



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## *Committee Report*

**Public**

**Date of Meeting:** 20 July 2006

**Title:** Food Service Plan

**Report of:** Director of Community Services

**Report reference:** CS 26/06

**Summary:** The Food Standards Agency requires each Local Authority to produce a Food Service Plan in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Agency's Framework agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement (Sept 2000) The plan must be approved by the Authorities relevant Member forum and a documented review shall be submitted to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee at least once a year

**Recommendations:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the Food Safety Plan for 2006-7, in particular the performance for 2005-6 & also comment upon whether the proposed targets in the Plan are considered workable and achievable.

**Contact Officer:** Ruth Harland

**Ext:** 7334

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None



# REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

## PORTFOLIO AREA:

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Date of Meeting: 12<sup>th</sup> June 2006

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Public

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Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes

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## Inside/Outside Policy Framework

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It is RECOMMENDED that the Executive accepts this Plan and refers the Food Service Plan to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 July.

**Contact Officer:** Ruth Harland, Food Health & Safety Team Manager **Ext:** 7334

**Note:** in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS**

As required by the Food Standards Agency's framework document, the attached plan contains the following elements:

- The aims and objectives of the food service and the contribution it makes to the Council's corporate objectives
- The scope of the service, the demands placed upon it and the service enforcement policy
- The plan for delivering the service including food premises inspection, food sampling, support and advice for businesses, control of infectious disease and requests for service
- The resources allocated, quality assessment and a performance review of the previous years plan.

Every local authority food law enforcement service is, at some stage, subject to a comprehensive audit by the Food Standards Agency, which since its introduction in April 2000 has had a key role in overseeing local authority food enforcement services. The Service Plan provides the basis on which the Council's food service will be monitored and audited by the Agency. The common format in which service plans are required to be produced enables the Food Standards Agency to assess and compare local authority activities.

## **2. CONSULTATION**

- 2.1 Consultation to Date. Internal consultation has taken place. The FSA does not require that any external consultation takes place
- 2.2 Consultation proposed: Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Executive accepts this Plan and refers the Food Service Plan to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 20 July.

#### **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Food Service Plan for 2006-7 has been produced in accordance with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency. It sets out how the Council will deliver its food service during the year, provides information on the previous year's performance against targets and identifies the targets for 2006-7.

The Agency states that the relevant Member forum must approve the Food Service Plan and at least once per year, a documented performance review must be carried out and submitted for Member approval.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

- Staffing/ Financial Resources – It is intended that all matters referred to in the attached Service Plan will be met within existing resources. Members' attention is, however, drawn to the following: -

The targets for 2006-7 as set out in the attached plan are again considered to be very challenging for the Food Health and Safety Team and will be reviewed on a regular basis. Where slippages are identified or anticipated, options to try to address these as outlined in the plan will be considered, having due regard to the existing staffing structure and budget.

The Team currently has a full establishment of competent Food Safety Officers and has recently been able to demonstrate performance above target.

In January 2006 the Team was given responsibility for all Carlisle City Council's statutory Health and Safety enforcement work (previously this was split between Food and Environmental Quality Teams). The Team now has responsibility for Health and Safety enforcement work in an additional 1500 (approx.) businesses. However, members will be aware of efforts currently being made to bring about improvements in the Council's performance of its statutory Health & Safety work. A new Health and Safety specialist post has

recently been added to the establishment (the post is currently being advertised).

Inevitably with a service of this nature unscheduled investigations, staff turnover, etc disrupt targets and may require some activities to be re-prioritised.

- Legal – Under Section 6 of the Food Safety Act 1990, the Council has a statutory duty to provide a food law enforcement service. The Food Standards Agency takes a very pro-active role in setting and monitoring standards and auditing local authorities enforcement activities in order to ensure this activity is effective and undertaken on a consistent basis. Powers to enable the Agency to set standards of performance, monitor and audit local authorities are contained in the Food Standards Act 1999.
- Corporate – This Service Plan indicates how the Food Safety Team will deliver the Authority's statutory duties and also contributes to the Corporate Priority of a 'Clean, Green and Safe' Carlisle.
- Risk Management – Incorporated within the Councils Risk Register
- Equality Issues – N/A
- Environmental – N/A
- Crime and Disorder – N/A
- Impact on Customers – Failure to deliver an effective Food safety service may result in deteriorating food hygiene standards across Carlisle, which may impact on the reputation of the Council

***Carlisle City Council***

**Community Services Directorate**

**Food Safety Plan  
2006-7**

## **1. Introduction**

Carlisle City Councils Food Service Plan is produced in accordance with the Food Standard Agency's (FSA) Framework Agreement on Food Law Enforcement, issued in September 2000. This Framework set out the structure and content of food service plans. The Plan details the measures that Carlisle City Council (CCC) will implement to ensure the safety of food and drink that is produced, prepared or sold within the district.

The plan should be seen as an integral part of the Council's corporate service delivery programme. It will be reviewed annually and presented to the Council's Executive for discussion and approval. When approved, the plan will be published for public scrutiny on the Council's website.

The Food Standards Agency requires CCC to produce an annual Food Service Plan to be submitted to the relevant Member forum for approval to ensure local transparency and accountability.

The Food, Health and Safety Team in the Council's Community Services Directorate delivers CCC's statutory Food Service.

