

Cabinet – June 2013

The Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for the year 2013/14

Portfolio: Councillor Ali, Public Health and Protection

Related portfolios: None

Service: Regulatory Services

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: No

1. Summary

- 1.1 Through the work of its Environmental Health and Trading Standards Divisions Regulatory Services ensures that food produced, prepared or sold in the Borough is safe and without risk to health, is correctly labelled and meets appropriate compositional and microbiological standards. The ongoing investigation into horse meat contamination both locally, nationally and internationally has shown that controls over the way in which food is produced and distributed are more important than ever.
- 1.2 The Food Law Enforcement Service Plan attached as **Appendix A** explains how the work of these Divisions seeks to achieve this and **Appendix B** sets out the staffing resources including potential shortfalls available to the Authority.
- 1.3 The proposed Plan describes how the Authority will enforce statutory controls and monitor food, premises and personnel in a structured manner. The Plan will also be used as the basis for any inspection or audit by the Food Standards Agency. As the Plan forms part of the Council's Policy Framework it is required to be approved by elected members.
- 1.4 With the transfer of Public Health functions into the local authority, issues around health and well being are at the centre of policy development. The link between the health of residents and the local economy is seen as a key issue in Walsall and is enshrined in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Sustainable Communities Strategy. The aims and objectives of the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan, contribute significantly to both the health and economy agendas.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for the year 2013/14.

3. Report detail

- 3.1 The provision of safe food and water and the prevention of outbreaks of food and water borne disease is a fundamental principle of protecting public health. Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers work directly with businesses and residents and are constantly striving to provide a balance between the economic success of the business against the need to always protect the health of customers and indeed staff.
- 3.2 The Food Law Enforcement Service Plan sets out the Council's commitment to Food Safety Enforcement for the year ahead. The plan also records the outturn against last year's work programme.
- 3.3 The Plan includes information about the service as well as demonstrating a balance between enforcement action and education of traders.
- 3.4 Pursuant to the Food Standards Act 1999 the Food Standards Agency requires Local Authorities to produce a Food Law Enforcement Service Plan which identifies its strategy and the resources required to fulfil its Food Safety function each year.

4. Council priorities

- 4.1 The work of Regulatory Services fits neatly within the Council's priorities as it is fundamentally involved with liaising with businesses of all sizes to ensure the work they undertake and products they produce are safe both in terms of the impact on their employees and the health of residents across the whole life course.
- 4.2 The service is in a position whereby it can support business by providing face to face, timely and competent advice on a range of complex subjects to ensure they operate correctly, efficiently and lawfully. Responsible, profitable businesses that have longevity are key to ensuring the economy recovers and that local people can stay in employment or get back into employment as quickly as possible.
- 4.2 Whilst the work within the plan involves the protection of health and the improvement and profitability of business it also recognises that some individuals or traders will place profit before safety and therefore the service has a range of legal sanctions available to it to tackle what are basically criminal behaviours.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 The Plan sets out targets for the year ahead. Through the regular reviews built into the service planning process any performance issues can be identified and acted upon before they have a detrimental effect on service delivery.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The service is currently funded from within the council's cash limited budget.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 By virtue of section 12 of the Food Standards Act 1999 the Food Standards Agency has the function of monitoring the performance of enforcement authorities in enforcing relevant legislation. That function includes, in particular, setting standards of performance (whether for enforcement authorities generally or for particular authorities) in relation to the enforcement of any relevant legislation. The Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities is the mechanism by which the Agency puts into effect the powers contained in the Food Standards Act 1999. It provides for the following:

- published local service plans to increase transparency of local enforcement services;
- clear agreed standards for local authority feed and food law enforcement;
- local authority monitoring data used to select authorities for audit where there are concerns over enforcement performance; and
- an audit scheme aimed at securing improvements and sharing good practice.

Any plan produced by the Authority should comply with the Framework Agreement.

- 7.2 The Agency's audits of local authority feed and food law enforcement are conducted against the requirements of the Framework Agreement and, more specifically, a document called the Standard. The Standard sets out the minimum levels of performance expected in relation to the full range of a local authority's feed and food law enforcement activity, including food hygiene, food standards, imported food and feeding stuffs law enforcement. The Standard draws together the obligations on local authority feed and food law enforcement services arising from legislation and related guidance, and codes of practice. This includes local authority performance in relation to inspections, sampling, complaints, formal enforcement, promotion and advice to business.

