

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**HIGHWAYS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS  
CABINET MEMBER**

**FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2012/2013**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek approval of the Authority's Food Service Plan for 2012/2013.
- 1.2 The key points in this report are:
- The Food Standards Agency (FSA) requires the council to produce a plan which sets out their work for 2012/2013 and shows the resources they need.
  - The plan is risk based. It details work in food safety, food standards and food law enforcement and includes a number of food safety projects on high profile food topics.
  - The council will target visits at the highest risk premises to secure high levels of compliance with food law.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The FSA require the council to write a plan that sets out how they will carry out their food work. The council enforces both Food Safety and Food Standards (Consumer Protection) legislation. It also carries out work on the composition and safety of Animal Feed products.
- 2.2 Appendix 1 and 2 contains two documents which make up the council's Food Service Plan.
- 2.3 The planned activity is in two documents, one for Food Safety and one for Food Standards as the latter document must now include Feed Law Enforcement work.
- 2.4 The FSA require the council to approve the food service plan.
- 2.5 The plan shows how the Environmental Health (Commercial) Team (EH) and the Trading Standards Service (TS) will carry out food service work required by the FSA in 2012/2013. EH will regulate food safety via programmed visits and a range of food

safety projects. 'Weak links' identified in the food safety compliance 'chain' and the promotion of food safety will be our priority. We will also continue to promote the 'National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme'.

- 2.6 The council will report to the FSA on its performance against the plan at the end of March 2013.
- 2.7 The council will continue with its sampling work and collect information to stop food fraud. Removing fake and potentially harmful alcohol in the market place is a high priority.
- 2.8 We will work to reduce the regulatory burdens on business, whilst protecting health and the environment.
- 2.9 The plan aims to ensure good levels of compliance at the highest risk premises. Food safety visits will be combined with other work where this is possible.
- 2.10 We will give advice and support to business and respond quickly to complaints and enquiries.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 Option 1 - To approve the plan
- 3.2 Option 2 – To not approve the plan

### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Approving the plan using the FSA guidance will mean the council will meet its legal duty under Food Law.
- 4.2 Ignoring the FSA guidance could lead to an FSA audit of the council and the potential transfer of the service to the FSA.

### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 5.1 The financial details are included in the Food Service Plan.
- 5.2 The new EH structure has created lead roles for Environmental Health Officers to provide a clear focus on key public health issues.

### **6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 – CRIME AND DISORDER AND OTHER)**

- 6.1 Workers and the public will be protected from becoming victims of crime through the graduated application of food law.
- 6.2 The plan provides a framework to encourage food businesses to become food law compliant with current legislation and in so

doing impact on the health determinants covered by the assessment.

- 6.3 The plan will encourage businesses to adopt a 'non-compliance costs' culture and will help them trade on a 'level regulatory playing field'.
- 6.4 The council must carry out this statutory duty and publicise it to show transparency and accountability.
- 6.5 The council's reputation may be put at risk if it fails to meet its statutory duty for the regulation of food safety and standards. The plan will remove this risk.

## **7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 We consult with businesses, following visits by staff, consumers who contact us about services and staff who carry out the service. Consultees views are taken into account when planning food enforcement work.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the Food Service Plan for 2012/2013

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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SCUNTHORPE  
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DN15 6XQ

Author: Martin Allcock  
Date: 9 July 2012

### **Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

- (1) North Lincolnshire Council Food Safety Service Plan 2012/2013
- (2) North Lincolnshire Council Food and Feed Law Enforcement Plan 2012/13



# **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **Food Service Plan (Food and Feed)**

**2012/2013**

Produced in accordance with the requirements of  
The Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement

## **1.0 Introduction**

This plan sets out how North Lincolnshire Council, through its Trading Standards Service, will develop its food and feed service to ensure that food and feed standards are complied with so consumers and traders can be confident in the food/feed that they buy. The plan also aims to ensure that there is a level playing field for all food and feed business operators. The plan details how the Trading Standards Service will meet its responsibilities under the Food Safety Act 1990, the Agriculture Act 1970 and European legislation for imported food and feed. This involves a combination of measures, which include enforcing food and feed standards law, sampling food and feeding stuffs and investigating complaints.

The structure of the plan follows the requirements contained within the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement published by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

## **2.0 Aims and Objectives**

For 2012/13, the Trading Standards Service will adopt as its key service aims:

- Operating a comprehensive compliance regime by means of a mix of sampling, inspection, testing and other interventions as appropriate, to ensure the legality of food and animal feeding stuffs produced or marketed within or imported into North Lincolnshire.
- Providing assistance and advice to local businesses to enable them to market products that comply with compositional and labelling requirements.
- Carrying out Food Standards Home Authority enquiries referred by other agencies.
- Investigating complaints/infringements of legislation and taking appropriate action.
- The plan acknowledges the principles identified by the Hampton Review and will endeavour to implement the related guidance issued by the Better Regulation Office. It also reflects the priorities identified by the Rogers Review on regulatory priorities.

## **2.1 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans**

The council's vision is to be a dynamic, high performing, customer focused council which gives the best possible value for money and focus on really changing outcomes for people living and working in the area.

Our strap line is "One Council Putting Our Customer's First".

The four priorities that will guide the councils work are:-

- Excellence in customer service
- Provide value for taxpayers' money
- Make our communities stronger
- Regenerate our area and increase prosperity

The Council will, through the implementation of the food and feed service plan, work to improve the health and well being of the residents of North Lincolnshire. The Food Service Plan contributes towards the Council's priorities in the following ways:

- The inspection of food premises will encourage compliance and promote a 'non compliance costs' culture.
- Providing business advice will assist the financial viability of local food businesses and help them succeed.
- Regulation of food businesses will contribute towards a 'level regulatory playing field' making it fairer for all business and better for those businesses that comply with food law.

### **3.0 Profile of North Lincolnshire**

North Lincolnshire is largely a rural area with a population of around 161,300 residents. Scunthorpe is the largest town in North Lincolnshire and the administrative centre for the area. The three other major population centres are Barton upon Humber, Epworth and Brigg. North Lincolnshire is served by main road links, the M180 and A18.

There are many farms and smaller food producers in the area, as well as medium and a few significant large businesses. The port of North Killingholme is located in North Lincolnshire, close to the border with North East Lincolnshire and the larger port of Immingham. The port of North Killingholme is split between two operators - Associated British Ports (Humber International Terminal) and the Simons Group (Humber Sea Terminal). Humber International Terminal is a deep water port and as such, accepts imports of bulk feed from third countries (mainly from South America). Humber Sea Terminal is a container port and accepts imports of containerised food and feed from other EU states (Holland and Belgium). The food imports are dealt with by The Hull and Goole Port Health Authority. Trading Standards have responsibility for imported feed.

A procedure has been put in place for monitoring these imported feeds. North Lincolnshire Council currently has a good working relationship with the importers, agents and hauliers bringing feeds through the ports at North Killingholme and also good links and chains of communication with the port operators and shipping lines. Contact is made via e-mail, telephone and letter where necessary. Regular notification of third country shipments are received prior to a vessel berthing at Killingholme and copies of vessel manifests are received for all vessels carrying containers from other EU ports. These manifests detail all consignments (Feed & Non Feed) being brought through the ports, including haulier details. A minimum of 30% inspection of these manifests has been agreed with the FSA, to determine what feeds are being brought into the UK via the port, however at present 100% checks are being carried out. Details of these consignments will be entered on to a Schedule of Animal Feed Consignments database. Where necessary, further detailed checks will be made with the hauliers regarding origin & ultimate destination within the UK.

If deemed appropriate, the Inland Enforcing Authority will be notified (see policies on Third Country Imports and Containerised Imports).