The Team currently has had a full establishment of competent Food Safety Officers since October 2005 and has been able to demonstrate performance above target since then.

In January 2006 the Team was given responsibility for all CCC's statutory Health and Safety enforcement work (previously this was split between Food and Environmental Quality Teams). The Team now has an additional 1500 (approx) businesses to deal with. No additional resource was provided at the time, although Members will be aware that work is currently underway to improve CCC H&S performance and a new Health and Safety specialist post has recently been added to the establishment (the post is **being advertised**).

During 2005-6 a significant amount of time (510 hours approx) was spent dealing with Premises Licence applications under the Licensing Act 2003. This significant workload influenced food safety work in the first 3 quarters of the year.

## **2. Service Aims and Objectives**

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

The Teams objectives link to the City Councils priority of -'Cleaner, Greener and Safer' and to the Community Services Directorate key objective of 'embracing and including all statutory requirements and best practice principles which contribute to the corporate health of the Council.'

**In partnership with the North West Food Alliance, the Team is currently offering free food hygiene training to small and medium catering businesses. This contributes to the City Councils priority of 'Learning City'**

### **2.2 Aims**

In delivering the service, the Food Safety Team aims to:

- Protect public health
- Promote consumer confidence

- Enhance food safety
- Deliver services in a competent, professional and courteous manner
- Provide a high quality service at an acceptable cost and to measurable standards
- Provide an impartial and consistent approach to the interpretation and implementation of food safety legislation and the provision of advice.

### **2.3 Objectives**

The key objective of the food safety service is to ensure the safety of foodstuffs, which are manufactured, processed, stored or sold within the City, and to ensure compliance with the relevant Code of Practice, Industry Guides and good working practice for Food Safety matters.

The Team will achieve this by:

- Inspecting 89% food premises at intervals in accordance with the statutory code of practice. (It is anticipated that this target will increase by 2% each year)
- In conjunction with Cumbrias Food Liaison Group to continue to implement an alternative enforcement strategy for lower risk food businesses
- To continue the correct implementation of new food safety legislation which came into force in January 2006
- . To continue to promote Safer Food Better Business as an approved documented Food Safety Management System in relevant businesses and to encourage businesses to attend free training seminars as appropriate
- Issuing approvals as required and monitoring compliance with relevant legislation
- Providing advice to businesses and the public on food safety matters
- Responding to requests for service and complaints about food and food premises (the Team aims to respond to any request for service within 5 working days)
- Responding to cases of confirmed food borne infectious disease and where appropriate, advising upon appropriate precautionary and control measures (the Team aims to contact all notified cases within 2 working days)
- Sampling and arranging for the microbiological testing of a range of foods produced and / or sold in the district (the Team aims to contact businesses as soon as possible to advise of results and in all cases to advise in writing within 10 working days)
- Continually developing and improving the service to meet the needs of customers, statutory requirements and to achieve best practice
- Ensuring all staff involved in food safety are properly qualified and competent and have adequate equipment and other resources to enable them to undertake their work.



### **3. Background**

#### **3.1 Profile of the Authority**

Carlisle City Councils area covers 400sq.miles and has a population of approximately 100,000. Much of the area is sparsely populated. Traditionally the area has been known for its food processing industries and agriculture.

The district has a variety of large food manufacturing businesses and many smaller specialty food producers. The district has an excellent communications network and is a popular tourist venue. Carlisle is within easy reach of the Lake District, southern Scotland, the northern Pennines as well as Newcastle upon Tyne.

The district has a number of visitor attractions, hotels, guesthouses, cafes, and a growing number of public houses, bars and clubs to cater for the tourist trade as well as residents from Carlisle and surrounding areas.

#### **3.2 Organisational Structure**

The food service is delivered by the Food, Health and Safety Team located within the Community Services Directorate, as set out in Appendix 1 attached. The Team Manager is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the Team and has specialist lead responsibility for the food hygiene function.

Matters relating to the Council's food policies and any other significant matters requiring a decision are referred to the Council's relevant Portfolio Holder, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and /or Executive.

#### **3.3 Scope of the Food Service**

The food service provided by CCC does not include food standards or feedingstuffs, as the Trading Standards Department of Cumbria County Council currently delivers these services.

The Council's Food Health and Safety Team is responsible for undertaking the following activities associated with the food safety service:

- Food hygiene inspections at fixed premises e.g. pubs, hotels, retail outlets and food manufacturers
- Food hygiene inspections at mobile premises and stalls, including those located at markets and shows
- The investigation of complaints relating to foodstuffs and food premises.
- The investigation of confirmed food poisoning cases and outbreaks, including viral outbreaks.
- The provision of information, guidance and advice to local food businesses and the public
- Registering food businesses
- Undertaking an annual programme of food sampling

- The approval of food premises covered by product specific food legislation e.g. dairies and meat products manufacturers
- The issuing of export certificates to assure importers of production conditions in Carlisle
- Responding to requests from other local authorities in relation to complaints about food purchased in their area but manufactured in Carlisle District
- Responding to complaints of alleged noise nuisance from food businesses
- Responding to Food Standards Agency food hazard warnings
- Consultation responses on relevant planning and building control applications.

The Team is statutorily required to respond to the Council's Licensing Section in relation to premise license applications where specified entertainment is taking place, to ensure the licensing objectives are met.

The Team is also responsible for some non food services and these may, where appropriate, be delivered alongside the food service.

