

FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2016-17

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To allow scrutiny committee to review the 2016-17 food service plan and suggest any comments for inclusion in future plans.

2 Recommendations

That members:

- 2.1 Note the contents and approve the 2016-17 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 Service 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 2016-17 is attached to this report as Appendix 1.
- 3.5 The key features of the plan are:
- There are 1724 registered food businesses in Aylesbury Vale.
 - Premises are given a risk rating, A to E. Resources are targeted to ensure higher risk premises (A, B, Non-compliant C and Unrated) are inspected in accordance with the FSA Code of Practice.
 - The number of premises which are deemed to be “broadly compliant” with the law is 97%.
 - In 2015/16 in total we achieved 95% of our programmed interventions. 100% of premises inspections rated A- non compliant C were completed.
 - The plan identifies areas of improvement or exploration to improve efficiency and to ensure we are offering the best service to our customers. These include:
 - Implementation of online forms
 - Use of partial inspections or audits of premises,
 - Extending the scope of the Alternative Enforcement Strategy

- Assisting with the implementation of the new premises database
- Updating staff development in line with Food Law Code of Practice changes

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. The FSA revisited in 2015/16 and was satisfied that the audit action plan had been fully implemented and the audit has been closed.

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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None

Official Food Controls Service Plan
Aylesbury Vale District Council 2016/17

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.

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 184,500 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 consisting of the Leader of the Council and six Cabinet Members each with a specific portfolio area. The food service reports to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste. The service is delivered within Environmental Health in the Customer Fulfilment team and the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager reports to the Director and is the service manager for the following teams;

- Environmental Health Customer Services
- Environmental Health
- Licensing

The food service is delivered by Environmental Health. The Environmental Health team is currently split into two sub teams based on geographical areas. Each sub team has an Environmental Health Manager who reports to the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager. One Environmental Health Manager leads on commercial activities and one leads on residential activities. The manager leading on commercial activities is the Lead Officer for food controls. There are four Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and four Environmental Health Technical Officers (EHTOs). EHOs and EHTOs cover all aspects of commercial and residential environmental health work including food activities irrespective of the lead area of their line manager. Two of our EHTOs are currently completing their qualifications to become EHOs. The service also employs two Senior Environmental Health Technical Officers who are specialists in pollution and housing matters. It is not expected they will undertake food control activity.

In 2015/16 some food controls were outsourced to a suitably qualified contractor as a result of restructure and deletion of posts. This will continue in 2016/17 to ensure food service targets are met and budget has been allocated to resource this. All contractors must evidence the qualifications, experience and competency to carry out food controls as required by the Food Law Code of Practice prior to the allocation of work. The Environmental Health Manager will continue to monitor and audit contractors work to ensure a high standard of consistency is maintained as far as is possible.

In 2016/17 Aylesbury Vale District Council will be undergoing business reviews and restructure. The programme of business reviews will redesign processes and jobs to be more commercially focused, flexible, responsive and efficient. This will change the organisation structure and reporting lines for Environmental Health and Licensing.

2.3 External contacts and provision

AVDC has liaison arrangements with public bodies and local authorities in Buckinghamshire. AVDC is a member of the Buckinghamshire Food Liaison Group. The Group has agreed terms of reference with regard to the shared common interests of the provision of official food controls in Buckinghamshire. The group consists of Environmental Health representatives from South Bucks and Chiltern District Council, Wycombe District Council and Milton Keynes Council. Also in attendance are Trading Standards representatives from Buckinghamshire and Surrey County Council and Milton Keynes Council and representatives from Food Standards Agency and Public Health England. The discussions include current enforcement issues, sampling results and programmes, legislation updates and implementation, initiatives to improve food service delivery.

AVDC is also a member of the Buckinghamshire Environmental Health Liaison Group. The group is chaired by Public Health England and consists of Environmental Health representatives from South Bucks and Chiltern District Council, Wycombe District Council and a representative from NHS Buckinghamshire. The discussions include latest infectious disease issues, legislation updates and implementation, initiatives to improve outbreak control and service delivery.

The Environmental Health team also liaises with the South East (Thames Valley) unit of Public Health England (PHE) and the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control. 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 service is delivered by the Environmental Health team which includes two Environmental Health Managers, four Environmental Health Officers, and four Environmental Health Technical Officers. Officers and managers deliver the food service alongside all other commercial and residential aspects of environmental health work. The work alongside food service delivery includes all proactive and reactive work for health and safety, public health, statutory nuisance, licensing and planning consultation, pollution control and housing standards. The areas of food activity undertaken by EHOs and EHTOs is dependent on qualification, experience and competency as required by the Food Law Code of Practice. The food service is driven by a combination of reactive and proactive demand.