North Lincolnshire is home to several large food businesses which distribute nationally. Many of these companies produce a range of foods for the major supermarkets: Vion produce pre-packed bacon; 2 Sisters produce millions of pre-packed chickens every week; Axgro produce cooked and prepared vegetables and salads for retail and the airline industry; The Sauce Company produce soups and sauces for retail and the ever growing food service industry; OSI produce millions of burgers for McDonalds. North Lincolnshire is also home to Nisa Today's retail consortium which is responsible for supplying a national network of members with a wide range of lesser known brands, including their own 'Heritage' brand of food products. There are currently around 50 high risk premises which are inspected annually for Food Standards purposes. North Lincolnshire Trading Standards acts as Home Authority for many of these businesses, providing advice and guidance on food labelling, Weights and Measures and advertising. At present, North Lincolnshire Trading Standards has yet to enter into formal Primary Authority agreements with these businesses.

Currently, North Lincolnshire has no Designated Ports/Points of Entry (DPE's) Therefore, no high risk animal feeds should be coming into the UK through the ports within North Lincolnshire. The ports will be monitored as this situation could change at any time with an application to become a DPE being submitted.

### **3.1 Organisational Structure**

The Trading Standards Service is part of the Places (Technical and Environment Services) Directorate within North Lincolnshire Council.

Food and feed enforcement within North Lincolnshire Council's Trading Standards Service is carried out by the Food, Agriculture and Animal Health team. The team also has responsibility for Weights and Measures enforcement. The team is headed by a Trading Standards Officer and also consists of an Enforcement Officer, a Trainee Trading Standards Officer (part qualified), an Enforcement Assistant (unqualified) and a part time Animal Health Officer. The team handle all demand coming into the service regarding food and feed law, supported by a basic administrative team.

Within the team are two officers qualified and competent to enforce food and feed legislation and one part qualified officer. These officers are also engaged in other aspects of Trading Standards enforcement work that fall within the teams remit, including weights and measures, animal health and welfare, infectious disease outbreaks. Only one officer is active in feed law enforcement at present.

The two qualified officers also have been appointed as lead food officer (Robert Clark) and lead agriculture officer (Steve Blanchard). They are overseen by the Head of Trading Standards and Licensing (Vacant Post).

North Lincolnshire Trading Standards has appointed the Public/Agricultural Analyst at West Yorkshire Scientific Services for the analysis and testing of food standards and feeding stuffs.

If deemed necessary, there is provision for the service to utilise other scientific services, if required.



### **3.2 Scope of Food Safety Service**

As well as providing comprehensive advice in response to business enquiries, officers carry out programmed inspections of food and feed premises and re-visits where necessary to check compliance with legal requirements. Where breaches of legal requirements are identified, we will take the necessary informal or formal action to rectify the breach.

Officers will also investigate any complaints received about food standards or feeding stuffs. Complaints coming into the service are initially dealt with via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline and may be referred or notified as appropriate.

Food and feed sampling, both formal and informal, is carried out at retail and trade premises according to the sampling plan drawn up for the year. Sampling of feeding stuffs takes place using a risk based approach or by responding to complaints or at the request of the purchaser. Where necessary, the service will participate in coordinated sampling surveys/programs organised by the Yorkshire and Humber Trading Standards Group (YAHTSG), Food Standards Agency (FSA) or our Public Analyst.



### 3.3 Service Delivery Points

The Service delivery contacts are as follows:

**Postal:** North Lincolnshire Council  
Trading Standards Service  
PO Box 42  
Church Square House  
Scunthorpe  
North Lincolnshire  
DN15 6XQ

**Personal Visit:** Monday - Thursday 8.30am-5.00pm, Friday 8.30am-4.30pm

**Telephone:** 01724 297664

**Fax:** 01724 297895

**Email:** trading.standards@northlincs.gov.uk

**Website:** www.northlincs.gov.uk

Church Square House is a Local Link office in a town centre location and is routinely open during normal office hours (9.00am to 5.00pm Mon – Thurs, 9.00am to 4.30pm Fri). Direct dial telephone capability is used to enhance the accessibility of the service. An increasing amount of information is being made available via the Council's web site and contact via e-mail is encouraged.

The service is also accessible via a network of 6 other Local Link offices based in Barton, Brigg, Crowle & North Axholme, Epworth & South Axholme, Winterton and Ashby.

24hr emergency contact is available via the Council's Emergency Control Centre (01724 276444).

There is an out of hours answer phone facility for contacting the Trading Standards Service (01724 297664).

### 3.4 Demands on the Food Safety Service

Currently, the number of food premises in North Lincolnshire is estimated at 1803. The number of premises registered under Food Hygiene is 724.

Premises Profile	Number of food businesses	Number of feed premises
Primary producers	19	453
Slaughterhouses	0	N/A
Manufacturers/processors/packers	33	7
Importers/exporters	2	2
Distributors/Transporters	36	30
Retailers (inc .catering)	1713	187
Food business selling co-products	N/A	12
Store	N/A	33
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1803</b>	<b>724</b>

### 3.5 Access to Expertise

#### Public Analyst

The Service has continuous dialogue and a good working relationship with the Public Analyst on all matters concerned with food and feeding stuffs sampling and analysis. Officers are encouraged to contact the Public Analyst where appropriate, to discuss sampling matters.

### 3.6 Enforcement Policy

The Places (Technical & Environment Services) Directorate provides an umbrella policy for all enforcement work carried out by its Divisions. Operating within this general enforcement framework are documented policies for the Food Service i.e. Inspection, Complaint Handling, Sampling, Enforcement of Legislation and dealing with matters of non-compliance. The Council recognises the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform's Regulators Compliance Code, whose principles are adopted when dealing with businesses. The service also follows the Code of Conduct of the Crown Prosecution Service, which recognises that prosecution is only one of a suite of remedies that can be used, and that others may be considered more appropriate in many cases of non-compliance.

### 3.7 Complaints about North Lincolnshire Council or its Officers

North Lincolnshire Council has an established complaints procedure, which, in the first instance, requires complaints to be directed to the officer's line manager.

### 4.0 Service Delivery

Food Safety inspections are programmed in accordance with Food Safety Act Code of Practice which is currently under review following consultation. The premises risk profile and inspection programme is summarised below.

#### 4.1 Premises Risk Profile

Food Standards and Feeding Stuff premises, under the risk assessment system currently in place, should receive a programmed inspection at the following intervals:

- High Risk premises every 12 months
- Medium Risk premises every 24 months
- Low Risk premises as required

#### Food Premises (L risk)

	Due for Visit	Total Planned
High Risk Premises	38	38 (100%)
Medium Risk Premises	406	163 (40%)
Low Risk Premises	357	11 (3%)
Premises outside programme	0	0
Unrated Premises	9	9 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>221</b>

### Feed Hygiene Regulations (R risk)

	Due for Visit	Total Planned
High Risk	3	3(100%)
Medium Risk	12	6 (50%)
Low Risk	349	10 (3%)
Non Inspectable risk (NIR)	0	0
Unrated	25	25 (100%)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>44</b>

### Food Hygiene Primary Production (F Risk)

	Total Premises	Due for Visit	Total Planned
Not farm assured	94	24	24 (25%)
Farm assured	154	3	3 (100%)
Unrated	231	228	57 (25%)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>84</b>

## 4.2 Targeted Inspection Activity

Our programmed inspections will be carried out in accordance with a risk-based approach, further outlined below.

In addition, premises may be targeted as a result of complaints received, local and national food audits, food alerts and advice from the FSA. Our inspections follow the procedure as laid down in the Code of Practice issued under Section 40 of the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Food Standards Agency Feed Law Code of Practice.

