

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**NEIGHBOURHOOD, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES
CABINET MEMBER**

FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2010/2011

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval of the Authority's Food Service Plan for 2010/2011.
- 1.2 The key points in this report are:
 - Each Food Authority is required to prepare an annual Service Plan setting out its proposed food service activities for the year.
 - The Food Service Plan 2010/2011 details how the available resources will be deployed by the Food and Safety Team in the Communities and Environment Division and the Trading Standards Division to deliver the broad range of activities required by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and European law.
 - Food fraud is one of the three enforcement priority areas decided upon by the Yorkshire and Humber Region Trading Standards Group for 2010/2011.
 - In addition to risk based food safety enforcement the Plan incorporates a broadening of the service to deliver a number of food safety projects targeting specific high profile food safety topics.
 - As in previous years resources will be deployed to secure high levels of compliance at the highest risk premises.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Under the Food Standards Act 1999 the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has the power to set standards in relation to Local Authority enforcement of food law.
- 2.2 In order to ensure that the expected level of enforcement is being performed, each Food Authority is required to prepare a Food Service Plan setting out its proposed activities for the administrative year.

- 2.3 The plan has to be given the approval of the Cabinet Member in order that it has the appropriate status as a strategic document on food safety and consumer protection.
- 2.4 As a Unitary Authority North Lincolnshire is responsible for the enforcement of both Food Safety and Food Standards (Consumer Protection) legislation.
- 2.5 The council also has responsibility for the composition and safety of Animal Feeding Stuff, which is seen as affecting the ultimate safety of the human food chain.
- 2.6 The Plan therefore deals with the Authority's proposed activities for the year 2010/2011 in all these areas of work (copy attached). The Plan details how the available resources will be deployed by the Food and Safety Team and the Trading Standards Division to deliver the broad range of activities required by the FSA.
- 2.7 In addition to the carrying out of programmed inspections the Food and Safety Team will deliver food safety enforcement via a range of food safety projects. This approach 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 2010/2011 will include the continuing commitment to National Food Safety Week. The emphasis on promotion will also be maintained via projects that will result in the production of a Food Safety Newsletter for food businesses and the engagement of ethnic caterers through the facilitation of food hygiene training courses. The projects will also focus on event catering, imported food and food labelling.
- 2.8 The council will be required to report to the FSA on the fulfilment of the activities proposed under this plan, at the end of March 2011.
- 2.9 As reported last year, the Rogers Review of national enforcement priorities for local authority regulatory services has recommended six national enforcement priorities of which 'hygiene of food businesses', 'animal and public health' and 'fair trading' are relevant to this Plan.
- 2.10 In addition food fraud is one of the three enforcement priority areas decided upon by the Yorkshire and Humber Region Trading Standards Group for 2010/2011. The priority areas were arrived at following the analysis of complaints, intelligence, potential risk and possible detriment to the community. A regional food fraud group has been set up to co ordinate sampling activity and gather intelligence on all aspects of the food chain that trading standards has a duty to enforce. This type of cross boundary cooperation reduces duplication, enables the more efficient use of resources and presents a wider picture of what is happening in the food industry.

2.11 Following the commencement of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act, the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) has the specific brief to reduce the regulatory burdens on business, while maintaining or even enhancing the current levels of public and environmental protection.

2.12 LBRO's statutory responsibility is to:

- Operate the Primary Authority scheme
- Advise the Government on local regulation
- Issue guidance to local authorities
- Manage the list of national enforcement priorities
- Encourage innovation and good practice
- Develop formal partnerships with national regulators

2.13 Against this background the Plan aims to ensure high levels of compliance at the highest risk premises. The provision of advice and support to business and the prompt response to complaints and service requests remain a priority.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Option 1 – To approve the Authority's Food Service Plan for 2010/2011. The Food Service Plan is a statutory requirement and the FSA sets out the issues to be covered in a framework agreement.

In recognition of the role of the LBRO and the national enforcement priorities of 'hygiene of food businesses', 'animal and public health' and 'fair trading', the council is recommended to place greater emphasis on these functions.

3.2 Option 2 - The council may decide to ignore the statutory guidance and national priorities and provide a lesser standard of service.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 Option 1 – Approving the Food Service Plan for 2010/2011 and following the FSA Framework Agreement and LBRO guidelines will ensure that the Food Service Plan complies with statutory requirements and recommended best practice.

4.2 Option 2 - Ignoring the statutory guidance and national priorities to provide a lesser standard of service would lead to the likelihood of a further FSA audit of the council and/or intervention by the LBRO.

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

5.1 The financial and staffing details are included in the Food Service Plan. There are no resource implications to consider at this stage.

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

6.1 The activities outlined in the Food Service Plan contribute to the sustainable community strategy and the following council ambitions and priorities:

6.1.1 An area that is thriving – developing a dynamic economy by providing support and advice to potential, new and established business.

6.1.2 Individuals can see the difference – reducing smoking, obesity and coronary heart disease and effective dissemination of public health messages.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultations have taken place routinely with various stakeholders during the compliance process.