- Health and safety enforcement in approximately 2500 businesses where the Authority is the relevant enforcement agency
- The investigation of notifiable accidents, dangerous occurrences and fatalities in these workplaces
- The investigation of complaints about such workplaces

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

There were 1140 food businesses on the Council's food database at 1 April 2006. These are split between the following categories (as specified by the Food Standards Agency):

7 Producers  
 24 Manufacturers/processors  
 0 Packer  
 0 Importers/exporters  
 22 Distributors (including wholesalers and transporters)  
 231 Retailers  
 844 Restaurant and other caterers  
 0 Material and article manufacturers  
 12 Manufacturers selling mainly by retail

Within these food businesses are a number which are approved under product specific food legislation, or licensed as follows:

#### Product Specific Approvals

Businesses which manufacture and supply certain types of food to markets other than the final consumer are subject to regulation and inspection through European Directives and are currently subject to more frequent inspection than 'non approved' businesses. The current workload for this type of business is as follows

## Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 Specific Rules for Food of Animal Origin

Fish Products	No of Premises - 1
Dairy Products	No. of Premises - 5
Meat Products	No. of Premises - 4

In addition to the above premises, the Team is required to meet additional demands arising from local activities which impact on the food service. This includes farmers markets, which occur in several locations, usually once a month, Continental markets which visit the City several times a year. Other activities include Carlisle Carnival, Cumberland Show, Brampton Live and other smaller shows and festivals held each year.

During 2005-6, the Council successfully prosecuted the owner of a local take away following a routine inspection when a significant mouse infestation and other poor hygiene conditions were found. The business was closed for several days whilst the risk to public health arising from the infestation continued. The proprietor was fined £1000 under the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990 and ordered to pay £150 prosecution costs to the Council.

The costs arising from officer time involved in bringing such action & monitoring the situation on a daily basis is considerable but in such cases formal action is appropriate and is taken in accordance with the Council's Food Safety Enforcement Policy. The prosecution was featured in several local newspapers

### **3.5 Access to the Service**

The Food Safety Team is located at the Civic Centre, Carlisle. Service users may contact officers on site or by leaving a message in the following ways:

- In person: at Civic Centre Customer Contact Centre between 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday; 9am to 4pm Friday. This is a developing part of the service which it is anticipated will grow over the coming years.
- By telephone: 01228 817336 between 8.45am to 5.15pm Monday to Thursday, 8.45am to 4.15pm Friday
- When officers are out of the office, a message will be taken and calls will be returned as soon as possible
- By e-mail: [foodandsafety@carlisle.gov.uk](mailto:foodandsafety@carlisle.gov.uk)
- By Fax: 01228 817346

### **3.6 Enforcement Policy**

The Council has signed up to the Enforcement Concordat and in so doing has agreed to abide by the principles of good enforcement. The Enforcement Concordat is a government produced standard designed to promote best practice in enforcement

The Council has a documented Food Safety Enforcement Policy (updated January 2006)

which sets out the Team's policy and approach to decisions concerning enforcement action relating to food safety, including prosecution. The policy incorporates the principles of the Enforcement Concordat. The Enforcement Policy is published on the Council's website and is available in hard copy on request.

It is recognised that the majority of individuals, businesses and other groups want to comply with the law. The aim therefore, is to deliver an enforcement service in a supportive way, helping food business proprietors meet their legal duty without unnecessary expense. However, formal action will be taken where appropriate.

## **4. Service Delivery**

### **4.1 Food Premises Inspections**

It is the policy of the Council to register, inspect and approve relevant premises within the district in accordance with appropriate legislation, centrally issued guidance, The Code of Practice and relevant Industry Guides to Good Hygiene Practice.

The Council maintains a database of food businesses in the district, including mobile food vehicles based in Carlisle. This is continually updated, to take into account any changes to existing businesses, any new businesses which have set up, or any which have ceased to trade.

The frequency of inspection is in accordance with The Code of Practice, and is based on the nature and size of the business and the degree of compliance with food safety legislation at the time of inspection.

This provides for a minimum inspection frequency of:

Category A	businesses presenting the greatest food safety risk - at least every 6 months
Category B	at least every year
Category C	at least every 18 months
Category D	at least every 2 years
Category E	businesses presenting a minimal food safety risk - can be subject to alternative enforcement strategy

The scheme of priority classification of food premises within categories A to E, is based on the inspection rating scheme set out in the Code of Practice.

The 1149 food premises on the Council's register are categorised as follows:

Category A	9 premises
Category B	107 premises
Category C	490 premises
Category D	186 premises
Category E	267 premises

63 N/A with no risk assessment due to business not been fully inspected since opening

27 outside the programme due to criteria set by the FSA

In the financial year 2006-7, programmed inspections are due to be carried out, as follows:

- 18 Category A (there are 9 businesses which need to be inspected x2 per year)
- 107 Category B
- 319 Category C
- 44 Category D
- 32 Category E these will be subject to an alternative enforcement strategy

These figures may alter to a small extent during the year because of premises being moved from one category to another, premises closing and new premises opening.

Businesses with an inspection frequency of less than once every 2 years can be dealt with by alternative means of enforcement. All Cumbrian authorities have agreed to use such an alternative enforcement strategy in the future. This will involve sending self-assessment questionnaires to relevant lower risk businesses. A sample will then be inspected, as will any that do not return the questionnaire. In 2005-6 a total of 87 businesses were dealt with in this way and visits were carried out to 10. It is planned that 34 self assessment packs will be sent out in 2006-7

Revisits following food premises inspections are carried out where appropriate, in accordance with the Enforcement Policy.