Interventions (contact with our food and feed businesses) planned for 2012/13 include a range of enforcement actions, including inspections. Re-visits will be carried out to ensure compliance for any required actions from these visits.

The focus of future food and feed law enforcement will be determined by intelligence gathered as a result of interventions and advice that our officers have given to food and feed businesses. Analysis of complaints and enquiries will also be taken into account.

The interpretation of the above intelligence enables us to take a suitable risk-based approach to inform us where our focus should be. This includes the development of our pre-programmed inspections, interventions and targeted food and feed projects. This ensures that we can continue to direct our resources to where they are needed most, taking into account the Council's ongoing need to make efficiency savings.

All high risk businesses and some medium risk businesses will be inspected throughout the year. It is not our intention to carry out any intervention at low risk

businesses without a valid reason for doing so (complaints or requests for advice). Feed Business Operators in particular will be visited where possible, without prior notification. This may not be possible at a primary inspection but sampling visits will generally be unannounced.

We may deal with businesses by means of 'alternative enforcement action' as opposed to conventional 'inspections'. However, we will always provide the opportunity for those businesses to request advice and assistance from authorised officers involved in food and feed enforcement, as required.

In order to reduce the regulatory burden on business, where possible, inspections will either be combined with Environmental Health inspections or in the case of premises with none complex food standards issues (i.e. takeaways), carried out solely by Environmental Health Officers on Trading Standards behalf. Any issues arising will be reported back.

Food hygiene inspections will be made at Primary Producers (arable farms, fish farms, honey producers, market gardens etc). The frequency is dependent upon membership of a recognised farm assurance scheme. Those that are members of such a scheme will be subject to less frequent inspections, whereas those that are not members will be subject to a 4 yearly inspection period, subject to available staffing resources.

The number of premises closing down and the number of new businesses opening up will contribute to the actual number of inspections undertaken. In addition to pre-programmed inspections, additional inspections are undertaken of new premises opening during the year and temporary or mobile traders at various events and markets held in the administrative area. Such events include Farmers Markets and County Shows.

### **4.3 Food Complaints**

Complaints are received into the Service by letter, email, direct phone calls or via referrals from the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline. Where the complaint refers to contamination, adulteration, composition and labelling, officers will fully investigate the complaint. Such an investigation will be conducted with a view to tackling the root cause of the problem, to avoid it happening again. Advice may be sought from the YAHTSG regional food/feed group or the LGR Agriculture panel if further assistance is thought necessary for a consensus of opinion, to ensure consistency. Where appropriate, enforcement action will be taken, having regard to the Enforcement Policy, Statutory Codes of Practice and LG Regulation (LACoRS) Guidance.

For complaints relating to imported food, officers will refer these to the Hull and Goole Port Health Authority (HGPH). Should HGPH have any concerns regarding feed imports, a reciprocal arrangement is in place.

Where the complaint is regarding foreign bodies or food safety, officers will refer the complaint to the Food and Safety team (Environmental Health Service).

During the course of the year, the service will receive a number of food and feed related complaints and enquiries. Food and Feed Law Enforcement will, (where possible), be structured to tackle the root cause of these complaints and will be designed to ensure that any interventions have the desired impact.

#### **4.4 Primary / Home Authority Scheme**

This Service operates in accordance with the LG Regulation (LACoRS) Home Authority Principle, acting as a point of contact for businesses within North Lincolnshire that trade both within and outside of the boundaries of the administrative area. We do not currently act as a 'Primary Authority' for any North Lincolnshire Food or Feed Business. The Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) are able to nominate a Council as a Primary Authority if a business has requested such a partnership. A Food or Feed Business may also approach our authority to request such a partnership. We will in future contact those businesses that we feel could benefit from a Primary Authority arrangement.

If any Primary Authority arrangements are set up for any business, we will provide business advice and guidance in relation to trading standards matters, with a dedicated single point of contact, in line with any Primary Authority Agreement which is put in place.

#### **4.5 Advice to Business**

The Service works with businesses to help them comply with the law and to encourage the use of best practice. This will be achieved through a range of activities including:

- Running courses or seminars, if it can be shown there is a demand for this type of activity.
- Written advice provided to a particular sector, for example if there is a significant change in legislation affecting that business sector.
- Advice given during the course of inspections and other visits.
- The provision of advice leaflets and information over the Service's web site.
- Responding to specific enquiries received from food and feed businesses.
- Support of national and local campaigns, such as nationally coordinated surveys.

#### **4.6 Food Safety Sampling**

It is the policy of the Service to produce a food and feeding stuffs sampling plan. Having taken into consideration intelligence gathered for food and feed complaints, enquiries, problems and advice provided and National Priorities, we will develop our sampling plan which will detail what sampling will be carried out across the year (finances permitting). We need to ensure that we take account of the following principles:

- a) To maximise the effectiveness of our sampling activities, we will join with coordinated sampling programmes, where appropriate. We will focus on

- b) To this end, we will not take samples where it cannot be justified that there is a need to do so. This principle will also apply to any complaints received.
- c) We will consider how our sampling can be more effective and the results maximised. We will work with our Public Analyst to discuss development of new sampling methods where there is a specific need.
- d) The sampling programme that we develop will focus on locally produced and packed products, as well as imported products. This will reflect both regional and national priorities. In particular, any priorities deemed as such by the Food Standards Agency.

In the design of our food and feed sampling plan, we will focus on our priority areas which are:

- Imported animal feeds (in particular those direct from 3rd countries outside the EU)
- Local food manufacturers

These priorities are designed with the aim of protecting both the consumer and the majority of legitimate businesses who aim to comply with the law.

Where possible, we will utilise the expertise of the new Food Standards Agency Food Fraud Advisory Unit to assist in our food fraud investigations.

As well as carrying out our own sampling projects, the service also participates in YAHTSG co-ordinated sampling programmes. In addition, we will contribute to the FSA imported food and feed sampling programme, where possible.

All samples taken are recorded on the national food and feed database (FSSNET).

Samples are taken in accordance with legal requirements, the Food Safety Act Code of Practice, the Feed Safety Code of Practice, and any guidelines issued by the FSA or LG Regulation (LACoRS).

Both food and feeding stuffs samples will, in normal circumstances, be submitted to the Public or Agricultural Analyst for analysis and comment.

In 2012/13, the number of food and feed samples we will submit to our Public Analyst will be dependent upon where a sampling need is identified and also on any future available budget. We estimate that this figure will be in the region of 200 food and feed samples.

As part of the YAHTSG regional bid and intelligence led sampling, it is estimated that in 2012/13, approximately 15 imported feed samples will be submitted for analysis.

## **4.7 Food Alerts**

Food and Feed hazard warnings are issued by the FSA to all food/ feed authorities in the country when a national food/feed safety issue has arisen with a specific food/feed product. The majority of food/feed alert warnings are issued for information only, a few requiring immediate action. However, some alert warnings may require

more immediate action. Large scale incidents may impact on the demands of the service.

Food/feed hazard warnings are responded to by appropriate officers of the service. All warnings and the subsequent action taken is recorded on our database.

The Service monitors the European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) to ensure any issues likely to impact on local businesses or national food/feed safety are actioned. Particular attention is given to any guidance on enforcement priorities for feed authorities issued from time to time by the FSA.

#### **4.8 Control & Investigation of Outbreaks & Food Related Infectious Disease**

Food poisoning notifications do not usually fall within the remit of the Trading Standards Service. If, however, the Service became aware of any incident of food poisoning or infectious disease, the facts would be reported to the Food and Safety Team (Environmental Health).

#### **4.9 Food Safety Liaison**

The Service ensures that the enforcement action taken within North Lincolnshire is consistent with that of its neighbouring authorities and liaises with a wide range of organisations to varying degrees in carrying out its food and feed law enforcement function.

