

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Monitoring Report on the Delivery of the Food Law Enforcement and Health and Safety Service Plans.

Meeting/Date: Licensing and Protection Committee – 28 September 2022

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Customer Services – Cllr S Ferguson

Report by: Claudia Deeth – Interim Community Service Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The Food Law Enforcement Service Plan and Health and Safety Service Plan 2022-23 were approved by committee on 29 June 2022.

The report provides information about the delivery of the two Service Plans for Quarter 1.

Programmed work is delivered alongside reactive work, the volume of which by definition is impossible to predict. This work is carried out according to risk. Complaints and accident investigations are prioritised using risk-based selection criteria, and the volume of work is reported here to attempt to identify any emerging risks in terms of resource provision.

The Food Standards Agency permitted all planned food safety inspections to resume mid-June 2021 and activities are being completed in line with the Food Standards Agency Recovery Plan.

Appendices 1 and 2 contain detailed information about the delivery of the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan. Appendix 3 contains detailed information about the delivery of the Health and Safety Service Plan.

Recommendation:

The Committee is asked to review progress and provide any comments considered appropriate on the delivery of the two Service Plans for Q1.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report provides information about the delivery of the two Service Plans for Q1 of 2022-23, the period 1 April 2022 - 30 June 2022.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members have asked to be kept informed about the delivery of the work in the approved plans.

3. SERVICE AREAS COVERED BY THE REPORT AND ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Food Law Enforcement consists of the following areas of work:

- Planned activities such as routine inspections of food businesses, food and environmental sampling and the provision of food hygiene training courses;
- Unplanned (reactive) work such as the investigation of customer complaints, dealing with requests for compliance advice and following up notifications of food poisoning;
- Liaison with other departments in the interests of coordinated service delivery: in particular licensing and planning;
- Supporting national strategies and the wider public health agenda.

- 3.2 Appendices 1 and 2 provide details of the number of proactive and reactive activities that have taken place throughout the year compared to the number of activities predicted.

- 3.3 Health and Safety regulation consists of these areas of work:

- Planned activities such as unannounced inspections of high-risk businesses and targeted interventions in line with the HSE's strategic aims.
- Unplanned (reactive) work such as the investigation of notifiable accidents, prescribed diseases, complaints and dealing with serious risks that are identified during other activities (Matters of Evident Concern).
- The provision of compliance advice to businesses.

- 3.4 Appendix 3 provide details of the number of activities that have taken place throughout the year compared to the number of activities predicted.

4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 4.1 The failure to monitor the delivery of the approved Service Plans could invite criticism from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in their capacities as the national regulators.
- 4.2 Members have asked to be kept informed about the delivery of the approved Service Plans in order that they can comment on the way in which the service is provided as well as the available resources.

5. ACTIONS TAKEN AND PROGRESS AGAINST THE APPROVED PLANS

5.1 Food Safety Service Plan

- 5.1.1 The inspection programme for 2022-23 is being completed in line the FSA Recovery Plan which determined new business and highest risk businesses must be inspected first. A 'temperature check' was submitted to the FSA at the end of June and we were able to report that the expectations set out in Phase 2 of the Recovery Plan were met.
- 5.1.2 It is noted that due to the inspection programme being suspended during the pandemic there are more inspections than usual due this year. There are also a large number of new businesses continuing to register. As the inspection programme has restarted and is being achieved in line with the FSA Recovery Plan it is shown at Amber status. There currently remains a backlog of inspections.
- 5.1.3 It is also of note that Officers are finding standards have declined where businesses have gone a number of years without inspection due to the pandemic, this is leading to longer inspection times. Therefore, the drive towards the most efficient inspection process remains a high priority.
- 5.1.4 Appendix 1 shows that the alternative enforcement strategy is currently at red; this is not however an immediate concern as these are the very low risk premises therefore considered appropriate to be assessed by other means than visits.
- 5.1.5 Appendix 2 refers to the number of unplanned, reactive activities undertaken. The number of customer complaints and service requests is driven by demand which can be unpredictable. In Q1, 95 service requests were received which is slightly less than anticipated based on previous years.
- 5.1.6 Officers have been participating in the UK Health Security Agency's sampling study which is why a higher number of samples have been taken than previously anticipated. In Q1 the topic was 'Hygiene in Takeaway Sandwich and Salad bars' and covered swabs from ready to eat contact surfaces and cleaning cloths used in ready to eat areas.
- 5.1.7 The food hygiene training programme was suspended during the pandemic but there have been requests for an in person classroom training course and one has been arranged for 20 October 2022 at Pathfinder House.

5.2 Health and Safety

5.2.1 In Q1 the health and safety activity has been concentrated around health and safety advice given to event organisers through the Safety Advisory Group (SAG). This is an advisory body comprising key representatives from relevant organisations. Its purpose is to offer advice to event organisers to promote public safety at events within the district. This advice from officers can be written or it can be given during SAG meetings or site visits. Of note are the events such as Secret Garden Party where SAG meetings and associated document reviews can take a considerable amount of officer time.

5.2.2 During Q1 there has also been 10 accidents investigated and a number of other service requests responded to, these comprise both complaints from members of the public and businesses requesting advice as well as skin piercing registrations and notifications of defective lifting equipment.

5.2.3 As we now approach the end of Q2 it is anticipated more targeted activities including those on the work plan set out in the Service Plan can begin.

6. **LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

6.1 These reporting arrangements support the wider corporate objectives to

- Create, protect and enhance our safe built environment
- Support people to improve their health and wellbeing
- Accelerate business growth and remove barriers to growth

7. **CONSULTATION**

7.1 No consultations are required as part of this report.

8. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None.

9. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The failure to report the delivery of the approved Service Plans may prejudice the Council's ability to provide the necessary resources.

10. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None.

11. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

11.1 To keep Members informed about the delivery of the approved Service Plans.

12. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 - Food Safety Service Plan: programmed (proactive) Activity

Appendix 2 - Food Safety Service Plan: Reactive Activity

Appendix 3 - Health and Safety Activity

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