

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2006/07 – PERFORMANCE REVIEW
From: HEAD OF PROTECTIVE SERVICES		
Date: 22 AUGUST 2007	Ref: GC/1	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Committee approval of the 2006/07 Food Safety Service Plan Performance Review.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement regarding Local Authority Food Law Enforcement all Council's are required to produce an annual Food Safety Service Plan and also conduct a Performance Review of the previous year's Service Plan.
- 2.2 The Agency consider that the Service Plan and the Performance Review process to be key elements in the monitoring process of Local Authorities food safety enforcement capabilities and activities. The importance which they place on these issues is reflected in the fact that the Agency require all Local Authorities to seek committee approval of the Food Safety Service Plan and the subsequent Performance Review.
- 2.3 Committee approved the 2007/08 Food Safety Service Plan earlier this year. Member approval is now sought through this report for the Performance Review of the 2006/07 Service Plan.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 Details of the outcome of the Performance Review are contained within Appendix 1 of this report. However, Members will doubtless be pleased to note that all aims and objectives set within the 2006/07 Food Safety Service Plan have been achieved. A copy of the 2006/07 Service Plan has been provided within the Members library.
- 3.2 Amongst the issues of particular note during 2006/07 is that all programmed inspections for high risk category food premises were undertaken within the relevant specified timescale.. this means that North Lanarkshire Council will be able to report a 100% outcome for the national Food Hygiene Inspection Performance Indicator which is a significant achievement and is a reflection on the Council's commitment to ensuring the highest possible food safety standards.

3.3 Considerable effort has also gone into the submission of an application for Chartermark status for the Food Safety Service. This has involved a major review of issues principally relating to customer service and has resulted in a series of new initiatives and changes to operational and working practices which it is anticipated will bring about further improvements to customer service. It is hoped to receive formal notification of the outcome of the audit in due course.

4. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

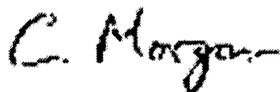
4.1 There are no issues relevant to this report which have any sustainability implications.

5. CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The recommendations are consistent with policy and there are no personnel, financial, legal or property implications in the report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 That Members approve the Performance Review of the 2006/07 Food Safety Service Plan.



**Crawford Morgan
HEAD OF PROTECTIVE SERVICES**

For further information please contact Gordon Cunningham on 01236 616511

Appendix 1

North Lanarkshire Council – Food Safety Service

Performance Review of the Food Safety Service Plan 2006/07

SECTION 1: SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Aims and Objectives

It is considered that the aims and objectives contained within the Service Plan are all relevant and properly reflect the importance which North Lanarkshire Council places on food safety issues. One of the Council's aims is to deliver an improvement in public confidence in the way food safety standards are monitored and enforced. The Food Safety Service is audited on a regular basis by the Food Standards Agency to ensure that the service provided by the Council meets relevant standards. It is considered that this independent, expert audit process is a key factor in maintaining public confidence in service provision. The Agency did not conduct an audit during 2006/07 but have arranged to do so in September 2007.

1.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

The work of the Food Safety Service links into many of the Council's corporate objectives and these are detailed in the Service Plan.

Stimulating business, social inclusion and life long learning objectives were once again progressed mainly through the continuation of the successful food safety training partnership with local colleges of further education and various food safety initiatives with schools.

Partnership working with Health Board colleagues and others continued links into common objectives and joint plans to improve the health of those living and working within North Lanarkshire.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

No significant change.

2.2 Organisational Structure

The only change to the structure during 2006/07 was that the post of Link Officer was deleted due to the Cook Safe initiative ending towards to the end of 2006.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

The scope of the food safety service remained largely unchanged during 2006/07 other than checks were introduced during routine programmed food safety inspections on levels of compliance with the national smoking ban.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

Numbers of food premises have risen to 2252 although the general profile of the premises remained relatively unchanged.

Numbers of food premises within each risk category during 2006/07 was as follows :-

Category A risk premises	37
Category B risk premises	364
Category C risk premises	1235
Category D risk premises	321
Category E risk premises	295

Category F risk premises 0

The welcome trend of a reducing number of higher risk premises continued during 2006/07 which is thought to be a combination of the work done by the Food Safety Service and, in most instances, the food businesses within North Lanarkshire to ensure that the highest possible food safety standards are achieved.

The Cook Safe initiative which the Council agreed to support in partnership with the Food Standards Agency is also thought to have been a factor in the reduction of higher risk ratings of food premises. The key aim of the initiative was to assist food businesses in meeting their statutory responsibilities particularly in relation to the introduction and maintenance of appropriate HACCP controls. Service delivery points for the Food Safety Service have remained unchanged as have business hours and arrangements for the out of hours service.