Partners include:

11 other Trading Standards Departments in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, that together make up the Yorkshire and Humber Regional enforcement group (YOHREGS).

Activities include liaison on all key Trading Standards issues, including discussion of more complex business advice matters to ensure a consistent approach. Through YOHREGS there are also coordinated inspections and sampling. The sharing of information and intelligence also takes place.

##### **HM Customs**

Contact is maintained with H M Customs at the ports at North Killingholme.

##### **Port Health**

Contact is maintained with the Hull and Goole Port Health Authority. Occasional meetings are held to discuss any emerging issues with HGPH and the neighbouring Trading Standards Services.

##### **Animal Health - Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)**

Activities include liaison on responsibility for overlapping work in animal health and welfare, joint inspections to targeted premises (animal by products and waste food entering the feed chain) plus exchange of information on specific premises and businesses.

### **Animal Medicines Inspectorate**

Activities includes liaison where premises are registered as producing medicated feeds, to ensure duplicate inspections are not conducted. Joint inspections are carried out where possible.

### **Food Standards and Feeding stuffs Promotion**

Food Standards and Feeding Stuff promotional work may form part of an annual programme of activities aimed at raising the awareness of food and other issues within the scope of the Service. This may include newsletters to update businesses on new legislation, and other relevant initiatives and campaigns, attendance at local events, reference material and other information on the Council's website. Press releases may be used to highlight food issues and other information with an immediate public interest.

## **4.10 Food Safety Promotion**

Food Standards and Feeding Stuff promotional work may form part of an annual programme of activities aimed at raising the awareness of food and other issues within the scope of the Service. This may include newsletters to update businesses on new legislation, and other relevant initiatives and campaigns, attendance at local events, reference material and other information on the Council's website. Press releases may be used to highlight food issues and other information with an immediate public interest.

## **5.0 Resources**

Provided below are details of the resources that are allocated to the delivery of the Food and Feed Service Plan. The establishment resource for the Food and Feed Service is 1.75 FTE. Officers are not dedicated to food and feed work and combine this work with other enforcement functions.

### **5.1 Staffing Allocation**

A list of officers currently authorised to undertake food and feed law enforcement across the department is maintained, together with a record of training and continuing professional development hours awarded. Currently this stands at 7 authorised food officers (3 active) and 1 feed officer.

**The staffing allocation is provisional and subject to approval by the Trading Standards Manager once appointed.**

Trading Standards & Licensing Manager	0.05
Trading Standards Officers	0.5
Enforcement Officer	0.5
Enforcement Assistant	0.2
Trainee	0.5



## 5.2 Financial Allocation

The figures are provisional and subject to approval by the Trading Standards Manager once appointed.

Staff costs	£64,543
Travel	£6,000
Budget for Analytical work	£24,000
Training	£2,000
Equipment	£1,000
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>£97,543</b>

## 5.3 Administration

Trading Standards, food and feed work is supported by an Administration Team which provides call handling, administration and some clerical support in addition to providing a staffed contact and referral point for service users.

## 5.4 Staff Development Plan

It is a requirement for food and feed enforcement officers to receive structured ongoing training of at least 10 hours per year as continuing professional development and to ensure effective and consistent food law enforcement.

The Service uses a range of external training organisations including the Trading Standards Institute, training co-ordinated by YOHREGS, the FSA, and internally provided courses. A full range of training will be used including:

- Formal courses leading to qualifications
- Specialist external training courses and events
- Regular updates through team meetings, seminars and training days
- Peer review
- In-house training

All staff participate in the Council's Employee Development Review (EDR) procedure with annual appraisals. Staff training needs are identified as part of the process and contribute to the training programme. It is recognised that officers undertaking the inspection of specialist or complex high risk activities require additional experience and skills.

The Service has also invested heavily in supporting a number of members of staff to study for professional qualifications.

## 6.0 Quality Assessment

We aim to continually improve the level of service provided. Procedures are reviewed, where necessary, to incorporate identified improvements.

## **6. Peer Auditing**

Trading Standards will take part in the Inter Authority Auditing (IAA) Programme which will provide a peer review of a designated service area in line with the Food Standards Agency audit principle.

## **7.0 Review and variation against the service plan**

The plan will be changed and updated as appropriate, at least annually. Areas for improvement are incorporated into the following year's food and feed law enforcement plan or dealt with as soon as possible, if there are no additional financial implications.

## Appendix A - Review of Food Safety Plan 2011/12

### Review against the Service Plan

In the absence of a Trading Standards Manager the service plan for food standards and feeding stuffs has been reviewed by the team responsible for the enforcement of food and feeding stuffs legislation.

The review compared the year's performance against targets set out in the plan 2011/2012. During the course of the year the service received the upsetting news that Robert Andrews, the Lead Food Officer, had suddenly past away. This had a massive impact on the service and its ability to fulfil the Service Plan commitments.

This post was never replaced and the remaining work had to be met by existing officers. Some additional training was required to bring them up to speed and enable them to carry out this work, which was done in addition to their existing workloads.

The plan called for all high risk and 190 medium risk premises to be visited, plus alternative enforcement interventions to unrated premises with a number of surveillance visits to low risk premises. In all, a total of 234 interventions were initiated. The target number of medium risk visits was not achieved due to lack of staff, however all high risk premises were visited. It was the sad loss of the Lead Food Officer that had the greatest impacted on the above results.

There have been no Food Standards Agency audits of the authority during the year. However, an inter-departmental audit was carried out which looked at inspections and record keeping. Any issues raised in the audit have now been implemented and amendments have been made on how inspections are recorded.

102 visits were made to Feeding Stuffs establishments during the year. However, a large amount of additional work on behalf of the FSA was carried out on imported animal feeds, which had an impact on the amount of planned feed work carried out.

In terms of sampling, the numbers taken were lower than planned, despite being slightly over budget. This was due to an increased number of unplanned non food samples such as counterfeit alcohol and tobacco samples, which put additional strain on the allocated sampling budget. Also, a larger number of animal feed samples were taken, which are generally more expensive to analyse than food samples, putting further strain on the budget.

There was a decrease in the total number of food samples taken during the year (118 food), however, an increase in the number of feeding stuff samples taken (67 feeding stuffs). Local performance criteria called for a minimum of 15% of samples taken to have some element of non-compliance to ensure correct targeting of the sampling budget. Out of all the samples taken, 17% were found to be unsatisfactory either in respect of composition or labelling.

The service dealt with 77 complaints from members of the public, which was an increase on the previous year. The number of complaints received, whilst higher, were more in line with expectations. The majority of the complaints concerned out of date food on display at retail premises. All complaints have been thoroughly investigated and appropriate guidance given or enforcement action taken.

During the year, 4 referrals were received from other local authorities under the Home Authority Principle. This is a decrease over the previous year. All referrals were recorded and taken up with the local producers. 38 service requests for assistance were received from local food and feed producers; this was a little less than the previous year.

Training of staff was, as usual, high on the agenda with all specialist food and agriculture officers receiving the necessary training to maintain their relevant competences.

### **Identification of any variation from the Service Plan**

The FSA asked that additional work be carried out at Points of Import (ports) in relation to imported feeding stuffs. This extra work has meant resources have been diverted away from carrying out work identified in the Service Plan.

The unfortunate loss of the Lead Food Officer has resulted in the planned number of inspections having to be reduced, resulting in a shortfall in inspection numbers compared to those identified in the original Service Plan. All High risk premises were, however, inspected

### **Areas of Improvement**

The targeted use of qualified food officers (including the Trainee, who is now qualified to carry out food inspections) to attempt to cover the shortfall resulting from the decrease in staffing levels. This will hopefully enable the Service to meet the targets set for the 2012/2013 Service Plan.

