

Committee: COMMUNITY AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Date: 9 September 2010

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Title: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION
ANNUAL STATUTORY SERVICE PLANS
FOR FOOD SAFETY AND HEALTH AND
SAFETY AT WORK ENFORCEMENT

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Summary

1. This report advises members of the statutory requirement for the Council to have in place service plans for its food safety and health and safety enforcement functions and recommends the approval of the plans attached.

Recommendations

2. Approval of the attached service plans for the food safety and health and safety enforcement functions.

Financial Implications

3. Potential purchase of mobile working solutions c. £10,000 from capital subject to evaluation and SMB approval.

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.
 - a) Food Safety Service Plan link
<http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/documents/website/Environment/Food%20Safety/UDC%20Food%20Safety%20Service%20Plan%202010-11.pdf>
 - b) Health and Safety Service Plan link
<http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/uttlesford/file/UDC%20HS%20Service%20Plan%202010-11%20v5.doc>
 - c) The Food Standards Agency - Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities
<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/enforcement/frameworkagreemntno5.pdf>
 - d) The Health and Safety Executive - revised mandatory guidance on implementation of Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA).

<http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/upload/23150.doc>

Impact

5.

Communication/Consultation	Plans will be published on the Council's website
Community Safety	Contributes to health, safety and welfare of the community
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	No corporate implications for staff.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Compliance with statutory duties placed on LA's to deliver enforcement functions
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	Additional efficiency required to deliver the service plans to be met by development of mobile working IT solutions

Situation

- 6 The Environmental Health division produces annual service plans for its statutory Food Safety and Health and Safety enforcement functions as required by the Food Standards Agency and Health and Safety Executive respectively. Guidance issued by these agencies suggests that these plans are approved by Members as a means of ensuring engagement and recognition of the importance of the delivery of these statutory functions by the Council.

7 Food Safety Plan

This identifies the work programme for 2010-11 based on the pro-active risk based inspection programme and reactive work arising from complaints, imported food and food poisoning outbreaks. The planned number of inspections for the year is 265 from a total of 621 premises within the district. These are prioritised so that the higher risk category A, B and C premises (207 in total) will be inspected by their due date while lower risk premises in categories D and E premises will be inspected or receive a verification visit or questionnaire to ascertain their current food hygiene status. In addition we are currently working towards implementing the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (*Scores on the Doors*) being introduced by the Food Standards Agency in the autumn. This will provide a real incentive for food business proprietors to improve their standards of food hygiene in order to achieve the best possible star rating to attract customers.

The plan also includes the provision of food hygiene training courses by qualified officers to food businesses (income generating), the inspection of approved food businesses such as meat product manufacturers and food sampling (225 samples submitted in 2009-10).

The resource for this service equates to 3.0 fte comprising 1.7 fte EHO;s, 0.6 fte Technical Officer and 0.7 fte Imported Food Technical Officer.

8 Health and Safety plan

In 2009 the Health and Safety Executive issued revised mandatory Section 18 guidance to Local Authorities requiring them to ensure that the delivery of their responsibilities for health and safety enforcement was being adequately resourced and implemented. The Section 18 Standard requires every Enforcement Authority (EA) by the 31 March 2011 to:

- i. make a commitment to improving health and safety (H&S) outcomes;
- ii. set out its priorities and plan of interventions for the current year;
- iii. target their interventions to maximise their impact.

9 In order to meet these requirements officers within the Environmental Health Commercial Premises Team have been dedicating time to reviewing and updating all existing policies and procedures and undertaking a thorough overhaul of the Ocella database records. Once completed we will be able to devise a revised risk based inspection programme.

10 The resource for this service equates to 1 fte comprising 0.5 fte EHO and 0.5 fte Technical Officer.

11 Resources to meet the requirements of these plans are very limited, they will be allocated according to the priorities identified in each plan. Shortfalls could arise if additional demands from intensive activities such as serious accident investigations, food poisoning outbreaks or legal proceedings occur. A reciprocal informal partnership agreement has been reached with Harlow Council that at such times we would seek to assist each other with staff and other resources as available however in common with the financial restraints on all LA's at this time our ability to respond will be limited.

12 Local Authorities are required by the HSE to ensure their elected members are satisfied that they have provided adequate resources after considering all aspects of the service delivery.

13 Following an internal audit in June this year one of the recommendations made was to investigate the possibility of providing mobile technology to improve efficiency. Our database providers Ocella are currently working on a hand held remote tablet device (similar to that already in use in the Building Control section) and trials are in progress with an Oxfordshire Council. This

will enable officers while out in the district to have access to premises records, the inspection database and documents to enable them to complete records and inspection forms on site. The aim being to reduce time spent in the offices and enable greater flexibility and efficiency for officers.

We plan to evaluate and trial the system to ensure it will improve efficiency later this year. Estimated costs are approximately £5,000 for the software and installation and a further £3 -5,000 for the tablet devices.

Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Failure to deliver on the service plans	2 Experienced and professional team to deliver this work.	3 Premises not be inspected on time, infringements not identified in a timely way.	Monthly service reviews conducted to monitor delivery. Inspection programme will be prioritised to ensure high risk premises are covered. Reciprocal agreement with Harlow Council in the event of exceptional demands. Investigation of mobile technology
Reputational damage due to failure to deliver	2 Experienced and professional team to deliver this work.	2 Experienced and professional team to deliver this work.	As above

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.