

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOOD, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES CABINET MEMBER

FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2008/2009

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Cabinet Member's approval for the Authority's Food Service Plan for 2008/2009.
- 1.2 The key points in this report are:
 - Each Food Authority is required to prepare a Service Plan setting out its proposed activities for the administrative year.
 - The Food Service Plan 2008/2009 details how the available resources will be deployed to deliver the broad range of activities required by the Food Standards Agency.
 - The Rogers Review of national enforcement priorities for local authority regulatory services has recommended the national enforcement priorities of 'hygiene of food businesses', 'animal and public health' and 'fair trading'. Currently the council is carrying out a consultation exercise to secure the views of stakeholders on local priorities.
 - 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) sets 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 Service Plan setting out its proposed activities for the administrative year.
- 2.3 The plan has to be approved by the council 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 and food hygiene on farms, 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 2008/2009 in all these areas of work. (Copy attached).
- 2.7 The council will be required to report to the Agency on the fulfilment of the activities proposed under this plan at the end of March 2009.
- 2.8 Along with other councils the food enforcement services of North Lincolnshire will be subject to external audit by the FSA at some stage. The Food Service Plan 2008/2009 details how the available resources will be deployed to deliver the broad range of activities required by the FSA. A number of issues are highlighted in the service plan.
- 2.9 As reported last year the Rogers Review of national enforcement priorities for local authority regulatory services (the Rogers Review) has recommended six national enforcement priorities of which 'hygiene of food businesses', 'animal and public health' and 'fair trading' are relevant to this Plan. Currently the council is carrying out a consultation exercise to secure the views of stakeholders on local priorities. The results of this exercise will influence the design of future regulatory service planning.
- 2.10 In 2005 the Hampton Review identified ways in which the administrative burden of regulation on business could be reduced while ensuring that regulatory outcomes were maintained. As part of the solution the government has created the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) to implement the key Hampton recommendations to help promote better targeting of resources and to deliver more consistency for business. As LBRO becomes established its work will impact on future service delivery.
- 2.11 As in previous years 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.
- 2.12 Alternative Enforcement Contacts have been introduced for lower risk premises as an alternative to formal inspection programmes. A range of methods for keeping local business informed and monitoring compliance rates are being used.

2.13 New legislation, on the need for documented food safety systems for all food business introduced under the theme of Safer Food Better Business continues as a priority.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 The Food Service Plan is a statutory requirement and the FSA sets out the issues to be covered in a framework agreement.

3.2 In recognition of the Rogers Review and the national enforcement priorities of 'hygiene of food businesses', 'animal and public health' and 'fair trading', the council may opt to place greater emphasis on these functions.

3.3 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 Following the FSA Framework Agreement will ensure that the Service Plan complies with statutory requirements.

4.2 Responding to the Rogers Review national priorities, incorporating additional local priorities and implementation of the Hampton recommendations via the LBRO will require resource prioritisation. Further details are required on the implications of the national priorities, local priorities and impact of the LBRO. These will be subject to further reports as and when required.

4.3 Ignoring the statutory guidance would lead to the likelihood of an FSA audit of the council.

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 Service Plan contribute to the council's environmentally related ambitions 'Communities that are confident and caring' and 'Developing partnerships that make a difference'.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation has taken place routinely with various stakeholders during the compliance process.

7.2 These include:

- i) Businesses, following visits by enforcement staff.

- ii) Consumers, following contact with some aspect of the service.
 - iv) Members of staff responsible for delivering the service.
- 7.3 Views expressed by the consultees are taken into account when enforcement activities are being planned.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the Food Service Plan 2008/2009.
- 8.2 That further reports on the implications of the national priorities, local priorities and impact of the LBRO be submitted as required.

SERVICE DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
North Lincolnshire Food Service Plan 2007/2008

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

Food Service Plan: - 2008/2009

1.0 Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aim

To ensure fair trade and protect the health of the public from risks associated with the consumption of food and water by:-

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: *'Transforming North Lincolnshire towards a better future for all.'*

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

1.3.3 The shared priorities are:

- A An area that is thriving;
- B Communities that are confident and caring;
- C Individuals lead healthy, safe and fulfilling lives;
- D Everyone works together for the benefit of North Lincolnshire.

1.3.4 The Council priorities are:

- 1 Empowering people to do the most important things better;
- 2 Supporting members to lead their communities;
- 3 Developing partnerships that make a difference;
- 4 Improving the capacity of the organisation.

