

Introduction

This Service Plan is dedicated to the food law enforcement function that is the responsibility of the Environmental Health Services by virtue of the Food Safety Act 1990 and EU Directives.

The Health & Environmental Services, as a district authority, is responsible for food safety and food hygiene matters. Food standards and descriptions, and controls on animal feedstuffs are dealt with by the County Council's Trading Standards Department.

This Service Plan is a comprehensive document covering the entire food hygiene enforcement function set out in accordance with the requirements contained in the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement, published by the Food Standards Agency.

All businesses are treated in an equal manner in line with Councils guidance and policies and procedures.

In all our activities, account is taken of the ability of proprietors to understand written and spoken English. Where appropriate, written and verbal translations are provided. Requirements are always phrased in a clear manner.

1. Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Service Aims

It is the policy of the Authority to ensure that food produced, prepared or sold in South Cambridgeshire is safe and without risks to health and meets appropriate quality standards. This will be achieved by:

- ❖ Enforcement of statutory controls,
- ❖ Development of services and initiatives,
- ❖ Influencing and improving food hygiene and food standards across South Cambridgeshire,
- ❖ Monitoring of food, premises and personnel in a structured manner which indicates the condition of food standards in the District
- ❖ Continuous improvement of services, influenced by national and local priorities.

It is also our aim to provide:

- a service that is readily available to the community.
- a value for money service.

The Authority subscribes to the Home Authority Principle, where we deal with food safety issues centrally for national food producers based within South Cambridgeshire.

1.2 Objectives

- ❖ Carry out an annual planned programme of food hygiene in accordance with Food Standards Agency framework guidance, codes of practice and relevant statutory requirements.
- ❖ Investigate food and food premises complaints and take appropriate action in accordance with our service standards procedures and national guidance.
- ❖ Inform businesses of their legal obligations under new EU regulations.
- ❖ Carry out routine microbiological sampling in accordance with national guidance and participate in local, regional and nationally coordinated annual surveys.
- ❖ Investigate and monitor reports of infections and notifiable diseases in partnership with the Health Protection Agency.
- ❖ Respond to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency in accordance with national guidance.
- ❖ Act as home and originating authority for certain food businesses and investigate or respond to any enquiries made by other authorities or agencies.
- ❖ Provide advice, assistance and training to both businesses and consumers.
- ❖ Help businesses improve their standards by promoting best practice, self-regulation and enhance the competence skills of employees.
- ❖ Promote food safety and, where appropriate, participate in local and national campaigns.
- ❖ Reduce health inequalities by the delivery of best quality services which aims to deliver year on year improvements in accordance with our customer care standards, which is accessible, open and equitable and also represents best value to the citizens of South Cambridgeshire
- ❖ Work in partnership with other agencies to help secure and promote good food standards and hygiene.
- ❖ Ensure the work of the Service conforms to Council policies, with particular reference to equal opportunities.
- ❖ To maintain effective internal policies and procedures.

Our values that underpin these objectives are:

VALUES

- *High quality service to the public.*
- *Target resources to areas of greatest risk/effect/change.*
- *Consult and provide sensible, clear, open, honest and fair decisions.*
- *Use new technology to improve service to the public.*
- *Be consistent, responsible and equitable.*
- *Use common sense.*
- *Be responsive and flexible to people's needs.*
- *Set standards by which to be judged.*

Key tasks, which lead towards fulfilling the objectives, are:

- ❖ To maintain a register of all premises where the service enforces food safety legislation.
- ❖ To take the most appropriate action upon inspection of relevant food premises including the use of advice, informal correspondence, improvement and prohibition notices, formal cautions and the institution of legal proceedings.
- ❖ To educate proprietors of relevant food businesses in food safety matters and their legal responsibilities in relation to their business by the distribution of leaflets and the provision of advice, information and training courses.
- ❖ To advise on the design of relevant food business premises prior to and during alterations and construction.
- ❖ To comply with the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice on food business risk rating in relation to inspection programmes.

1.3 Performance Measures

In order to achieve the stated objective the service has identified key performance measures as required in the Health & Environmental Services Service Plan;

- ❖ The Best Value Indicator 166 - The Environmental Health Checklist score of enforcement best practice.
- ❖ The percentage of food safety inspections carried out for high risk premises and the percentage of other risk food businesses carried out including alternative intervention strategies.
- ❖ The percentage of complaints and requests for service, which were responded to within 3 working days.

- ❖ The benchmark score for the service against a Quality and Performance matrix (Hampshire Matrix).

The Council has also approved new customer service standards that are applied to the service.

1.4 **Links to Corporate Objectives and Departmental Plans**

1.4.1. The Councils relevant Corporate Objectives and policies are as follows:

- ❖ **High quality, accessible, value for money services**

For example:

Ensuring equal access for all e.g. adequate provision for those with food safety concerns or those who have contracted infectious disease from food consumption to contact the Council.

- ❖ **Quality village life**

For example:

Ensuring local food businesses are hygienic and that local residents can access safe and wholesome food.

- ❖ **A sustainable future for South Cambridgeshire**

For example:

Ensuring that local and national businesses within South Cambridgeshire comply with and go further than the legal food safety requirements and thus offering the South Cambridgeshire area as an attractive one to which businesses will wish to be based.