- 7.3 The Food Law Enforcement Service plan adopts parts of the "service plan template" set out in the Framework Agreement. The work of the Division pertinent to this report is undertaken pursuant to the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990 and associated codes of practice, the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006 and any other such regulations developing from the European Communities Act 1972

The Food Safety Act 1990 states that every food authority shall enforce and execute within their area the provisions of this Act with respect to which the duty is not imposed expressly or by necessary implication on some other authority.

8. Property implications

- 8.1 There are no property implications arising from this Report.

9. Health and wellbeing implications

- 9.1 The purpose of this Plan and the primary objective of the work of Regulatory Services is to ensure that the health and wellbeing of individuals and indeed communities is protected. The fact the service has a direct link to both business, residents and partner organisations also places it in a strong position in terms of added value work in terms of interactions on such key issues as obesity, smoking, alcohol and safety at work. Failure to undertake this work would place residents at threat of ill health, disease and particularly for vulnerable persons the possibility of preventable death.

10. Staffing implications

- 10.1 Although the work contained within this report is managed each year based on the resources available to the Service it is unlikely in the current economic climate that we can continue to maintain all aspects of the service at the levels we do currently. This does mean that we will need to consider over the course of 2013/14 new approaches to the way in which the service operates and where we believe certain areas of work cannot be effectively undertaken that we acknowledge this both internally and in communication with the Food Standards Agency.

11. Equality implications

- 11.1 These proposals seek to benefit all parts of the community equally and will be consistently applied across the Borough. Food sampling programmes and support for local businesses will where possible reflect local needs. Where there are food businesses or consumers with particular language, cultural or other needs these can be addressed with reference to good practice that is shared amongst local authorities within the West Midlands and also nationwide.

12. Consultation

- 12.1 Regulatory Services carry out customer satisfaction surveys to gauge how satisfied businesses are with the way in which they have been treated by Officers. The Environmental Health Service is also part of the West Midlands Food Liaison Group consisting of representatives from the 7 West Midlands Authorities and where good practice, principles of enforcement and education

and joint or collaborative work is discussed. Upon approval of the Plan it will be uploaded onto the Authority's web site and made available for public comment.

Background papers

- Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement
- Marmot Review.
- Sustainable Communities Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Author

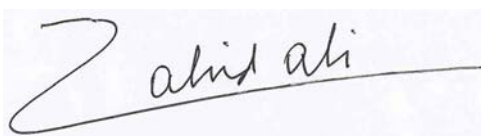
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11 June 2013

Councillor Zahid Ali
Public Health and Protection



11 June 2013



Walsall Council

Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2013/14

DRAFT

CONTENTS

1.0 SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Profile of Walsall MBC
- 2.2 Organisational Structure
- 2.3 Scope of the Food Service
- 2.4 Enforcement Policies.

3.0 SERVICE DELIVERY

- 3.1 Food Premises – Hygiene Inspections
- 3.2 Enforcement activities 2011/12
- 3.3 Food Hygiene: Activities for 2011/12
- 3.4 Food Premises – Standards and Feedingstuffs Inspections
- 3.5 Food and Feedingstuffs Complaints
- 3.6 Food and Feedingstuffs Sampling
- 3.7 Composition and Labelling
- 3.8 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks of Food Poisoning and Food/Water Related Infectious Disease
- 3.9 Food Safety Incidents
- 3.10 Advice to Businesses
- 3.11 National Liaison Work

4.0 RESOURCES

- 4.1 Financial Resources
- 4.2 Staffing Allocation
- 4.3 Staff Development

5.0 QUALITY ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Quality Assessment

6.0 REVIEW

- 6.1 Review against service objectives
- 6.2 Variation from Service Plan

7.0 WORK PLAN FOR THE FOOD SAFETY TEAM 2011/12

1.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FOOD REGULATORY SERVICE

AIMS

- To protect the health of the local population from the spread of preventable, communicable illness by ensuring that high standards of food safety are maintained in food premises.
- To protect public health nationally and internationally by ensuring that manufacturers of food within the Borough comply with regulatory standards
- To use the skills and opportunities available to the service to promote and implement key aspects of the Health and Well Being Strategy and the Marmot principles enshrined in the Fair Society, Healthy Lives report.
- To act within the standards set in the service's Enforcement Policy when considering the most appropriate course of action in response to non compliance.
- To instil a culture that supports a thriving local economy, where existing companies and jobs are sustained and the potential for new jobs optimised.

