

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

Report to:- **The Mayor and Members of the City Council**

Date of Meeting:- **8th November 2005**

Agenda Item No:-

Public

Policy

Delegated Yes

Accompanying Comments and Statements

Required

Included

Executive

Yes

Yes

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Yes

Yes

Title:-

Food Service Plan 2005-6

Report of:-

Interim Head of EPS

Report reference:-

EPS 12/05

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

Recommendation:-Council is asked to approve the Food Service Plan for 2005-6

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Carlisle City Council

Environmental Protection Services

**Food Safety Plan
2005-6**

1. Introduction

Carlisle City Councils Food Service Plan has been 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. This 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 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. This is the first year that the Authority has produced such a plan. In 2003-4 and 2004-5 the Food Safety Team had to manage its work programme, as there had been a vacancy for a qualified EHO since June 2003. With the approval of the Business Unit head it was agreed that resources should be concentrated on the higher risk food businesses. This has resulted in some lower risk food businesses not being inspected for almost 4 years. Other statutory routine work (particularly Health and Safety work) has not been completed.

The Team currently has a full establishment of competent officers and it is anticipated that some of this backlog will be dealt with in this financial year.

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 Safety Team in the Council's Environmental Protection Services Business Unit delivers CCC's Food Service.

2. Service Aims and Objectives

2.1 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

The Teams objectives link to the City Councils emerging priority of -'Cleaner, Greener and Safer' (subject to approval by Council) and to the objective of achieving excellence in core Council services.

They also link to the following EPS Business Unit objectives of

- providing a high quality efficient service
- protecting the public using fair and transparent regulation and to
- improving health and well being

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 aim of the food 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 Food Safety Team will achieve this by:

- Inspecting 87% food premises at intervals in accordance with the statutory code of practice. (It is anticipated that this target will increase by 2% each year)
- Ensuring that higher risk food businesses that have not been inspected for at least 4 years (due to lack of resources) are inspected in this year
- In conjunction with Cumbrias Food Liaison Group to develop and implement an alternative enforcement strategy for lower risk food businesses
- To ensure the correct implementation of new food safety legislation due in January 2006
- To ensure Healthy Eating is highlighted as the Councils priority for public health in 2005/6, by promotion of the City Councils Healthy Eating Award.
- Issuing licenses and 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 sampled premises within 5 working days to advise of results)
- 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 Safety Team located within the Environmental Protection Services Business Unit, as set out in Appendix 1 attached. The Food Safety Team Manager is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the Team and also 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 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 and licensing butchers
- 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.
- Consultation responses to the Council's Licensing Section in relation to premises 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 inspections in food businesses where the Authority is the relevant enforcement agency
- The investigation of accidents in such premises
- The investigation of complaints about such workplaces

3.4 Demands on the Food Service

There were 1157 food businesses on the Council's food database at 1 April 2005. These are split between the following categories (as specified by the Food Standards Agency):

5 Producers
 22 Manufacturers/processors
 0 Packer
 0 Importers/exporters
 30 Distributors (including wholesalers and transporters)
 245 Retailers
 843 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 vertical 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

The Food Safety (Fishery Products & Live Shellfish) (Hygiene) Regulations 1998:

No. of Premises - 1

The Dairy Products (Hygiene) Regulations 1995 as amended

No. of Premises - 5

The Meat Products (Hygiene) Regulations 1994 as amended

No. of Premises - 4

Licensed Businesses

The Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) (Butchers' Shops) Amendment Regulations 2000 require that all butchers selling raw and ready to eat food shall be licensed by the Local Authority on an annual basis. There are currently 26 Premises (includes mobile shops)

In addition to the above premises, the Food Safety Team are 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 2004-05, the Council successfully prosecuted the owners of a local bar following a routine inspection when poor hygiene conditions were found. The proprietors were fined £10,000 under the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990 and ordered to pay £250 prosecution costs to the Council. The costs arising from officer time involved in bringing such action 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 and TV channels.

