

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet 9 July 2007
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Corporate Manager Health and Environmental Services

FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON LOCAL AUTHORITY FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN

Purpose

1. To seek the Cabinet's approval and recommendation to Council of a Food Service Plan for 2007/08.

Background

2. This report is being presented by virtue of it being a requirement of the Food Standards Agency that will consider the Food Service Plan as part of any audit of the service.
3. Food aspects of the Department's work have been included within the 2007/08 Health and Environmental Services Plan. However, the Food Standards Agency in the Framework Agreement require the production of a specific Food Service Plan to a common format. The Food Service Plan attached as an **Appendix** to this report meets this requirement. Appendices to the Food Service Plan are available in the Corporate Manager Health & Environmental Services office.

Considerations

4. The Food Standards Agency has stated the following in their framework documentation:
...Service Plans are an expression of Local Authority's own commitment to the development of food service. However, it is also important to consider the use made of the plans by the Food Standards Agency, which will need information about Local Authority food law enforcement activities in a common format to enable it to assess Local Authorities' delivery of the service.
5. Guidelines were then given as to the details and expected content of the Food Service Plan. The Service Plan simply identifies in one single document the work and structure of the Department relating to food safety.
6. This plan is included within the Policy Framework of the Council and as such the responsibility for agreeing the Food Service Plan lies with the Council.

Options

7. To agree the service plan as detailed in the appendix, which is drafted to comply with the Food Standards Agency requirements. Failure to adopt the plan would leave the service and the Council open to criticism by the Food Standards Agency if they choose to audit us.

Implications

8.	Financial	Referred to in the body of the service plan
	Legal	None
	Staffing	At this time it is anticipated that existing staff will meet the fieldwork targets set for the Department in the food safety area.
	Risk Management	Failure to carry out the work identified would result in adverse media comment and publicity. The FSA could name and shame the local authority nationally. In extreme circumstances if we fail to carry out this work the FSA may take over our inspection and enforcement duties and charge the local authority for the work.
	Equal Opportunities	<p>In line with general and specific duties under the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Council operates a Race Equality Scheme (RES) in order to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote race equality and good race relations. The Scheme gives priority to actions relating to Travellers as the biggest ethnic minority in the district (around 1.7% of the district's population). Statistics from the 2001 Census also show that, whilst only 2.9% of the district's population is made up of black and minority ethnic groups, there are greater ethnic minority communities in three wards in particular. These are the villages of Girton, Milton and Teversham where the black and minority ethnic groups are two or three times as much.</p> <p>An assessment of SCDC services in terms of their relevance to the statutory duty to promote race equality, which is featured in the Race Equality Scheme, rates food safety issues as of 'medium relevance'.</p>

Consultations

9. None.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

10.	Affordable Homes	N/a
	Customer Service	Customers of food businesses, the public, staff and business operators all receive benefit from an effective Food Service. The plan details areas where customer service standards are applied.
	Northstowe and other growth areas	An educational and advice service is provided which can be particularly useful for new businesses during their planning stage.
	Quality, Accessible Services	The plan refers to many ways in which the food service works towards this objective i.e. Access to services through the Contact Centre and quality benchmarking.
	Village Life	The plan supports the development and maintenance of small business through appropriate measured enforcement, advice and education.
	Sustainability	The service has at its heart the protection of public health.
	Partnership	The service involves liaison and partnership working with a variety of food businesses, organisations and agencies.

Conclusions/Summary

11. This proposed plan meets one of the requirements of the Food Standards Agency and sets out the essential parts of the service including what is expected of it.

Recommendation

12. That Cabinet recommends Council to approve the Food Service Plan 2007/08 attached to this report.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

The Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement.

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