

South Cambridgeshire District Council Health & Environmental Services



“SCORES ON THE DOORS” BIRTHDAY PARTY

Food Safety Service Plan 2008/09

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Portfolio Holder/s: Cllr Mrs S Ellington
Approved 17th July 2008.

Introduction

The hygiene of food businesses is a national enforcement priority because of the high impact in terms of deaths and ill health caused by unhygienic food businesses and the high costs to the economy. The Rogers¹ review summarised these with the following statistics relating to 2005:

- 329 deaths can be anticipated as arising from food business operations (almost 1 death per day).
- 535,500 cases of food borne diseases (1,467 per day)
- Over 12,000 hospitalisations (33 per day)
- Both businesses and citizens considered that this policy area was a priority to ensure food safety and local authorities themselves considered this to be a top priority.
- £900 million total costs to the economy in 2005 (including cost to the health care system)

This Service Plan is dedicated to the food law enforcement function that is the responsibility of the Environmental Health by virtue of the Food Safety Act 1990 and EU Directives. The Health and Environmental Services of South Cambridgeshire District Council 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 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, 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. Contraventions and recommendations are always phrased in a clear manner.

1. Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 The Council Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities

The relevant Council Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities are:

- ❖ **Work in partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future** – by:
 - Developing effective working arrangements with major partners to deliver the growth agenda.
- ❖ **Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community** – by:
 - Ensuring the best value for money options for service delivery.
 - Strong management and prioritisation of resources, resulting in improved audit assessments.

¹ Rogers P (2007) – National Enforcement priorities for Local authority regulatory services.

- Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services.
- A commitment to improvement and good quality services, demonstrated by performance against national, local and Direction of Travel indicators.
- Improving access to services through our Contact Centre.
- Working towards level 2 of the equalities standard.

❖ **Enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work – by:**

- Listening to and engaging with the local community.
- Working with local people to promote community cohesion and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in the community.
- Promoting economic development consistent with our sustainability and environmental aims.

The Council ensures that it delivers on its priorities by:

1. Setting out clear action plans to deliver on priorities.
2. Ensuring that the Medium Term Financial Strategy is linked with the achievement of the Councils' priorities.
3. Actively monitoring and managing progress throughout the year through our performance management framework.
4. Ensuring that these plans are reflected in the plans of individual services.
5. Ensuring that all staff are working towards the priorities by agreeing objectives with them in their appraisals.

1.3 **Health & Environmental Services Statement of Purpose**

The Health & Environmental Services Statement of Purpose is directly relevant to the Food Safety service and provides further detail in how it will contribute to the Council's overall objectives.

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of health & environmental services within South Cambridgeshire District Council are to work in partnership with local organisations, businesses and the wider community to:

- ◆ Protect and enhance the environment now and in the future
- ◆ Improve on the sense of well being within our existing and future villages, communities and businesses
- ◆ Safeguard and improve public health
- ◆ Enhance the quality of life of citizens generally and for those disadvantaged specifically

- ◆ Instil a sense of pride in being associated with Environmental Health at SCDC

VALUES

- High quality customer service to the public
- Target resources to areas of greatest risk/effect/change.
- Consult and provide sensible, clear, open, honest and fair decisions
- To improve service to the public that represents best value
- Be professional, consistent and equitable, showing mutual respect towards others.
- Use common sense
- Be responsive and flexible to people's needs
- Set standards by which to be judged

1.4 Service Aims and Supporting Objectives

The food safety service contributes to the statement of purpose by ensuring that risks to a person's health through food are properly controlled through education, advice and enforcement. 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.

The Authority has regard to the Regulator's Compliance Code and subscribes to the Home Authority Principle, where we deal with food safety issues centrally for national food producers based within South Cambridgeshire.

Key tasks, which lead towards fulfilling this objective, 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 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 FSA Code of Practice on food business risk rating in relation to inspection programmes.
- ❖ Consult and engage with food businesses on the service provided.

1.5 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:

- ❖ Achieve the 'Broadly Compliant' standard as laid down in the new NI 184 for 90% of businesses.
- ❖ 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 percentage of food businesses which felt their business was treated fairly (NI 182).
- ❖ The percentage of food businesses which felt the contact the service had with them was helpful (NI 182).