- ❖ **A better future through partnership**

For example:

An underpinning ethos of the Council, recognising that not all of services can be delivered in isolation. The Council is at the forefront of partnership working with other agencies including the Food Standards Agency, local businesses, Trading Standards and Health Protection Agency. The Council is also looking to implement the "Better Regulation" agenda, which is a partnership with other enforcement agencies designed to reduce the legislative burden on businesses.

1.4.2 **The Sustainable Community Strategy for South Cambridgeshire**

The Sustainable Community Strategy paints a picture of our district, as we want it to become over the next 15 or more years. It takes account of the changes and challenges facing the district, including creating the new town of Northstowe. The strategy is closely related to the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement and contains targets to improve the food safety and wellbeing of our residents and those working or visiting South Cambridgeshire. The Strategy is currently being reviewed and a new version will be produced mid 2007.

1.4.3 **Access to Quality Services**

Quality Services - Service Standards

South Cambridgeshire has introduced a set of service standards that aim to put customers first, deliver outstanding services and provide easy access to services and information. They place the customer at the centre of its service delivery.

The specific standards for food safety are as follows and we will:

- ❖ Carry out inspections of Local Authority enforced premises.
- ❖ Investigate food safety complaints and take appropriate action.
- ❖ Provide food safety training courses.
- ❖ Investigate all food related infectious diseases and respond to notifications with 24 hours.
- ❖ Redirect your complaint to the appropriate organisation if the matter is not our responsibility.
- ❖ Record anonymous complaints and decide on appropriate action.

The Contact Centre acts as a first point of contact for food safety enquiries. The staff are trained to answer questions on food and hygiene issues. The service is available 8.00 am to 8.00 pm six days a week.

Customer feedback is encouraged and welcomed. Each year Health & Environmental Services carries out a Customer Satisfaction Survey, the results of which are worked on to improve customer service.

The needs of “harder to reach” groups has yet to be addressed and it is hoped that the results of further consultation will be incorporated into the strategy in due course.

Various leaflets are also available relating to specific areas of food and infectious disease control.

1.4.4 Health and Environmental Services Service Plan 2007/08

In order to meet the key corporate objectives and ensure continuous improvement, the Health and Environmental Service has a Service Plan covering 2007/08. This incorporates key actions, improvements and performance indicators specifically for food safety. The areas highlighted for improvement in 2007/08 are contained in section 7 of this plan.

In addition the Council has signed up to the Enforcement Concordat and has an agreed Environmental Health Enforcement Policy. The service operates to the principles of transparency, helpfulness, proportionality and consistency contained within these documents.

1.4.5 Equality and Diversity

The Council has produced a disability equality scheme that addresses the needs of disabled people accessing the Council's food safety service.

The Council is also reviewing its access to services and policies in relation to ethnic minorities in accordance with the Race Equality requirements and has produced interactive thematic maps of the area using Census 2001. The council has also worked in partnership with the Primary Care

Trust to produce a health profile of the district using the DETR MID, the information is used to plan services based on the needs of the population.

The Council monitors the composition of the population particularly with regards to the ethnicity of the population. (Travellers form the largest ethnic minority in South Cambridgeshire).

The Council produces, upon request, letters/leaflets in other languages and formats including Braille and has a contract with Language Line to provide translation services for tenants/clients who first language is not English

The team performs an enforcement function requiring commercial businesses to manage food safety through a risk-based approach. The service will take account and have regard for individual situations as they arise.

The Council, through its best value review on accessing services has identified the following groups whose access requirements need to be addressed:

- ❖ Working parents, commuters etc – i.e. busy people for whom time is the greatest constraint. They need to be able to contact the Council at a convenient time of day, quickly and easily. In some cases, such people may wish to use technology (email and website) but in other cases the opportunity to be able to speak to someone outside normal office hours would be valuable.
- ❖ Low income groups – i.e. people who may find the cost of phoning the Council (particularly for long calls); travelling into the main offices; or the cost of some discretionary services prohibitive.
- ❖ People from different age groups. While wishing to avoid pre-judging the preferences of different age groups, the Council needs to provide for both new and more traditional forms of communication.
- ❖ People living in outlying villages in South Cambridgeshire, including those that look more to the surrounding market town as they're nearest centre. Residents in such villages may find it difficult to come to see the Council (if it is something which cannot be dealt with by telephone) because of lack of public transport.
- ❖ People with access to computers and those who don't. Electronic service delivery will have great benefits for many people and will also achieve efficiencies for the Council. It will continue to be necessary to ensure that people without computers are not disadvantaged.
- ❖ People with sensory or other physical difficulties. The Council must continue to develop the means to enable all residents to have equal access.
- ❖ People who don't have English as their main language or who may have other cultural differences.

In order to address these concerns the council uses a range of methods to make services as accessible as possible. These include:

- ❖ Wheelchair accessible offices with private interview facilities at Cambourne.

- ❖ Translation and Interpreting facilities where needed.
- ❖ Website and email.
- ❖ Contact Centre – with flexible and extended hours of operation.

2. Background

2.1 Profile of the Authority

The area served by South Cambridgeshire District Council is approximately 350 square miles, much of which is farmland given to primary production of food, mainly cereals and vegetables. Villages range from small rural settlements to suburban and new village settlements such as Bar Hill and Cambourne. There are no large towns within the district, the largest village currently having a population of 7,060.

There is increasing pressure from development, particularly research and high technology industries and new housing. South Cambridgeshire is part of the Eastern development growth area. The population of approximately 133,000 is rapidly expanding. New build and new villages will take the population to over 160,000 within 5 years. It is anticipated that the village of Cambourne under development will have a new population of 10,000 persons within 3 years. Additionally the preparatory work has commenced for the new village of Northstowe. It is currently estimated that the population will be about 15,000 people.