The previous sampling plan had to deal with reductions in budget and did not correctly address the balance between food and feed samples. This resulted in fewer food samples being taken and a greater number of feed samples than planned. The new sampling plan will better address this balance.



# **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **Food Service Plan (Food Safety)**

**2012/2013**

Produced in accordance with the requirements of  
The Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement

## **1.0 Introduction**

This plan sets out how the council, through its Environmental Health Service, will deliver food safety work to ensure that consumers can be confident that the food that they buy is safe. The plan also aims to ensure that there is a level playing field for all food business operators. The plan details how Environmental Health will meet its responsibilities under Food Safety legislation. This involves a combination of measures, which include enforcing food safety law, sampling food, the investigation of outbreaks and food related infectious disease and investigating complaints.

The structure of the plan follows the requirements contained within the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement published by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

## **2.0 Aims and Objectives**

To help the residents and businesses of North Lincolnshire prosper in a safe, healthy and clean environment and ensure that food produced sold or consumed in the council's area is safe to eat and does not pose a risk to health the council will:-

- Promote food safety via education, persuasion and enforcement and by the monitoring of food and water quality.
- Provide assistance and advice to local businesses to ensure food safety.
- Support the Primary Authority principle.
- Prevent the spread of communicable diseases within the local community.
- Investigate complaints/infringements of legislation and take appropriate action.
- Work to the principles identified by the Better Regulation and Delivery Office in promoting a front line regulatory service that provides businesses with confidence to grow whilst maintaining public protection.

## **2.1 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans**

The council's vision is to be a dynamic, high performing, customer focused council which gives the best possible value for money and focus on really changing outcomes for people living and working in the area.

Our strap line is "One Council Putting Our Customer's First".

The four priorities that will guide the councils work are:-

- Excellence in customer service
- Provide value for taxpayers' money
- Make our communities stronger
- Regenerate our area and increase prosperity

The Council will, through the implementation of the food safety service plan, work to improve the health and well being of the residents of North Lincolnshire. The Food Safety Service Plan contributes towards the council's priorities in the following ways:

- The inspection of food premises will encourage compliance and promote a 'non compliance costs' culture.
- Providing business advice will assist the financial viability of local food businesses and help them succeed safely.
- Regulation of food businesses will contribute towards a 'level regulatory playing field' making it fairer for all business and better for those businesses that comply with food law.

### **3.0 Profile of North Lincolnshire**

North Lincolnshire Council is a Unitary Authority, established in 1996, covering an area of around 85,000 hectares located on the southern side of the Humber estuary and occupying tracts of land on either side of the River Trent. It is a largely agricultural area and the pattern of settlements reflects this, with market towns surrounded by many small villages. At the centre of the area lies the industrial town of Scunthorpe, which developed in the late C19 as a centre of the steel industry. Although the industry is greatly diminished in scale, Scunthorpe is still one of the major centres of the British steel industry. Like all similar communities, however, the town is endeavouring to develop a more diverse economy to secure its future and the council has been successful in attracting a number of new enterprises to the area. Approximately 50% of the total population of North Lincolnshire live in the town and its immediate environs; and it serves as a centre for shopping, employment and further education for the whole area.

The area has a total population of 161,300. The overall population density of North Lincolnshire is, however, low compared to most English Unitary Councils. This presents particular problems to the council as it tries to provide a uniform level of service to all its customers.

Agriculture dominates in the rest of the council's area. The other principal towns originally developed as market centres for the surrounding farmlands but this role is now diminished in these days of improved communications.

The towns of Brigg, Barton-upon-Humber, Kirton-in-Lindsey, Crowle and Epworth are, however, still important centres for the rural communities and like Scunthorpe are developing economies, more in keeping with modern requirements.

There are 10 ports within the area, including Humberside Airport, that are liable to import food or feed in to this area. There has been a rapid expansion of container traffic at the North Killingholme terminal.

The council is responsible for delivering a full range of local government services. The authority is divided into 17 electoral wards represented by 43 councillors. Within the administrative area there are 8 Town Councils and 49 Parish Councils.

The cultural diversity of the local population has increased over recent years with the influx of many ethnic groups including representatives from the expanded European Union.

### 3.1 Organisational Structure





### 3.2 Scope of Food Safety Service

As a Unitary Authority the council is responsible for the full range of duties required by European and National food law that relate to food safety, food standards and feeding stuffs.

**Food Safety** is the responsibility of the food safety function of the Environmental Health Commercial Team which is part of the Technical and Environment Services Division. Infectious disease control, sampling and health promotion activities are also carried out by the same team. This service plan covers this aspect of the service. Health and Safety legislation is also enforced as a joint discipline.

**Food Standards and Feeding Stuff**s is the responsibility of the Food Agriculture and Animal Health Team within Trading Standards and Licensing also part of the Technical and Environment Services Division. This team also enforces legal metrology and other consumer protection legislation in retail and manufacturing premises (Prices, Description, Animal Welfare and Fertiliser etc) and food hygiene at primary producers (mainly farms). This aspect of the service is detailed in the Food and Feed Law Enforcement Plan 2012/3.

Where opportunities for joint working are recognised, staff from the two services work together in the interest of efficiency and effectiveness. They also share information about new businesses and other matters of common interest and utilise a common computerised premises database.

### 3.3 Service Delivery Points

The Food Service is based at:  
Church Square House  
Po Box 42  
Scunthorpe  
DN15 6NL

Church Square House is a Local Link Office in a town centre location, and is routinely available during normal office hours (9am to 5pm Mon to Thurs, 9am to 4.30pm Fri). Direct dial telephone capability is used to enhance the accessibility of the service. An increasing amount of information is being made available via the council's web site ([www.northlincs.gov.uk](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk)) and contact via e-mail is encouraged. An email address has been established for food safety related enquiries at [food.safety@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:food.safety@northlincs.gov.uk).

The service is also accessible via a network of 7 other Local Link offices based in Barton, Brigg, Crowle & North Axholme, Epworth & South Axholme, Winterton, Scunthorpe and Ashby. 24hr emergency contact is available via the council's Emergency Control Centre. **(01724 276444)**

There is an out of hours answer phone facility for contacting the Trading Standards Service. **(01724 297664)**

All Trading Standards consumer complaints are initially dealt with by the Citizens Advice Consumer Service **(0845 040506)**. Matters requiring further action or investigation are referred back to the council.

### **3.4 Demands on the Food Safety Service**

The area contains a mix of retail, catering and manufacturing premises. The manufacturing sector is eclectic in nature, as it is not based upon any particular primary industry. The businesses vary in nature from simple co-packing operations to complex food manufacturing enterprises producing from raw materials. The retail and catering businesses range from major national traders to small and medium sized enterprises. The town of Scunthorpe, in particular, contains a number of catering and retail businesses operated by traders of Sikh, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese and Eastern European origin. Generally the owners of these businesses have a good command of English, but provision has been made for leaflets to be put into native languages to address the needs of kitchen staff where this is needed. The council also has access to translation services should these be required.

<b>Food Safety Premises Profile 2012/2013</b>	
Total number of premises	1637
Primary Producers	5
Manufacturers and packers	29
Importers/exporters	2
Distributors/Transporters	32
Retailers	415
Restaurants / Caterers	1154
7 Approved Establishments approved for:	
Meat Products only	4
Minced Meat only	1
Dairy Products only	1
Meat Products, Fish Products and Milk Products	1
Cold Store	1
Enhanced Remote Transit Sheds	2

As the competent food authority North Lincolnshire Council must give approval to establishments handling, preparing or producing products of animal origin for which requirements are laid down in Regulation (EC) 853/2004. There are currently 7 establishments in the council area which require approval. These premises are inspected annually by appropriately qualified officers.