1.6 Links to Corporate Strategies and Service Plans

1.6.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy for South Cambridgeshire

The Sustainable Community Strategy for South Cambridgeshire sets out what people in South Cambridgeshire want to happen here, and how we aim to make these things happen. It is a single document that will help to set the agenda for all agencies working in the district over the next three years. Its scope is set within the framework of national, regional and sub-regional strategies, including the Regional Planning Guidance and the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan and the national shared priorities for Local Government.

Cambridgeshire's five Local Strategic Partnerships have identified – through their Communities Strategies – the social, economic and environmental issues that matter to our residents. The Community Strategies have provided the starting point for the development of this Local Area Agreement in addition to other key plans and strategies setting out Cambridgeshire's priorities. There are also cross cutting themes running across the four blocks of the LAA. These are areas where - although appearing under a specific block - partners recognise there is further scope for the LAA and partnership working to provide added value beyond the work of individual organisations. Community cohesion, public health, and culture and sport are examples of this.

1.6.2 Access to Quality Services

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 and the food service is required to comply with these standards.

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 the Environmental Health Service carries out a Customer Satisfaction Survey, the results of which are considered and acted upon 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.

1.6.3 Health and Environmental Services Service Plan 2008/09

In order to meet the key corporate goal and ensure continuous improvement the Health and Environmental Service has a Service Plan covering 2008/09. This incorporates key actions, improvements and performance indicators specifically for food safety. The areas highlighted for improvement in 2008/09 are contained in section 7 of this plan.

In addition the Council has signed up to the Enforcement Concordat, has due regard for the Regulator’s Compliance Code and has an agreed Health & Environmental services Enforcement Policy. The service operates to the principles of transparency, helpfulness, proportionality and consistency contained within these documents.

1.6.4 Equality and Diversity

SCDC values people from all backgrounds and supports their right to respect and equality of opportunity. The Council is working to eliminate discrimination and prejudice from all it does and ensure that equalities becomes a central and essential element of our service planning and delivery, both as an employer and provider of services.

We are using our position as a democratically elected community leader to promote equality of opportunity and diversity within our partners and the wider community.

Our commitment to this agenda is reflected in our adoption of the following principles:

- ❖ *Fairness and equity* - Being fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory in all areas and activities, including service delivery, staff recruitment and development; the purchasing of goods and services, and by ensuring that the most disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of our community have equal access to all of our services.
- ❖ *Compliance with our statutory obligations* - Ensuring that we operate in conformity with existing equalities legislation, codes of practice and other such legislation as may be introduced in future, and improving our equalities practice at corporate,

- departmental, service and individual levels throughout the Council to maintain a positive and inclusive workforce culture.
- ❖ *Promotion of community cohesion & good community relations* - Ensuring that elected members and staff at all levels are clear about their responsibility to challenge discrimination, promote diversity and social inclusion, and work towards equality for all members of the community, and actively promoting a culture of recognition and valuing of diversity.
 - ❖ *Community involvement/inclusion* - Encouraging real participation in local democracy and representation from people who may normally feel excluded from decision making processes.
 - ❖ *Partnership working* - Working with partners in the statutory, voluntary, and private sectors to promote 'best practice' equality approaches throughout the community strategy, while ensuring the best outcomes for the people of South Cambridgeshire.

The Council has achieved Level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and is taking the following high-level actions to deliver our equality commitments, aims and objectives:

- ❖ Establish a corporate "self assessment" mechanism for reviewing progress across the organisation as a whole.
- ❖ Establish a training programme for all staff on our statutory responsibilities in reference to equalities legislation and the Council commitments in this policy.
- ❖ Strengthen our links with partners and with the LAA process to ensure that a 'golden thread' links higher level equality objectives at the county level with equality improvement action plans at the service planning level.
- ❖ Achieve Level 2 of the Equality Standard.