Priority is given to high-risk food premises and any national or local situations that require urgent attention and/or as directed by the Food Standards Agency, e.g. checks on the safety of imported meat, responses to food hazard warnings and food poisoning outbreaks etc.

In 2005-6, officers carried out a total of 490 programmed inspection (96% of those which were due) and 78 revisits.

## **4.2 Food Complaints**

During 2005-6, the Food Health and Safety Team received a total of 491 service requests (an increase of 67% on the previous year). Of these, 45 were complaints about food failing to meet the food safety requirement e.g. containing foreign bodies or being unfit to eat a further 41 were complaints about food premises and 84 related to licensing issues. The remainder of food service requests related mainly to legislation and other food safety enquiries and planning and matters. The large increase over the previous year will be in part due to the Team taking full responsibility for all Health and Safety enforcement.

It is anticipated that a similar level of service requests will be received in the coming year and these will be dealt with in accordance with the Team's documented procedures on requests for service and dealing with food complaints.

The Team aim to respond to 90% service requests within 5 working days and to respond to urgent requests within 2 working days (excluding anonymous requests and certain internal requests e.g. planning and licensing, where alternative arrangements have been agreed).

## **4.3 Advice to Businesses**

CCC recognises the importance of its educational and advisory role as a means of improving food safety and meeting the service demands of stakeholders. The Council welcomes requests for information or advice from businesses and is keen to develop contacts with local business organisations. The Team provides advice to businesses in a number of different ways including:

- Advisory visits where appropriate
- Visits and advice prior to the setting up of a food business
- The provision of advice on best practice during inspections
- The provision of a range of free advisory leaflets and other guidance, including information on the Council's website
- The provision of advice relating to planning or building control applications
- A presence at local food events e.g. food festivals, where businesses can speak with an EHO and obtain information and advice.

In 2005-6 84 requests for advice were received representing a slight decrease on the previous year. It is anticipated that this number will continue at this level as the commercial and entertainment sectors in Carlisle are encouraged to grow.

The Team (in partnership with 16 other NW Authorities and the NW Food Alliance was successful in being granted funding to train 180 small/medium catering businesses in Safer Food Better Business (a simple, jargon free Food Safety Management System). The Team actively encourages relevant businesses to attend the free training sessions and an EHO is required to attend each 3 hour training workshop (18 in total). Once the training is concluded, officers are required to assess each business to ensure the system is being implemented correctly to ensure compliance with the law

It is anticipated that another grant application will be made in 2006-7 to train approximately 50 businesses – this time it is hoped to focus on those businesses run by members of ethnic minorities. This will be dependant on a successful bid and the FSA producing training materials appropriate for use by ethnic minorities.

#### Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 came into force in January 2005 and the Team spent approximately 30 hours responding to requests made under this legislation in 2005-6. Requests are usually from the local media.

It is not possible to estimate the demands that this legislation will make on the service in the new financial year. The Team (in partnership with all other Cumbrian LA's) is currently investigating a 'scores on the doors' system to facilitate the publishing of food hygiene information about businesses electronically. This should help reduce the amount of time spent responding to FOI enquiries.

Members will be informed and asked to endorse any decision relating to this issue.

#### **4.4 Food Sampling**

The enforcement of food hygiene legislation within Carlisle City Council includes an element of food sampling to assist in the protection of public health and the food law enforcement functions of the authority. Food samples are procured and handled in accordance with the Council's procedure document on food sampling.

The sampling of food for microbiological examination is an integral part of the Councils food law enforcement programme and provides a means of surveillance to ensure food safety and hygiene standards are being maintained in accordance with food hygiene laws.

It is the policy of the Team to participate in the following food sampling activities with an emphasis on the sampling of locally produced high-risk products:

- Investigation of food contamination and food poisoning incidents.
- Complaints (where sampling is considered necessary).
- Participation in the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) / Health Protection Agency (HPA) coordinated sampling programmes.
- Participation in North West Regional HPA laboratories sampling initiatives.
- Co-ordinated programmed surveillance in conjunction with the Cumbria Food Liaison Group.
- Participation in EU co-ordinated control programmes.
- Special investigations e.g. as directed by the Food Standards Agency.
- Sampling related to local events / initiatives
- Environmental sampling (swabbing) in connection with poor hygiene/sample results
- Imported food sampling – approximately 50% of food offered for sale in the UK is imported. The FSA requires all local authorities to take steps to ensure imported food has been legally introduced and that it is safe for the consumer. Where appropriate, imported food will be included in the sampling programme.

The annual sampling plan formulated each year supports the sampling policy. The proposed programme for 2006-7 is attached as Appendix 2.

The Council's food examiner is:

Carlisle Microbiology Services  
Cumberland Infirmary  
CARLISLE  
Cumbria  
CA2 7HY

For foodstuffs requiring analysis such as chemical taint, foreign body analysis etc, the Council's food analyst is:

Lancashire County Council  
County Analyst  
Pedders Way  
Riversway  
Docklands  
Ashton-on-Ribble  
PRESTON

The food sampling policy and procedure are reviewed on a regular basis and as required in the event of changes to advice on good practice, legislation and local circumstance.