- Reactive demand- This is based on intelligence from members of the public, internal departments and external organisations. This includes investigation of food and food premises complaints, investigation of notifications of infectious disease, responding to food incidents and alerts, requests for re-rating by food businesses under the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, participation in PHE led national sampling programmes, acting on food safety issues and trends as raised by the Food Standards Agency.
- Proactive demand - This is based on inspections required by law and education for food businesses. This includes 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. 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 and via the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

The Environmental Health service is delivered from the Council Office at The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, and 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.

2.5 Demands on the Food Service

The total number of food premises within the Vale is 1724. The table below shows the food premises profile in Aylesbury Vale by business type and risk category:

Business Type	Premises Risk Category					Unrated	Outside Programme	Total
	A	B	C	D	E			
Primary Producers	0	0	1	5	17	1	1	25
Manufacturers/ Packers	1	8	7	5	11	2	0	34
Importers/ Exporters	0	0	0	1	4	1	1	7
Distributors/ Transporters	0	0	1	2	23	0	5	31
Retailers	0	4	17	43	149	2	57	272
Restaurants/ caterers	2	36	240	409	456	96	116	1355
Total no. of food premises	3	48	266	465	660	102	180	1724

The classification of premises risk is in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice. Risk rating is based on the nature of the operation and standards of hygiene. Category A businesses are highest risk and category E are lowest risk. Unrated premises are those that have not currently been classified. Premises outside the programme are premises that are registered with us, but do not receive routine programmed interventions.

Approved establishments are food premises that prepare and handle foods of animal origin for sale or supply to other businesses. These premises must meet additional

legislative food safety requirements and will generally require greater officer resource than other food premises. Within the premises profile there are 16 approved establishments. This is an increase of 2 from 2015/16. The new approved premises manufacture a scrambled egg product and ice cream product.

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

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 (QPMS-04) which aims to ensure a clear and consistent approach to enforcement within the department, including in the delivery of the food service. The Policy was reviewed in May 2014, and has regard to the requirements of the Regulators' Code.

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.

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 2016/17 generated from the Food Law Code of Practice 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 2016/17 as of 1st April 2016

	Total	A	B	C Non-comp	C Comp	D Non-comp	D Comp	E
Programmed interventions (including outstanding interventions 2015/16)	794	3	48	14	183	2	202	342
New unrated interventions (excluding low-risk categories)	42	Unclassified						
Total	836	3	48	14	183	2	202	342

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). The aim is to allow the Council to target a limited resource where the risk to public health is likely to be the greatest. In 2016/17 programmed interventions are to be carried out in accordance with date due and in the following priority order;

- A rated
- B rated
- C rated- non-compliant
- New unrated businesses awaiting inspection
- C rated- compliant
- D rated- non-compliant
- D rated- compliant

- E rated

The definition for non compliant and compliant business is in line with the Food Law Code of Practice. It is based on the risk score given by the Environmental Health Officer at the time of inspection. It includes three risk rating areas; food hygiene and safety, structure and cleaning and confidence in management. Compliant D rated and E rated premises are lower risk premises and 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.

New unrated premises currently awaiting inspection as of 1st April 2016:

Total no. of new unrated food premises awaiting inspection	99
Child-minders awaiting intervention	56
Low-risk premises awaiting intervention (church halls etc.)	0
Low-risk domestic premises cake-makers	1
Total no. of remaining unrated premises awaiting intervention (excluding low risk categories above)	42

There has been a significant decrease in the total number of new unrated premises awaiting intervention from 221 in 2015/16 to 56 in 2016/17. This is as a result of a combination of factors; a review of the classification of these premises found that some unrated premises should be reclassified as 'outside the programme' and do not require an intervention, unrated childminders were contacted and a large proportion were found to be no longer trading. In addition, the contractor was allocated low risk new unrated premises which is an area of improvement identified in 2015/16. A further extended review of the premises database is planned in 2016/17 to ensure the correct classification is applied to businesses. This area of improvement will ensure resource is appropriately targeted to businesses requiring intervention and according to public health risk.