The Council is also implementing a system of Equality Impact Assessments and this service plan will be the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment in due course. 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 SCDC 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. (census 2001)

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 138,000 is rapidly expanding. New build and new villages will take the population to an estimated 170,500 by 2021. The village of Cambourne is continuing to develop and will have a growing population of up to 10,000 persons. Additionally

the preparatory work has commenced for the proposed 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

- ❖ Qualified and competent officers undertake a range of duties including food hygiene, food fitness 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 at the Health protection Agency.
- ❖ 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, for example dealing with food alerts from FSA and imported food matters.
- ❖ Specialist Services are also 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 (0845 4564564 or 01480 428018) is the current contact within Huntingdon Police Headquarters for criminal food adulteration.
- ❖ Contractors are also used to assist with any shortfall in food hygiene inspections of Category C and D premises. The use of contractors is restricted to an initial inspection. Any follow up action required, e.g. revisits, service of notices, legal proceedings is referred back to the Service.
- ❖ The Food Safety Team is organised into three geographical areas 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 officers' district. This helps to ensure that our limited resources are flexible. The demands on the service are high and the team strives to achieve its inspection targets.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service.

The Food Safety section of Health and Environmental Services 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, Levels 1, 2 and 3 food hygiene and nutrition courses
- ❖ Website 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.

- ❖ Securing compliance with the requirements of the Health Act 2006.

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 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 FSA's Food Law Code of Practice (England) October 2004 – (revision awaited). They must also have the necessary qualification and experience.
- ❖ 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, SCDC retains the inspection of high risk premises by its 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.

Food safety Officers also undertake dual food safety and health & safety inspections of Local Authority enforced premises, based on a risk focused inspection programme. The Food safety service operates from the South Cambridgeshire Hall between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. Evening and weekend inspections are carried out as determined by the risk based inspection programme and the premises opening hours.

Emergency health and safety issues are currently directed initially to a 24-hour out of hour's officer via a Contact Centre. In addition the Council's fully revised website is used to provide information about health and safety services for consumers and business and also provides a direct email address for service requests env.health@scambs.gov.uk

In November 2005 the Service launched its 'Scores on the Doors' website. This provides information to the public and businesses on the inspection standards of the food premises. It has been very successful in improving the standards within food businesses in the District.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

2.4.1 Profile of food premises – April 2008/09.

There are 1036 local food businesses mainly of retail or catering nature. There are few large food manufacturers located in the District.

Risk Category	A	B	C	D	E	Other	Total
Number of premises	5	36	447	137	416	16	1057

2.4.2 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 | Very Low risk visit every 60 months or use alternative enforcement strategy |
| C Medium Risk visit at least every 18 months | |

The profile of the district is updated continuously. The growth and development of the district results in significant coding changes. Registered premises on 1/04/2006 numbered 1031, on 1/04/2007 1042. This indicates a steady growth in the number of food businesses and they appear to be increasing by a minimum of 10 a year.

Currently there is 1 food business authorised under the vertical directive food legislation. There are 19 licensed Game Dealers in the District.

The following specialist businesses are in the district:

- a) A production plant for 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 .
- 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.

Further demands will be made on the service in 2008/09 due to:

- ❖ The implementation of CLAE (Changes to Local Authority Enforcement) by the FSA, linked to the 'Hampton Review' and the Rogers Review. We are awaiting a new code of practise from the FSA to set out how these changes can be made to our inspection programme.
- ❖ Ongoing review and changes to approved premises, including the identification of new premises and the expansion of the definition to low level meat cutting plants. SCDC will have up to 2 of these in the next few months.
- ❖ Alternative enforcement strategies, resulting in a reduction of low risk inspections but with time then reallocated to increased 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 FSA.
- ❖ New Codes of Practice and a change in the way we work to be able to report on outcomes
- ❖ Further development and promotional work linked to the 'Scores on the Doors' initiative.
- ❖ At the end of June 2008, the dedicated Smoke-free officers will finish their contracts with SCDC. Their activities will be passed to the Food and Health and Safety team

- for day to day management. At this time it is envisaged that the food safety team will be taking on outstanding issues, checking compliance on inspection visits, responding to complaints and providing advice to new business.
- ❖ Regulation in Practice - The Regulators' Compliance Code.
In accordance with the Regulators' Compliance Code the Council will perform its duties in a business-friendly way, by planning regulation and inspections in a way that causes least disruption to the economy, and as such the code has been considered when determining this Food Service Plan.

2.5 Service Delivery Points

Service is mainly delivered during office hours. The main offices are situated at South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne. The service is delivered proactively through programmed inspections and reactively by responding to complaints and requests received by the Service. Service delivery can take place at any food business or at people's homes or place of work.

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' is provided which gives 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. 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.