These include:

- i) Businesses, following visits by enforcement staff.
- ii) Consumers, following contact with some aspect of the service.
- iii) Members of staff responsible for delivering the service.

7.2 Views expressed by the consultees are taken into account when enforcement activities are being planned.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Food Service Plan 2010/2011 be approved.

SERVICE DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

The Angel
Market Place
Brigg
North Lincolnshire
DN20 8LD
Author: Trevor Laming
Date: 08 June 2010

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

Food Service Plan: - 2010/2011

1.0 Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aim

Helping the residents and businesses of North Lincolnshire prosper in a safe, healthy and clean environment.

1.2 Objectives

- 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.
- Promoting food safety via education, persuasion and enforcement and by the monitoring of food and water.
- Providing assistance and advice to local businesses to ensure food safety and to enable them to market products that comply with compositional and labelling requirements.
- Carrying out Food Standards Home Authority enquiries referred by other agencies.
- Preventing the spread of communicable diseases within the local community.
- 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.

1.3 Links to Corporate Vision and Ambitions

1.3.1 The Council's **Vision** is: *“many faces one community working in partnership to transform North Lincolnshire for the benefit of all.*

1.3.2 The Council has ambitions in terms of the area, communities and individuals. Some ambitions have been developed which are shared with the community.

1.3.3 The shared ambitions are:

- A An area that is thriving;
- B Communities that are confident and caring;
- C Individuals can see the difference;
- D Everyone works together for the benefit of North Lincolnshire.

The Council has also identified the outcomes it wants to achieve over the next three years. The outcomes relevant to this service plan are:

- 1 Improved safety and resilience;
- 2 Improved health and
- 3 Improved satisfaction.

1.3.5. A Sustainable Community Strategy – Many Faces, One Community developed by the North Lincolnshire Strategic Partnership sets out an agreed vision. The Food Service Plan 2010 - 2011 contributes to three of the seven key areas identified in the North Lincolnshire Sustainable Community Strategy:

Greater Economic Success
Healthier communities
Lifelong learning

2.0 Background

2.1 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, further education etc. for the whole area.

The area has a total population of 158,070. The overall population density of North Lincolnshire is, however, only 1.8 per hectare, which is 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.

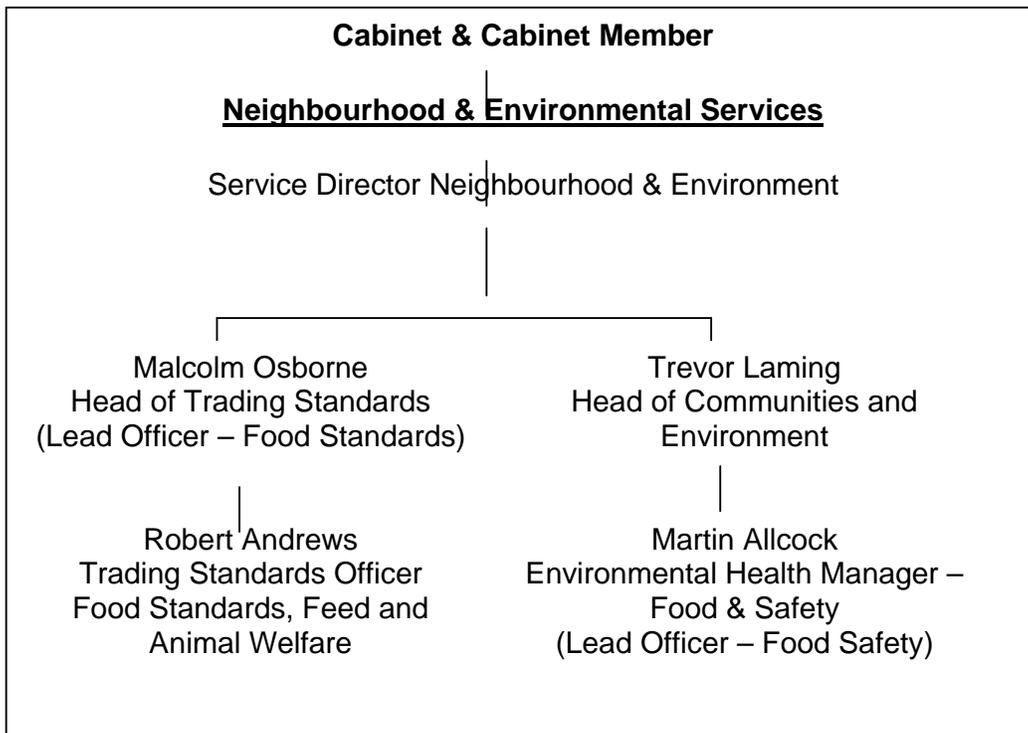
Agriculture dominates in the rest of the council's area. The other principal towns originally developed as market centres for the surrounding farmlands but this role is now diminished in these days of improved communications.

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 2001 Census of Population shows the following distribution of ages: 25% less than 20 years, 58% aged between 20 and 64 and 17% aged over 65. 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.

2.2 Organisation



2.3 The Scope of the Food Service

As a Unitary Authority the council is responsible for the full range of duties required by European Food law.