SECTION 3: SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 Food and Feedingstuffs Premises Inspections

In accordance with policy, priority was given to ensuring that routine programmed food hygiene inspections were undertaken in accordance with at least the minimum frequency outlined within the Code of Practice.

A total of 1442 food hygiene visits were made last year which is slightly more than was estimated in the Service Plan.

In addition 675 food standards visits were undertaken during 2006/07 which was almost exactly as had been estimated within the Service Plan.

These visits are almost always conducted on an unannounced basis and many are undertaken during the evenings and/or week-ends.

A further 1814 visits were also made to food premises for purposes other than programmed inspections including investigating food complaints, food poisoning enquiries, food alerts and sampling.

3.2 Food and Feedingstuffs Complaints

A total of 162 food complaints were investigated last year which is slightly more than had been anticipated in the Service Plan. An investigation into the food complaints was always commenced within 48 hours of notification in accordance with the target set within the Service Plan.

3.3 Home Authority Principle

Home Authority agreements remained unchanged at one. However, considerable work was undertaken out with home authority status in order to respond to enquiries and requests for information regarding local businesses mainly from other local authorities throughout the United Kingdom.

3.4 Advice to Business

An important part of the work of the Food Safety Service continued to be providing advice to food businesses. Advice is usually requested and given to assist them to meet their statutory responsibilities but some advice is also given on technical issues in order to prevent unnecessary expenditure.

A considerable amount of work was done throughout 2006/07 preparing an application for Chartermark status for the Food Safety Service. As part of this process improvements were made in key customer service areas such as the website. The process for customer feedback from questionnaires was reviewed and improved and other initiatives such as customer panels have also been introduced.

3.5 Food and Feedingstuffs Inspection and Sampling

Around 2000 food samples were submitted to the laboratory last year. The majority of these samples were subsequently reported to be satisfactory by the Public Analyst. Sampling is principally focussed on local products and/or as part of a national sampling project.

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

A total of 175 cases of food poisoning were investigated last year. Some of these cases related to persons returning from holiday abroad.

All cases were investigated within 24 hours of notification thus meeting the relevant target set within the Service Plan.

Outbreak control plans to identify and control the spread of infection have been agreed with Lanarkshire and Glasgow & Clyde Health Boards and continue to be kept under review.

3.7 Food Safety Incidents

One major food poisoning incident occurred last year. The outbreak was quickly controlled with no serious consequences.

In addition 71 Food Alerts were received from the Food Standards Agency regarding a variety of issues. This is a national electronic warning system whereby the Agency can send details of food related issues to all local authorities for information purposes or for action, depending on the circumstances. The majority of these alerts were fairly routine however one involving a major confectionary company required a significant amount of resources in order to ensure that the public and local businesses were kept fully informed and that suspect products were quickly removed from sale, where necessary.

3.8 Liaison with other Organisations

North Lanarkshire continued as an active member of the West of Scotland Food Liaison Group with one of the senior managers acting as secretary for the Group. The authority is also represented on the Scottish Fish Hygiene Working Group and is also a member of the Central and Eastern Scotland Benchmarking Group.

Regular meetings also take place with Lanarkshire and Glasgow & Clyde Health Boards to which a representative from Scottish Water is normally invited.

SECTION 4: RESOURCES

4.1 Financial Allocation

The financial allocation for the Service was sufficient in order to provide the resources necessary for the Council to meet its commitments.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

Staff numbers temporarily dropped in terms of Senior Environmental Health Officers but it is hoped to address this issue in due course. There were however sufficient staff in order for the Council to meet its commitments.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

The Performance Review and Development Scheme has now been adopted for all staff and is generally working well and is linked into the Service Plan.

SECTION 5: QUALITY ASSESSMENT

5.1 Quality Assessment/Monitoring

Key food safety policies and procedures are included as part of an ISO 9001:2000 Quality System which is kept under constant review and is updated, as required. A working group continues to meet to support this process.

Accreditation is based on an annual external audit which is supplemented by a series of internal audits. Results of all audits undertaken during 2006/07 were all satisfactory.

SECTION 6: REVIEW

6.1 Review against the Service Plan

The Service Plan was reviewed on a quarterly basis.

6.2 Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan

There were no significant variations of the 2006/07 Food Safety Service Plan.

6.3 Areas of Improvement

No areas were identified as requiring action.

SECTION 7: PERFORMANCE PLANNING

7.1 Performance Plan

All targets detailed within Appendix 1 of the Service Plan were achieved.

7.2 Planning and Environment Department Service Plan Key Actions

The key action relating to assisting food businesses within the FSA target group to provide HACCP based food safety management procedures in order to comply with relevant statutory requirements was achieved.

7.3 Performance Indicators

Performance has been excellent with 100% being achieved for all high risk premises and 99.5% for all others.