With this projected growth it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of food businesses in the District. This increase in business numbers has already started. South Cambridgeshire is one of the largest growth areas in the country at the present time.

2.2 Organisational Structure

- ❖ Within the Health & Environmental services, the Food Control & Health & Safety Team Leader oversees day to day delivery. Only qualified and competent officers provide the service and undertake food hygiene, food standards and the investigation of food borne illness.
- ❖ Lead Officer, responsible for Food Safety is Mr J.G Keerie, Principal Environmental Health Officer, 01954 713133 geoff.keerie@scambs.gov.uk
- ❖ The Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) is currently Dr Bernadette Nazareth, supported by Dr Kate King and a public health network based at Huntingdon Primary Care Trust, Kingfisher Way, Hinchingsbrooke Business Park, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 6FH.
- ❖ The South Cambridgeshire food safety team deals with food safety issues whilst Cambridgeshire Trading Standards deal with food standards work. All services work closely together on issues particularly for example in dealing with food hazard warnings.
- ❖ Specialist services are provided by Lincoln Sutton and Wood Ltd, Analytical and Consulting Chemists, 6, Clarence Street Norwich NR1 1HG.

- ❖ The food examiners are the Health Laboratory service at Addenbrookes Hospital 6th Floor. The HPA laboratories in Chelmsford now process food samples.
- ❖ The Product Contamination Liaison Officer, Daniel Middleton (0845 456 4564 or 01480 428018 Mobile Number 07712 665957) is the contact within Huntingdon Police Headquarters for criminal food adulteration.
- ❖ Contractors are also used to assist with the shortfall in food hygiene inspections of Cat C and D premises. The use of contractors is restricted to an initial inspection and any follow up action required e.g. revisits, service of notices, legal proceedings is referred back to the service.
- ❖ As a result of current national and local drivers for change such as the recent Hampton review, the formation of the Local Better Regulation Office and the Rogers Review of regulatory priorities, the Environmental Health Service is reviewing its arrangements to ensure it can be in a strong position to respond to any changes that have been recommended.

2.3 **Scope of the Food Service.** The Food Safety section provides the following services and key functions:

- ❖ Programmed food hygiene inspections of food premises within the District.
- ❖ Health and safety inspections and accident investigations in food premises.
- ❖ Responding to food alerts.
- ❖ Dealing with food and food related complaints and other service requests.
- ❖ Carrying out our annual food sampling programme.
- ❖ Registering and licensing food premises and mobile vehicles.
- ❖ Dealing with imported food and its origin.
- ❖ Education e.g. Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Foundation Certificate Food Hygiene Courses.
- ❖ Food Safety Newsletter and web site information, including 'Scores on the Doors'.
- ❖ Investigating cases of food related illness and other infectious diseases.
- ❖ Food Safety awareness campaigns e.g. Food Safety Week.

To facilitate maximum efficiency the service is delivered through public/private partnerships. External contractors are used to deliver low and medium risk food hygiene inspections, alternative enforcement work and food safety training courses.

The selection and use of external contractors will be a decision taken by the Principal Environmental Health Officer in consultation with the Corporate Manager of Health and Environmental Services and will be subject to the following criteria:

- ❖ There is a direct need to ensure statutory and local performance targets are met.
- ❖ External contractors must meet the competency requirements of the Food Standards Agency's Food Law Code of Practice (England) October 2004 - General qualification and experience requirements and,
- ❖ The cost of the work can be met within existing budgets and is in accordance with the Council procurement policies.

In order to maintain the best quality of service, South Cambridgeshire District Council retains the inspection of high risk premises by it's' officers to ensure that resources are targeted on the appropriate categories of premises where risks have been identified. This allows for a greater degree of control over these premises and ensures continuity of enforcement activities.

Enforcement Officers also undertake dual food safety and health & safety inspections of Local Authority enforced premises, based on a risk focused inspection programme.

In November 2005 the Service launched 'Scores on the Doors' web site. This provides information to the public and businesses on the inspection standards of the food premises. The scheme is designed to also be compatible with any national scheme that is proposed by the FSA. It has been very successful in improving the standards within food businesses in the District.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

Profile of food premises – April 2007. There are 1042 local food businesses mainly of retail or catering nature. There are few large food manufacturers located in the District. The profile of the district is updated continuously. The growth and development of the district as identified in 2.1 results in significant coding changes. Registered premises on 1/04/2006 numbered 1031.

Risk Category	A	B	C	D	E	Other	Total
Number of premises	5	61	444	132	400	0	1042

National Food Risk Category Descriptions. The visit frequency is the minimum we are required to carry out.

A High Risk visit at least every 6 months	D Low Risk visit at least every 24 months
B High Risk visit at least every 12 months	E Low Risk visit at least every 36 months
C Medium Risk visit at least every 18 months	F Very Low risk visit every 60 months

National Food Producer Category Descriptions:

A Primary producer	F Distributor/wholesalers
B Slaughterhouse	G Retailer
C Manufacturer	H Caterer
D Packer	I Materials supplier
E Importer/exporter	J Manufacturing retailer

Food category	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	total
Number of premises	37	2	18	3	3	25	167	787	0	0	1042

Currently there are 2 food businesses authorised under the vertical directive food legislation. There are 19 licensed game dealers in the district.

