred, and the second premises had had an intervention through the year, so the officers were in contact although a full inspection was not undertaken on time.), compliant C rated (8), compliant D rated (11) and E rated (26). The outstanding compliant D rated and E rated premises did receive an AES (self-assessment questionnaire) intervention in the 2013/14 period where information was requested but then not returned to the authority. These will be followed up by the EHTOs in the 2014/15 period. The outstanding B premises will be inspected as priority. The outstanding compliant C rated interventions will be carried out by employing the services of a qualified contractor. There has been budget allocated for this period to resource this.

3.4 Alternative Enforcement Strategy

Premises currently due an AES intervention (as of 1 April 2014)

	Total	Compliant D rated	E rated
Low-risk premises overdue intervention from 2013/14	37	11	26
Premises due for AES intervention 2014/15	270	173	97
Total no. of premises that may be subject to AES in 2014/15	307	184	123

Currently our AES questionnaires are sent out by post. During 2014/15 a system so that businesses can complete questionnaires online will be investigated and if possible introduced.

The policy relating to the inspection of food premises is detailed in the Food Hygiene Inspection Procedure (QPMS-55). This document sets out what food businesses can expect from EHO's and expands in a practical way the Council's Divisional Enforcement Policy. In recognition that most businesses want to comply with the law, EHO's help food businesses and others meet their legal obligations without unnecessary expense, whilst taking firm action against those who fail to comply with the law, including prosecution where appropriate.

3.5 Revisits

The Food Hygiene Inspection Procedure details the action to be taken when non-compliance following inspection is found and identifies when to carry out a revisit.

Based on previous years' revisits carried out and a change of procedure in the 2012/13 period which places increased emphasis on the importance of revisit to

improve compliance in non-complaint premises , it is estimated that approximately 120 revisits to food premises will be carried out during the 2014/15 period. It was originally estimated that for 2013/14 there would be 50 revisits, however the revised policy has increased the focus on gaining compliance and 113 were undertaken. In total 153 hours were spent on revisits to non compliant premises.

The division provides health certificates to several manufacturers within the Vale to assist with the export of products of fish or plant origin to countries outside of the European Union. Health certificates are provided for companies that have received an inspection or audit of the premises and this service is charged for. Last year the division generated £18,000, a slight decrease from the previous year, from health certification.

3.6 National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)

The authority is part of the Food Standards Agency's national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS). Under the food hygiene rating scheme businesses that have taken steps to address the issues of non-compliance raised at the time of their initial inspection can request a revisit to the premises for the purpose of re-rating. In the 2013/14 period the number of requests for revisit received by the authority was 6.

3.7 Food Complaints

During 2013/14 the documented procedures were put into place that cover the investigation of food complaints or complaints relating to the hygiene of food premises, and officers were given the appropriate training. The majority of complaints are investigated and contact made as appropriate with the food manufacturer and/or enforcing authority.

In the 2013/14 period the authority received 101 food related complaints. The complaints can be broken in to two distinct areas; complaints regarding food itself (20 complaints / 39 hours) and complaints about premises (81 complaints / 108 hours). It should be noted that one complaint has lead to a detailed investigation which is not complete and is not included in the time above. The resource involved

in investigating these complaints by the EHOs was approximately 147 hours. This does not take into account time spent on telephone contact and data entry by the Customer Services Team. It is anticipated that the number of food complaints received in the period 2014/15 is likely to be similar.

3.8 Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Scheme

The Council does not act as either a Home Authority or a Primary Authority partner for any businesses within the Vale. The Home Authority Principle and Primary Authority Scheme are adhered to by Officers when undertaking interventions in multi-outlet businesses. Officers will contact the Primary Authority where an agreement exists, on policy or enforcement issues relating to food hygiene for national food businesses. All officers, including EHTOs received refresher training regarding the Primary Authority scheme following a relaunch of the website by Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO).

There are several large manufacturers within the Vale with whom a Primary Authority agreement could be possible. This is an area in which the Council is interested and would consider further if an approach was made.

3.9 Advice to businesses

Officers routinely provide advice and guidance to businesses during programmed interventions. However there are also a number of contacts received each year from businesses requesting advice regarding their existing business or from those looking to set up a new food business in the Vale. In 2013/14, 69 requests for general food business advice were received by the authority. Of these 41 related to information requests regarding the setting up of a new food business. The resource involved in providing this advice to businesses by the department was approximately 25 hours. Officers now have some general advice which they can email out to a new business. It is acknowledged that this area of work is not fully recorded on our system as we are sometimes contacted for advice before a business has found a premises in the Vale in which to be established. In addition if a premises asks for advice this may be recorded against the premises record rather than as a service request and hence the

time taken is a lot less than the previous year. This does not take into account time spent on telephone contact and data entry by the Customer Services Team. Although improvements were made to how data regarding new food business advice contacts is recorded during the 2012/13 period, there is still evidence that it is not fully recorded.