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: eps@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 December 2001) 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 inspect, approve, register and licence relevant premises within the district in accordance with appropriate legislation, centrally issued guidance, The Food Safety Act 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 Food Safety Act 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	(those 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 (those 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 1157 food premises on the Council's register are categorised as follows:

Category A	30 premises
Category B	140 premises
Category C	495 premises
Category D	258 premises
Category E	213 premises

N/A No risk assessment due to business not been fully inspected since opening

In the financial year 2005/06, 724 programmed inspections are due to be carried out, as follows:

60 Category A (there are 30 businesses which need to be inspected x2 per year)
141 Category B
299 Category C
224 Category D
Category E these will be subject to an alternative enforcement strategy

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

It should be noted that the FSA has recently reviewed existing codes of practice including the frequency of inspection.

As a consequence of that review, businesses with an inspection frequency of more 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.

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

Priority will be 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 2004-05, officers carried out a total of 429 programmed inspection (71.5% of those which were due) and 50 revisits.

4.2 Food Complaints

During 2004-05, the Food Safety Team received a total of 328 service requests of which approximately 290 related to the food service. Of these, 58 were complaints about food failing to meet the food safety requirement e.g. containing foreign bodies or being unfit to eat and a further 77 were complaints about food premises. The remainder of food service requests related mainly to legislation and other food safety enquiries and planning and licensing matters.

It is anticipated that a similar level of service requests will be received this year and these will be dealt with in accordance with the Food Safety Team's documented procedures on requests for service and dealing with food complaints. It is also anticipated that the number of licensing consultations will be nearly 300 this year (representing upto 600 hours work), due to the change in CCC licensing responsibilities.

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 Food Safety 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 2004-5 a total of 90 requests for advice were received representing a 20% increase on the previous year. It is anticipated that this number will continue to rise as the commercial and entertainment sectors in Carlisle are encouraged to grow.

In addition, during the flooding at the beginning of 2005, approximately 60 advisory visits were carried out to those food businesses affected by the floods

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 came into force in January 2005 and the Food Safety Team spent approximately 50 hours responding to requests made under this legislation.

It is not possible to estimate the demands that this legislation will make on the service in this financial year

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.

It is the policy of the Council 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.

In the event of sample results being returned which do not comply with statutory requirements or HPA guidance, the Council will consider whether informal or formal action is necessary and submit further laboratory samples as appropriate to identify where a problem may have occurred.

The annual sampling plan formulated each calendar year supports the sampling policy. The programme for 2005-06 is attached as Appendix 3.

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.

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

During 2004-05, 213 samples were collected for microbiological examination. (representing approximately 200 hours)
177 were classified as satisfactory/acceptable and 36 were classified as unsatisfactory.

Follow up visits and additional sampling is always undertaken when unsatisfactory results are obtained.

4.5 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

The Food Safety 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, phone 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 2004-05.

Last year 190 hours were spent on investigating 146 notifications of food related infectious disease. These consisted of:

108 cases of Campylobacter
24 cases of Salmonella
4 cases of E. coli 0157
10 cases 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. 90 food hazard warnings were received during 2004-05.

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.

In the past year 47 food hazard warnings were received concerning the presence of Sudan 1 in various foodstuffs. Trading Standards Officers would normally deal with this matter but it was agreed that EHO's would work in partnership with them due to the volume of work involved. Letters regarding one particular incident were sent to approximately 500 businesses by the Food Safety Team

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

- Cumbria Food Liaison Group
- North Cumbria District Control of Infection Committee
- The Health Protection Agency Laboratory/Environmental Health Officers Liaison Group
- Cumbria Zoonosis Liaison Group
- Cumbria Food Development Group
- Commission for Social Care Inspectorate / EHO Liaison Meetings
- Cumbria Animal-by-Products Liaison Meetings
- The Environmental Services Section is represented on the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Lake District Branch Committee.
- The Breathing Space Group

The Food Safety 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 prior to 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 promotion initiatives, e.g. the Breathing Space Group promotion of smoke free eating places

throughout North Cumbria, CCC Healthy Eating Award, CIEH Curry Chef competition 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 Environmental Protection Services Unit does not actively participate in more than 1 or 2 food safety promotion initiatives each year. Given the limitation of resources, the Food Safety Team Manager, in consultation with the previous Head of the Business Unit, concluded 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 Section, improving public health and improving the standards of food production and food handling within businesses and the home.

