

Select Committee on the Environment 10th November 2008

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Food Service Plan 2008/2009

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee on progress with the activities detailed in the Directorate of the Urban Environment Food Service Plan 2008/2009.

Background

2. Local authorities are required by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to produce and implement an annual Food Service Plan that sets out how the authority will deliver food law enforcement functions to ensure that national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally.
3. The Food Service is located within the Planning and Environmental Health Division of the Directorate of the Urban Environment and provided by officers within the Food and Occupational Safety (FOS) and Trading Standards sections.
4. The service consists of inspections of food businesses to ensure compliance with food safety and food standards legislation, investigation of complaints relating to food and premises, sampling of foods for microbiological and compositional requirements, the investigation of food borne disease as well as educational and promotional activities.
5. Delivery of the service contributes to the Council Plan themes of Safety, Environment, Caring and Quality Service Matters. The Community Strategy themes of creating a prosperous borough, promoting well-being and good health and safeguarding the environment are contributed to by ensuring the safety of food produced and consumed within the borough, encouraging healthy eating and reducing health inequalities.
6. The current year's Food Service Plan was brought to the Select Committee on the Environment on 24th June 2008.
7. A summary of the activities in the Food Service Plan 2008-09 completed at the half-year stage is contained in Appendix 1 of this report. However, items of note include:
 - Launch of the "Scores on the Doors" scheme which publishes the results of food hygiene and safety inspections on the Council's website. At the half year stage, approx 900 out of the 2,100 food premises in the borough

are listed with 78% being rated as satisfactory or better (achieving 2* or higher). The scheme is proving to be very popular with members of the public with up to 2,000 users accessing the scheme each month since April 2008.

- Continuing delivery of the Dudley Food for Health Awards with 32 Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards being made, exceeding the LAA target at the half year stage.
- High levels of microbiological and compositional sampling have been maintained
- A six month trial of a draft Dudley MBC Food Policy, which commits to providing healthy eating choices whenever food is provided for staff or visitors to Council premises, is underway within the Directorate of the Urban Environment. In preparation, healthier choices have been made available on hospitality menus and where food is sold from cafes or vending machines, for example in the Leisure Centres. A Dudley MBC Food Policy will contribute to meeting the priorities of key strategies which promote health, including workplace health, and the reduction of obesity.
- Food labelling lessons delivered in schools have continued to be popular. A further lesson relating to nutritional information has been trialled in a junior school and is being delivered to schools as a follow up to previous food labelling lessons.
- A number of food alerts requiring action have been received from the FSA this year. These have related to counterfeit alcohol and contaminated milk products from China. Some counterfeit alcohol has been found within the borough and investigations are continuing.

8. At the half year stage there is some under achievement on high and low risk food safety inspections. This has been due to a number of factors including an increase in the number of re-visit inspections being made to deal with underperforming 1* and no star premises. Following the cessation of funding from the Food Standards Agency to train food business proprietors to implement written systems of food safety management, the inspection time for premises which have not yet implemented a system or where there are new proprietors has had to be extended to assist proprietors to meet their legal obligations and this has impacted on the number of inspections completed. However the 100% inspection targets will be delivered by the year end.

Finance

9. Financial implications from implementing the Food Service Plan are met from within existing budgets.

Law

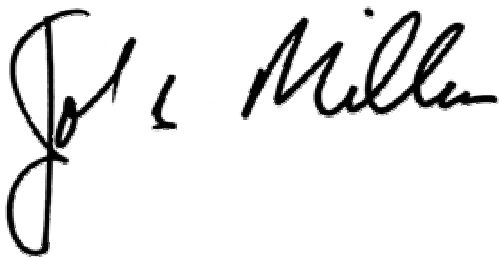
10. The Council's duties with respect to protecting consumer interests in relation to food safety and standards are set out under the Food Safety Act 1990.
11. Powers to enable the Food Standards Agency to monitor and audit local authorities are contained in the Food Standards Act 1999.