On occasion we may also make direct contact with a particular sector of food businesses to advise them regarding new legislation or guidance that may affect their businesses. This contact is generally made either in writing or via email and has not been considered in the resource allocation above.

Over the next two years work will be undertaken to improve the main Council website and the areas concerning food information will require review. The information needs to be modified to make it more appropriate to its audience ie business and consumers.

3.10 Food Sampling Programme

Food sampling is undertaken in line with the Food Sampling Policy and Procedure. The objectives of the food sampling programme are to protect the consumer from contaminated foods that may pose a risk to health. The Council participates in both proactive and reactive sampling activity. Proactive sampling involves participation in national sampling programmes coordinated by Public Health England, Bucks Food Liaison Group and the Food Standards Agency. The information obtained through the national sampling programmes helps to identify food hazards and provides a knowledge base for food authorities. Reactive sampling is also undertaken in food businesses in the Vale where it is necessary to validate food processes, activities and procedures and to investigate contamination and food poisoning incidents.

The 2014/15 proactive sampling plan is based on the Public Health England (PHE) UK Co-Ordinated Microbiological Sampling Programme 2014/15. In addition the authority will be undertaking sampling on locally agreed areas informed by the Bucks Food Liaison Group and local intelligence and information. The PHE study plans relate to environmental swabs from serving platters (ie wood or slate) and food samples from premises with a FHRS score of 3 or less. There is likely to be a

reactive study later in the year which will pick up an area of concern which has been identified through the year. It is anticipated that the Council will participate in the first two studies, and potentially the third depending on whether we have premises which are included in the scope of the survey.

In 2013/14 a study was undertaken concerning the use of commercial dishwashers. A total of 12 premises were included in this survey. This survey used both a process of swabbing a cleaned plate, as well as using a themosticker which changed colour depending on the temperature inside the dishwasher. It was determined that we would not continue with this survey in future years due to the sensitivity of the themostickers. A number of samples were taken from premises which had low FHRS ratings or where there were concerns about the processes being undertaken.

An imported foods programme was introduced in 2013/14 and this will be built upon in 2014/15.

In addition a number of reactive samples will be taken during the course of the year to both validate food processes and procedures and investigate where there may be concerns regarding contamination.

In 2013/14 a total of 61 proactive and reactive samples were taken from food businesses in the Vale. The resource involved in taking these samples and the associated administration by the EHOs was approximately 60 hours. This does not take into account time spent on data entry by the Customer Services Team, or time taken to organise and plan the sampling programme. In the 2014/15 period it is anticipated that a larger number of samples will be submitted for analysis because we will be taking part in at least three sampling projects. The number of samples likely to be submitted for analysis in the 2014/15 period is approximately 70 and the time spent on this is likely to be in the region of 80 EHO hours. The four Environmental Health Technical Officers working with the Environmental Health division are authorised to take informal food samples and will be involved in proactive sampling for the national sampling programme. Two of the EHTOs have also been given a greater responsibility in organising the sampling process and hence it is anticipated a greater number of samples will be taken. In the event that a

formal food sample needs to be taken where legal action may result an Environmental Health Officer would undertake this sampling.

Samples requiring microbiological analysis are submitted for analysis to the Food and Water Laboratory at Public Health England in Colindale, London. Food sampling analysis credits are provided by the PHE and used and shared by the food authorities in Buckinghamshire. Aylesbury Vale DC liaises with the other food authorities in Buckinghamshire via the Bucks food Group to coordinate sampling across the County.

There maybe occasions when samples need to be sent to the Public Analyst. Examination maybe for chemical contamination or composition analysis. Our appointed Public Analyst is Worcester Scientific Services.

3.11 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

Food poisoning notifications and outbreak controls are carried out in accordance with the Control of Infectious Disease Procedure (QPMS-11).