It is also responsible for the enforcement of legislation dealing with the production and sale of animal feeding stuff, which is regarded as an essential step in assuring the safety of food.

The Food Service is delivered by the Food and Safety Team in the Communities and Environment Division and the Food/Animal Health Team in the Trading Standards Division.

Food Safety is the responsibility of the Food Safety Team of Communities and Environment Division, which also enforces Health and Safety legislation as a joint discipline. Infectious disease control, sampling and health promotion activities are carried out by the same team.

Food Standards and **Feeding Stuffs** are the responsibility of the Food/Animal Health Team which also enforces Legal Metrology and other consumer protection legislation in retail and manufacturing premises (Prices, Description, Animal Welfare and Fertiliser etc). Food hygiene at primary producers (mainly farms) has increased workload for a variety of reasons including education, extra inspections etc.

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.

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 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.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

Premises Profile: Food/Animal Health and Food Safety

Primary Producers	507
Slaughterhouses	1
Manufacturers/processors	30
Packers	6
Importers/Exporters	13
Distributors/Transporters	47
Retailers	538
Restaurants and other caterers	1035
Manufacturers and Suppliers of Materials and Articles in contact with food	2
Manufacture mainly selling by retail	31
Total number of premises	2210

Service Delivery Points. The Food Service is based at:

Church Square House
Church Square
Scunthorpe
DN15 6NL

Church Square House is a Local Link Office in a town centre location, and is routinely available 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 (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.

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)**

All Trading Standards consumer complaints are initially dealt with by Yorkshire and Humberside Consumer Direct **(0845 040506)**.

Matters requiring further action or investigation are referred back to the Authority.

2.5 Enforcement

The Neighbourhood and Environmental Services 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.

3.0 Service Delivery

3.1 FOOD STANDARDS AND FEEDING STUFFS

As in previous years the plan aims to ensure high levels of compliance at high and medium risk premises. The provision of advice and guidance to all businesses that seek or need help together with the investigation of complaints will remain a high priority.

The sampling budget has been maintained at last year's level.

A trainee Trading Standards Officer will spend some time seconded to the food team.

Enforcement will be by means of "interventions" as opposed to "inspections". This is the result of procedural changes prompted by the Hampton report and channelled through BERR, LBRO and FSA to LAs. The idea is to use monitoring, sampling, auditing, verifying, surveying and inspecting as means of control as opposed to only inspections. However this authority has always used varied means for ensuring legal compliance and not relied on inspections alone so the effect will have little impact on day to day working.

As well as local and national priorities there are regional priorities decided by the Yorkshire and Humber Trading Standards Group on a yearly basis. This year Intellectual property crime, doorstep trading (including cold calling) and food fraud have been identified as areas where resources should be concentrated. With this in mind a regional group has been convened to deal specifically with food fraud. Members of the group will be in close contact with the Food Standards Agency's fraud section and Regional Co-ordinator. The group has been tasked with identifying cross boundary food fraud and managing it on a regional basis whilst being aware of local and national implications.

Sampling will be targeted at local manufacturers, 'Home Authority' businesses regional initiatives and food fraud. A number of surveillance visits will be made to low risk premises primarily in the "take away" food sector. Checks on the nutritional makeup of pre school meals are being undertaken. The Food Standards Agency's imported food and feed sampling project is an annual national initiative that is supported locally and organised regionally. In effect funds are provided nationally to fund targeted local sampling.

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

Cat A (High Risk) premises	every 12 months
Cat B (Medium Risk) premises	every 24 months
Cat C (Low Risk) premises	every 60 months

Food Standards Premises Profile

Primary Producers	507
Slaughterhouses	1
Manufacturers/processors	27
Packers	6
Importers/Exporters	13
Distributors/Transporters	47
Retailers	538
Restaurants and other caterers	820
Manufacturers of Materials and Articles in contact with food	2
Manufacture mainly selling by retail (Local manufacturers)	31
Total number of premises	1992

Food Premises	Total Planned	Due for Visit
A premises	42 (100%)	42
B premises	101 (33%)	304
C premises	16 (5%)	311
Premises outside programme.	4	4
Unrated premises	170	170
Total	336	831
Estimated number of AECs	70	
Estimated number of revisits	32	

	Feed Hygiene Regs		Agriculture General	
	Total planned	Due for visit	Total planned	Due for visit
High risk	4	4	2	2
Medium risk	9	9	8	8
Low risk	25	25	8	8
NIR	0	0	0	0
Unrated	42	42	12	12

Primary Producers	Food Hygiene Total planned	Food Hygiene Due for visit
Not Farm Assured	20	40
Farm Assured	10	20
Unrated	30	286

It should be noted that the majority of these premises have only become due for an inspectional visit for the first time this year and as such most are still not assessed.

Estimate of resources required for programmed inspections and alternative enforcement contacts. (1.3 FTE)

It is estimated that sufficient resources exist to undertake the **planned** Visit/AEC level, but this represents only 52% approx of those that the **Food Standards Agency** expects to be addressed.