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

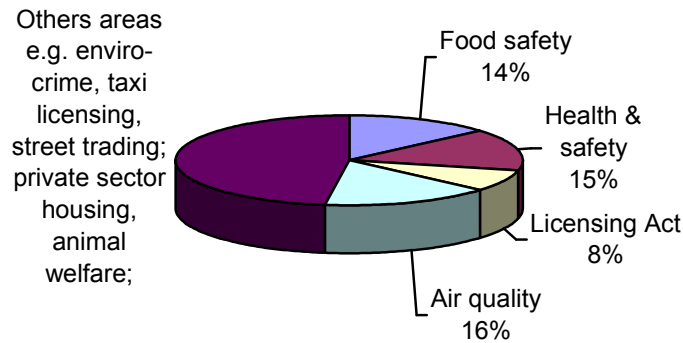
2.6 Enforcement Policy

The Food safety service follows the published Health & Environmental Services Enforcement Policy acknowledging the Enforcement Concordat and the Regulators' Compliance Code. The policy was approved by the Cabinet Member responsible for food safety matters

2.7 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 due to the high risks posed to individuals, their families, damage to business and the costs to the economy as a whole. It also generates high levels of local concern and local authorities can have a significant impact either working in partnership or individually. This plan demonstrates that SCDC also recognizes the food safety service as a priority area within the total Environmental Health services provided.

Figure 2: Estimated number of FTE equivalent field staff allocated to national priority enforcement areas as proportion of total field staff employed



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 2008

Risk Category	A	B	C	D	E	Other	Total
Number of premises	5	36	447	137	416	16	1057
Inspections scheduled	10	40	279	72	276	0	677

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 given at 2.4.2. Special database software package for logging and tracking inspections and other activities is used. Revisions in the FSA Code of Practice provides the opportunity to deal with low risk premises by means other than an inspection; The Food service is developing a strategy for 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 Section has a structured risk based criteria to enable revisits to be prioritised. It is anticipated that 10% of premises inspected will be revisited.

In line with the Enforcement Policy, Hygiene Improvement Notices are issued 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 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 2007/08

Number of premises where Improvement Notices were served	0
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	0

Prosecutions 2007/08

The Navigator at Great Shelford The Food Safety (England) Regulations 2006

The Company was prosecuted for poor hygiene standards and fined £3,000. Costs of £500 were awarded to the authority. The Managers were also prohibited from running a food business for 12 months.

3.2 Food Hygiene Inspection Changes

3.2.1 Scores on the Doors

SCDC was the First Local Authority to Launch this innovative project, using an externally hosted website in November 2005, and the South Cambridgeshire/Southwark 5 star banding scheme. Subsequently 91 other local authorities have joined together on this website and share a common scheme. Early signs are that the project is encouraging business proprietors to engage more with Environmental Health Officers to seek better compliance and the authority is seeing an increase in the star ratings on re-inspections. The website also had an increased number of 'hits' currently running at around 10,000 per month. In 2007/08 the FSA evaluated all schemes and SCDC took part in that evaluation.

3.2.2 Alternative Inspection Strategy for Food Hygiene

The FSA has recognised the importance of concentrating resources on high and medium risk rated premises. In line with the Regulators' Compliance Code and 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 FSA 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 food samples need to be taken during routine food hygiene inspection work.

3.3 Food Complaints

It is the Authority's policy to investigate all complaints concerning food produced, stored, distributed, handled and / or 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 received about food relate to food produced outside of the District, although others relate to 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 a team leader regularly monitors progress.

Number of Complaints about food, premises and personnel			
Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number of complaints	99	76	112

3.4 Home Authority Principle

The Home Authority may be the local authority where businesses that manufacture or process food items are based, and 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.

In accordance with the Regulators' Compliance Code the District Council:

- ❖ Endorses the expectations laid down in the LACORS Home Authority Principle and the Regulators Compliance Code.
- ❖ Will act as the Home Authority for local businesses as necessary.
- ❖ Will consult the Home Authority or Originating Authority where enforcement action impacts on a business.

- ❖ The Home Authority will also be consulted or informed regarding 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 District is Premier Foods (formally Chivers).

3.5 **Advice to Businesses**

SCDC along with the other Cambridgeshire Authorities and external partners has been successful in being awarded a grant from the FSA 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) has enabled the six Cambridgeshire authorities to target 1,800 food businesses across the region. (South Cambridgeshire had 311 businesses go through this process, 61 more than originally expected). Free workshops and follow up one to one coaching has been provided and the local authority are currently evaluating the effectiveness of the project at a follow up inspection. The project team is also formulating a report on the project to the FSA.