In 2013/14 the number of notifications of infectious disease received by the Council was 99. Not all of these are necessarily food related. This is considerably less than in previous years due to changes in the types of illness which are reported to the Council by PHE. PHE directly investigate a number of infectious diseases with the patient and only notify the Council where there find links with a premises or are given information which is of concern. The Council directly investigates Campylobacter and Salmonella in vulnerable people or where it is known the patient is a food handler. Many of our investigations are undertaken via a postal questionnaire. It is considered likely that a similar number of notifications will be received by the authority this year. The resource involved in processing and investigating these notifications by the department was approximately 50 hours. This does not take into account time spent on data entry and the production of standard letters and questionnaires by the Customer Services Team. The majority of notifications are administered by the Customer Services Team and the Environmental Health Technical Officers who categorise the disease case by risk group and send out and

administer questionnaires as necessary. In some cases it is necessary to carry out visits to infected persons to provide advice or assistance with the collection of faecal sampling at the request of PHE. The information collected is provided to PHE as requested to inform and assist with trend analysis.

In the event of an outbreak of infectious disease the investigation process follows that detailed within the PHE Thames Valley Health Protection Team Outbreak Plan and would be led by an Environmental Health Officer. In the event of an outbreak resources have to be pulled from other workstreams to enable investigation of the outbreak as necessary. A number of non-food related outbreaks associated with swimming pools occurred in 2013/14 and resources did need to be pulled as part of these investigations. This resource cannot be allocated on a day-to-day basis because of the unpredictability of occurrence and can place high demands on other areas of service provision at the time of the outbreak.

3.12 Food Safety Incidents

Food Safety incidents are dealt with in line with the Food Hazard Warning Policy and Procedure and in line with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice. It is acknowledged that the Food Hazard Warning Procedure requires review to ensure that it accurately reflects current guidance and this is a priority for this year. In 2013/14 a number of food safety incidents required action from the authority. These included unsatisfactory sampling results obtained concerning a product which was imported to one of our premises from a Third Country (sampling was undertaken at the port of entry), and another premises who had cheese which was subject to a product recall following unsatisfactory sampling results elsewhere within Europe. The authority is regularly informed of incidents and product recalls which have taken place such as due to undeclared allergens. These are read and action taken if directed by the FSA.

3.13 Liaison with Other Organisations

The Authority has liaison arrangements with various outside bodies and neighbouring local authorities. The Buckinghamshire Food Liaison Group meets every two months to discuss current enforcement issues and ensure consistency in approach and joint working. The Food Liaison Group has agreed shared food terms

of reference across Buckinghamshire. A representative from the FSA and from PHE also attends and contributes to the Food Liaison Group as well as a representative from Buckinghamshire County Council Trading Standards department and Milton Keynes Council Trading Standards department. The Food Lead Officers for each organisation do often liaise outside of meetings if necessary. In 2013/14 the resource involved in attending and contributing to Food Liaison Group was approximately 66 PEHO hours. It is anticipated that the resource implications for the period 2014/15 will be similar. The format of meetings will be changing slightly in 2014/15 to enable the environmental health representatives to focus on future priorities and to undertake a benchmarking process to increase consistency.

Aylesbury Vale District Council is also a member of the Thames Valley Health Protection Agency Environmental Health Liaison Group (EHLG) which meets quarterly to review infectious disease and food safety issues. In 2013/14 the resource involved in attending and contributing to EHLG was approximately 45 PEHO hours. It is anticipated that the resource implications for the period 2013/14 will be similar.

3.14 Food Safety Promotional Work and other Non-official Controls Interventions

There is limited resource available for the provision of food safety promotional work in the 2014/15 period. During 2013/14 the environmental health team had a stall at the Bucks County Show which was attended by approximately 500 people. In addition the Council utilised the media toolkits produced by the Food Standards Agency concerning promoting FHRs around Christmas and Valentines' Day. The local newspaper has also run a few articles on FHRs and this has highlighted the scheme. It is anticipated in 2014/15 that the tool kits will continue to be used and it enables us to use both traditional press releases and social media. Articles will also be included in the Council newspaper which is distributed to every house in the Vale. It is anticipated that around 20 hours will be spent on food safety promotional work.

On the 1st April 2013 responsibility for public health transferred from the NHS to local government. Public Health England has been established to coordinate the strategic delivery of local public health interventions based on community need. It is likely that the new public health agenda will shape local delivery of food controls to some

extent as there is the opportunity to expand on our current intervention with food businesses to deliver this agenda e.g. through the provision of healthy menu advice. During 2013/14 officers attended a number of meetings regarding the new public health arrangements. In addition Buckinghamshire County Council Trading Standards launched a healthy eating award scheme for catering premises called “Eat Out , Eat Well” EHOs are promoting the scheme during inspections to premises who may meet the criteria. This is a developing area of work, and it is difficult to predict the time that will be taken in this area.