Other enforcement activities are prioritised over inspections. Service Requests, Home Authority Referrals and Consumer Complaints link directly to the council priority for Customer Service (North Lincolnshire customers) Sampling also takes priority because of our regional co-ordinated sampling programme. The Council has, again, committed itself to participate in an Inter-Authority Audit Process. The time necessary for this and any consequent actions has been accounted for in this years plan.

3.1.1 Targeted Inspection Activity

The following premises will be targeted:

Food Standards:

Premises rated as Category A, particularly Importing, Manufacturing, Primary producers or Packing premises where North Lincolnshire acts as Home or Originating Authority.

New premises not yet rated.

Premises that match with local ambitions and that are considered important under local area agreements.

Feeding Stuffs

Manufacturers producing compound feeds where additives are incorporated into farm feed

Stores where feed materials are entering the Community or UK (Prime Import)

All feed premises to be registered under the Feed Hygiene Regulations, including transport, primary producers, wholesalers etc.

Food Hygiene at Primary Production

Premises involved with the primary production of food will be inspected under food hygiene legislation. Inspection frequencies:

Farm Assured = 2% per year

Non Farm Assured = 25% per year

3.1.2 Access to expertise

Following a competitive tendering process the Public and Agricultural Analytical Services are currently provided by West Yorkshire Joint Services based in Morley. The contract will be re-tendered this year in a joint procurement exercise with North East Lincolnshire Council. The Humber Authorities Calibration Centre in Hull carries out calibration of metrological equipment

3.1.3 Food Complaints

Estimated Number of Complaints 37

Estimated FTE 0.05

This is a demand led activity and will be carried out in full.

The introduction of Consumer Direct in August 2004 (where the initial response to Complaints will occur at a remote call centre) impacts upon the manner and speed with which, complaints are dealt. It also impacts upon the complexity of the complaint received by the service as simple complaints are dealt with by CD.

3.1.4 Home Authority Principle

North Lincolnshire is fully committed to the Home Authority Principle and acts upon matters received from other agencies that concern North Lincolnshire based premises.

Estimated FTE 0.05

This is a demand led activity and will be carried out in full although in recent years there has been a gradual reduction in numbers due to the ongoing work performed by officers at HA premises.

3.1.5 Advice to business

The Service has a policy of offering comprehensive advice to any business for which the Service is, or is likely to be, Home Authority or Originating Authority for any part of the business based within the area.

For **Food Standards and Feeding Stuff**s this includes giving advice on legal and technical matters where officers have expertise; vetting and approving premises, packaging, labelling etc; assisting in the resolution of queries involving other enforcement agencies etc. It should be noted that although there has been a reduction in enquires from large companies there has been an increase in start-up businesses wanting advice.

Requests for such assistance currently run at 2 per week.

Estimated FTE required: - 0.15

This is a demand led activity and will be carried out in full.

3.1.6 **Food and Feeding Stuffs Sampling**

The target number of food standards and feeding stuff samples is 340 per annum.

This now includes the enhanced level of sampling, required by the FSA, for Animal and Feed Materials being imported into the area via the controlled places and those produced by 'on-farm mixing'. There is now also a need to test consignments of fishmeal for the presence of Dioxins and PCBs. Sampling this type of product is very labour intensive and can involve high analytical fees (Up to £1000 per sample).

A number of food standards complaint samples are also submitted for test in addition to the programmed samples

These are demand led and will be carried out in full.

Regional initiatives (e.g. examining salt levels in food) are paid for out of the budget.

Sampling is an activity the Food Standards Agency considers to be of great importance and each year it invites LA's or regional groups to bid for funding that is allocated for a specific purpose e.g. imported food sampling. North Lincolnshire Council will again be participating in this year's programme.

The **Food Standards** sampling programme is decided at the beginning of the year (as required by FSA) but is subject to alteration as circumstances change.

It also takes into account the sampling programme of the Yorkshire and Humber Trading Standards Group so that a co-ordinated submission of samples can be arranged, where possible. This enables some samples to be analysed at a cheaper rate.

An internal Performance Indicator requires 15% of samples to be adversely reported thus encouraging a targeted approach to sampling.

Estimated FTE required for sampling programme: 0.9

3.1.8 **Business Training Seminars**

Training for businesses is to be used as a means of dissemination of information on topics that are current/important

Estimated FTE required for business training 0.05

3.1.9 **Food and Feed Alerts**

Food and Feed Alerts are the responsibility of the **Food/Animal Welfare Team**. A co-ordinated approach with the **Food and Safety Team** is adopted where Alerts relate to food safety matters.

It is the Council's policy to handle all food alerts in accordance with the relevant Food Safety Act Code of Practice and local input.

Estimated FTE required for food and feed hazard warnings: 0.1

This is a demand led activity and additional resources are made available if required.

3.1.10 **Liaison**

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, LACORS and the professional bodies, the Trading Standards Institute and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

For Food Standards issues the authority is a member of The Yorkshire and Humber LACORS regional group.