This Food Safety Service Plan 2008 – 2009 contributes to priorities A,B,C,1,2,3 and 4.

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 2008 - 2009 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.

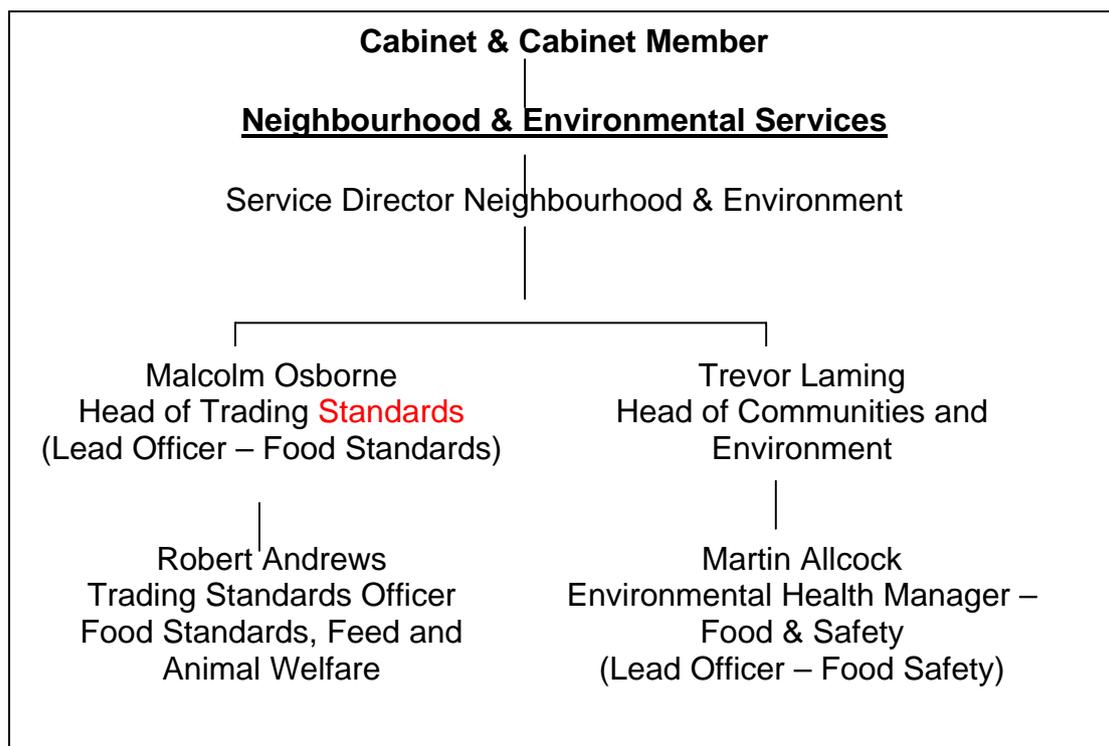
Agriculture dominates in the rest of the council's area. The other principal towns originally developed as market centres for the surrounding farmlands but this role is now diminished in these days of improved communications.

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 International 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 Environmental Health 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 and Chinese 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 agree between TS/F&S

Primary Producers	430
Slaughterhouses	1
Manufacturers/processors	25
Packers	6
Importers/Exporters	2
Distributors/Transporters	47
Retailers	516
Restaurants and other caterers	670
Materials and Articles/Manufacturers and Suppliers	2
Manufacture mainly selling by retail	24
Total number of premises	1524

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 7 other Local Link offices based in Barton, Brigg, Crowle & North Axholme, Epworth & South Axholme, Winterton, Ashby and Crosby Scunthorpe.

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 Trading Standards Officer has returned to work following maternity leave.

A Trading Standards Officer has been seconded to the food team for part of the year.

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.

Owing to the Rogers report and bearing in mind the Hampton report of 2005 the service is awaiting future developments that will be occurring as a result of LBRO's input. The service is making use of Alternative Enforcement Contacts (AECs).

