

FOOD & HEALTH AND SAFETY INTERVENTION PLANS

Head of Service/Contact: Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community

Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No

If yes, reason urgent decision required:

Annexes/Appendices (attached): Annex 1 - Food Service Plan
Annex 2 - Health and Safety Intervention Plan

Other available papers (not attached):

Report summary

In 2018 the Environment and Safe Communities Committee adopted the Environmental Health Service Plans for Health & Safety and for Food Safety. This report contains monitoring information on action taken in 2018-2019 and proposes new targets for 2019-2020.

Recommendation (s)

- (1) The Committee adopt the service plan for food safety**
- (2) The Committee adopt the intervention plan for health and safety**
- (3) The Committee agree to receive revised food and health and safety plans for 2020-2021 at a date in 2020.**

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 The Council's Key Priority of Supporting Business and the Local Economy applies. Fair, justifiable and proportionate intervention to address poor standards in business helps to ensure a level playing field for law abiding operators whilst protecting and promoting public health.
- 1.2 The Council's Key Priority of Supporting our Community applies owing to the beneficial effects to public health of an effective food and health & safety service. The service exists to protect and enhance public health, particularly in cases where the most vulnerable are involved.

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- 1.3 The Council's Key Priority of Managing our Resources applies as the proper planning of services allows for efficient delivery using the available resources in the most effective manner.

2 Background

- 2.1 In 2018 the Environment and Safe Communities Committee adopted two separate service plans relating to Health and Safety and Food Safety. Those plans have been updated with information on progress and achievements in 2018-2019. In addition the planned actions for 2019-2020 have been included as targets.
- 2.2 The section 18 standard under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 requires local authorities to make adequate arrangements for the enforcement of health and safety law in their area and draw up effective intervention plans setting out how they plan to carry out their enforcement and advisory function for the year.
- 2.3 The Council is charged with enforcement of UK and European food hygiene controls within its area. The expectation from the Food Standards Agency under the food framework agreement and food law code of practice is that local authorities will draw up a service plan illustrating how they intend to fulfil their food safety duties and for that plan to be adopted by the relevant policy deciding body of the Council.
- 2.4 Best practice in the area of regulatory service is to establish transparent plans for the deployment of public resources and to publicise those plans.
- 2.5 This item appears on the Committee's forward plan for later in the year, however as it is a plan for the year, it has been brought forward so as to be relevant to the year in which it is presented.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee adopt both the food safety service plan and the health and safety intervention plan for 2019-2020.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 There are no additional implications arising from this report however members will note it was not possible to complete the food hygiene due inspection programme for 2018-2019. As a result this backlog will need to be carried out in 2019-2020 in addition to the due inspections.
- 4.2 The reason for the shortfall is
 - 4.2.1 Lack of suitably qualified staff
 - 4.2.2 Poor availability of competent consultancy staff

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4.2.3 A higher proportion of the work volume arising from a small number of actual and pending prosecutions for food safety, health and safety and waste matters.

4.2.4 A high demand on the service coming from the Council's wider community safety and enforcement agenda on subjects such as flytipping and the introduction of greater licensing responsibilities in respect of houses in multiple occupation.

4.3 Having been unable to recruit to the vacant Environmental Health Officer position the team is being supported by a consultant which has financial implications in the current year. A further attempt to recruit is underway. The skills shortage in this area of work is affecting councils across much of the country and is particularly acute in the south east.

4.4 Chief Finance Officer's comments: the department is currently forecasting a £13.5k adverse variance on employee costs as a result of the agency staff employed. This position would be improved upon successful recruitment of a permanent member of staff to the team. Officers are currently also working with finance colleagues to address this variance through additional income generation.

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

5.1 The Council has statutory duties as outlined above in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 above in relation to these service areas.

5.2 Monitoring Officer's comments: None arising from this report.

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

6.1 None arising from this report

7 Partnerships

7.1 The Service is working in partnership with other Surrey Boroughs in both the health and safety and food safety areas. Further partnership arrangements exist with other bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive, OFSTED, Care Quality Commission, Surrey County Council and Public Health England.

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 The Food Standards Agency and the Health & Safety Executive monitor the effectiveness of the Authority's action taken in these service areas. The risk of under resourcing these areas is a decrease in public protection and public health, adverse publicity arising from annual reports on local authority performance and non-fulfilment of statutory obligations.

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9 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended the Committee adopt the service plan for food safety and the intervention plan for health and safety.
- 9.2 The committee agree to receive revised plans for the 2020-2021 year at its meeting in 2020.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);