There is a backlog of 42 new unrated premises (excluding low risk categories) in Aylesbury Vale who have registered with the Council but not received an intervention. It is important to note that within this number there will be a proportion

of businesses which have registered with us, but have not yet commenced trading and therefore we are unable to inspect. It is better to visit premises once trading has commenced so the officer can see the practices which are actually being carried out on site. It is the Council's view that these premises should take priority for intervention in 2016/17 in line with the risk prioritisation scheme detailed above. 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. New premises are prioritised because without any knowledge of the processes and activities going on within these businesses we cannot make risk judgements about them. Although there is a requirement for businesses to register with us 28 days before they commence trading we find that businesses will either register far in advance or not register prior to commencement of trading. Officers will often pick up information about new businesses via other intelligence sources.

In 2016/17 an online food registration form will be implemented in line with the area of improvement identified in 2015/16. The new website will facilitate the implementation of the new food business registration form. Previously food registrations were paper format and received via post. The online form will reduce the administration time and allows quicker categorisation of low risk businesses. The form requires the business to provide information about the food they prepare and supply before they can submit it to us. This information allows officers to determine if the premises is low risk or outside the programme. This includes small-scale domestic cake-makers and community halls available for hire. Premises outside the programme 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 intervention.

In 2014 changes were made at a national level concerning the registration of childminders as food businesses. Childminders no longer directly register with district councils and this information should be supplied to Environmental Health by Buckinghamshire County Council. All new childminders will continue to receive a self-assessment questionnaire. In 2016/17 this questionnaire will be available for businesses to complete online. This will reduce the administration time for

questionnaires which were previously sent by post and will be easier for business customers to complete. 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. Those that prepare and provide higher risk foods are identified as requiring inspection and added to the list of new unrated premises awaiting inspection. There will be a review in 2016/17 as to whether this can be expanded to other premises types where further information is required to determine risk. This targets limited resources towards premises more likely to be involved in higher-risk food activities.

In addition to the 836 programmed interventions and new unrated interventions (excluding low risk) detailed above the authority receives between 15 and 20 new food business registrations a month throughout the year. These numbers will also be factored into the inspection allocation for these periods. In 2016/17 the authority will continue to employ the services of a qualified contractor to assist with the low risk programmed inspections and to reduce the time taken to inspect new unrated premises. There has been budget allocated for this period to resource this.

3.2 Outstanding Inspections from 2016/17

Number of overdue interventions by risk category 2016/17 as of 1st April 2016:

Rating	Outstanding
A	0
B	0
C	5
D	20
E	13
Total	38

There are 38 overdue interventions from 2015/16. 87% of the outstanding interventions are from the lowest risk categories and many of these would have been subject to a self-assessment questionnaire instead of an inspection visit. These businesses would have been sent a questionnaire but it may not have been returned

despite EHTOs attempting to make contact with the business. It is likely that a number of these businesses may have ceased trading and not informed us. EHTOs will target these premises during 2016/17 in order to establish their status and remove them from the database or reclassify them where appropriate.

3.3 Alternative Enforcement Strategy (for low-risk food businesses)

Premises currently due an AES intervention as of 1st April 2016:

	Total	D	E
Low-risk premises overdue intervention from 2015/16	37	23	14
Premises due for AES intervention 2016/17	426	101	325
Total no. of premises that may be subject to AES in 2016/17	463	124	339

In 2015/16 questionnaires were sent and received via post. In 2016/17 online versions of the questionnaire will be available for customers to complete. The questionnaires will be targeted towards the type of business e.g. egg packing, childminding and low risk. This will be facilitated by the new website and emails will be sent with a direct link to the form for completion. This will save administration time and be easier for business customers to complete and return. A further review will be carried out in 2016/17 to ensure these online questionnaires are effective and to identify if there is a need for online forms in other food service areas that would assist in the delivery.

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 Environmental Health Officer interventions and expands in a practical way the Council's Divisional Enforcement Policy. In recognition that most businesses want to comply with the law, Environmental Health Officers 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.

This Service Plan is focused towards directing our resources towards the highest risk and most non-compliant businesses. European food law states that all food businesses should receive an intervention, however, AVDC along with all other Bucks Food Liaison Group members formally agreed in June 2015 that the following premises would be classed as having a non-inspectable risk. This will continue in 2016/17. This does not exempt these businesses from meeting food law requirements, but they will not be subject to programmed interventions.