OBJECTIVES

- To carry out a programme of routine inspections of food premises concentrating on those premises of highest risk.
- To respond to requests for advice or assistance from new businesses, existing businesses or those taking part in the Home or Primary Authority schemes and support them in achieving legal compliance.
- To publish Food Hygiene ratings on the national database empowering consumers to make informed choices as to where they buy food and encouraging businesses to improve standards and become more profitable.
- To ensure that food offered or exposed for sale is fit for human consumption and to expedite the removal of hazardous products from the food chain.
- To ensure that food promotes public health by complying with compositional standards and labelling and is free from harmful contaminants.
- To eliminate fraud and substitution from food manufactured in the borough and to respond to complaints and intelligence about fraudulent activities in the food supply chain
- To investigate cases of communicable disease, including the investigation of practices and processes identified as sources of infection at commercial premises
- To investigate complaints relating to food and the conditions of food premises and where necessary take appropriate enforcement action

- To ensure procedures comply with the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement and that all food service work is carried out in accordance with relevant codes of practice, quality systems and the service's enforcement policy.
- To undertake a microbiological food sampling programme at manufacturing premises and in connection with outbreaks of disease or service requests.
- To and undertake a food sampling programme to ensure compliance with quality and labelling requirements.

1.1 LINKS TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVES AND PLANS

The Council has published a Sustainable Communities Strategy 'The Walsall Plan' for the period 2013 - 2016 as a key element of its performance framework. The plan sets out the council's vision for the borough, its aims, objectives and strategic priorities and is agreed by all elected members at full Council.

The vision as set out in the Sustainable Communities Strategy is for Walsall to be "a great place to live, learn, work and invest"

The Plan has been informed by a range of information including the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Police Strategic Assessment, the residents survey "Your Place, Your Well Being" and importantly from a national perspective the Marmot Review "Fair Society, Healthy Lives"

The Plan also considers that the wellbeing of individuals and communities is what matters most at the present time and getting people into work and keeping them there is fundamental to ensuring well being.

For 2013 - 2016 the Councils priorities as set out in The Plan are:

- Supporting businesses to thrive and supporting local people into work.
- Improving health including well being and independence for older people.
- Creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities.
- Improving safeguarding, learning and the life chances for children and young people.

These priorities provide a focus for the whole council and the Food Service directly supports and contributes to them by ensuring the provision of the following:

- Supporting new and existing businesses to not only survive but thrive despite difficult economic conditions.
- Continue to introduce an element of competition into regulatory standards through the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – empowering residents to choose which business should receive their custom.

- To confront those businesses or individuals who seek to gain an unfair advantage over competitors by not complying with regulations and therefore putting their staff and customers at risk.
- Ensuring that unsafe practices and foodstuffs are identified and robustly tackled to ensure the health of the public is protected therefore preventing ill health that places a negative burden on the economy and peoples lives
- To give consumers confidence when shopping in Walsall
- To use the skills and opportunities available to the service to promote and implement key aspects of the Health and Well Being for example through Healthy Retailer Awards, Healthy Workplaces Awards, Making Every Contact Count and tobacco control/smoking cessation projects.
- To assist in preventing outbreaks of communicable disease and where such disease outbreaks take place using the statutory powers available to control and stop their spread as well as bringing to justice those who may be responsible.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 PROFILE OF WALSALL MBC

Walsall is the northern-most of the Boroughs in the Black Country region and consists of six towns with a total population of 269,300 (2011 National Census). One side of the Borough is bordered by similar Metropolitan Districts while the other side is bordered by the rural Shire Districts of Staffordshire.

The western side of the Borough is a mixture of industrial and residential areas although much of the traditional heavy engineering has gone, being replaced by light engineering and service industries.

The eastern side of the Borough is much greener with substantial public open space, agricultural land and some light industry. Despite the presence of a number of dairy cattle there are no milk processing plants in the Borough

Walsall has a variety of manufacturing and service industries and is an operational base for a number of food wholesalers. There are also several companies producing a variety of food products which are distributed throughout the UK.