It is proposed that the Council 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 2005-06 is £289,900.

5.2 Staffing Allocation

The Food Safety Team of the Environmental Protection Services Unit 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. 3 Technical Clerks work solely within the Team to provide the equivalent of 1.60 full time administrative support posts.

All existing 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 Food Safety Act 1990 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 staff resources. However, the workload of the Food Safety Team presents a very demanding challenge for each officer and the Team has very little capacity to deal with unforeseen work.

5.3 Challenges

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

- A major food poisoning outbreak would mean that all Food Safety Team members (and possibly officers from other parts of the Business Unit) would be taken away from their 'normal' duties
- A turnover of staff within the Team
- A period of long term sickness within the Team
- Existing Food Safety Legislation is due to be replaced in January 2006, which will place additional demands on the Team. It is anticipated that all staff will be required to attend training events and to deliver training to all food businesses affected. There is evidence from other LA's who have piloted the new legislation that it will require at least 3 hours one –to – one training per caterer and 1 hour per retailer. For Carlisle this equates to an additional 2 Full Time staff.
- The anticipated workload arising from the Premises License applications will also place a strain on the service.

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

- A re-prioritisation of workloads (as has occurred in the last 2 years)
- Provision of temporary staff from within the Business Unit (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 Food Safety

Act 1990 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. existing Food Safety legislation is to be replaced with new legislation from January 2006). As a consequence there will be a need (as 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 also 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 been spent this year in validating and maintaining the accuracy of this database.

Reporting requirements are due to change again in 2006 and it is felt that the amount of time and money spent on constantly updating this database may be better directed to the purchase an 'off the shelf' package.

This has been identified in the EPS review as a high priority

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 2004-5 has been as follows:-

	% Cat A-C inspected	% Cat D etc inspected
Quarter 1	92	1.8
Quarter 2	75.4	0
Quarter 3	90.7	33.3
Quarter 4	95	0

(Targets for both categories were 85%)

Performance below target is explained by: -

- Lack of staff resources in the Team which, was a full time qualified EHO short for 18 months (a new officer was appointed in December 2004)
- A period of long term sickness in Quarter 2 where a drop in performance of at least 15% can be seen.

Quarterly reports of these indicators are presented to the Council's Scrutiny Committees to enable Scrutiny members to review performance all indicators throughout the year. The Business Units Management Team also monitor performance indicators before they are presented

to the Scrutiny Committees and in the event of any of the indicators being off target, the Team Leader of the service is required to explain the reasons for any shortfall and how this will be rectified.

In addition to the above, the Manager of the Food 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 Food Safety 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.