It is estimated that up to three samples per year may be submitted to the County Analyst in relation to food complaints.

An EHO working 2 days per week normally undertakes sampling, but all officers are authorized to take samples if required.

During 2005-6, 285 samples were collected for microbiological examination. (representing approximately 220 hours)

194 were classified as satisfactory/acceptable, 28 were classified as unsatisfactory and the remainder could not be classified according to national standards due to the nature of the sample

Samples were taken from a variety of premises during April 2005 – March 2006 in accordance with the Councils sampling policy and procedure, having regard to the planned programme for that period, and included participation in regional and national sampling initiatives. Such initiatives provide valuable microbiological data, and for this period included the sampling of ready to eat salads, cheeses, sandwiches, and cooked tongue.

The Carlisle Microbiology Services Laboratory issue reports as to the microbiological quality of the food having regard to national guidelines.

The results are graded as follows: -

Satisfactory - a term applied to foods of good microbiological quality (numbers of bacteria are relatively low or not detected in the food).

Acceptable - a term applied to foods reflecting a borderline limit of microbiological quality. (A review of food handling procedures is sometimes necessary.)

Unsatisfactory - a term applied to foods with a relatively high number of bacteria (indicates that further samples may be necessary and investigation as to whether hygiene practices are adequate or not.)

Unacceptable/ (potentially hazardous) - test results indicate immediate action is required to locate source of the problem. Such results may form the basis for prosecution, especially if they occur in more than one sample.

In the event of acceptable/unsatisfactory sample results being received revisits may be carried out by the Team to investigate any possible source of contamination and give appropriate advice. Re-sampling is carried out together with the environmental swabbing of food preparation surfaces and equipment, as appropriate.

Results of the sampling activity April 2005 – March 2006 are summarised below.

Sample	Satisfactory	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Unacceptable /hazardous	Unclassified	Total
Food	155	39	28	0	63	285

The classification of acceptable or unsatisfactory given to some of the samples was due to the number of organisms present and/or the presence of indicator organisms. These organisms are



not harmful in themselves but when present in high numbers can indicate possible problems with processing or post processing contamination.

No pathogenic (disease causing) organisms were detected in any of the samples submitted.

The Teams sampling activity was audited in August 2005 as part of a programme of audits of various food enforcement activities carried out by the Cumbria Food Liaison Group. The auditors reported that The Authority demonstrated effective arrangements for sampling activities and had well established links with neighbouring authorities and the Laboratory Service. Some minor improvements were suggested as a result of the audit which are currently in hand.

#### **4.5 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease**

The Team's objectives in respect of the control of food related infectious diseases are to:

- Contain the spread of any outbreak
- Identify the focus of infection
- Identify the causative organism
- Trace carriers and cases
- Trace the source of the infection
- Determine the causal factors
- Recommend practices to prevent recurrence of disease
- Determine whether criminal offences have been committed

All cases of food related infectious disease notifications formally notified by The Cumbria and Lancashire Health Protection Unit and where appropriate, those of an informal nature will be investigated in accordance with the Council's documented procedure. Notifications are followed up either by visit, telephone call or postal questionnaire, depending on the organism concerned and the circumstances relating to the incident.

Outbreaks will be responded to in accordance with the Council's procedure, the local Outbreak Control Plan and in liaison with the Consultant in Public Health Protection, who will lead any Outbreak Control Team set up to deal with the outbreak. There were no outbreaks during 2005-6.

Last year 160 hours were spent on investigating 122 notifications of food related infectious disease. These consisted of:

87cases of Campylobacter  
12cases of Salmonella  
2cases of E. coli 0157  
21cases of Rota virus

A similar level of resource is estimated this year, although this may increase significantly in the event of a food poisoning outbreak

#### **4.6 Food Safety Incidents**

The Food Safety Team responds to food hazards warnings and food safety incidents received from the Food Standards Agency, in accordance with the Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice and the Council's documented procedure.

The Council maintains a computer system capable of receiving food hazard warnings via EHC-Net and utilises this system on a daily basis, to obtain details of food hazard warnings issued. Food hazard warning messages are also received by via e mail and / or text message.

The response of the Council to notifications of food hazard warnings and food safety incidents will be in accordance with the instructions from the Food Standards Agency given on the food hazard warning or food safety incident issued. 94 food hazard warnings were received during 2005-6, a slight increase on the previous year

Arrangements have been made within the Cumbria Food Liaison Group to ensure that liaison takes place with the County Councils Trading Standards Officer's as to who should take the lead in cases where it is not immediately clear from the nature of a food hazard warning, whether this should be Environmental Services or Trading Standards.

The Council does not currently operate a formal out of hours response service for food hazard warnings or food safety incidents, however the Food Standards Agency does have out of hours contact details for the Food Safety Team Manager). In addition, the Council's out of hours Emergency Response Team also holds these contact details.

#### **4.7 Liaison with Other Organisations**

The Council is represented on the Cumbria Food Liaison Group and the Cumbria Chief Environmental Health Officer Group. These groups provide a forum for Cumbrian authorities to discuss and review food enforcement issues and facilitate a consistent approach to enforcement throughout the county. Furthermore, both groups have links with the Lancashire Groups, enabling a broader basis from which to develop and achieve consistency.