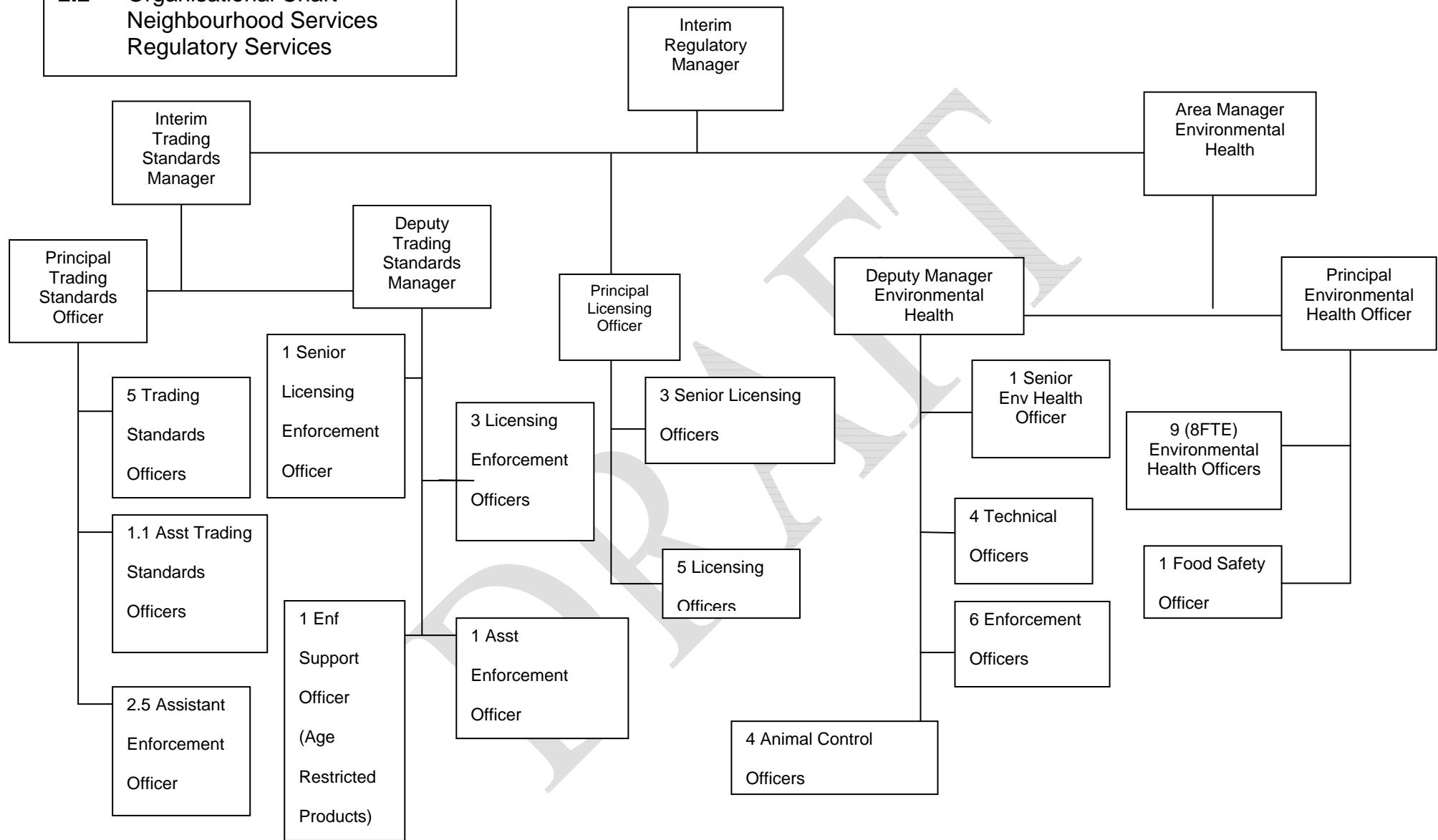
Over 17% of Walsall's working age population are not working and dependent on out-of-work benefits. 19.5% of Walsall's adult population have no qualifications. Walsall has been ranked as the 30th most deprived English local Authority. It is therefore clear to see how the Council's Vision and focus on work as a way of increasing well being are of key importance and how the food service can assist in bridging the link between health and economy.

Of an overall total of 2224 food businesses registered within the Borough. This includes 16 premises approved to produce products of animal origin for distribution throughout the UK and Europe and 41 butchers. The largest single type of premises are grocery shops (136) with hot food takeaway as a grouping accounting for 275 premises – the largest single type being those serving British foods.

There is one small-scale Halal poultry slaughterer operating throughout the year; food safety enforcement in this premises is undertaken by the Food Standards Agency. There are no red meat slaughterhouses. There are six registered agricultural feeding stuffs establishments.

The Borough is ethnically diverse, with 23.1% of Walsall's inhabitants coming from minority ethnic communities. In some wards, up to 70% of the population are from BME groups. Many people in these communities either own, or are employed in small food businesses.