This has been an exciting project, which has offered real benefits to small food businesses and has required careful management and co-ordination of milestones to achieve the target to get maximum value from the award. South Cambridgeshire has acted as the financial facility for this project and chaired the process. It has shown that businesses are more receptive if local authorities are involved with recruitment to the seminars.

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 website.

A Council magazine, "South Cambs Magazine", is produced four times a year and distributed free of charge to the 56,000 households in South Cambridgeshire. This magazine provides an opportunity to distribute food safety information to a wide audience.

A range of leaflets and advisory pamphlets from a variety of sources are available and are freely distributed during visits and with other 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. Website information is also available.

3.6 Food Complaints

A documented policy relating to food complaints is adhered to and follows LACORS guidance. This policy has been adopted across the Cambridgeshire food authority district councils. A performance indicator to respond 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.

3.7 Food Inspection and Sampling

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

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

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

Year	2007/08
Number of microbiological samples	247
Number unsatisfactory	8

3.7 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 discover, if possible, the source of the infection and also to minimise the likelihood of secondary cases

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	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Number of individual investigated cases *⁶	199	277	249

*⁶ formally and informally notified

In 2007/08 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 Department. Campylobacter, the highest number of those reported, 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 498 hours. 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 drafted and printed and these will be distributed to all infectious diseases / food poisoning cases within the district during 2008/09.

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 for up to 10-12 persons 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.

3.8 Food Safety Incidents

The FSA 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 the Food Safety Code 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	2007/08
Number of National Food Hazard alerts	55	100

3.9 Liaison with Other Organisations

The established County Officer Food Liaison Group collaborates well. Departmental procedures are shared Countywide to promote consistency. A yearly workplan 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 workplan of the Food Liaison Group and monitors its work and output.

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

Regular updates of food premises registration information is provided to our Trading Standards and HSE colleagues.

Other partnerships with a food safety agenda include:

- ❖ The South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Improving Health Partnership.
- ❖ Both the Cambridgeshire Obesity Group and the South Cambridgeshire Obesity Group.
- ❖ The Cambridgeshire Food and Health Group.

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

3.10 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.
- ❖ In 2008/09 nutrition courses will be offered.
- ❖ Talks to pupils of local educational establishments including schools, colleges, and voluntary groups.
- ❖ Targeted seminars and training sessions are undertaken on subjects such as the Safer Food Better Business campaign

The EHO (Public Health Specialist) considers other additional food safety promotional activities as part of his annual workplan. A healthy eating award will be implemented across South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City in 2008/09.

Food Safety Officers were in attendance at 3 events over the summer period of 2007 promoting the service and especially hand washing and Scores on the Doors. This was well received by the public.

The Council's 'Scores on the Doors' scheme which actively provides information on the inspections and risk rating of businesses on the Council website. The Service works with businesses to help them improve their own 'star rating'. November 2007 was the second year of running "Scores on the Doors". To recognise this a birthday party was arranged to celebrate with four and five star businesses invited to attend and presented with a certificate. All four and five star rated businesses now receive a certificate when this rating is achieved.

During National Food Safety Week the team will be launching a 'new look' sticker that all businesses can display from 2 star upwards.

4. Resources

4.1 Financial Allocation

Cost centre	2007/08 (£) actual	2008/09 (£) budget
Staffing * ¹	351,710	140,710
Supplies and Services * ²	24,979	26,470
Support Services * ³	36,804	36,430
Transport Costs	7,423	8,840
Income	217,379	2,000
	<u>203,537</u>	<u>210,450</u>

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 service 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 Service budget headings.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

The food team currently consists of the Principal Officer, Mr J Keerie and 4½ full time equivalent Officers, Mrs C Archibald (Team Leader), Mrs Julie Winfield District EHO, Mrs J Power (part-time) District EHO, Mr Stephen Broadbelt District EHO, Mrs Emma Trollope (part-time) Food Safety Enforcement Officer, Mrs Sarah Killick (part-time) Food Safety Enforcement Officer. In addition an EHO with responsibility for Public Health also has a time input into food related projects and 1 technical officer also contributes time. Consultants are employed on an ad-hoc basis to supplement the service offered. The 5 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 Service obtaining the Investors in People Award in 2003 and reaccreditation in 2006. 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 training budget allocation for 2008/09 should be adequate to fund the identified training needs for this year.