- Retailers where the sale of low-risk food is ancillary and/or seasonal, e.g. clothes and card shops
- Service sector businesses only serving drinks and biscuits, e.g. hairdressers and car sales showrooms
- Religious groups only serving drinks and biscuits after events
- One-off events such as charity fundraisers and fetes
- Food brokers that do not actually handle food, i.e. offices
- Grain haulage businesses as Trading Standards will cover them if serving feed businesses
- Community halls offered for hire by others (individual businesses operating regularly from these will be expected to register and be subject to official controls)
- Child-minders that only provide milk, other drinks and low-risk snacks or serve food provided by the parents

AVDC seeks to ensure that resources are targeted and applied where they are most required and can be most effective. There are a number of food businesses that consistently perform compliantly and/or have a number of external audits each year. In 2016/17 we will continue to explore the possibility of extending the scope of our Alternative Enforcement Strategy to include more of our complaint food businesses, however this would mean that we were acting outside of the FSAs Code of Practice. The FSA and Department of Business, Innovation and Skills have been reviewing the option of earned autonomy for businesses and the outcomes of this will inform our own work in this area.

3.4 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. In 2015/16 we undertook 80 revisits which took approximately 60 officer hours including administrative time. This does not include travel time.

3.5 Health Certificates

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 £15,500 from health certification. In 2015/16 we reviewed the process for issuing the certificates and the associated costs. We now charge businesses for scanned copies. In 2016/17 we will continue to review the process of issuing health certificates to ensure we are offering customers the best service.

3.6 National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)

The authority is part of the Food Standards Agency's national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS). The scheme is intended to give consumers information to assist them in making choices about where they buy their food from. AVDC promotes the scheme through various channels including social media, and articles in Council publications.

We have seen an interest in the ratings we award to businesses from the local media and have been contacted by members of the public for advice about premises following rating. 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 2015/16 period the number of requests for revisit received by the authority was 4.

3.7 Food Complaints

In the 2015/16 period the authority received 133 food related complaints and requests for service. The resource involved in investigating these complaints by the EHOs was approximately 249 hours. This does not take into account time spent on telephone contact and data entry by the Customer Services Team. The complaints can be broken in to two distinct areas; complaints regarding food itself (22 complaints), complaints about premises (74 complaints). It is anticipated that the number of food complaints and request for service received in the period 2016/17 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 food 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. Primary authority partnerships are an area in which the Council is interested. In 2016/17 we will consider primary authority partnerships with businesses which may be interested.

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 2015/16, 37 requests for general food business advice were received by the authority and approximately 13 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 40 hours. This does not take into account time spent on telephone contact and data entry by the Customer Services Team. 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.

The AVDC website provides links to further guidance and information which food businesses are directed. Business advice will be an area of improvement for 2016/17. A review is planned to ensure consistency in recording of advice to businesses and to ensure that information sources are easily available to customers e.g. directed via our website. This will allow resources to be targeted to specific advice contact and allow businesses to resolve general advice queries without the need to contact the team.

We are currently working closer with colleagues in our Economic Development Team and in the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) region. SEMLEP are working on a project called “Better Business for All” which is about developing and understanding the benefits of the relationships regulators have with businesses. This is an area which is in development for the department.

On occasions 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. We are aware that there are ongoing issues concerning the service of rare burgers and this is an area where officers are keeping up to date in order that we are able to supply the appropriate guidance once it is issued by the Food Standards Agency.

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 2016/17 proactive sampling plan is based on the Public Health England (PHE) UK Co-Ordinated Microbiological Sampling Programme 2016/17. It is anticipated that the Council will participate in the studies where we have premises which are included in the scope of the surveys. In addition the authority will be undertaking sampling on locally agreed areas informed by the Bucks Food Liaison Group and local intelligence and information. An imported foods programme was introduced in 2013/14 and this will be built upon in 2016/17. 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 2015/16 a total of 35 proactive and reactive samples were taken from food businesses in the Vale. In addition we took part in a survey which involved taking samples of sandwich and jacket potato fillings. The resource involved in taking these samples and the associated administration by the EHTOs was approximately 4 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. 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 were given a greater responsibility in organising the sampling process and there was an increase in number of samples taken. A similar number of samples are anticipated in 2016/17. 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. AVDC liaises with the other food authorities in Buckinghamshire via the Buckinghamshire Food Group to coordinate sampling across the County. There maybe occasions when samples need to be sent to the

Public Analyst 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 2015/16 the number of notifications of infectious disease received by the Council was 94. Not all of these were necessarily food related, and it is extremely rare to be able to associate them with a premises. PHE directly investigate a number of infectious diseases with the patient and only notify the Council where they 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 94 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 work streams to enable investigation of the outbreak as necessary. 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 Incident Policy and Procedure and in line with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice. In 2015/16 a small number of food safety incidents required action from the authority. 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 Food Standards Agency.