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

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

3.1.1 Food Standards Premises Profile

Primary Producers	430
Slaughterhouses	1
Manufacturers/processors	25
Packers	6
Importers/Exporters	3
Distributors/Transporters	32
Retailers	481
Restaurants and other caterers	599
Manufacturers of Materials and Articles in contact with food	1
Manufacture mainly selling by retail	24
Total number of premises	1602

Food Premises	Total Planned	Due for Visit
A premises	50 (100%)	50
B premises	250 (79%)	315
C premises	10 (3.6%)	277
Premises outside programme.	4	4
Unrated premises	43	43
Total	357	689
Estimated number of AECs	70	
Estimated number of revisits	20	-

	Feed Hygiene Regs		Agriculture General	
	Total planned	Due for visit	Total planned	Due for visit
High risk	7	7	2	2
Medium risk	1	1	8	8
Low risk	12	12	8	8
NIR	0	0	0	0
Unrated	80	80	12	12

Primary Producers	Food Hygiene Total planned	Food Hygiene Due for visit
High risk	1	1
Unrated	50	50

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. (1.5 FTE)

It is estimated that sufficient resources exist to undertake the **planned** Visit/AEC level, but this represents only 65% 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 program. 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.

3.1.2 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 premise 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

3.1.3 Access to expertise

Following a competitive tendering process the Public and Agricultural Analytical Services are provided by West Yorkshire Joint Services based in Morely. The Humber Authorities Calibration Centre in Hull carries out calibration of metrological equipment

3.1.4 Food Complaints

Estimated Number of Complaints 48

Estimated FTE **0.10**

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) may impact upon the manner and speed which, complaints are dealt.

3.1.5 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

3.1.6 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 or Originating Authority for any part of the business based within the area.

For **Food Standards and Feeding Stuffs** 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.

Requests for such assistance currently run at 3 per week.

Estimated FTE required: - **0.2**

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

3.1.7 **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 (such as 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.

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: 0.65

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.

The number of food alerts has increased from 53 in year 2006/7 to 140 in year 2007/2008, an increase of 160%.

Estimated FTE required for food and feed hazard warnings: (0.15)

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: 0.05

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	£ 116,586
Travel	£ 7,800
Budget for Analytical work	£ 34,610
Training	£ 2,600
Equipment	£ 1,000
Total Cost	£ 162,596

Food Standards (FTE) Operational

Trading Standards Manager/Principal Officer	0.2
Trading Standards Officers	1.50
Enforcement Officer	0.8
Enforcement Assistant	0.25
Animal Welfare Officer	0.1
Technical Clerk	0.05

Total number officer hours available for Food Standards/Feedstuffs work in 2007/2008

Operational :	(2.55FTE)
Management / QA etc:	(0.35FTE)
TOTAL	(2.9FTE)

3.1.14 Staff Development Plan

Staff's individual training needs are identified formally during Employment 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	
Total number of premises	1443
Producers	13
Manufacturers	25
Packers	4
Distributors/Importers	45
Retailers	498
Restaurants	858
8 Approved Premises approved for:	
Meat Products	4
Minced Meat	1
Milk Products	2
Fish 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.

		Required Inspection Programme
Category A premises (High risk)*	22	44
B*	256	256
C	550	360
D	244	127
E	360	115
Unclassified	11	
Total	1443	902 *

*In addition approved premises are now subject to transitional inspection arrangements based on approval type.

These figures do not include new premises which are inspected within 28 days of opening.

3.2.2 Targeted Inspection Activity

Food Safety:

The inspection programme is based on the inspection rating scheme contained in the FSA Food Safety Code of Practice which means that dependant on risk, all premises will be inspected within a range of 6 months to 3 years. The code also permits the use of alternative strategies such as questionnaires for low risk premises but this approach will not be utilised because of the potential to lose the advantages gained through personal engagement with business proprietors.

The outcome of a review of the Code of Practice is awaited and it is anticipated that it will introduce a range of interventions available to the Authority to improve food business compliance levels. New National Indicators will also be introduced during the life of the service plan which will necessitate the collection of data for reporting purposes.

Inspections of catering premises and restaurants will be focussed towards the implementation of the compliance guidance schemes such as Safer Food Better Business (SFBB).

New legislation introduced in 2006 required all food businesses to provide documented food safety systems. The Team will continue to be active in this area by building on the outcomes generated by the Council's participation in the SFBB implementation project. The SFBB model will continue to be utilised where appropriate during the inspection of catering and retail premises. This will result 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 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 2008/909.

3.2.3 **Access to expertise**

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) Laboratory, Leeds provide bacteriological analysis of food and potable water and faecal samples. The NHS Laboratory in Hull provide 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 2008/9 60 (56 in 2007/8)

Estimated Number Food Premises Complaints 2008/9 80 (74 in 2007/8)

Food Safety/Premise 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 Principle**

There are no formal Home 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 or Originating 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 etc; assisting in the resolution of queries involving other enforcement agencies etc.