The food safety team is organised into three districts due to the rural nature of the area. Inspections are issued on month-by-month basis and officers may inspect premises or carry out other duties in another district than they're mainly designated to if required. This helps to ensure that our limited resources are maximized. The demands on the service are high and the team strives to achieve its inspection targets. However officers have also undertake health and safety work in the last financial year two fatalities on the district required a great deal of officer time.

The following specialist businesses are in the district:

- a) A production plant for Chivers Hartley trading as Premier Foods producing preserves and pickles for national and international export. They also produce dried potato products and peanut butter.
- b) A cook-chill central production unit (CPU) producing cook-chilled foods for regional hospitals, NHS trusts and care homes.
- c) A sandwich producer for regional distribution (Melbourn).
- d) A significant number of market garden units producing products under glass, e.g. lettuces.
- e) Cambridge City Airport.
- f) A number of food mobiles.
- g) An increasing number of eastern europeans working in food businesses which can present language and interpretation difficulties.
- h) Two vertical directive premises.
- i) 19 game dealers.

Further demands will be made on the service in 2007/08 due to:

- ❖ The implementation of CLAE (Changes to Local Authority Enforcement) by the FSA, linked to the 'Hampton Review' and the 'Rogers Review' due to be completed by December 2007.
- ❖ Ongoing review and changes to approved premises, including the identification of new premises.

- ❖ Alternative enforcement strategies, with increased and targeted educational and promotional work.
- ❖ Ongoing implementation of documented hazard analysis for all food premises commensurate with their activities, including utilisation of the 'Safer Foods Better Business' pack promoted by the Food Standards Agency.
- ❖ Further development and promotional work linked to the 'Scores on the Doors' initiative.
- ❖ Health Development activities in partnership with the Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust, including healthy eating, obesity and smoking cessation.

2.5 **Service Delivery Points**

Service is mainly delivered during office hours. Businesses, which trade out of hours, at weekends or during evenings only, are inspected accordingly. An "Out of Hours" 24x7 emergency service exists for dealing with food hazard alerts and warnings and emergency food related issues. A 'Contact Centre Service' has been implemented which provides access for the public and businesses 8am to 8pm Monday to Saturday inclusive. A second contact centre based in Blackpool covers the remaining hours of the week.

The main offices are situated at South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne.

All direct telephone lines to the Food Safety Team are connected to answer machines out of hours which also give details of the out of hours emergency telephone number.

South Cambridgeshire has a central customer contact centre for a range of Council services.

The service is delivered proactively through programmed inspections and reactively by responding to complaints and requests received by the Department. Service delivery can take place at any food business or at people's homes or place of work.

Emergencies such as outbreaks of infectious disease will be responded to on demand

2.6 **Enforcement Policy**

Enforcement policies are in place for Food Safety. These policies are approved by the appropriate Council Cabinet Member and were formulated in consultation with the Cambridgeshire Food Hygiene Liaison Group, and local businesses. The policies direct us towards a staged approach to enforcement, opting for an informal advisory approach with most issues. Essentially, we will take action, which is proportionate to the risk involved, and the seriousness of the circumstances. The policies are in line with the government's Enforcement Concordat, which the Council is a signatory to. The policies were adopted on 20th February 2004. A copy can be downloaded from the website www.scams.gov.uk

2.6.2 The Roger's Review – National Enforcement Priorities for Local Authority Regulatory Service

The Roger's Review clarified the priorities that central government considered mattered most in local regulatory services. Within the five priorities 'hygiene of food businesses' is a national enforcement priority because of the high impact in terms of numbers of deaths and ill-health caused by unhygienic food businesses and high costs to the economy. It also generates high levels of local concern and local authorities have a significant impact either working in partnership or individually. This plan demonstrates that South Cambridgeshire District Council also recognizes the food safety service as a priority area within the total Environmental Health services provided.

3 Service Delivery

3.1 Food Safety and Hygiene.

Food Premises – Hygiene Inspections. The Authority follows the priority rating system identified in the Food Safety Code of Practice and aims to inspect 100% of due high risk premises each and every year. Inspections consist of questioning the food business operator to discover their knowledge of food hazards and an inspection of the premises and food prepared there by observing food handling practices and procedures.

Inspection profile for the year beginning 1st April 2007

Risk Category	A	B	C	D	E	other	total
Number of premises	5	61	444	132	400	0	1042
Inspections scheduled	10	61	231	65	88	0	455

Category F businesses have moved into category E following the revised Code of Practice

Category A premises are those with the highest risk, whether by the nature of the activities carried on there, or because of poor operating conditions. The minimum inspection frequency for the different categories of premises is detailed in 2.4. Due to re-visits and vertical directive requirements some Individual businesses are inspected more frequently. We use a special database software package for logging and tracking our inspections and other activities.

Revisions in the Code of practice give us the opportunity to deal with low risk premises by means other than an inspection; we will develop our strategy to these premises through the year in consultation with local businesses and partners.

Revisits are made where there are concerns about food safety. The food safety team has a structured risk based criteria to enable revisits to be prioritised. We anticipate that we will revisit 10% of premises inspected.

It is our policy to issue Hygiene Improvement Notices if work detailed on a previous inspection report has not been completed or if there are serious concerns about food safety during a current visit. These legal notices ensure that improvements are made within a reasonable timescale.

Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices are used where there is an imminent risk to health. The Corporate manager Health & Environmental services, Principal Environmental Health Officer

and the Food Control and Health and Safety Team Leader are the only officers who are authorised to undertake this action. Officers must always contact either if an imminent risk is found. This will normally involve the immediate closure of the premises. Common reasons for closing premises are the discovery of pest infestations (mice, cockroaches), the absence of water / hot water; or very poor control over food hazards and/or cleaning.

Number of formal actions taken in 2006/07

Number of premises where Improvement Notices were served	21
Number of premises where Emergency Prohibition Notices were served	0
Prosecutions against businesses for poor conditions	1
Prosecutions against businesses for not complying with a notice	0
Formal Cautions issued against businesses for food safety and hygiene offences	0
Voluntary Closures	2

Prosecutions 2006/07

Red Lion House, Hinxton Trading as Blue Hop Ltd The Food Safety (England) Regulations 2006

The Company was prosecuted for poor hygiene standards and fined £1000 and Costs of £1000 were awarded to the authority.

3.4 Food Hygiene Inspection Changes

3.4.1 Scores on the Doors

South Cambridgeshire District Council was the first Local Authority to launch this innovative project, using an externally hosted website in November 2005, with the South Cambridgeshire/Southwark 5 star banding scheme. Subsequently 54 other local authorities have all joined together on this web site and share a common scheme. Early signs are that the project is encouraging the business proprietors to engage more with Environmental Health Officers to seek better compliance and we are seeing an increase in the star ratings on re-inspections. The website also has an increased number of 'hits' currently running at around 8,000 per month. In 2007/08 the Food Standards Agency will be evaluating all schemes and SCDC will take part in that evaluation.

3.4.2 Alternative Inspection Strategy for Food Hygiene

The Food Standards Agency has recognised the importance of concentrating resources on high and medium risk rated premises. To that end food businesses that present little or no risk to food safety for food hygiene purposes can be inspected by an alternative method. The alternative methods employed for food hygiene inspections are detailed below.

- ❖ Postal Questionnaire for low risk premises.

- ❖ Applications for registration.

The inspection technique and follow up, including post inspection correspondence will relate to the risk to food safety that was identified from the questionnaire.

The primary objectives when carrying out inspections are in accordance with the new Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice, however, a special emphasis is placed on the level of compliance with the new requirements for documented control systems, awareness raising of the South Cambridgeshire Star Award Scheme ('Scores on the Doors') and Safer Food Better Business, and also staff hygiene training. Specific consideration is also given to whether samples need to be taken during routine food hygiene inspection work.

3.5 Food Complaints

It is the Authority's policy to investigate all complaints concerning food produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed, intended for human consumption within the District to ensure that it is without risk to the health or safety of the public. Complaints regarding labelling etc are forwarded to the trading standards department of Cambridgeshire County Council in accordance with a county wide documented protocol.

Most of the complaints we receive about food relate to food produced outside of the District, although others concern more freshly made local foods from establishments such as restaurants, takeaways etc.

Service standards are set for response times to complaints. Performance against these targets is regularly monitored. In general, complaints will be responded to within 3 working days, however the more urgent the matter, the speedier the response.

All complaints and requests for service are recorded using the Proactive software and the team leader regularly monitors progress.

Number of Complaints about food, premises and personnel

Year	2005/06	2006/07
Number of complaints	99	76

3.6 Home Authority Principle

The Home Authority may be the local authority where businesses that manufacture or process food items are based. Where the head office of such companies is not at the same place as the manufacturing unit, the authority responsible for the location of the manufacturing centre is referred to as the Originating Authority. All Local Authorities are encouraged to liaise with Home and Originating Authorities for all relevant complaints and to consult them before taking any formal action.

The District Council:

- ❖ Endorses the principles laid down in the LACORS Home Authority Principle.
- ❖ Will act as the Home Authority for local businesses as necessary.
- ❖ Where enforcement action impacts on a businesses national policy, the Home Authority or Originating Authority will be consulted.

- ❖ The Home Authority will also be consulted regarding, or informed of, local actions whenever such consultation/information may be helpful, or indicative of matters with potential national implications.

The most significant food manufacturer in the South Cambridgeshire is Premier Foods (formally Chivers).

3.7 Advice to Businesses

South Cambridgeshire District Council along with the other Cambridgeshire Authorities and external partners has been successful in being awarded a grant from the Food Standards Agency to deliver Safer Food Better Business, a food safety management system, into catering businesses which will help them comply with the New European Regulations and improve food safety standards.

The grant of 366K (the third largest grant awarded by the FSA in this second round of bids) will enable the six authorities to target 1,800 food businesses across the region. Free workshops and follow up one to one coaching is to be provided and the local authority will evaluate the effectiveness of the project at a follow up inspection.

This is an exciting project, which offers real benefits to small food businesses but will require careful management and co-ordination if milestones are to be achieved. South Cambridgeshire chairs the project and provides the financial facility. It has also been proven that business are more receptive if the local authority is involved with recruitment to the seminars. This is resource intensive but is hoped the intervention along side 'scores on the doors' will provide positive results in legal compliance for food businesses in the district.

In support of the departmental aims, the culture of the food team is to freely offer advice and information when required or when requested. Officers respond positively to requests for advice from proprietors of food businesses within 10 working days. Requests for advice from food businesses currently number approximately 150 per year. It is estimated that 1 hour per enquiry of officer time is necessary to meet this demand. This demand is currently met.

New businesses are sent an information pack containing relevant FSA and local literature. This is also available on the web site.