The Food Health and Safety Team is represented on a wide range of working groups and committees, as set out below:

- Cumbria Food Liaison Group
- Cumbria & Lancashire District Control of Infection Committee
- The Health Protection Agency Laboratory/Environmental Health Officers Liaison Group
- Cumbria Zoonosis Liaison Group and the State Veterinary Service
- Cumbria Food Development Group
- Commission for Social Care Inspectorate / EHO Liaison Meetings
- Cumbria Animal-by-Products Liaison Meetings
- The Environmental Health Teams are represented on the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Lake District Branch Committee.

- Smoke Free North Cumbria

The Team has a close working relationship with officers in the Council's Development Control Unit and is notified of all relevant planning and building control applications. Similarly the Team is consulted by the Licensing Section on a range of license applications, and this will now include all variations to existing premises licenses and any new premises license applications.

#### **4.8 Home Authority Principle**

CCC acts as the originating authority for a wide range of local food manufacturers and Home Authority principles are implemented without the existence of a formal partnership with the business. The Council provides advice to these businesses on legal compliance and liaises with and investigates complaints on behalf of other Local Authority Environmental Health Departments, who make enquiries relating to these businesses.

Likewise, CCC initiates liaison with other Local Authorities in respect of complaints received. The Council will also consult the home/originating authority before requiring actions/works which may have policy implications for the company, or when legal action is being considered. Having initiated liaison with any home and/or originating authority, the Council will notify that authority of the outcome. Reference will be made to LACORS Guidance on the Home Authority Principle.

#### **4.9 Food Safety Promotion**

Each year, the Council aims to be involved with several food safety & Public Health promotion initiatives, e.g. the Smoke Free North Cumbria promotion of smoke free eating places, CCC Healthy Eating Award, and representation at local events such as food festivals to promote topics such as food safety and healthy eating.

However, due to competing demands, the Team cannot actively participate in more than 1 or 2 promotions or initiatives each year. Given the limitation of resources, the Team Manager, in consultation with the Head of Environmental Services, continues to conclude that priority must be afforded to the delivery of statutory services.

However, the important role that promotion can play as an integral part of the service and the subsequent long-term benefits it can achieve is recognised. Accordingly, such initiatives will be progressed to the extent allowed for by existing staff resources with particular emphasis given to initiatives likely to produce long-term benefits in terms of the aims and objectives of the Directorate, including improving the standards of food production and food handling within businesses and the home & improving public health.

The Team will continue to promote food safety through local publicity campaigns, via the production of information for businesses and the public, including topical advisory leaflets e.g. barbecue safety, festive food hygiene etc and through involvement with the FSA food safety campaigns where possible.

Evaluation of promotional work will be via press coverage achieved and feedback from participants where appropriate.

## **5. Resources**

## 5.1 **Financial Allocation**

The Council has a formally agreed budget sheet.

The estimated overall level of directly controlled expenditure in providing the Food Service (including Health & Safety enforcement) for 2006-7 is £343,000

## 5.2 **Staffing Allocation**

The Food Health and Safety Team of the Community Services Directorate has a staffing establishment of a Team Manager, an Assistant Team Manager, 4 full time District Environmental Health Officers, one District Environmental Health Officer working 2 days per week equivalent to 0.40% of a full time officer & a District Health and Safety officer. 3 Technical Clerks work solely within the Team to provide the equivalent of 1.60 full time administrative support posts.

All existing specialist food Environmental Health Officers have obtained the Certificate of Registration of the Environmental Health Officers Registration Board (EHORB). In determining the level of competency of officers regard is had to the Code of Practice and the Council's Authorisation and Training Procedure.

It is the intention that all aspects of the service set out in Section 4 above will be met within existing resources.

However, the workload of the Team presents a very demanding challenge for each officer and the Team **will need to re-prioritise workload in the event of unforeseen work.**

## 5.3 **Challenges**

The following challenges have been identified and considered as possibly affecting the ability of the Team to deliver this workload resulting in shortfalls in targets: -

- A major food poisoning outbreak would mean that all Team members (and possibly officers from other parts of the Directorate) would be taken away from their 'normal' duties
- A turnover of staff within the Team
- A period of long term sickness within the Team
- The workload arising from the transfer of H&S enforcement responsibility will also likely to place a strain on the food safety service.
- The proposed ban on smoking in the workplace may also place an additional workload on the Team if responsibility for enforcement is placed with Environmental Health professionals – the extent of this is not able to be determined but it is hoped that lessons will be learned from colleagues in Scotland

Such issues will be considered appropriately at the time and may be mitigated by: -

- A re-prioritisation of workloads (as has had to occur in the past)

- Provision of temporary staff from within the Directorate(although there may be an issue of competence)
- Use of temporary staff from outside the City Council (budgetary considerations permitting)
- Increasing the establishment of staff within the Team

#### **5.4 Staff Development Plan**

A performance appraisal interview with each individual member of the Food Safety Team takes place on an annual basis. Key tasks and targets are agreed for each team member, which contribute to the objectives of the Team, the Section and the Council. Any essential training needs identified will be provided either in-house or externally. A training budget of approximately £4000 is allocated to the Team and managed by the Team Manager.

The Council is committed to ensure that each officer authorised to carry out inspections and enforcement receives structured, ongoing training to promote competency, and raise awareness and understanding of legislation and technological advances. As a minimum, all authorised officers will receive at least 10 hours training per year, specifically on food issues, as required by Code of Practice and based on the CIEH requirement for a minimum of 20 hours per year overall continuing professional development training.