2.2 Organisational Chart
Neighbourhood Services
Regulatory Services



2.3 SCOPE OF THE FOOD SERVICE

The enforcement of food related legislation is a joint responsibility between Environmental Health and Trading Standards, the former dealing with safety issues and the latter with quality standards and labelling. All services are provided by the Authority's own Officers.

The **Environmental Health** service provides the following services:

- Food safety/hygiene inspections
- Infectious disease investigations, (including food poisoning)
- Microbiological food sampling
- Food safety advice incorporating Safer Food Better Business
- Food and food hygiene complaint investigations
- Drinking water supply - monitoring and assessment
- Promotional and educational activities and initiatives based around food safety and hygiene
- Adherence to the National Food Hygiene Rating System
- Animal Health and Welfare in the domestic, commercial and agricultural sectors including licensing associated with animals and premises.
- Nuisance complaints arising from commercial premises, odour, noise, waste, drainage etc.
- Comments as a statutory body in the respect of Planning applications and Licence applications.
- Paying for and arranging for cremations and burials where no arrangements have been made to bury the dead.
- Monitoring the exhumation of buried human remains in terms of disease control and healthy and safety
- Health and Safety at Work regulation including accident investigation and the registration of skin piercing activities.

The **Trading Standards** service provides the following services:

1. Food standards inspections (including feeding stuffs inspections)
2. The investigation of complaints in relation to food labelling and composition
3. Food and feeding stuff sampling for compositional and labelling conformity
4. The investigation of complaints in relation to composition and labelling of animal feed and feeding stuffs
5. Food standards advice to business
6. Food standards education to consumers

The full range of Trading Standards legislation is delivered alongside the food standards service.

Delivery of the Food Regulatory Service	
Service Delivery Point	Civic Centre, Walsall, WS1 1TP
Hours of Opening	Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 5.15pm Friday 8.45pm to 4.45pm
Telephone numbers	EH 01922 653010 TS 0845 330 3313
E mail	foodsafety@walsall.gov.uk trading_standards@walsall.gov.uk
Website	www.walsall.gov.uk

2.4 ENFORCEMENT POLICIES.

An Enforcement Policy is in place for Regulatory Services which has been approved by full Council. Below is the link to the Enforcement Policy on the Walsall Council web site.

http://www.walsall.gov.uk/enforcement_policy

3.0 SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 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 high and medium risk premises every year.

An inspection involves assessing the knowledge of the food business operator and the practices and procedures in place at the premises. The physical condition of the premises and equipment including cleanliness is also an important part of an inspection.

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 below. We use a purposefully designed database for logging and tracking our inspections and other activities.

Inspection Profile for the Year Beginning 1st April 2013

RISK CATEGORY	A	B	C	D	E	U	TOTAL
FREQUENCY OF VISITS	6 mths	12 mths	18 mths	2 yrs	Alternative intervention strategy		
INSPECTIONS SCHEDULED	20 x 2 40	187	561	114	49	0	951

Revisions in the Code of Practice give us the opportunity to deal with low risk premises by means other than an inspection. We will continue to review our strategy in relation to these premises through the year.

Revisits are made where there are immediate concerns about food safety. The Environmental Health Division has a structured risk based criteria to enable revisits to be prioritised. This was formulated through the West Midlands Food Liaison Group

Our procedures state that we will issue Hygiene Improvement Notices if there are serious concerns about food or where there is a failure to adequately implement a Food Hygiene Management System. These legal notices ensure that improvements are made within a reasonable time scale.

A Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice which immediately closes a premises will be served where there is an imminent risk of injury to health. Common reasons for closing premises are the discovery of pest infestations (mice, cockroaches), the absence of water; or very poor control over food hazards and/or cleaning. Voluntary closure measures are also available but this course of action must be instigated by the Food Business Operator.

During 2012/13 the Food Safety service dealt with:

- 1006 inspections
- 116 complaints about food eaten or purchased being unfit
- 109 new business advisory visits or discussions
- Registered or confirmed existing registration of 298 Food Businesses.
- 93 advisory visits or discussions with existing businesses
- 267 Infectious disease notifications
- 614 Planning and Licensing consultations
- 120 complaints of waste at commercial premises
- 178 complaints of noise at commercial premises

Appendix B provides a breakdown of the demands on the Food Service in terms of staff resources.

