



Borough of Oadby & Wigston

SERVICES COMMITTEE

13 January 2009

FOOD SAFETY SERVICE AUDIT

Report of: Director of Community Services Report Number: 6 (f)
Author: Mr. S.J. Bruce, Head of Environmental Health

NON-EXEMPT

This report is likely to be considered while the meeting is open to press & public

Summary:

This report brings Members up to date with the audit of our food safety service, undertaken in September 2008.

Recommendations:

- (1) That Members agree to amend the service plan targets for 2008/09 to include those actions arising from the audit that are to be completed by 31 March 2009.

Level of delegation: Committee

Wards affected:

Comments of Statutory Officers:

Head of Paid Service: None

Proper Officer for Financial Affairs: None

Monitoring Officer: None

Appendices Attached: Audit action plan and other points arising from the audit

Impact Assessments

Health: The key aim of the food safety service is to protect public health and safety by ensuring that all food sold or prepared in the Borough is safe to eat.

Environment: None.

Community Safety: None.

Human Rights: None.

Equal Opportunities: Our food law enforcement service is applied to all food businesses in the borough, according to the risk they present to the public from food borne illness and disease.

Risk Assessment: No significant impact – the audit action plan can be delivered by operational amendments within existing resources.

Commentary:

1. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has a remit to oversee local authority food law enforcement to ensure appropriate local services are in place. In order to achieve this, the FSA carries out a number of audits each year focusing on specific areas of local authority food enforcement.
2. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council was selected for inclusion in an audit in September 2008 which focussed on overall organisation and management of the service, and all food law enforcement activities in relation to our database management, food premises inspections and internal monitoring arrangements. It was conducted against what is known as the Standard contained in the Framework Agreement, which is an agreement entered into between the FSA and all local authorities in 2001.
3. The final outcome of the audit is the seven point action plan shown at Appendix 1. Members are asked to note that a number of these actions are well in hand, or have already been achieved.
4. The auditors had no significant concerns with the delivery of food safety enforcement in Oadby and Wigston.
5. The auditors recognised that in February 2008, Leicestershire authorities had carried out an inter authority audit, which had generated its own action plan for our authority and which we were already working on. This helped to demonstrate to the auditors that we are proactive in our monitoring against the national good practice standards.
6. Although these audits do not result in a score or a rating, they are published on the FSA website at www.food.gov.uk/enforcement, and copies are also placed in the libraries of the Houses of Parliament, the British Library and the Copyright Library.
7. Overall officers found the audit to be a fair reflection of our food safety service and were pleased that a number of successful features of the service were recognised in the final report (see Appendix 2).
8. We are confident that the action plan points can be achieved within existing resources and that they will improve our documented procedures and monitoring arrangements. With Members' approval, these action points will be added to the food safety service plan targets for 2008/09.
9. A review of progress will be carried out by the FSA in six months' time and the outcome of this will be reported to Members.
10. Preparation for the audit was carried out by a team of officers led by Susan Price, Principal Environmental Health Officer, whose work before and during the audit made a significant contribution to our positive outcome.
11. Any Member wishing to see a copy of the full report can either access it through the FSA website (see paragraph 6) or obtain a copy from the Head of Environmental Health.

Action Plan for Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

Audit date: 16-17 September 2008

IMPROVEMENTS	BY (DATE)	TO ADDRESS RECOMMENDATION (INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	ACTION TAKEN
To improve the documented procedures to include the following:- (a) inspection and approval of approved establishments (b) Enforcement actions specific to approved premises (c) details on the types of general enforcement action that can be taken and when that should be taken	30/04/09 (to coincide with next review of Policies and Procedures	3.1.7 Ensure that documented procedures for the inspection and approval of approved establishments are developed and implemented, in addition to ensuring there are procedures for all available follow-up and enforcement actions, in order to cover the full range of food law enforcement activities, in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice and official guidance. [The Standard – 15.2]	Good practice examples have been sourced and are being used as guidance in developing the revision to the procedures.
Revised authorisation to be implemented following consultation with Barrister	30/03/2009	3.1.12(i) Ensure that officers are appropriately authorised for all relevant enforcement powers. [The Standard – 5.1]	Review of authorisation documents has now been commissioned on behalf of the Leicestershire Authorities.
Identification of training needs through training matrix and annual action plan to address those needs (existing Employee Development Interview system) and through the regular commercial meetings (6 per year). Update procedure to reflect new system	31/12/08	3.1.12(ii) Maintain and implement a documented training programme to ensure that officer and team training needs, in respect of food law enforcement, are met. [The Standard – 5.4]	Training matrix has now been produced. Some training needs have been identified.
To risk rate approved premises and inspect at a frequency determined by the Code of practice	Completed	3.3.8(i) Ensure that inspections of approved establishments are carried out at a frequency not less than that required by the Food Law Code of Practice. [The Standard – 7.1]	Premises have been risk rated and are being inspected at frequencies in line with the Code of practice

<p>To assess each premises at the next programmed inspection against its current approval, and to approve for the appropriate activities.</p> <p>To notify FSA of changes to the approvals</p>	30/06/09	3.3.8(ii) Review the approval documents for the Authority's product specific establishments to ensure that the extent of the approval is appropriate for the activities carried out at the premises. [The Standard – 7.2]	Timing of this action in line with next programmed inspection.
<p>Enhanced monitoring to ensure comprehensive details are being recorded.</p> <p>Amendments to the inspection forms to facilitate completion</p> <p>Use of inspection forms specific to Approved premises</p>	ongoing	3.3.8(iii) Maintain comprehensive records for all food premises including approved establishments information, and determination of compliance with legal requirements and details of action to be taken where non compliance was identified. [The Standard – 16.1]	<p>Approved Premises inspection forms have been introduced and will be utilised at the next programmed inspection in order to gather the comprehensive information on the premises concerned.</p> <p>Monitoring is now been undertaken</p>
<p>Revise monitoring procedure to include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) sampling and infectious disease work (ii) methodology for monitoring enforcement activity and (iii) the frequency of monitoring to be specified within the procedure 	31/12/08	3.4.7 Review and expand the documented monitoring procedure to ensure it covers quantitative and qualitative monitoring of the full range of food law enforcement activities, including details of the frequency, responsibilities and approach to internal monitoring. [The Standard – 19.1]	Some amendments to the procedure have already been made

Complimentary Points Noted by the Food Standards Agency in the Audit Report

1. Tightly managed inspections programme, ensuring that inspections were carried out as required by the Food Law Code of Practice.
2. Comprehensive food service plan for 2008/09, fully in line with the Food Standards Agency's service planning guidance and approved by Members.
3. Effective procedures and arrangements in place to ensure the food premises database is up to date.
4. Increased inspection frequency introduced for high risk food businesses had resulted in improvement in compliance and a consequent reduction in risk rating of a number of businesses.
5. Authorisation procedures in place to ensure that officers were authorised in line with their qualifications, experience and competency.
6. Effective system to ensure review at the appropriate time of the food safety policies and procedures required by the Food Law Code of Practice.
7. Comprehensive enforcement policy, including detailed guidance on the new Regulators Compliance Code.