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.
- ❖ Checking of correspondence.
- ❖ Checking of drafted notices.

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 2009. The review will be facilitated by information from the IT system and will include trend analysis from previous year performance data. Departmental performance indicators are reviewed annually under the Service Plan process.

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.

6.2 Review of Previous Year's Performance against Service Plan

The FSA 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 2007/08 and must outline any significant issues that impacted on the delivery of the service.

At the end of this financial year, the intended actions as specified in the Health and Environmental Services 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.

6.3 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. It should be noted that 34 new businesses were registered last year.

6.4 Food Premises Inspections

In 2007/08 a total of 455 food business premises required an inspection of which 308 were classed as high risk (risk group A to C) and 153 were other risk (risk group D to F).

Target 2007/08 was a 100% of High Risk premises, which was achieved. The target for other risk premises was 90%, which 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.

6.5 Food Related Complaints

Up to 31 March 2008, the service received 112 food complaints and 26 complaints about food premises. This is an increase to the previous year.

All complaints about food premises were investigated efficiently, with the response deadline of 3 working days being met (100%).

6.6 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. 162 advice responses were made but this figure is low as advice is often given ad-hoc and not recorded. In addition to advice given during the inspection process various advisory leaflets were produced and distributed.

6.7 Food Inspection and Sampling

A total of 247 microbiological samples were taken and submitted mainly to the Hospital Laboratory Services for analysis. The sampling programme formulated by LACORS and the Eastern Region programme, as well as the services’ sampling programme was followed. 8 food samples were considered to be unsatisfactory.

8 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.

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

6.8 Food-related Infectious Diseases

A total of 249 notified cases of food poisoning and suspected food poisoning were received up to 31 March 2008. 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 Food Safety Incidents

The service received 100 'Food Alerts' from the FSA for 2007/08. These were responded to appropriately.

6.10 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 Food Safety Promotion

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

South Cambridgeshire had 311 businesses go through the Safer Food Better Business programme, 61 more than originally expected

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

6.12 Staff Development

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

6.13 Staffing

Posts becoming vacant during the year were eventually successfully filled. 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 Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan

There were no significant deviations from the Service Plan.

7 Areas for 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 the scores on the matrix have included placing additional information on our website and the introduction of the structured award "Scores on the Doors".

Over the past 3 years food safety legislation has undergone significant changes and the team has dealt with these and continues to provide a high quality service. With new national priorities being developed by the FSA and the Local Better Regulation Office, the service will need to respond to these and improve further.

Some of the current planned improvements for 2008/09 are outlined as follows:

Service Improvement	Planned Outcomes / Output	Link to FSA framework agreement	Target Date
Assess the implications of the FSA's revision of the Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice and Guidance	Amend procedures and practise notes in line with the new code	All sections of the framework agreement	March 2009
Healthier Lifestyles smoke free premises	Ongoing inspections and advice to ensure compliance	General commitment to better regulation. Dual Inspections	Ongoing
Assess the implication of new guidance from the FSA in relationship to childminders and assist them to meet compliance through SFBB bid in phase 3	To seek secure SFBB funding from the FSA to provide one to one coaching and to ensure consistency within the Cambridgeshire Food Liaison Group	Advice to businesses and partnership working in line with guidance.	Bid July 2008 then roll out if successful September 2008 to March 2009
Continue to develop and promote the "Scores on the Doors" scheme for providing inspection risk ratings on SCDC "Scores on the Doors.org" website as a 5 star rated scheme	Increase public access to inspection scores through SCDC website. Improve overall number of premises achieving 3 stars and above.	Advice to businesses. Records and Inspection reports. Food Safety Promotion	March 2009
Set up and run a business stakeholder forum	Feed back from food businesses in SCDC on how we can improve assistance		March 2009
Set Up and run food safety surgery	To provide a regular time when businesses can come and discuss food safety issues and receive one to one assistance with SFBB	Food Safety Promotion and information	September 2008
Establish and implement a healthy eating award across SCDC and Cambridge City	Increase public awareness of healthy diets to reduce levels of obesity	Food Safety Promotion and information	March 2009