Equality Impact

12. The proposals in this report do not impact on relevant groups or conflict with the Council's commitment to equality. Account is taken of the diversity of the ethnic origins of the local food business proprietors and efforts made to assist those whose first language is not English, for example by providing interpreters to accompany inspectors where necessary and by providing advice literature in a range of languages.
13. The Food Service Plan contributes towards reducing health inequalities for all residents in the borough by promoting healthy eating. In particular, healthy eating is encouraged for children and young persons and also elderly people through the Dudley Food for Health Award. The vast majority of premises achieving the award are schools, nurseries and residential care homes.

Recommendation

14. It is recommended that progress with the delivery of service within the Food Service Plan 2008-09 at the half-year stage be noted by members.



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List of Background Papers

Food Service Plan 2008/2009

APPENDIX 1

FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2008/2009

Progress up to 30th September 2008

<u>ACTION</u>	<u>HALF YEAR TARGET</u>	<u>ACHIEVED</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
High risk food safety inspections	100% (463)	87% (403)	Reasons for underachievement: (i) Increasing number of follow up inspections to deal with 1* and no star premises (ii) Inspection time increased to assist proprietors to prepare documented Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) systems (iii) Smoke free inspections being carried out at all premises visited. The 100% target is programmed to be achieved by year-end.
Low risk food safety inspections	100% (76)	84% (64)	As above
Implement a "Scores on the Doors" scheme on the Council's website to publish the results of food hygiene & safety inspections	Implement in April 2008	Achieved	Scheme launched April 2008, backdated to January 2008 and updated monthly. All high risk premises will be listed by July 2009. At the half year stage 898 premises are listed in the following categories: 5* (excellent): 80 premises (9%) 4* (very good): 190 premises (21%) 3* (good): 266 premises (30%) 2* (broadly compliant): 165 premises (18%) 1* (poor): 136 premises (15%) no stars (very poor): 61 premises (7%)
High risk food standards inspections	100% (8)	88% (7)	Underachievement due to complaint workload and litigation.
Medium risk food standards inspections	95% (150)	91% (137)	As above.
Microbiological food samples	156	223 (143%)	

Compositional food samples	100	113	Includes involvement in regional sampling projects (CenTSA)
Food complaints (FOS)	Approx 100	78 received	Complaints relate to foreign bodies, microbiological or chemical contamination.
Food complaints (Trading Standards)	Approx 60	56 received	Most complaints relate to out of date foods
Food premises complaints (FOS)	Approx. 100	112 received	
Food advice enquiries (FOS)	Approx 125	146 received	Includes advice requests from businesses and members of the public.
Food Alerts	Action all received as appropriate	34 received	All alerts are appropriately actioned; this may involve contacting food businesses and/or issue of press releases.
Food borne disease notifications	Approx. 250	259 received including 162 campylobacter notifications	Campylobacter notifications dealt with by postal advice. All others require officer visit/contact.
Dudley Food for Health Awards Issued	Local Area Agreement target (LAA) is 60 Awards for the year	32 awards given (4 Platinum, 15 Gold, 9 Silver, 4 Bronze Awards)	Delivered in conjunction with PCT partners. Award encourages premises to promote healthy eating whilst complying with food hygiene regulations.
Implement a Dudley Food Policy to ensure that healthy eating choices are always available whenever food is provided for staff or visitors to Council premises	Trial a Dudley MBC Food Policy within Directorate of the Urban Environment	Six month trial commenced Sept 2008	This is a key action of the Dudley Food for Health Action Plan. After evaluation of the trial, consideration will be given to extending Council wide, subject to approval. In the longer term, the aim is to have a shared policy with Dudley PCT and Dudley Group of Hospitals who have also implemented similar healthy eating policies.
Educational and promotional work undertaken	Contribute to National Food Safety Week	Event held at Dudley Council Plus in June 2008, giving information &	

	<p>Deliver food labelling lessons to years 5 , 6 and 11 pupils</p>	<p>advice to visitors and demonstrating Scores on the Doors scheme</p> <p>9 lessons have been delivered. A follow up lesson on nutritional labelling has been developed.</p>	<p>These lessons are a key action of the Dudley Food for Health Action Plan.</p>
<p>Prosecutions/formal cautions concluded</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Cases include legal proceedings against 2 premises for poor food hygiene standards, prosecution of a butcher's for offences in relation to disposal of animal by-products and a formal caution of a restaurant proprietor in relation to a food poisoning incident. All prosecutions and formal cautions are published on the Council's website.</p>