Where staff are required to quickly develop an in depth understanding of new legislation or in relation to an area of work they may previously have been unfamiliar with, training needs to be provided as a priority (e.g. the new responsibility for the full range of H&S enforcement duties). Consequently, there will be a need (yet unquantified) for all officers in the Team to attend relevant specific training.

#### **5.5 IT Resource**

The Food Standards Agency requires the Authority to set up and maintain a database of all food businesses in the area.

This database is used to provide information on work due to be done and the statistical returns required both internally and by the Food Standards Agency.

This facility is currently an electronic system, which has been developed 'in house' with the assistance of an IT consultant contracted to the Authority.

Following an audit of the Authority by the FSA in summer 2004 and changes to the information required by the statistical returns a large amount of staff time has again been spent in validating and maintaining the accuracy of this database. Reporting requirements are due to change again shortly and it was felt that the amount of time and money spent on constantly updating this database would be better directed to the purchase an 'off the shelf' package. A budget has now been identified for this purpose and this will be progressed this year

### **6. Quality Assessment and Monitoring Arrangements**

The Council has identified a number of local indicators, which reflect the work and priorities of the Council. Achievements against these indicators, along with the statutory national Best Value indicators, are published each year in the Council's Performance Plan. All

indicators within this plan have targets set for a three-year period. The indicators relating to the food service are:

LP 114a - The percentage of food premises inspections carried out of those due for high risk premises (categories A, B and C)

LP 114b - The percentage of food premises inspections carried out of those due for other premises (categories D and below)

Performance against these targets for 2005-6 was as follows: -

	% Cat A-C inspected	% Cat D etc inspected
Quarter 1	80.5	74
Quarter 2	75.5	88
Quarter 3	87.7	80
Quarter 4	98.9	100

(Targets for both categories were 87%)

Performance was below target can be explained by: -

- Lack of staff resources in the Team which is now at full strength for the first time since June 2003
- The impact of Premises Licence applications in the first 3 quarters of the year
- The transfer of all H&S enforcement responsibility from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006

Quarterly reports of these indicators are presented to the Council's Scrutiny Committees to enable Members to review performance against all indicators throughout the year. The Team Leader of the service is required to explain the reasons for any shortfall and how this may be rectified.

In addition to the above, the Manager of the Team monitors and reviews performance against the above mentioned targets on a quarterly basis and provides feedback to the Team at the team meetings.

The Team Manager also monitors other aspects of the service relating to the quality and quantity of work undertaken by the Team, in accordance with the Team's internal monitoring procedure. This includes monitoring letters and computer entries to ensure consistency and compliance with the service plan and standard. Additionally, each year, the Manager or Assistant Manager will accompany each Officer on at least one inspection visit, to monitor consistency of approach and compliance with the Teams inspection procedure document, service plan and standard.

In order to measure the 'quality' of the food service, customer satisfaction questionnaires have, in the past, been sent to premises where routine inspections have been undertaken. Results from these has always indicated that the Food Service is well thought of and that officers are helpful and courteous in their dealings with food business proprietors. It is anticipated that this will occur on a more regular, structured basis in the future to enable meaningful information to be gathered.

The Team holds regular meetings (usually 6 weekly) to review performance, discuss new legislation and publications, identify problems, discuss Food Liaison Group issues, Food Standards Agency and LACORS initiatives and correspondence etc, to ensure all members of the team are fully aware and conversant with current issues.