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 often liaise outside of meetings if necessary. In 2015/16 the resource involved in attending and contributing to Food Liaison Group was approximately 66 EHM hours. It is anticipated that the resource implications for the period 2016/17 will be similar.

Aylesbury Vale District Council is also a member of the Thames Valley Health Protection Agency Environmental Health Liaison Group (EHLG) which meets twice annually to review infectious disease and food safety issues. In 2015/16 the resource involved in attending and contributing to EHLG was approximately 45 EHM hours. It is anticipated that the resource implications for the period 2016/17 will be similar.

3.15 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 2016/17 period. 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 several articles on FHRS and this has raised awareness of the scheme. It is anticipated in 2016/17 that we will continue to use the FSA media tool kits which enable us to use both traditional press releases and social media. Articles will also be included in the Council newspaper 'Vale Times' which is distributed to every house in the Vale. It is anticipated that around 20 hours will be spent on food safety promotional work.

Public Health England coordinates the strategic delivery of local public health interventions based on community need. It is likely that the 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. In addition Buckinghamshire and Surrey County Council Trading Standards has a healthy eating award scheme for catering premises called "Eat Out , Eat Well" and EHOs are promoting the scheme during inspections to businesses which meet the criteria.

The Food Information Regulations came into force in 2014. These are primarily enforced by Trading Standards, however, environmental health has been given some enforcement powers concerning the requirements which now apply to catering establishments. Officers check compliance and provide advice and guidance during routine inspections.

3.16 FSA Audit

A full Food Standards Agency audit was undertaken in October 2012, and revisits to confirm progress occurred in October 2013 and October 2015. The FSA was satisfied that the action plan had been fully implemented and the audit has been closed. There will be no further revisits.

4. Resources

4.1 Financial Allocation

The overall level of expenditure allocated for the provision of the food service in the 2016/17 period is as indicated below:

Staff Costs (and internal recharges – Marketing, Finance etc.)	£179,000
IT Costs recharge	£13,500
Legal Costs recharge	£7,200
Equipment/printing	£4,000
Specialist advice (including payments for contractor inspections)	£12,000
TOTAL	£216,200

The estimated level of food service demand during the 2016/17 period:

Food service demand 2016/17	Resource required (hours)			
	EHTO	EHO	EHM	CSA
212 inspections (programmed A to non-compliant D plus outstanding C premises from 2015/16)	0	424	56	36
135 -180 new inspections (premises registering during the 2016/17 period) plus 42 from 2015/16	0	444	16	38
80-100 compliant D and E rated premises inspections (not suitable for AES)	0	175	0	17
463 compliant D and E rated premises AES interventions (suitable for AES)	347	20	116	116
Revisits to non-compliant premises	0	150	10	0
FHRS administration and revisits to re-rate	0	20	15	0
Infectious disease investigation	150	100	0	17
Food complaint investigation	45	180	0	0
Sampling activity	80	50	10	0
Attendance/input at Bucks Food Group, EHLG and other food related forums	0	0	140	0
Food incidents and alerts	0	20	0	0
Provision of food business advice	0	180	0	50
Management and administration of food service	0	20	700	400
Formal enforcement activity and legal cases	0	300	70	0
Training and CPD	20	60	35	0
Support of EHTOs undertaking EHO qualification (food element)	0	60	30	0
Work on implementation of public health agenda	0	15	0	0
Food/Health Promotion activities	0	20	20	0
TOTAL	642	2238	1218	674
Grand Total	4772 hours (Approx. 2.98 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 2015/16 and known demands within the 2016/17 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 2.50. This consists of 4 Environmental Health Officers and one Environmental Health Manager (EHM) as well as administrative Customer Services support. There is additional support available as the other EHM and the EHLM are both food competent. Each of the EHOs spends approximately 50% of their time on food service work. The EHM also spends approximately 50% of their 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.

The FTE staff allocation for the provision of the 2015/16 food service was 2.90. In the 2016/17 period this staff allocation has increased by 0.08. There is a £12,000 specialist advice budget within the 2016/17 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

The Food Standard Agency's Code of Practice was revised in April 2015. The section concerning the Qualifications and Experience was updated and local authorities were given 12 months to implement the revised requirements.