3.15 FSA Audit

A full FSA Audit was undertaken in October 2012, and a revisit to confirm progress occurred in October 2013. It was deemed that satisfactory progress was made on the original action plan, however there were a few items which were outstanding. One of these related to an electronic document management system. This was purchased and implemented in December 2013. Future works include transferring the records for approved establishments onto to new IDOX document management system. This will take administration resource to complete.

4. Resources

4.1 Financial Allocation

The overall level of expenditure allocated for the provision of the food service in the 2014/15 period is as indicated below:

Staff Costs (and internal recharges – Marketing, Finance etc.)	£179,000
IT Costs recharge	£11,000
Legal Costs recharge	£9,400
Equipment/printing	£3,300
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme	£1000
Specialist advice (including payments for contractor inspections)	£10,000
TOTAL	£213,700

The estimated level of food service demand during the 2014/15 period is as indicated below:

Food service demand 2014/14	Anticipated resource requirement (hours)
253 inspections (programmed A rated to non-compliant D rated premises plus outstanding B and C rated premises from 2013/14)	506 EHO hours
135 -180 new inspections (premises registering during the 2013/14 period) plus 56 new inspections carried over from 2013/14	472 EHO hours
91 compliant D and E rated premises inspections (not suitable for AES)	137 EHO hours
307 compliant D and E rated premises AES interventions (suitable for AES)	126 EHTO hours 100 EHO hours 100 CSA hours
Revisits to non-compliant premises	240 EHO hours
FHRS administration and revisits to re-rate premises	15 PEHO hours 35 EHO hours
Infectious disease investigation	200 EHTO hours 80 EHO hours
Food complaint investigation	270 EHO hours
Sampling activity	10 PEHO hours 80 EHO hours 50 EHTO hours
Address remaining outstanding FSA audit items (ldox DMS, review of some procedures)	50 PEHO hours 100 CSA hours

Attendance/input at Bucks Food Group and EHLG	110 PEHO hours
Food incidents and alerts	100 EHO hours
Provision of food business advice	180 EHO hours
Management and administration of food service	700 PEHO hours 400 CSA hours
Formal enforcement activity and legal cases	300 EHO hours 70 PEHO hours
Training and CPD	25 PEHO hours 60 EHO hours 20 EHTO hours
Work on implementation of public health agenda	60 PEHO hours
Arla Foods Ltd – on going support and familiarisation with new processes, practices and procedures	20 PEHO hours 40 EHO hours
Food/Health Promotion activities	20 PEHO hours 20 EHTO hours
Total	1080 PEHO hours 2600 EHO hours 416 EHTO hours 600 CSA hours
Grand Total	4696hours (approx. 2.94 FTE)

A FTE post amounts to approximately 1600 working hours per annum. The above figures are an approximation based on the information available regarding the provision of the food service in the period 2012/13 and known demands within the 2014/15 period. Due to acknowledged gaps within the database it is likely that these figures do not take into account additional factors such as the increased demand of reactive work in other areas during the summer months, staff sickness and considerable travel time to and from food premises. They also do not take into account the unpredictable demands that can be placed on the food service by

incidents such as a large food poisoning outbreak, a complex prosecution case, a serious workplace accident investigation or a major pollution incident.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff allocated to the provision of the food service is currently 2.95. This consists of 4 Environmental Health Officers and one Principal Environmental Health Officer (PEHO) as well as administrative Customer Services support. Each of the EHOs spends approximately 50% of their time on food service work. The PEHO also spends approximately 50% of her time on work associated with the delivery of food controls. There is administrative support provided to these officers by the Customer Services team and the Database Administrator which is equivalent to 0.45 of a FTE post. The EHTOs provide support to the EHOs in some areas of food service work and this is reflected in the table above.

The FTE staff allocation for the provision of the 2012/13 food service was 2.95. In the 2014/15 period this staff allocation remains the same although the resource allocation for support from external contractors has reduced by a third. There is a £10,000 'specialist advice' budget within the 2014/15 expenditure allocation food service budget to allow the department to buy in contractor inspections to assist with meeting intervention targets as necessary. This amount is equivalent to a 0.22 FTE post.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

Environmental Health staff involved in the delivery of Official Controls will complete a minimum of 10 hours per year of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training. Aylesbury Vale District Council supports and engages with the CIEH Buckinghamshire Branch who run a number of low cost training courses (including food training) throughout the year. Environmental Health Officers will attend both external and internal cascade training courses during the course of the year, some of which are organised by the Food Standards Agency. Where Officer's attend courses that are of use to the rest of the Environmental Health staff this information is delivered via cascade training and course resources made available to others. One area where cascade training will occur in 2014/15 is around the drafting and service of notices. It is also known that the Food Information Regulations will have

enforcement implications for the EHOs and training will be given (this legislation will primarily be enforced by Trading Standards colleagues. The development needs identified previously were addressed during 2013/14. Officers are required to keep records of the CPD training that they complete.