A newsletter, "South Cambs News", is produced four times a year and distributed free of charge to the 55,000 households and businesses in South Cambridgeshire. This newsletter provides an opportunity to distribute Environmental Health information.

A range of leaflets and advisory pamphlets from a variety of sources is available and is freely distributed during visits and accompanying correspondence.

When new legislation/guidance makes a significant change to food law or how the food safety service is delivered, advice/information and a contact point is distributed to relevant businesses. Web site information is also available.

3.8 Food Complaints

A documented policy relating to food complaints is adhered to and follows LACORS guidance. This policy has been adopted across the six Cambridgeshire food authority district councils. A performance indicator of response within 3 working days is a service standard.

The scope of the procedure currently covers:

- ❖ Receiving food complaints.
- ❖ Investigation of food complaints.
- ❖ Action to be taken on completion of the investigation.
- ❖ Transfer of food complaints.

The team is currently appropriately staffed to meet demand.

3.9 Food Inspection and Sampling

Microbiological food sampling is carried out to meet 4 main objectives:

1. To determine the current state of food safety in the District as part of a structured sampling programme.
2. To improve the effectiveness of food hygiene inspections.
3. To investigate suspect cases of food poisoning where a link with a local business or food is suspected.
4. To investigate complaints about food.

The formal food sampling plan links with LACORS plans as well as taking account of local trends and needs. The number of samples, including water, taken and submitted for analysis over the last few years has been significantly reduced by a shortage of regional resource.

Year	2005/06
Number of microbiological samples	221
Number unsatisfactory	39

3.10 Control & Investigation of Outbreaks, Disease & Food Related Infectious Diseases

GP's across the District report suspected cases of food poisoning to the Consultant for Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) at the Health Protection Agency. The Local Medical Microbiology Laboratory at Addenbrookes Hospital also advises the CCDC of positive results for food poisoning and food/water related illness. The Food Safety Team are then advised and carry out investigations to attempt to discover the source of the infection.

The Authority has a documented procedure for the investigation of incidents of reported or suspected cases of food poisoning and a formal plan to cover the management of the investigation of outbreaks of food borne infectious disease.

These documented policies have been developed in conjunction with the Consultant for Communicable Disease Control at the Health Protection Agency, Dr Bernadette Nazareth.

Year	05/06	06/07
Number of individual investigated cases ⁶ *	199	277

⁶
* formally and informally notified

In 2006/7 the food safety team continued to investigate all notifiable gastro-intestinal illnesses including the most common cause of food poisoning, campylobacter. An increase in awareness of 'winter vomiting illness' - Norovirus - resulted in a small number of outbreaks being reported to the service. Campylobacter was the highest of those reported and forms part of the FSA's Food Borne Disease Strategy for target campaigns until 2010.

Approximately 2 hours is allowed per individual case investigation, making a total workload of approximately 554 hours, which is an increase on last years figures by 120 hours. However with a change in the way that we are investigating Campylobacter, it is anticipated that demand can be met by current staffing.

Following a recent review of guidance relating to infectious diseases and enteric disorders, new pamphlets have been redrafted and printed and these are being distributed to all infectious diseases/food poisoning cases within the district during 2007/08.

A workload related to disease control is 'welfare burials'. Each one of these is unique and requires an immediate response. These are currently running at 2-6 per year but officers often begin to make welfare burial arrangements before distant members of family or friends agree to take on the burial arrangements. Welfare burials can be resource intensive as they are all different and require approximately 2 weeks of officer time to complete for a straightforward case. This puts additional pressure on the service.

3.11 Food Safety Incidents

The Food Standards Agency identifies a food safety incident from time to time and notifies food authorities of these by means of a 'Food Alert' procedure. Some of the notifications require immediate action where there is imminent risk to health. Others require action as necessary depending on the local distribution of food and products.

The authority has a documented procedure for dealing with food safety Incidents, normally notified through the 'Food Alert' system. The procedure is in line with the requirements of Food Safety Codes of Practice. The Authority subscribes to the EHCNet electronic mail network and also receives hazard alerts by text message facility to each food team members mobile phone.

Year	2006 /07
Number of National Food Hazard Warnings	55

3.12 Liaison with Other Organizations

The established county officer food liaison group collaborates well. Service procedures are shared countywide to promote consistency. A yearly work-plan is produced and followed. The food officer sub-groups share allocated procedural tasks.

A Chief Environmental Health Officers Group functions at a strategic and management level. It approves the work-plan of the Food Liaison Group and monitors its work and output.

Liaison with LACORS, the FSA, CSCi, HPA, and Trading Standards exists through the Principal Officer Food Liaison Group.

Regular updates of food premises registration information is provided to our trading standards and HSE colleagues.

Working groups in partnership with the South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust and other NHS and voluntary sector groups are attended by the Corporate Manager Health & Environmental Services and the EHO (Public Health Specialist) with a view to implementing the Joint Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Improving Health Plan.

Close liaison exists inter-departmentally with Building Control and the Planning Department with reference to food businesses.