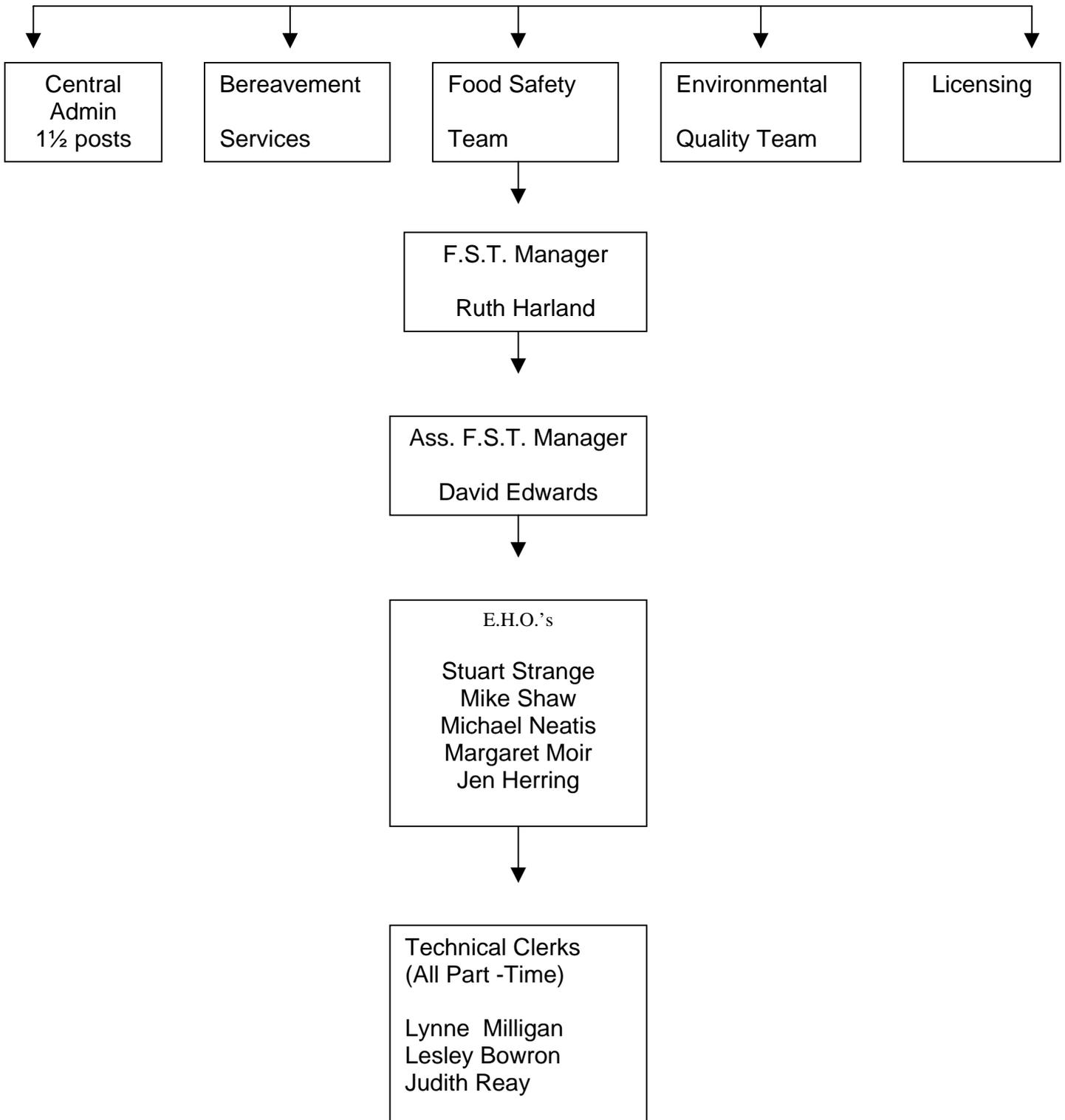
7. Review

In addition to the above monitoring, a review of the performance against the previous years plan and specified performance targets is prepared on an annual basis. This will be presented to the EPS Management Team as part of their monitoring of Environmental Protection Services performance. Any missed targets will be identified together with reasons for that where appropriate.

An annual report will also be presented to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee to allow a review of performance focusing on targets in-house and wider performance indicators

As part of the EPS Review additional meaningful performance targets will be developed where necessary.

Environmental Protection Services



Product	Frequency	No of Samples per premises or protocol	Total No samples
Cooked meat and Ready to Eat products from butchers	Annually	6	120
LACORS/HPA Sampling programme sandwiches from hospitals/residential/care homes	Throughout April – March period	2	Estimated 24
LACORS/HPA Sampling programme Ready to Eat salads	May June	5	10
LACORS/HPA Sampling programme Pasteurised Cheese	Sept Oct	5	10
LACORS/HPA Sentinell Surveillance Raw Whole Chicken	Monthly	1	12
Ready to Eat high risk foods from retail and catering premises, including institutional catering premises	As determined by risk assessed by District Officer	6	120
Products from approved premises	As determined by risk assessed by District Officer	As determined by risk assessed by District Officer	12
Milk from point of production premises	Annually	4	4
Dairy products from point of production premises	Annually	As determined by District Officer	10
Environmental samples from high risk premises	As determined by risk assessed by District Officer	6	24

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