3.2 Enforcement 2012/13

6 premises were closed using Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices

3 premises were closed voluntarily to improve standards before reopening

43 Hygiene Improvement Notices served on 29 different premises requiring improvement to standards at their premises

13 Health and Safety Improvement Notices were served at 9 food premises to protect employees or customers

2 Health and Safety Prohibition Notices were served at food premises to protect staff from imminent risks

Notices requiring arrangements made to adequately dispose of waste served against 3 food premises

Noise abatement notices served against 4 licensed (food) premises

3.3 FOOD HYGIENE: ACTIVITIES FOR 2013/14

National Food Hygiene Rating System

Walsall Council implemented this national system on the 1st April 2011 following a successful bid to the Food Standards Agency of around £8000 to assist with implementation. After two years of operation we have a clearer idea of how the rating Scheme relates to businesses in Walsall with

328	Rated 5 Very Good	41% increase on last years figure
308	Rated 4 Good	47% increase on last years figure
336	Rated 3 Generally Satisfactory	93% increase on last years figure
130	Rated 2 Improvement Necessary	106% increase on last years figure
180	Rated 1 Major Improvement Necessary	5% increase on last years figure
10	Urgent Improvement Necessary	23% decrease on last years figure

It is good news that despite the continued financial pressure on businesses that the overall trend is for improvement with the only decrease in numbers being in the worst category and 75% of premises are at least satisfactory. The service will aim to have year on year improvements in the percentage of compliant businesses.

Microbiological Food Sampling

In terms of Microbiological Food Sampling 2012/13 proved how sampling can effectively show food manufacturers and producers flaws in their Food Safety Management Systems that could lead to the growth of food borne micro organisms responsible for disease. We will continue where resources allow to undertake more reactive sampling in line with the other West Midlands Councils or where our own officers wish to more critically review the systems of premises in the Borough not normally covered by the proactive sampling programme.

Alternative Intervention Strategy Food Standards and Safety

The number of inspections and amount of work coming into the service remains at a high level and it is becoming clear that sustaining this may not be possible or desirable. It is unclear how future financial settlements may affect the Council and in particular Environmental Health and Trading Standards however consideration of new approaches to how we work are inevitable.

Environmental Health Staff have recently attended a 1 day training event at Wolverhampton Council who have pioneered a new approach to food hygiene interventions. This approach works on the principles of a more mutually cooperative approach to interventions whereby the needs and desires of the food business operator

are at the heart of the intervention and the inspector assists, coaches, monitors and ultimately approves the way in which a business produces food.

The principle requires a slightly different mindset from staff and a new work allocation model for management. It is expected that to consider how this could be effectively implemented in Walsall will require a progressive timetable of work based around the subjects below.

1. Ask businesses what their view of our current inspection technique and regime is and understand and respond to their views positively.
2. Understand our own processes, where inefficiencies lie and what 'time stealers' can be eradicated from the system.
3. Discuss with colleagues such as Regeneration and Public Health how their resources could be used to add value to the inspection process i.e. health improvements, small business grant applications etc.
4. Trial new techniques, paperwork, systems, agile working, IT.
5. Review the success or otherwise of the trial and report back through future Food Law Service Plans or through other member forums any change in direction deemed necessary.

This process and any outcomes from it needs to be run in consultation with the Food Standards Agency so that they are comfortable with the development of the service and satisfied we still comply with our statutory obligations.

Food Safety Week

The service intends to contribute to the National Food Safety Week campaign during June 2013. This year the campaign focuses on safe picnics and hand washing. This incorporates aspects of the national project on home kitchen safety but also follows up on incidents last year where residents visited a park where cattle had grazed and contracted E-coli.

Officer Training

Ensuring officers are trained and competent is a key issue for the service. If competencies aren't maintained, or lapse, it can bring the Officer and therefore the Council into disrepute in legal proceedings. Training is often costly and with restrictions on spending and reductions in budgets new ways of accessing training need to be found.

Consideration of free, subsidised or low cost training in collaboration with other Councils or Partners will always be considered.

3.4 FOOD PREMISES – STANDARDS AND FEEDINGSTUFFS

Trading Standards Profile of Food Premises – April 2013

FOOD CATEGORY	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	TOTAL
NO. OF PREMISES	6	0	27	3	0	42	585	999	0	19	1681

***National Food Category Descriptions** (applicable to the trading standards profile only)

A	Primary Producer	F	Distributor
B	Slaughterhouse	G	Retailer
C	Manufacturer	H	Caterer
D	Packer	I	Materials Supplier
E	Importer/Exporter	J	Manufacturing Retailer

Food Standards interventions are programmed in relation to a risk based assessment of premises established in line with the Food Law Code of Practice. Traditionally, all food premises have been subject to food standards inspections. The Code of Practice now lays out alternative interventions which Local Authorities may adopt. These allow authorised Officers to use their professional judgement to apply a proportionate level of regulatory and enforcement activity to each food business. Interventions will be applied in a risk-based manner so that resources are directed at those businesses that present the greatest risk.