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 15 per week for food safety (819 requests received in 2008/9). This level of contact with the food sector is likely to increase with the introduction of the 'Scores on the Doors' scheme.

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.

It is estimated that during 2007/8 590 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 2007 - 2008 the Team received 67 Food Alerts and 63 of these were Food Alerts for Information. 4 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 2008 - 2009 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. In 2007 – 2008 the use of self-completed postal questionnaires was initially introduced 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 can not 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 2007 – 2008, 302 infectious disease notifications were investigated and it is estimated that a similar number will be reported in 2008 - 2009.

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
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.

Estimate of resources required for liaison:

Hours available for food safety liaison arrangements : 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**

Last year the Food Safety Team were successful in attracting funding from the Food Standards Agency as part of their National programme to implement Safer Food Better Business (SFBB). They will continue to encourage its implementation in 2007/8.

This year will see the launch of the Councils Scores on the Doors scheme in the Autumn. This initiative will use 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 may be awarded a no star rating.

As part of the scheme businesses will be 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. Such schemes have been shown to improve compliance levels of businesses and are popular with members of the public who by using the scheme are able to make informed decisions about their food safety purchases.

National Food Safety Week 2008 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 small number of 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 their 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 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. The review of the arrangements in place at our local airport and ports will take place during the year in recognition of this developing area of food safety.

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

3.2.13 Resources

Financial Allocation

The base budget for 2008-2009 is detailed below:

Staff costs	£207,040
Travel	£ 20,010
Equipment	£ 14,990
Sampling	£ 12,390
Litigation	£ 0
Other	£ 13,330
Income	£ -4,790
Total (Net)	£262,970

Staffing Allocation

	Level of Competency High – Low - NA	Full Time Equivalent
Divisional Manager Environmental Health	#	0.135
Manager Food & Safety	#	0.550
Environmental Health Officer	#	2.056
Senior Food & Safety Officer	#	0.618
Food & Safety Officer	#	2.681
TOTAL Operational Resource		6.040*
Technical, Clerical & others	#	1.759
TOTAL – service		7.799

*Anticipated operational resource available for the planned Food Safety work in 2008/9 is reduced by 1.313 FTE due to staff vacancies and career development commitments.

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 professional continuing 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 3 members of the Team hold Chartered Environmental Health Officer status.

4.0 Quality Assessment

Neighbourhood and Environmental Services were awarded Investors In People status in June 2007. The Council is also an active partner in the New Unitaries Benchmarking Group through which the food safety service is reviewed. In addition under the Council's corporate management system the Food Service i.e. Trading Standards and Food Safety services each produce an Annual Service Plan. 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.

4.1 Food Standards

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

Result for 2007/2008 **100** %

Percentage of planned visits carried out (target 100%)

Result for 2007/2008 **80** %

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

Result for 2007/2008 **18** %

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

Result for 2007/2008 **0.19** %

4.2 Food Safety

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

Result for 2007/2008 - **66** %

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

Result for 2007/2008 - **99.3** %

Percentage of service users surveyed during the year regarding attitudes to service provision (target 2%)

Result for 2007/2008 - **75** %

(all inspection generated a service user questionnaire in 2007/8)

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

Result for 2007/2008 - 97 %

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

Result for 2007/2008 - 100 %

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

Result for 2007/2008 - 100 %

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 2008/2009. 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 2007/2008 is attached is attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively.

Review of Food Service Plan 2007/2008

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 2008 compared the year's performance against targets set out in the 2007/8 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.

During this year there were outbreaks of Foot and Mouth, Blue Tongue and Avian Influenza. This meant increased animal welfare enquiries, increased bio-security measures and several meetings with government bodies. Further a number of multi-agency exercises were held to test and refine our response to exotic animal disease outbreaks. Owing to the serious and complex nature of these outbreaks resources have of necessity been diverted to accommodate these activities and priorities and targets were re-assessed.

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 435 high and medium risk premises due to be visited a total of 290 were visited. The plan called for all high risk and 328 medium risk premises to be visited, plus unrated premises with a number of surveillance visits to low risk premises. In all a total of 728 premises of which 386 were visited. In addition a number of surveillance visits were carried out to low risk premises. The target number of visits was not achieved due to other, unplanned work relating to animal health and welfare. However a small increase has been made in resources due to a reduction in DEFRA animal health funding. The Authority made a decision not to reduce officer's hours but to re-allocate them to food and feeding stuffs tasks.

68 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.