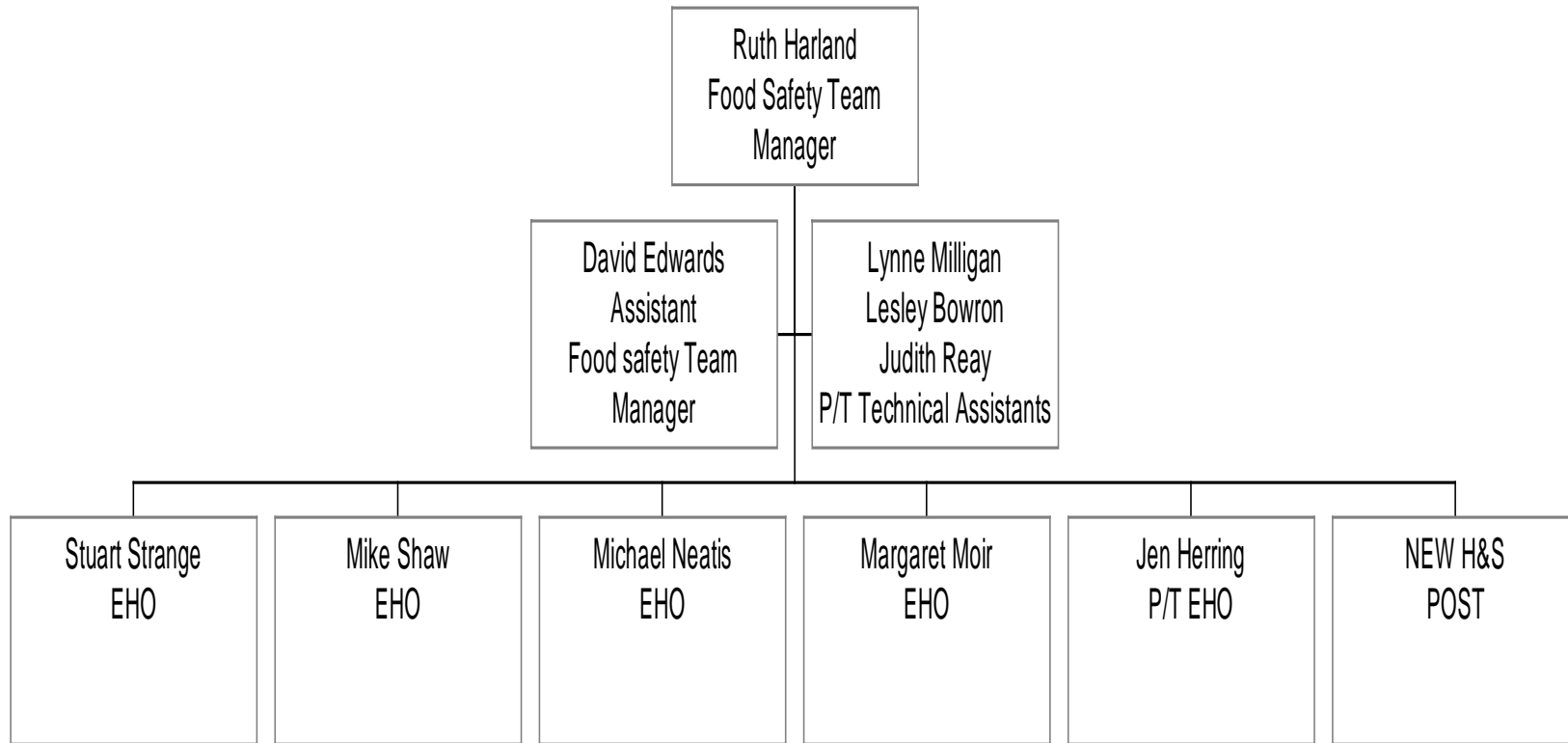
The role of the Cumbria Food Liaison Group in the interpretation of food safety issues and promotion of inter authority consistency is recognised and the Council will be participating in the inter authority auditing of various food service elements which the group intends to undertake during the year.

## **7. Review**

In addition to the above monitoring, and at the request of Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee a review of performance against the previous years plan and specified performance targets has been prepared and is included in this report at Appendix 3. Any missed targets are identified together with reasons for that where appropriate. Additional meaningful performance targets will be developed where necessary.

# COMMUNITY SERVICES

## FOOD, HEALTH & SAFETY





## PROJECTED SAMPLING PROGRAMME APRIL 2006 – MARCH 2007

<b>Product</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Estimated No samples</b>
LACORS/HPA Sampling programme focused shopping basket	May 06 – April 07	Estimated 24
LACORS/HPA Sampling programme mobile food vendors including swabbing	June – November 07	25
FSA Sampling programme. Raw shell eggs. Catering premises	April – November 2006	8
Ready to Eat high risk foods from retail and catering premises	As determined by risk assessed by District Officer	150
Products from approved premises	Annually	N/K
Environmental samples from high risk premises	As determined by risk assessed by District Officer, and in investigation of unsatisfactory food sample results	50

NB This programme is to be agreed with Carlisle Microbiology Services & may be subject to alteration : -

1. In addition to above, involvement in Preston Microbiology Services group sampling as appropriate having regard to nature of samples.
2. All proposed sampling subject to credit allocation and budgetary provision.

## REVIEW AGAINST PREVIOUS YEARS SERVICE PLAN

Target for 2005-6	Activity	Performance Achieved	Target for 2006-7	Comments
87%	<b>Food Hygiene Inspections</b> LP114a Inspection of Risk Category A-C businesses when due	Q1 80.5% Q2 75.5% Q3 87.7% Q4 98.9%  <b>96% achieved over 12months</b>	89%	<b>Target achieved overall</b> Performance affected by Staff shortage & Premises Licence applications in Q1,2 & 3
87%	<b>Food Hygiene Inspections</b> LP114b Inspection of Risk Category D businesses when due	Q1 74% Q2 88% Q3 80% Q4 100%  <b>84% achieved over 12months</b>	89%	<b>Target achieved overall</b> Performance affected by Staff shortage in Q1& 2 & Premises Licence applications in Q1,2 & 3
Planned no. of Samples 346	Food Sampling Programme	A total of 285 samples were taken	From sampling plan (App 2) 257 samples planned	<b>Planned no. not achieved</b> due to competing demands for staff time
90% within 5 working days	<b>Service requests</b> The Team aims to respond within 5 working days to requests for service	A total of 491 service requests were received <b>100%reponded to within 5 working days</b>	95%	<b>Target Achieved</b>
100%	<b>Inspect all overdue Cat D food businesses</b>	90 were overdue for inspection <b>88% achieved</b>	100%	<b>Target not achieved</b> due to Staff shortage in Q1& 2 & Premises Licence applications in Q1,2 & 3
100%	<b>Premises licence applications</b> -the Team was consulted on all premises licence applications. Response time 28 days	435 applications received  <b>100% achieved</b>	100%	<b>Target Achieved</b>

100%	<b>Food Borne Infectious Disease</b> – the Team aims to respond to all notifications within 2 working days	<b>100%achieved</b>	100%	<b>Target Achieved</b>
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