For Feeding Stuffs matters the authority has membership of The LACORS Feed and Fertilisers Focus Group It should be noted that a member of staff in the Trading Standards food and feed team is the national LACORS feed hazard warning co-ordinator.

A Joint Food Management Team comprising Environmental Health and Trading Standards staff meets several times a year to discuss matters of mutual interest.

The department is a member of the Food in Schools group dealing with nutritional and healthy eating issues in North Lincolnshire educational establishments.

Estimate of FTE required for liaison: 0.1

3.1.11 **Food Standards Promotion**

A Trading Standards promotional event is planned for food and feed including promoting the hazards of salt in food.

Estimate of FTE required for food standards promotion: 0.05

3.1.12 **Imported Food**

In recognition of the "Step Change" required in this area the Council has endeavoured to update training of its Officers in Imported Food Law and has authorised designated Officers in this respect. Policies and procedures have been implemented to ensure that appropriate action is taken when food and feeding stuffs are imported into the Councils area from outside the European Community.

Estimated FTE required for imported food enforcement included in sampling FTE allocation.

3.1.13 **Resources**

Provided below are the details of the resources provided by the Food/Animal Welfare Team as part of the Food Service. Other Trading Standards and Enforcement Officers are available to assist in major alerts/issues.

Financial Allocation

Staff costs	£ 96,059
Travel	£ 8,200
Budget for Analytical work	£ 34,560
Training	£ 2,600
Equipment	£ 1,100
Total Cost	£ 141,419

Food Standards (FTE) Operational

Trading Standards Manager/Principal Officer	0.2
Trading Standards Officers	1.2
Enforcement Officer	0.5
Enforcement Assistant	0.2
Animal Welfare Officer	0.1
Technical Clerk	0.1
Trainee	0.4

Total number officer hours available for Food Standards/Feedstuffs work in 2009/2010

Operational:	(2.3FTE)
Management / QA etc:	(0.4FTE)
TOTAL	(2.7FTE)

3.1.14 **Staff Development Plan**

Staff individual training needs are identified formally during Employee Development Reviews held annually with an optional review after six months. The Food/Animal Welfare Team completes its own Training Plans 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; internal training courses; cascade training; shadowing and mentoring.

3.2 FOOD SAFETY

3.2.1 The food premises profile for food safety purposes is as detailed below:

Food Safety Premises profile	
Total number of premises	1491
Producers	7
Manufacturers	30
Packers	3
Distributors/Importers	26
Retailers	390
Restaurants	1035
7 Approved Establishments approved for:	
Meat Products only	3
Minced Meat only	1
Dairy Products only	1
Meat Products, Fish Products and Milk Products	1
Cold Store	1

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

Risk Category	No	Required Inspections 2010/2011
Category A premises (High risk)	12	24
B	123	123
C	645	441
D	248	116
E (Low Risk)*	438	438*
Unclassified (new premises awaiting inspection)	25	
Total	1491	704

*These premises are not included in the programmed inspection total as they will be subject to an Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) which will involve the completion of a self assessment food safety questionnaire. Non responding businesses will however generate the need for visits.

These figures do not include new premises which open during the year. During 2009/2010 140 food premises closed and 136 new food premises were inspected in addition to the programmed inspections.

3.2.2 Targeted Inspection Activity

Food Safety:

The inspection programme is required to reflect as a minimum the 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 Food and Safety 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. This year this approach will be utilised for all low risk businesses irrespective of whether they were due in the year for a visit from the Food and Safety Team or not. The information generated from this segment of the food sector will update the food safety database, support the proposed extension of the 'Scores on the Doors' scheme to such premises 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 and at 3.2.1 the Food and Safety 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 2010/2011 will include the continuing commitment to National Food Safety Week. The emphasis on promotion will also be maintained via projects that will result in the production of a Food Safety Newsletter for food businesses and the engagement of ethnic caterers through the facilitation of food hygiene training courses (3.2.11). The projects will also focus on event catering, imported food and food labelling (3.2.12).

Following on from its successful introduction 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 Hampton principles enforcement officers also undertake health and safety 'project based hazard spotting' inspections when carrying out programmed food safety inspections.

Estimate of resource available to carry out programmed inspections is **3.993 FTE**. The resource available for inspections work has been reduced because of vacancies that are currently being carried. This will have consequential effects on performance in the areas until vacancies can be filled and it may be necessary to explore the possibilities of employing external agencies to enable the Team to meet its targets for 2010/2011.

3.2.3 Access to expertise

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) Laboratory, Leeds provides bacteriological analysis of food and potable water and faecal samples. The NHS Laboratory in Hull provides bacteriological analysis of faecal samples.

The Council subscribes to Campden & Chorleywood Food Research Association (CCFRA), which provides a range of specialist services including analytical and technical support.

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

The Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, Humber Health Protection Agency, 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.

3.2.4 Food Safety Complaints

Estimated Number Food Safety Complaints 2009/10 50 (51 in 2009/10)

Estimated Number Food Premises Complaints 2009/10 50 (50 in 2009/10)

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

Estimate of resource available to carry out food complaints investigations- **0.349 FTE**

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

3.2.5 Home Authority / Primary Authority Principle

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.