3.13 Food Safety Promotion

Food safety promotion work is undertaken by the following methods:

- ❖ Basic food hygiene training courses are run at intervals during the year and on request if a business has more than 12 delegates. Specialist groups, i.e. care home wardens and caterers whose first language is not English, are run as required.
- ❖ The EHO (Public Health Specialist) considers other additional food safety promotional activities as part of his annual work plan.
- ❖ Food Safety Officers were in attendance at 3 events over the summer period of 2006 promoting the service and especially hand washing and Scores on the Doors. This was well received by the public.
- ❖ Talks to pupils of local educational establishments including schools, colleges, and Voluntary groups.
- ❖ Targeted seminars and training session are undertaken on subjects such as the Safer Food Better Business campaign
- ❖ The Council's 'Scores on the Doors' scheme which actively provides information on the inspections and risk rating of businesses on the Council web site. The Service works with businesses to help them improve their own 'star ratings'

4. Resources

4.1 Financial Allocation

Cost centre	2006/7 actual	2007/8(£) budget
Staffing costs *1	186,675	175,250
Supplies & services *2	30,082	33,530

Project based initiatives		
Support services *3	29,625	23,940
Transport costs	6,388	8,590
Income	-70,175	-47,100
Net expenditure	182,595	194,210

NOTES

*1 includes training costs and contractor payments. Lower costs for “Safer Food Better Business” estimated for this year.

*2 includes ICT costs

*3 includes accommodation and other support services costs (administration, finance, legal services, personnel etc). Lower legal costs estimated for this year.

Legal action is pursued within Departmental budgets but with access to consultancy and contingency funds if required. If and when costs are awarded by the Courts, these monies are transferred back to the portfolio budget headings.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

The food team currently consists of the Principal Officer, Mr J Keerie and 3½ full time equivalent Officers, Mrs C Archibald (Team Leader), Miss R Walkowiak (a soon to be vacant post), a vacant post and Mrs J Power (part-time). In addition an EHO with responsibility for Public Health also has a time input into food related projects, and 2 technical officers also contribute. Consultants are employed on an ad hoc basis to supplement the service offered. The EHO’s are all fully qualified and maintain their competence levels. Work relating to the food law enforcement service equates to 3½ full time equivalents.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

A personal development programme was introduced from 1 April 2001. This contributed to the services’ Investors in People Award in 2003. This has highlighted training needs identified by individual officers, their managers and service demands. These training requirements are built into officers work programmes and budgetary requirements are identified and allowed for in service plans. Both internal and external training opportunities will be utilised, e.g. LACORS, CIEH, FSA and specialist consultants/expert advisers.

All food safety staff are subject to an annual appraisal and a progress review which tracks and identifies training and development needs. Food safety training needs are prioritised in the context of wider Environmental Health requirements identified within the service wide training plan. The budget allocation for 2007/08 should be adequate to fund the identified training needs for 2007/08.

All food safety staff complete a training record log and a food safety training matrix to further assist in identifying development and training needs and for monitoring the competency of individual officers. The officers undertaking specific duties, such as dealing with approved premises, are identified and the training requirements assessed accordingly.

5. Quality Assessment

Performance Indicators have been identified within this Service Plan.

Regular team meetings of the specialist food officers take place.

Internal quality monitoring is undertaken in accordance with:

- ❖ The Internal Procedure Monitoring Note.
- ❖ Food Premises Inspections – Quality Control.

Health & Environmental Services is currently awarded Investors in People (IIP) status.

6. Review

6.1 Review of the Service Plan

The Service Plan will be reviewed March 2008.

The Standards for Food Law Enforcement including food policies and procedure notes will be reviewed in accordance with the review timetable in the Internal Monitoring Procedure Note.

The review will be facilitated by information from the IT system and will include trend analysis from previous year performance data.

Service performance indicators are reviewed annually under the Service Plan process.

6.2 Review of Previous Year's Performance against Service Plan

At the end of this financial year, the intended actions as specified in the Health & Environmental Services Service Plan will be compared with what was achieved in the areas relating to food safety. The reasons for any variance identified will be stated and next year's plan will take these into account as lessons to be learnt from the previous year.

Targeted outcomes are reviewed on a three monthly basis.

The Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement requires every local authority to review its previous years performance against its service plan. The review must identify where the authority was at variance from the service plan and, where appropriate, the reasons for that variance. This review details the performance of the food service for the financial year 2006/07 and must outline any significant issues that impacted on the delivery of the service.

6.3 Review of Profile of the Authority

The new village of Cambourne currently has twelve food businesses and four home caterers including a large supermarket and a Public House. The inspection of these businesses and anticipated additional food businesses can be sustained within existing staffing levels. 34 new businesses were registered last year.

6.4 Review of Food Premises Inspections

In 2006/07 a total of 511 food business premises required an inspection of which 433 were classed as high risk (risk group A to C) and 144 were other risk (risk group D to F). The 2006/07 target of 100% of High Risk premises, which was achieved. The target of 90% for other risk premises was also achieved.

Revisits are carried out on an ad hoc basis to premises where significant remedial work is required, or “critical control points” are not adequately controlled.

By 31 March 2007, 21 Improvement Notices were served, all of which were complied with within the specified timescale.

6.5 Review of Food Related Complaints

Up to 31 March 2007 the service received 56 food complaints and 20 complaints about food premises. This is similar to the previous year.

All complaints about food premises were investigated efficiently, with the response deadline of 3 working days being met in 72 out of 76 jobs (94%).

6.6 Review of Advice to Businesses

Officers have continued to give free advice and assistance to both the trade and public throughout the year on food safety and hygiene matters. In addition to advice given during the inspection process various advisory leaflets were produced and distributed.

6.7 Review of Food Inspection and Sampling

A total of 221 samples were taken and submitted mainly to the HLS for analysis. The sampling programme formulated by LACORS and the Eastern Region programme, as well as our own sampling programme was followed. 39 food samples were considered to be unsatisfactory.