A total of 228 food and feedings stuffs samples were taken during the year. (193 food and 35 feeding stuffs). Of these 22% were found to be unsatisfactory either in respect of composition or labelling. 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 £7000 worth of sampling. Samples taken included imported poultry products, fish, herbs and spices, fruits and nuts, oils and coffee.

The service dealt with 48 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 15 referrals were received from other local authorities under the Home Authority Principle. All referrals were recorded and taken up with the local producers.

131 requests were received from local food and feed producers for assistance under the Home Authority Principle, this was a 230% increase over the previous year.

Surveys of food businesses showed a high level of satisfaction with the services provided. 98% of all respondents were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with an overall business satisfaction index of 92.5 based on CPA performance indicator E31.

Food hygiene at primary producers was a priority and a training course specifically aimed at this sector of trade was run during the year. Inspection of primary producers as required under the food hygiene was carried out during the year. 36 premises were inspected.

Training of staff was 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 140. This was an increase of 160% compared to the previous year.

There were 12 animal by-products enquiries during the year.

2. Identification of any variation from the Service Plan.

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

Increased food hazard warnings (160% increase over previous year).

Increased advice to business (230% increase over previous year).

3. Areas of Improvement

The Inter Authorities audit on monitoring produced a number of ideas for future development in relationship to Post Inspectional Documentation.

A protocol has been developed for Food Hygiene on farms and is now in use. This is following national guidelines.

An advice pack has been developed for new businesses to try and ensure they are aware from the outset of the legislation they have to comply with.

Appendix 2

Review of Food Service Plan 2007/2008

Food Safety

This review of the service plan for food safety compares the year's performance against targets set out in the 2007/8 plan and relevant standards.

Overall results were highly satisfactory both in terms of the level of quality and quantity of work carried 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. In addition the resources of the Team have been tested by the unforeseen demands generated by the emergency response to the sudden flooding of parts of North Lincolnshire in June and the impact of the Foot and Mouth control restrictions on food manufactured in the area for export.

Over the year the impact of new food legislation has significantly extended the time spent with business proprietors in the catering and retail sectors and much effort has been expended by the Team in providing assistance with new legislative requirements and the compliance guidance schemes such as Safer Food Better Business. The Food and Safety Team will continue to respond to the outcomes generated by the introduction of this new legislation.

A significant impact on the workload of the Team was made by the continued implementation of new food safety legislation requiring food business to adopt a more documented approach to food safety. The introduction of Safer Food Better Business model for catering business and supplemental guidance on specific catering businesses and practices has increased visit and 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 2007/8 99.3% 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 2008/9 to improve the depth of service provision in all areas.

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 590 food samples were taken and submitted

to the HPA collaborating laboratory for analysis. Of these 100 required follow up action because of poor results(35% of these were relating to ice samples). In addition to food sampling, 25 samples of drinking water from mains and private supplies (2 private supplies were found to be unsatisfactory) and 181 water samples from swimming pools (13 were found to be unsatisfactory warranting follow up action) were also taken and analysed. Follow up and remedial action has been taken where unsatisfactory sample results have been identified.

Complaints about food business 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 56 complaints relating to food and 74 complaints about food premises during the year. All complaints have been thoroughly investigated and appropriate guidance given or enforcement action taken. Responses received from complaints service users indicated an 100% level of satisfaction with the level of service provided.

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 819 requests for guidance advice and information during the year. Many of these related to the implementation of new food safety legislation. This level of activity represents a significant increase in activity over previous years which has in part been due to better recording of business contacts and raised awareness amongst the food business community.

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 2007/8 it investigated 302 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, 12 of which were found to be viral in origin and associated with institutions. The remaining case was caused by a bacterial pathogen spread by poor hygiene in a catering premises.

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 1500 schoolchildren. It also promoted food safety through the local media and at the annual children's Gala in Scunthorpe. Members of the Team also presented 'Get to 'Know your EHO' talks to prospective business operators at businesses start up seminars sponsored by the Enterprise in Food initiative sponsored by the Business Link.

The Food Service was subject to an Inter Authority Audit in 2007. The Humber Authorities Food Safety, Standards and Feedstuffs Inter Authority Auditing Group carried out an audit of the post inspection administration systems and procedures in place within the Team. Findings revealed minor areas for improvement in the documentation of procedures for monitoring and corrective actions and these have already been implemented.

6.2 Identification of any variation from the Service Plan.

There were no signification variations from the plan.

6.3 Areas for Improvement

The EDR performance was below target in 2007/8. This will be addressed in 2008/9.