Estimated resource available for dealing with home authority issues: **0.076 FTE**

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

3.2.6 **Advice to Business**

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; vetting and approving premises; packaging; labelling; and assisting in the resolution of queries involving other enforcement agencies.

The implementation of the Food Safety (Food Hygiene) Regulations 2006 introducing a new requirement for the provision of a documented risk based hygiene system continues to generate an increased number of requests for assistance.

Requests for such assistance or service user requests currently run at approximately 10 per week for food safety (542 requests received in 2009/10). This level of contact with the food sector is likely to increase with the introduction of the 'Scores on the Doors' scheme and increasing financial constraints on the food sector in general.

Estimated resource available for the provision of advice to business is 0.196 FTE

3.2.7 **Food Safety Sampling**

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 LACORS or 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 18 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 received 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 Leeds 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 Food and Safety 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 2009/10 596 food samples were taken of which 128 were unsatisfactory and required follow-up action. It is estimated that during 2010/11 600 food and 350 water samples will be collected.

Estimate of resources available for carrying out sampling programmes: 0.369 FTE

It is estimated that this level of resource is adequate for the anticipated level of service.

3.2.8 Food Alerts

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: Food Alerts for Action and Food Alerts for Information. And they are received by direct email to the Food and Safety Team.

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

In 2009 - 2010 the Team received 84 Food Alerts and 71 of these were Food Alerts for Information. 13 Food Alerts for Action required investigatory visits and where necessary the recovery/disposal of unsafe food by the Food and Safety Team.

It is anticipated that the number of Food Alerts will remain at a similar level in 2010/2011 and the available resource for responding to food alerts is estimated at **0.137 FTE**.

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

3.2.9 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

The control and investigation of outbreaks and food related infectious disease is the responsibility of the Food & Safety 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 Humber Health Protection Agency 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. The use of self-completed

postal questionnaires has continued for cases requiring the investigation of the most common pathogen (Campylobacter) to release officer time. In practice however because of the poor quality of returns this initiative increased investigation times and has as a consequence been reserved for the small number of cases that cannot be interviewed directly.

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, 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, Leeds and the HPA Collaborating Laboratory in Hull.

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

In 2009 – 2010, 252 infectious disease notifications were investigated and it is estimated that a similar number will be reported in 2010 - 2011.

The available resource to carry out infectious disease control is **0.278FTE**
It is estimated that this level of resourcing is adequate for the anticipated level of demand.

3.2.10 **Food Safety Liaison**

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, LACORS 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 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. Both teams are statutory consultees under the Licensing Act 2003.

A Joint Food Management Team comprising of relevant Environmental Health and Trading Standards staff meets several times a year to discuss matters of mutual interest within North Lincolnshire.

The available resource available for food safety liaison arrangements is **0.082 FTE**.
It is estimated that this level of resourcing is adequate for the anticipated level of demand.

3.2.11 Food Safety Promotion

This year will see the continuation of the Councils 'Scores on the Doors' scheme. This initiative uses the scores generated by the FSA's risk assessment scheme to generate a star rating which will be published on the Council's website in a format that is easy for the public to understand. Under the scheme businesses are awarded up to five stars. The higher the standard of compliance the more stars are awarded. Very poor standards are awarded a no star rating.

As part of the scheme businesses have been provided 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. The schemes has been shown to have a positive effect on the compliance levels of businesses in North Lincolnshire and remains popular with members of the public who by using the scheme are able to make informed decisions about there food safety purchases. So far the Council's Scores on the Doors website has registered over 44,000 hits and there are currently 884 premises on its database.

National Food Safety Week in June 2010 provides an annual opportunity for the Food and Safety Team to continue its hygiene awareness raising initiative in local schools. This successful initiative will target 1500 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 Food and Safety Team are grateful for the continued financial support provided by local businesses which enables this initiative to be maintained.

A new initiative this year will be the publication of a food safety newsletter. The first edition of this 'Food 'n' Lincs' will be distributed to catering businesses during National Food Safety Week. Food safety projects planned for 2010/2011 will also include an increased engagement with ethnic caterers through the facilitation of food hygiene training courses.

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. Such presentations will be resource constrained and there provision will only be entertained where the food service can accommodate their delivery.

The Food and Safety 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.

Estimate of resources required for health promotion:

Estimated resource available for food safety promotion; **0.38 FTE**

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

3.2.12 **Imported Food**

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 and feeding stuffs are imported into the Councils 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. In addition enforcement focus at a local level has been enhanced through the food safety inspection programme and project based interventions.