9 water samples were found to be unacceptable. All failed samples were followed up to ascertain the cause and necessary improvements were put in place to reduce the risk of a recurrence.

Twenty-one Food Export Certificates were issued for consignments of food that was manufactured in the district and exported to non-EU countries.

6.8 Review of Food-related Infectious Diseases

A total of 99 notified cases of food poisoning and suspected food poisoning were received up to 31 March 2007. Investigations were carried out within 24 hours of notification in 95% of cases. In all instances where local food premises were potentially implicated, no conclusive evidence was found to confirm that either the food or the premises was the source of the illness.

6.9 Review of Food Safety Incidents

The service received 55 ‘Food Alerts’ from the Food Standards Agency for 2006/07. Food Alerts received by this authority are notified to other local authority environmental health departments by the cascade system.

6.10 Review of Liaison with Other Organisations

All existing liaison arrangements have worked successfully throughout the year and there are no planned changes to these systems.

6.11 Review of Food Safety Promotion

8 food Hygiene Courses were successfully completed which is the normal number of courses offered each year.

A selection of new leaflets for food hygiene for both the public and local businesses will be available on the website.

6.12 Review of Staff Development

With officers personal development plans in place, training needs are identified at the beginning of the year. Both the officer and the service training officer, source and access relevant training courses. All officers secured the necessary amount of CPD as required by the FSA.

6.13 Review of Staffing

The team is endeavoring to recruit to the vacant posts. In addition, consultants are engaged periodically to supplement the team output and a small consultancy budget has been agreed to continue this service.

6.14 Review of Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan

There were no significant deviations from the Service Plan.

6.15 Review of Areas of Improvement

The service for a number of years has produced a Service Plan. The requirement of the Service Plan is to improve yearly the achieved percentage of identified targets and identify where possible any improvements of a qualitative nature. The review of the Service Plan enables foreseeable trends and known changes that may affect service requirements and service delivery to be considered.

To facilitate interpretation of the Service Plan and focus the food team's attention on relevant improvements, the Hampshire Matrix has been used since 2002 to monitor progress of the food team's improvements at six monthly intervals. Recent improvements in the last year to our scores on the matrix have included placing additional information on our website and the introduction of the structured award

7.0 Identification of Achievements and any variation from the Service Plan

Over the past 2 years food safety legislation has undergone significant changes and the service has dealt with these and continues to provide a high quality service. With new national priorities being developed by the Food Standards Agency and the Local Better Regulation Office, the service will need to respond to the changing regulatory landscape and improve the service further. Some of the current planned improvements for 2007/08 are outlined as follows:

Service Improvement	Planned Outcome/Output	Link to FSA framework agreement	Target Date
Assess the implications on the service of the FSA new 'vision' for Changes to Local Authority Enforcement (CLAE), to be completed in Dec 07.	To monitor and review the proposed changes. To ensure the Food Safety Service prepares for the changes and adapts the service accordingly.	This will form a key part of the FSA's review of the existing Framework Agreement.	March 2008
Assess the implications of the FSA's revision of the Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice and Guidance.	Compliance with the new food safety law code of practice and guidance, when final document published. Amend procedures and enforcement policy in line with new code. Assess impact of 'Earned Autonomy' for businesses and the consumer.	All sections of the framework contained in the framework agreement	March 2008
Further develop and implement an alternative enforcement strategy for low risk food premises.	Planned alternative enforcement to be decided, but could be self-assessment packs and/or training seminars.	Advice to businesses. Food Safety Promotion	March 2008
Assess the implication of New Guidance from the FSA in relationship to childminders.	Ensure consistency within Cambridgeshire Food Liaison Group	Advice to businesses and inspections if required in line with guidance.	March 2008
Further develop and promote the 'scores on the doors' scheme for providing inspection risk ratings on SCDC website, along with 'star' rating system.	Increase public access to inspection scores and 'star' ratings on local premises through SCBDC web site. Improve overall number of premises achieving 4 stars and above.	Advice to businesses. Records and Inspection Reports. Food Safety Promotion.	Dec 2007
As a Member of a regulatory partnership of authorities in Cambridgeshire take part in Phase II of the Retail Enforcement Pilot being undertaken by the Cabinet Office	Single joint risk assessment; Greater information sharing; Holistic approach to enforcement; greater emphasis on compliance; Non-cashable efficiency gains. Improved targeting of inspection regimes reducing cost on business		March 2008
Set up a Business Stakeholder Forum for South Cambridgeshire on regulatory matters.	Feedback from businesses in SCDC on regulatory service policies, areas of assistance regarding compliance etc. Improved regulatory policy, improved performance against relevant indicators increased business satisfaction; improvements in compliance.		March 2008
Develop and implement the management audit procedure for food safety.	Ensure consistency between officers and consultants in relation to undertaking inspections, enforcement, and advice and risk assessments for the star awards.	Organisation & Management, Internal Monitoring.	Jan 2008
Undertake identification and assessment of premises for approval under EC food hygiene regulations. (Egg producers, packers, wholesalers to be targeted in 07/08)	Identification of premises and approval of, if necessary.	Food Premises Inspections.	March 2008

Support the work of compliance monitoring and proactive inspections for 'Smoke Free' premises and Vehicles regulations from 1 July 2007.	Ensure business compliance with the relevant Smoke Free regulations.	General commitment to better regulation– Dual Inspections.	March 2008
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