### **3.5 Access to Expertise**

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) Laboratory, Sand Hutton York provides bacteriological analysis of food and potable water and faecal samples. The laboratory provides bacteriological analysis of faecal samples.

Killgerm provide a free identification service for insects found in food premises or manifesting themselves as food complaints.

The Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, North Yorkshire and the Humber Health Protection Unit, provides specialist support in relation to infectious disease control.

The Director of Public Health and the Specialist Health Promotion Service, North Lincolnshire PCT & North East Lincolnshire PCT provides specialist advice on health related aspects of food safety.

### **3.6 Enforcement Policy**

The Technical and Environment Services Divisional Enforcement Policy provides an umbrella policy for all enforcement work carried out by its Divisions. Operating within this general enforcement framework are documented policies for the Food Service i.e. Inspection, Complaint Handling, Sampling, Enforcement of Legislation and dealing with matters of non-compliance. The council recognises the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform's Regulators Compliance Code, whose principles are adopted when dealing with businesses. The service also follows the Code of Conduct of the Crown Prosecution Service, which recognises that prosecution is only one of a suite of remedies that can be used, and that others may be considered more appropriate in many cases of non-compliance.

### **3.7 Complaints about North Lincolnshire Council or its Officers**

North Lincolnshire Council has an established complaints procedure, which, in the first instance, requires complaints to be directed to the officer's line manager.

### **4.0 Service Delivery**

Food Safety inspections are programmed in accordance with Food Safety Act Code of Practice which is currently under review following consultation. The premises risk profile and inspection programme is summarised below.

### **4.1 Premises Risk Profile**

<b>Premises Risk Profile</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Inspection Programme 2012/2013</b>
Category A premises (High risk)	16	<b>32</b>
B	61	<b>61</b>
C	598	<b>410</b>
D	294	<b>133</b>
E (Low Risk)*	636	<b>187</b>
Unclassified (new premises awaiting inspection)	25	<b>25</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1637</b>	<b>848</b>

\*These premises represent a third of the low risk premises that will now be inspected in 2012/13 in accordance with the Code of Practice.

These figures do not include new premises which open during the year. During 2011/2012 149 food premises closed and 129 new food premises were inspected in addition to the programmed inspections.

## **4.2 Targeted Inspection Activity**

**Resource 3.121 FTE**

The inspection programme is required to reflect the minimum inspection frequency dictated by the rating scheme contained in the FSA Food Safety Code of Practice. This means that dependant on risk; all premises will receive an inspection from the Commercial Team every 6 months to 2 years. The code also permits the use of alternative enforcement strategies (AES) such as questionnaires for low risk premises on a rolling 3 year cycle. The code requires that every three years the AES must be replaced by a more informed inspection strategy. This year this approach will be utilised for the proportion of those businesses that are at the appropriate stage in their 3 year cycle. This inspection strategy will form part of the food safety project work for 2012/13 and will provide an opportunity to update business information, offer food safety advice and guidance where appropriate and provide documentation to assist businesses that need it, with their requirement to document their food safety management procedures. The information generated from this segment of the food sector will update the food safety database and through personal engagement with food business operators will provide opportunities for food safety promotion.

In addition to the carrying out of programmed inspections as detailed above the team will continue to develop the delivery of food safety enforcement via a range of food safety projects. This approach to food safety regulation provides the team with an opportunity to focus on specific areas that have been identified as 'weak links' in the food safety compliance 'chain' in North Lincolnshire. Projects proposed for 2012/2013 will include the continuing commitment to Food Safety Week, a survey of butchers premises to assess their compliance with updated guidance on E coli and cross contamination, the development of a food safety training opportunity for an ethnic group, a review of the food hygiene compliance amongst catering businesses at outdoor events including car boot sales which often take place outside of normal working hours and a continuation of the implementation of the new national Food Hygiene Risk Rating Scheme.

Following on from its successful implementation last year, a project focussing on those premises that have been identified as repeat offenders will continue. This approach demonstrates a commitment to improve the compliance levels of the small number of consistently poor premises in North Lincolnshire by providing their operators with an opportunity to engage with officers from the team to achieve and sustain food hygiene performance.

Inspections of catering premises and restaurants will continue to be focussed towards the implementation of the compliance guidance schemes such as Safer Food Better Business (SFBB). The SFBB model will continue to be utilised where appropriate during the inspection of catering and retail premises which has resulted in an increase in the inspection time for this section of the food premises profile.

In line with the objectives of the Better Regulation Delivery Office officers also undertake health and safety project based interventions where appropriate and deal with any safety hazards when carrying out programmed food safety inspections. This inspection model reflects the priorities highlighted by the Government report 'Common Sense, Common Safety' which advocates combined inspections to reduce the regulatory burden on business.

<b>4.3 Food Complaints</b>	<b>Resource 0.232 FTE</b>
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	2011/12 (Actual)	2012/13 (Estimated)
Number Food Safety Complaints	41	45
Number Food Premises Complaints	55	60

Food Safety/Premises complaints are responded to as a matter of priority within a planned response time of 3 working days.

<b>4.4 Primary / Home Authority Scheme</b>	<b>Resource 0.024 FTE</b>
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There are no formal Home Authority or Primary Authority arrangements in place for Food Safety issues as few local manufacturers have their head office in this area. However support is provided to those companies, both directly and acting as an intermediary for enquiries from other local authorities. Whilst the council does not currently have any primary authority agreements with any businesses it will remain open to requests and will respect these arrangements where they are relevant to the enforcement of food safety at premises in North Lincolnshire. At a local level the team operates a multiple outlets policy whereby businesses with multiple premises in the area receive an inspection and advice from a single point of contact within the team. The level of resourcing will have to be reviewed if an opportunity to enter into a formal Primary Authority arrangement arises.

<b>4.5 Advice to Business</b>	<b>Resource 0.13 FTE</b>
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The service has a policy of offering comprehensive advice to any business for which the service is, or is likely to be, Home Authority, Originating Authority or Primary Authority for any part of the business based within the area.

For Food Safety this includes giving advice on legal and technical matters where officers have expertise; inspecting and approving premises and assisting in the resolution of queries involving other enforcement agencies.

The implementation of the new requirement for the provision of a documented risk based hygiene system continues to generate an increased number of requests for assistance as does the implementation of the new National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

Requests for such assistance or food safety service user requests currently run at approximately 10 per week for food safety (563 requests received in 2011/12). This level of contact with the food sector will increase with the increased exposure of food safety compliance levels offered by the availability of the national Food Hygiene Risk Rating Scheme and increasing financial constraints on the food sector in general.

#### **4.6 Food Safety Sampling**

**Resource 0.322 FTE**

The Food Safety sampling programme includes the sampling of food and potable water, both public and private supplies. The programme is determined annually and comprises a local sampling programme in addition to contributions to national programmes co-ordinated by the HPA. For potable waters the programme includes provision for the sampling of each of the 11 water supply zones supplied by Anglian Water and Yorkshire Water in North Lincolnshire and the sampling of the potable private water supplies in the councils area.

The programme is designed around the seasonal availability and high-risk nature of certain foods and the results it generates contribute to the data collected nationally on the microbiological quality of ready to eat foods. Food samples are generally collected informally to allow the samples to be purchased in much the same way that a member of the public would have bought the food. All business proprietors are advised of the results of samples and unsatisfactory sample results are subjected to further detailed investigation.

Bacteriological analysis of food and water samples is provided by HPA. Following a procurement review the Environment Agency have been contracted to provide chemical analysis of potable water. HASS or CCFRA provide chemical analysis of food samples.