5. Quality Assessment

5.1 Quality Assessment and Internal Monitoring

During the 2012/13 period new procedures for monitoring the accuracy, quality and consistency of the delivery of the food service were introduced. Details of the monitoring arrangements in place are set out within the departmental procedures 'Food Database Management Procedure (QPEMS-58) and 'Food Service Monitoring, Audit and Review Procedure' (QPEMS-62). The food service is subject to a rolling programme of review by the Internal Audit Team. FHRS scoring is also a rolling item on the Food Group meeting agenda.

6. Review

6.1 Review against the Service Plan

The table below details the number of interventions that formed part of the programme in 2013/14. A category A premises should receive an inspection 6 months after the previous intervention, where as a category C is at 18 months. A number of factors influence when an inspection is due ranging from the number of people supplied to how compliant the premises is with the legislation.

2013/14	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Interventions carried out	8	33	263	121	355	780
Due interventions outstanding	0	2	8	11	26	47
% due interventions achieved	100%	94.3%	97.0%	91.7%	93.2%	94.3%

The Food Standards Agency, gives a definition concerning whether it is deemed that a premises is considered to be “broadly compliant” with the law.

2013/14	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Total number of premises	6	38	485	313	630	1472
Number broadly compliant	2	25	452	311	630	1420
% Broadly compliant	33.33%	65.79%	93.20%	99.36%	100%	96.47%

The 2013/14 figures show an increase of 40.7% in the total number of interventions achieved in comparison to the 2012/13 figures. A number of these interventions centred around delivering interventions to lower risk premises via questionnaires. The figures illustrate that 95.1% of interventions in the highest risk categories (A rated and B rated premises) were achieved. There were reasons identified for why two category B premises were not inspected within the period, in line with the Food Hygiene Intervention and AES strategy (QPEMS-59). There was a significant increase of 88% in the number of interventions achieved in the lower risk premises (D rated and E rated). The number of D rated premises receiving an intervention remained the same, however the number of category E premises receiving an intervention increased by 71%. These figures reflect the introduction in the 2012/13 period of a new strategy for dealing with interventions within these types of premises and demonstrate that this procedure has been effective in dealing with the previous backlog of interventions.

The figures relating to compliance of food businesses remained the same as the previous period (2012/13 96.69%, 2013/14 96.47%) however the number of premises which have an inspection rating increased by 51. As 99.8% of D and E rated premises are broadly compliant, it provides the justification for resources being given to A-C rated premises. It is important to note that an A rated premises is not necessarily a non compliant business.

In addition to the above, the Council was involved the temporary closures of two premises due to hygiene matters; one was voluntary and the other used formal powers within the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013. The Council also successfully prosecuted one takeaway business. There were 10 charges and a total fine of £5000 was received, £1500 costs and £50 victim surcharge.

In the period 2014/15 delivery against this service plan will be reviewed every 6 months and a report provided to the Environmental Health and Licensing Group Manager for cascade to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Health.

6.2 Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan

As part of the review process any variance from the service plan will be identified and detailed within the report. Reasons for the variance will be given and any necessary improvement plans for the following 6 month period identified.

6.3 Areas of Improvement

This service plan has identified the following areas for improvement in delivery of the food service over the 2014/15 period:

- The department will be going through a review and restructure process throughout this period, and food service will be reviewed to ensure that it is efficient and meets the requirements of the FSA Code of Practice
- The format of the Buckinghamshire Food Liaison Group meetings will be reviewed to ensure that the meetings provide the environmental health members to discuss current topics, consultations, implementation of new policy and undertake benchmarking work with regard to FHRs scoring
- Review and implement the departmental enforcement policy to reflect the requirements of the Regulators' Code
- Review and implement changes to the information provided to new businesses who which to operate in the Vale. This may include updating information which is available on the main council website

- Review and implement a revised Food Hazard Warning procedure to ensure it meets the requirements of food incidents and alerts
- Implement recommendations from the FSA revisit, including transferring the records for 12 approved premises to the IDOX document management system.
- There should be a focus on the development of the role of the delivery of official food controls within the new public health agenda
- Investigate and implement electronic responses to AES questionnaires to low risk premises.
- Staff development is required in specific subject areas including service and drafting of notices in line with FSA recommendations (cascade training)

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