High risk food premises will continue to receive programmed food standards inspections or audits.

Medium risk premises that are broadly compliant can be dealt with by “other official controls” on alternate planned inspections (monitoring, surveillance, verification, sampling as part of wider control).

Low risk premises will be subject to alternative enforcement strategies, such as sampling, trader information, advice, complaint related inspections or the use of self assessment questionnaires.

The results of alternative enforcement strategies will be assessed by a qualified food standards officer, who may initiate a further intervention if appropriate.

RISK CATEGORY	TOTAL PREMISES	TARGET NO. OF INTERVENTIONS
High	67	67
Medium	1067	213*
Low	372	74
Totals	1506	354

The required target is 50% (533) but due to reduced staffing levels this is not achievable and so this is the realistic delivery target.

As required by the Code of Practice new food establishments that come within the scope of food standards will be subject to an initial inspection following which intervention ratings for the establishment will be determined.

In 2012/13 the following actions were undertaken by Trading Standards Officers:

- 1 90 food standards warnings were issued by Trading Standards Officers during the inspection of food premises. By the end of the year 93% of those food premises that were inspected had achieved food standards compliance.
- 2 33 food complaints were received by the Trading Standards Service. These were resolved by a variety of enforcement methods which ranged from FSA and Home Authority Referrals to business advice and written warnings.
- 3 20% of the 92 food samples submitted for compositional and chemical analysis were reported as incorrect. This resulted in 7 FSA national alerts and product recalls, 6 officer cautions and 5 referrals for action by other Authorities.
- 4 Walsall Trading Standards was selected by the FSA as one of 28 UK Authorities to take part in a grant funded sampling programme investigating the presence of horse meat in minced beef products from local retailers, caterers and wholesalers.

Additional sampling was also carried out at home authority companies, schools and the Manor Hospital.

Out of the 33 samples submitted for DNA analysis 3 were found to contain horse meat. Two of these, meat balls and minced beef, contained less than 1% horse DNA and were subject to a national recall and a co-ordinated response from Trading Standards and the FSA. The minced beef, which was supplied to Walsall Catering Services had already been withdrawn from all Walsall schools and other authority outlets as a precautionary measure.

The third incorrect sample was a beef burger containing 7.3 % horse DNA. It had been purchased by officers from a local caterer, via a local wholesaler and Birmingham manufacturer. The product was recalled and investigations by Walsall, Birmingham and the FSA are ongoing.

Trading Standards Officers also carried out traceability inspections at approved meat plants to ensure horse meat was not entering the supply chain within Walsall.

- 5 A Survey of 16 takeaway meals that were described as containing almonds found that, in fact, 5 contained peanuts and no almonds. When the meals were ordered the business stated that no peanuts were present. This could have potentially fatal consequences for a consumer with a peanut allergy. Further investigation indicated that instead of purchasing almond powder, restaurateurs were using a cheaper ground peanut mix. Written warnings were issued to the businesses and further surveillance is planned.
- 6 24 off-licences and convenience stores were inspected for illicit alcohol. The sale of such alcohol can pose a serious risk to human health. Alcohol seized in similar operations across the region was found to be contaminated with high levels of methanol and chloroform, the presence of which renders the drink unsafe for human consumption. Within Walsall 5 premises were found to be selling Smirnoff

Vodka with a counterfeit duty stamp. Investigations established that this was genuine alcohol intended for export and did not pose a food safety risk.

- 7 A grant was obtained from the Food Standards Agency to carry out Feed Hygiene inspections at food businesses that place waste food into the animal feed chain. Training for officers was also provided. This is a new area of work for trading standards and resulted in increased business awareness and significant improvements in the procedures and hygiene of waste food intended for animal feed.

3.5 FOOD AND FEEDINGSTUFFS COMPLAINTS

The Authority investigates complaints concerning food produced, stored, distributed, handled, consumed or intended for human consumption within the Borough. Officers act to ensure that food is without risk to the health or safety of the public; it is correctly labelled and meets appropriate compositional or quality standards.

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 and team leaders regularly monitor progress.