The food and drinking water microbiological analysis service provided by the HPA through their laboratory in York is delivered in accordance with a service level agreement which now limits the number of free charge samples and prescribes charges for sampling beyond these levels or for certain specified sample types. The team will continue to maintain its sampling levels because of the invaluable microbiological data that they provide despite the budget pressure that this will present. During 2011/12 464 food samples were taken of which 58 were unsatisfactory and required follow-up action. 13 private water supplies were also sampled of which 3 failed water quality criteria but were found to be satisfactory when re-sampled.

In 2012/13, 600 food and 300 water samples will be taken as part of the annual sampling programme. The sampling of the water quality at swimming pools is detailed in the councils Health and Safety Service plan.

#### **4.7 Food Alerts**

**Resource 0.073 FTE**

Food Alerts are the Food Standards Agency's way of letting the council and consumers know about problems associated with food and in some cases provide details of specific action to be taken. They are issued under two categories: Product Withdrawal/Product Recall Information Notices and Food Alerts for Action and they are received by direct email to the team.

Food Alerts are also received by the Consultants in Communicable Disease Control, Trading Standards Officers and food trade organisations to alert them to current food issues.

In 2011/2012 the team received 61 notices of product withdrawal or recall and 1 Food Alert for Action. The Food Alert for Action required investigatory visits to identify/recover/dispose of unsafe food (Illicit Vodka).

It is anticipated that the number of Food Alerts will remain at a similar level in 2012/2013.

#### **4.8 Control & Investigation of Outbreaks & Food Related Infectious Disease**

**Resource 0.22 FTE**

The control and investigation of outbreaks and food related infectious disease is the responsibility of the Commercial Team. The fundamental principle of this role is to prevent the secondary spread of infectious disease.

It is the council's policy to assess all cases and suspected cases of infectious disease notified to the council, either formally from North Yorkshire and Humber Health Protection Unit or informally from other sources, to determine which of those require a full investigation. The target is to achieve initial assessments within one working day of receipt.

Where practicable initial assessments are conducted by telephone to establish food histories and/or common food links and to identify individuals (cases or contacts) working in high-risk environments thus posing a risk of further transmission. These cases or contacts are subjected to a full investigation. A letter and advisory leaflet is used for cases requiring the investigation of the most common pathogen (Campylobacter) to release officer time.

Establishments associated with confirmed or suspected cases are also investigated if within the council's area or notified to the appropriate local authority for investigation.

The Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, North Yorkshire and Humber Health Protection Unit with whom exclusion and clearance policies have been agreed, provides expert advice.

Analytical services are provided jointly by the Health Protection Agency Laboratory, in York.

It is the policy of the council to assist other local authorities where cross boundary incidents may have arisen.

In 2011/2012, 282 (15% increase on 2010/2011) infectious disease notifications were investigated of which 16 were viral outbreaks mainly in institutions, and it is estimated that a similar number will be reported in 2012/2013. In response to resource constraints the investigation procedure for Campylobacter food poisoning cases has been amended to reduce the amount of time taken up by this work which generates epidemiological data but is of minor value to public health protection.

#### **4.9 Food Safety Liaison**

**Resource 0.155 FTE**

The council is committed to ensuring the Food Service is consistent with that of neighbouring authorities. As a consequence the council supports a number of national and local liaison groups to secure this aim.

The council receives and takes cognisance of guidance from the Food Standards Agency, Local Government Regulation, and the professional bodies, the Trading Standards Institute and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. For Food Safety issues the authority is a member of The Humber Authorities Food Liaison Group and the District Control of Infection Committee. Formalised liaison arrangements are also in place for the review of Planning and Building Control applications made to the authority. The team is a statutory consultee under the Licensing Act 2003.

It is estimated that the level of resourcing is adequate for the anticipated level of demand.

#### **4.10 Food Safety Promotion**

**Resource 0.231 FTE**

This year will see the council operate the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. The move from the Scores on the Doors stars to the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme 'spots' has been achieved seamlessly with little or no adverse comment from businesses or the public. This initiative operates in a similar way to the previous scheme and provides the public with an easy to operate internet based access to the council's published food safety premises data and that of other local authorities that have joined the national scheme in a format that is easy for the public to understand.





The scheme has provided businesses with a window sticker/certificate for optional display on the premises. This is particularly helpful for members of the public who do not have access to the Internet. It is anticipated that the publicising of the scoring scheme following inspections of food premises will continue to have a positive effect on the compliance levels of businesses in North Lincolnshire and retain its popularity with members of the public who by using the scheme are able to make informed decisions about their food safety purchases. So far the council's pages on the national Food Hygiene rating Scheme website have registered over 90,000 hits and there are currently over 1441 premises on its database.

Food Safety Week (FSW) in June 2012 provides an annual opportunity for the team to continue its hygiene awareness raising initiative in local schools and this year for the first time children's centres. This successful initiative will target Junior School children with a 'hand washing road show' and related competitions aimed at raising hand hygiene awareness of the importance of hand hygiene and the 4 'Cs' (Cross-contamination, cleaning, chilling and cooking). The theme for NFSW 2012 is 'food safety on a budget' and officers are planning to provide parents at children's centres advice about the economic benefits of food hygiene. This will provide an opportunity to jointly work with members of the Waste Management Team to provide a combined focus on food waste and food safety. The Commercial Team are grateful for the financial support provided by a local businessman which has made it easier for this initiative to be maintained.

Where possible, presentations to schools and local bodies will be provided during the year to maintain the profile of the service in the eyes of the business sector and public.

The team also receives and responds to a range of enquires relating to topical food safety issues. Enquiries may be received from the public, business or the media and are responded to as appropriate, sometimes in consultation with the Director of Public Health and/or the Specialist Health Promotion Service.

It is envisaged that there will be more involvement in matters pertaining to the health of North Lincolnshire residents in coming years. The team will continue to support health improvements and initiatives such as the 'Healthy Options' scheme by working with colleagues in the council's Health Improvement and Partnerships Team to promote healthy eating and lifestyle choices.

<b>4.11 Imported Food</b>	<b>Resource 0.142 FTE</b>
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The council receives requests for the issue of Export Health Certificates for food being exported from the UK. The development of excellent business links with a local company that are the UK's leading member owned retailing organisation has generated an increased number of export certification requests. In addition the introduction of controls for imported fish has also seen an increase in the amount of import activity at Humberside airport which currently receives fish from Iceland. In recognition of the increased focus in this area the council has authorised designated Officers in this respect. Policies and procedures have been implemented to ensure that appropriate action is taken when food is exported and fish is imported into the council's area from outside the European Community. The monitoring of the arrangements in place at our local airport and ports will take place during the year.

## 5.0 Resources

Provided below are details of the resources that are allocated to each aspect of the Food Safety service. The resources available for the delivery of the Food Safety Service are shared across the Commercial Team, which as its name suggests also has broader responsibilities for Occupational Health and Safety, and Environmental Protection functions. Projected statutory workload targets and discretionary activities will reflect the resource available to this service area. The establishment resource for the Food Safety Service is 4.65 FTE.

## 5.1 Staffing Allocation

Designation	Posts	Level of Authorisation High - Low		Food Safety Resource (FTE)
Environmental Health Manager - Commercial	1			0.15
Environmental Health Officer Food Safety (Lead Officer)	1	#		0.63
Environmental Health Officer – Infectious Disease & Community Health (Lead Officer)	0.8	#		0.5
Environmental Health Officer	1	#		0.32
Food & Safety Officers	5		#	3.05
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8.8</b>			<b>4.65</b>

## **5.2 Financial Allocation**

The base budget for 2012/2013 is detailed below:

Staff costs	£179,074
Travel	£10,000
Equipment/Sampling	£29,630
Other	£ 5489
Income	£5290
Total (Net)	£229,483

## **5.3 Administration**

The Food Safety Service is supported by an Administration Team which provides call handling, administration and some clerical support in addition to providing a staffed contact and referral point for service users.