**Estimated resource available for carrying out imported food function
0.09 FTE**

3.2.13 **Resources**

Financial Allocation - The base budget for 2010 -2011 is detailed below:

Staff costs	£216,060
Travel	£ 17,240
Equipment	£ 12,330
Sampling	£ 21,560
Litigation	£ 0
Other	£ 15,930
Income	£ -5.030
Total (Net)	£278,090

Staffing Allocation

	Level of Authorisation High - Low – N/A	Full Time Equivalent (Establishment)	Full Time Equivalent 2010/2011(available)
Head of Communities and Environment	#	0.135	0.135
EH Manager Food & Safety	#	0.550	0.550
Environmental Health Officer	#	2.056	1.850
Senior Food & Safety Officer	#	0.618	0.618
Food & Safety Officer	#	2.681	2.140
TOTAL Operational Resource		6.040*	5.293* (88%)
Technical, Clerical & others	#	1.759	1.079* (60%)
TOTAL – service		7.799	6.372 (82%)

*Anticipated resource available for the delivery of the Food Safety function in 2010/11 is reduced by 1.43 FTE due to staff vacancies.

3.2.14 Staff Development Plan

Staffs' individual training needs are identified formally during Employment Development Reviews held annually with an optional review after six months. The Food and Safety 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; 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 2 members of the Team hold Chartered Environmental Health Officer status.

4.0 Quality Assessment

Neighbourhood and Environmental Services currently hold Investors in People status. The Service Plan includes a number of performance indicators against which the Service is assessed. Detailed below are the food related performance indicators for each aspect of the Food Service. The Food and Safety Team were included in an audit by the Food Standards Agency of Inter Authority Auditing (IAA) arrangements during the year which has 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.

4.1 Food Standards Performance Indicators

Percentage of staff participating in an EDR (target 100%)

Result for 2009/2010 **100** %

Percentage of planned visits carried out (target 100%)

Result for 2009/2010 **83** %

Percentage of food/agriculture samples reported adversely (target >10%)

Result for 2009/2010 **25** %

Number of samples taken as a percentage of population (target 0.25%)

Result for 2009/2010 **0.22** %

4.2 Food Safety Performance Indicators

Percentage of staff participating in an EDR (target 100%)

Result for 2009/2010 - **100** %

Percentage of planned food safety inspections completed (target 100%)

Result for 2009/2010 - 100 %

Percentage of service users surveyed during the year regarding attitudes to service provision (target 80%)

Result for 2009/2010 - 100%

(all inspections generated a service user questionnaire in 2009/10)

Complaints/enquiries to the service responded to within one working day (target 95%)

Result for 2009/2010 - 95 %

Percentage of user satisfaction with the food complaint investigation service (target 100%)

Result for 2009/2010 - 71 %

Percentage of food complainants satisfied with the investigation outcome (target 80%)

Result for 2009/2010 - 60 %

Percentage of user satisfaction with the food hygiene inspection service rated excellent/Good (target 80%)

Result for 2009/2010 - 94%

4.3 **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.

Estimate of Man Hours needed for Peer Audit

Food Standards (0.05 FTE)

Food Safety (0.09 FTE)

5.0 **Review**

5.1 **Review against the Service Plan**

This Food Service Plan will be formally reviewed on an annual basis. Performance against key indicators is detailed at 4 above.

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

A review of the service to establish where the Authority is at variance with this Service Plan and, where appropriate, the reasons for that variance will be carried out at the end of 2010/2011. The review process will set out any relevant improvement plan or service development identified as necessary by the review.

5.3 **Service Review**

A review of the Food Standards and Feeding Stuffs and Food Safety elements of the Food Service in 2009/2010 is attached is attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively.

Review of Food Service Plan 2009/2010

Food Standards and Feeding Stuffs

1. Review against the Service Plan

The service plan for food standards and feeding stuffs has been reviewed by the Head of Trading Standards, principal TSO and team responsible for the enforcement of food and feeding stuffs registration.

The review conducted in May 2010 compared the year's performance against targets set out in the 2009/10 plan and relevant standards.

Overall results were satisfactory both in terms of visits and sampling achieved. Business surveys show that the department continues to maintain excellent relationships with local food manufacturers and retailers. The National Performance Indicator NI182 (Business satisfaction with regulatory services) result for Trading Standards was 77% for 2009/10

All the planned visits to high risk premises were achieved but there was a shortfall in the visits achieved for medium risk premises. Of the 358 high and medium risk premises due to be visited a total of 209 were visited. The plan called for all high risk and 243 medium risk premises to be visited, plus unrated premises with a number of surveillance visits to low risk premises. In all a total of 478 premises were visited. In addition a number of surveillance visits were carried out to low risk premises. The target number of medium risk visits was not achieved due to other, unplanned work relating to animal health and welfare.

There have been two Food Standards Agency audits of the authority during the year. In Feb 2010, in conjunction with other regulatory divisions, trading standards took part in the Regulatory Services Peer Challenge Initiative. Following the self assessment peer challenge team visit an improvement plan has been drawn up. In Oct 2010 an audit was carried out for the purposes of ISO 14,001 which included food safety and food labelling. No non-conformances were found. During the year 3 officers left the team, 2 taking retirement and one for another position. This impacted on results due to the recruitment process, the need to cover the duties of vacant posts and training requirements.

253 visits were made to Feeding Stuffs establishments during the year. However the major area of work was in connection with the new Feed Hygiene Regulations. All the farms in North Lincolnshire were written to and asked to complete a questionnaire. From this about 400 premises, which could supply production to the feedstuffs chain have been identified and provisionally risk assessed.