The Food Law Code of Practice requires authorised food officers to complete a minimum of 20 hours per year of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training. These hours are split into:

- 10 hours- core food matters directly related to the delivery of official controls
- 10 hours- other professional matters including training needs identified by the EHM during competency assessments/appraisals

These changes were implemented in 2015/16. This was achieved in 2015/16 through the completion of food competency self assessments and shadowed competency visits by environmental health officers and managers. In 2016/17 the outcome of the self assessment and shadowed visits will be reviewed and a development plan identified for each officer. In addition, the self assessment will be extended to all environmental health technical officers involved in the delivery of food service.

Aylesbury Vale District Council supports and engages with the CIEH Buckinghamshire Branch who runs 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 Officers 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. Officers are required to keep records of the CPD training that they complete. Environmental Health Officers have taken part in a Food Standards Agency consistency exercise and food service consistency is discussed at monthly team meetings. This will continue in 2016/17.

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. Consistency within the FHRS is also an item on the Buckinghamshire 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 2015/16. Category A premises should receive an inspection 6 months after the previous intervention, where as a category C is inspected at 18 month intervals. A number of factors influence when an inspection is due including the number of people the business supplies food to and how compliant the business is with legislative requirements.

The number of interventions completed in 2015/16 by risk category:

2015/16	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Interventions completed	11	84	195	252	149	828
Interventions outstanding	0	0	5	20	13	38
% interventions achieved	100%	100%	97%	92%	91%	95%

The total number of interventions achieved increased from 515 in 2014/15 to 828 in 2015/16. All of the highest risk premises (A rated and B rated premises) were inspected. There was an increase in interventions achieved across categories C-E. The overall percentage of interventions achieved increased by 9%. In 2014/15 the department underwent a restructure and the uncertainty and training demands did have a small impact on officers' capacity to carry out food interventions. In 2015/16 a new way of monitoring interventions and officer allocation was introduced. This

allows the EHM to have a better overview of the food service plan and ensure resources are appropriately targeted at the highest risk premises. It is expected that the implementation of the new database Salesforce will further improve service plan monitoring.

The Food Standards Agency provides categorisation of when a business is deemed to be broadly compliant with the law based on their risk scores at inspection.

The number of broadly compliant businesses by risk category:

2015/16	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Total number of premises	3	48	266	465	660	1442
Number broadly compliant	1	36	241	462	660	1419
% Broadly compliant	33.33%	75.00%	90.94%	99.35%	100%	97.08%

The figures relating to compliance of food businesses has remained within 1% over the previous periods (2012/13 96.69%, 2013/14 96.47%, 2014/15 96.93%, 2015/16 97.08%). As 99.35% of D and E rated premises are broadly compliant, this provides justification for the targeting of resources towards A-C rated premises. It is important to note that an A rated premises is not necessarily a non-compliant business but may be high-risk because of the type of food activities it carries out.

The areas of improvement identified in the previous 2015/16 Food Service Plan are discussed within this document. The areas have been completed or are identified as ongoing in the 2016/17 improvement areas below. In the period 2016/17 delivery against this service plan will be reviewed and the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager will update the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

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 2015/16 period:

- Implement online versions of the food registration form, self assessment questionnaires and explore if there are other aspects of the food service that would benefit from a online form. This will reduce administration time and make the process easier for business customers.
- Review the premise database to ensure that premises are correctly classified as outside the programme. This will improve the database accuracy and ensure resources are targeted to those requiring intervention and based on risk to public health.
- EHTOs are to target D and E Rated premises who did not return questionnaires last year. If necessary inspections will be carried out. This work will improve the accuracy of our database.
- Review the use of partial inspections and audits as alternatives to full inspections in order to increase efficiency with lower risk premises and direct resources to premises with highest public health risk..
- Review staff development plans for EHOs, extend self assessment to EHTOs involved in the delivery of food service and update procedures in line with the Food Law Code of Practice 2015 updates.
- Explore the option of increasing the scope of our Alternative Enforcement Strategy to businesses which are consistently compliant. This will allow resources to be directed towards premises with highest risk.
- Assist in the development and implementation of the new premises database Salesforce in relation to the food controls and interventions. This will assist in the delivery and improve monitoring of the food service plan.
- Continue to review the health certificate processes to ensure that we are offering the best service to our business customers.
- Continue to work with SEMLEP regarding the “Better Business for All” initiative in order to assist businesses and improve the relationship between regulators and the businesses themselves (especially those which are generally compliant).

- Continue to keep abreast of current issues, (particularly concerning new guidance on the service of rare burgers) and cascade information to businesses as required.

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