## **5.4 Staff Development Plan**

Staffs' individual training needs are identified formally during Employee Appraisals held annually with an optional review after six months. The team completes its own training plan through this process. This formal process does not preclude additional training needs being addressed during the year or prevent staff from taking advantage of other opportunities that may arise. Training will be provided using a range of techniques including formal qualifications; external training courses; online training packages, internal training courses; cascade training; shadowing and mentoring. The Council supports all members of the team in maintaining continuing professional development (CPD) and encourages its Environmental Health Officers to maintain membership of the Chartered Institute and minimum CPD levels as required by the Food Safety Code of Practice. Currently 1 member of the team holds Chartered Environmental Health Officer status.

## **6.0 Quality Assessment**

The Service Plan includes a number of performance indicators against which the Service is assessed. Detailed below are the food related performance indicators for the Food Safety Service. The Commercial Team were included in an audit by the Food Standards Agency of Inter Authority Auditing (IAA) arrangements in 2009 which acknowledged the effectiveness of the auditing system operated by North Lincolnshire Council as a member of the Humber Authorities IAA Group. The Team were also contributors to the Regulatory Services Peer Review Challenge initiative in February 2010. As a member of the Humber Authorities Inter Authority Auditing Group, the Council was audited in 2011 on its performance in terms of the monitoring of business compliance and will be subject to an annual audit on an aspect of its service in 2012/13.

## 6.1 Peer Auditing

The Food Service will take part in the Inter Authority Auditing (IAA) Programme which will provide a peer review of a designated service area in line with the Food Standards Agency audit principle.

## 6.2 Performance Indicators 2012/13 & Review of 2011/12

Performance indicators for the current year are detailed in the table below including a summary of performance for 2011/12. Last years performance is discussed further in Appendix A.

Indicator	2012/13 Target	2011/12 Actual	Comment
Percentage of planned food safety inspections completed	100%	<b>99%</b>	Not Achieved Review in 2012/13
Percentage of service users surveyed during the year regarding attitudes to service provision	60%	<b>25%</b>	To reduce costs a reduced number of service user questionnaires were issued in 2011/12
Complaints/enquiries to the service responded to within three working days	95%	<b>92%</b>	Not Achieved Review in 2012/3
Percentage of food complainants satisfied with the investigation outcome	80%	<b>50 %</b>	Based on very small return of questionnaires (2)
Percentage of user satisfaction with the food hygiene inspection service rated excellent/Good	80%	<b>82.3%</b>	Achieved

## 7.0 Review and variation against the service plan

This Food Service Plan will be formally reviewed annually in order to update the work plan and assess the previous year's performance. The review process will set out any relevant improvement plan or service development identified as necessary by the review.

A review of the Food Safety Service in 2011/2012 is attached at Appendix A.

## Appendix A - Review of Food Safety Plan 2011/12

### Review against Service Plan

This review of the service plan for food safety compares the year's performance against targets set out in the 2011/12 plan and relevant standards.

Overall results were highly satisfactory both in terms of the level of quality and quantity of work carried out during the year. Customer and service user surveys show that we continue to maintain excellent relationships with local food businesses and provide an excellent service to the consumer. This level of service is even more creditable when considering that it has been delivered with constrained resources and in an increasingly complex legislative climate.

A significant impact on the workload of the team was made by the continued implementation of new food safety legislation requiring food businesses to adopt a more documented approach to food safety and the transition from the Scores on the Doors scheme to the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme also generated additional workload although this was compensated for financially through the successful application for a grant from the Food Standards Agency.

In 2011/12 99% of the food safety inspection programme was completed. This level of inspection performance was only achieved through the reallocation of resources from other work areas in the Food and Safety service area. This has resulted in underperformance in some discretionary functions and other areas of lower priority.

In line with the Food Safety Code of Practice and in accordance with the inspection programme, 790 interventions were carried out at food premises in North Lincolnshire in 2011/12. These inspections resulted in Officers issuing 584 informal warning letters, serving 12 statutory notices including an emergency prohibition notice for which a court order was granted to effect the closure of the premises. During the year 2 food premises were closed voluntarily by their owners at the instigation of the Commercial Team and 1 food business was prosecuted for food hygiene offences which resulted in a fine of £1965.00 including costs.

During the year the team continued with its approach of focusing on food safety project work. Projects were designed to focus on specific and relevant food safety topics that would benefit from this concentrated approach and effective use of resources. Project areas for the year included, Food Safety Week 2011, a targeted inspection focus on poorly performing food premises, an alternative enforcement strategy for low risk premises, the production of a food safety newsletter for businesses, a successful partnership working project with the Schools Catering and Cleaning Service and the transfer to the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Projects that could not be completed because of the need to reprioritise resources included the Private Water Supply survey and the Butchers Shops Review which it is anticipated will be completed in 2012/13.

The activities of the team during Food Safety Week were well received by schools and children who received hand washing talks. In addition the focus placed on poorly performing premises has also reaped benefits and the level of compliance in this

small section of the food sector has improved as a result. The engagement of low risk premises through the use of a self assessment questionnaire has provided invaluable information from these businesses that do not often appear on the 'food safety radar' and the food safety database has benefitted from this project as a result.

Sampling is recognised as an important part of the enforcement and monitoring of food safety compliance. The team sampling programme has regard to the inspection programme, centrally co-ordinated FSA and HPA sampling initiatives and local and topical issues. Where appropriate sampling is co-ordinated with neighbouring authorities in the Humber Region. During the year 464 food samples were taken and submitted to the HPA collaborating laboratory for analysis. Of these 58 required follow up action because of poor results.

Complaints about food businesses and food products manufactured or sold in North Lincolnshire from consumers and business proprietors provide valuable intelligence regarding legal compliance and general standards. The Food and Safety Team investigated 41 complaints relating to food and 55 complaints about food premises during the year. All complaints have been thoroughly investigated and appropriate guidance given or enforcement action taken.

The team continued to contribute to corporate objectives by providing consumers and businesses with accurate timely and easily understood advice and guidance through a variety of mechanisms including the web based information newsletters and articles in the local press. The team has responded to 563 requests for guidance advice and information during the year. Many of these related to the implementation of new food safety legislation.

The team works closely with the Health Protection Agency in providing an investigatory and advisory service for notified cases of food borne infectious disease. During 2010/11 it investigated 282 cases of food borne infectious disease (15% increase) that included common food poisoning infections such as Campylobacter, E coli and Salmonella as well as more exotic pathogens such as Giardia. In addition to individual cases of food poisoning 16 gastro enteric outbreaks were investigated during the year all of which were found to be viral in origin and associated with institutions.

On the education front the team successfully promoted food hygiene during Food Safety Week with competitions and a hand washing road show that visited over 1000 school children in 19 primary schools. It also promoted food safety through the local media and food safety competitions which attracted over 250 entries.

The council's Food Hygiene rating Scheme continues to be well received by the public and the website has recorded over 90,000 hits on the North Lincolnshire pages in 2011/12. The range of premises included has been expanded in accordance with Government guidance and currently 1441 North Lincolnshire food businesses are published on the national database.

### **Variation from the Service Plan.**

There were no significant variations from the Service Plan

## **Areas for Improvement**

The level of customer satisfaction with the food complaints investigation service was below target in 2011/12. This statistic is based on a small return of questionnaires and will be reviewed to guide strategies for improvement in 2012/13. The response rate for complaint investigation fell just short of target and will also be reviewed in 2012/13.