There was an increase in the total number of 350 food and feedings stuffs samples were taken during the year, (323 food and 27 feeding stuffs). Of these 25% were found to be unsatisfactory either in respect of composition or labelling. There have

been a number of internet purchases of supplements and pseudo- medicines that proved to be incorrect and have been dealt with using the HA principle. 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.

The 11 councils of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Group were successful in bidding for additional funding from the FSA, amounting to £40000, to sample imported foods. North Lincolnshire helped compile the bid and did £2700 worth of sampling. Samples taken included imported poultry products, fish, herbs and spices, fruits and nuts, oils and coffee and materials in contact with food.

The service dealt with 37 complaints from members of the public, all of which related to food. 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 12 referrals were received from other local authorities under the Home Authority Principle. This is a decrease of 65% over the previous year however the previous year had been exceptionally busy in this respect and this was simply a return to normal levels. All referrals were recorded and taken up with the local producers.

77 requests were received from local food and feed producers for assistance under the Home Authority Principle; this was the same as the previous year which had been abnormally high.

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.

Food alerts (whether from the FSA or local food premises) totalled 61. This was about half the number of alerts compared to the previous year. The two officers training to be TSO's as part of the divisions succession planning have successfully completed the TSI food module.

There were 15 animal by-products enquiries during the year

2. Identification of any variation from the Service Plan.

A shortfall in the general food businesses assumed inspection numbers (20% of medium risk premises proposed for the year not completed).

A decrease in the number of food alerts.

An increase in the amount of internal training due to new staff appointments.

3. Areas of Improvement

A more rigorous approach to the production of the yearly sampling plan has resulted in an increased level of unsatisfactory samples.

Appendix 2

Review of Food Service Plan 2009/2010

Food Safety

This review of the service plan for food safety compares the year's performance against targets set out in the 2009/10 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. Throughout the year there has been a continuing implementation of the Safer Food Better Business model for catering businesses. This new approach has re-focused visits and has extended inspection times as Officers have endeavoured to explain this new approach and to encourage and advise business proprietors to take up this or a similar method of achieving compliance.

In 2009/10 100% 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. It is hoped to secure additional resources in 2010/11 to improve the depth of service provision in all areas.

During the year the Team piloted a new approach by introducing 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, National Food Safety Week 2009, hygiene training for ethnic groups, a targeted inspection focus on poorly performing food premises and an alternative enforcement strategy for low risk premises. All projects have been successfully completed. The activities of the Team during Food Safety Week were well received and are detailed later in this report. In partnership with the Humberside Chinese Association, a Level 2 Food Hygiene course was delivered in Cantonese and successfully completed by 58 candidates from the Chinese community. 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 Food and Safety Team sampling programme has regard to the inspection programme, centrally co-ordinated FSA and LACORS sampling initiatives and local and topical issues. Where appropriate sampling is co-ordinated with neighbouring authorities in the Humber Region. During the year 596 food samples were taken and submitted to the HPA collaborating laboratory for analysis. Of these 128 required follow up action because of poor results. In addition to food sampling, 17 samples of drinking water from private supplies (3 were found to be unsatisfactory), 22 samples from mains supplies (all satisfactory), 171 water samples from swimming pools (3 were found to be unsatisfactory) and 30 spa pool samples (10 were found to be unsatisfactory) were also taken and analysed. Follow up and remedial action has been taken where unsatisfactory sample results have been identified.

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 51 complaints relating to food and 50 complaints about food premises during the year. All complaints have been thoroughly investigated and appropriate guidance given or enforcement action taken.

The creation of a thriving local economy is a Council priority requiring informed compliant and successful businesses. The Food and Safety Team continued to contribute to this objective 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 542 requests for guidance advice and information during the year. Many of these related to the implementation of new food safety legislation.

The Food and Safety Team works closely with the Health Protection Agency in providing an investigatory and advisory service for notified cases of food borne infectious disease. During 2009/10 it investigated 252 cases of food borne infectious disease that included common food poisoning infections such as Campylobacter and Salmonella as well as more exotic pathogens such as Giardia. In addition to individual cases of food poisoning 13 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 Food and Safety Team successfully promoted food hygiene during National Food Safety Week with competitions and a hand washing road show that visited over 1200 schoolchildren in 15 primary schools. It also promoted food safety through the local media and at the annual children's Gala in Scunthorpe.

The Council's 'Scores on the Doors' Scheme continues to be well received by the public and the website has recorded over 44,000 hits in 2009/10. The range of premises included in this scheme will be expanded in years to come

to provide a more comprehensive picture of food safety compliance for the public in North Lincolnshire.

The Food and Safety Team, together with other regulatory divisions, took part in the Regulatory Services Peer Challenge review in February 2010 and have contributed to the Food Standards Agency audit of Inter Authority Auditing arrangements.

6.2 Identification of any variation from the Service Plan.

There were no significant variations from the plan.

6.3 Areas for Improvement

The level of customer satisfaction with the food complaints investigation service was below target in 2009/10. This area of service will be reviewed to determine strategies for improvement in 2010/11.