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT FOOD, PREMISES AND PERSONNEL			
Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Number of complaints	258 EH 89 TS	181 EH 95 TS	331 EH 33 TS

3.6 FOOD AND FEEDINGSTUFFS SAMPLING

Microbiological Sampling

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

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

An annual sampling programme is produced with a target of 200 microbiological food samples to be taken for examination. Microbiological examinations will be carried out under the free allocation from Public Health England using Good Hope Hospital in Sutton Coldfield. The samples are taken by the Food Safety Officer; other Officers are authorised and can take samples if necessary. The food sampling programme links with the LGR sampling programme as well as taking account of local trends and needs.

During 2012/13 the Microbiological Sampling programme identified harmful micro organisms including food poisoning bacteria in food manufactured or processed in the Borough for sale locally, nationally and internationally.

Prompt action by Environmental Health Staff working alongside the Food Business Operators led to improvements in practices to ensure outbreaks of disease were prevented.

Sampling was undertaken to ascertain the safety of vacuum packed meats with an unusually long shelf life provided by one of the boroughs manufacturers. The sampling provided evidence that the long shelf life was allowing the growth of microorganisms which could pose a health risk. The manufacturer has now reduced the shelf life to a more acceptable standard thereby significantly reducing any risk to the consumer.

At four premises introduction of ingredients or temperature control of ingredients at key stages was identified as allowing growth of microorganisms with the potential to cause a health risk. Working with each of the businesses in making alterations to their practices has resolved these issues satisfactorily.

At two premises personal hygiene issues in relation to the production of food was identified as a likely cause of sample failures and coaching has been given in improving practices to prevent further issues.

The Food Liaison Group surveys identified some temperature control issues in pies, pasties, samosas that have been rectified with businesses.

Food Sampling Programme 2013/14

Hospitals

The hospitals have their own sampling regime and rarely fail any tests undertaken. Therefore it has been decided to prioritise the Manufacturers and reactive sampling ahead of the Hospitals this year. Should time and resources allow some sampling may take place toward the end of the year or if there are concerns or complaints received.

Hospital	Address	Due
Manor Hospital CPU	Moat Road, Walsall	Own sampling regime
Dorothy Pattison Hospital	Alumwell Close, Walsall	Own sampling regime
Bloxwich Hospital	Reeves Street, Bloxwich	Receives food from the Manor Hospital

Food Manufacturers and Manufacturers Selling Mainly by Retail

Company	Address	Food
Gorman's Pork Pies	48 Central Drive, Bloxwich, Walsall	Pork Pies
MSEC Foods	Unit 64, Morgan Close, Willenhall,	Meat pies
Midland Chilled Foods Ltd	Stringes Lane, Willenhall.	Meat pies
Midland Sandwich Co.	Bridgeman Street, Walsall.	Scotch eggs
T C Morris	81 Walsall Street, Willenhall.	Pork pies
Piquant Ltd	Willenhall Lane, Bloxwich	Mayonnaise
Coopers	195 Walsall Road, Darlaston	Cooked meats
A E Poxon	Lichfield Road, Brownhills	Cooked meats and sausages
Madani Frozen Foods	Brineton Street, Walsall	Kebabs, sausages, Asian snacks
The Traditional Indian Catering Company	Unit 7 Tollpoint Industrial estate, Lichfield Road, Brownhills.	Asian snacks, sandwiches
Direct Food Solutions	Unit 2 Ashmore Lake Way, Willenhall.	Curry ready to eat meals
Lawrences	6 Saddlers Court, Fryers Road, Walsall.	sausage
Potters Pork Products	Unit 3 Newfield Close, Walsall.	sausage

LGR/PHE National Surveys:

Survey	Description	Due
Reactive Response	Provides a rapid response to an issue of public concern which arises during the year.	As an issue arises

Awaiting clarification of studies to be carried out

West Midlands and Warwickshire Food Surveillance Group Surveys

Awaiting clarification of studies to be carried out

Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Food samples	653	208	201	47	233	196

3.7 COMPOSITION AND LABELLING (Food Standards Sampling)

An annual sampling programme is drawn up to ensure that food is accurately labelled and meets compositional standards. It also facilitates the support and auditing of local businesses and contributes to the Food Standards Agency's healthy food / healthy eating campaign. The programme is devised following consultation with stakeholders and in adherence with the Corporate Plan, Vision and Values and the priorities identified by the Food Standards Agency's Strategy 2010-2015.

It is enhanced by additional sampling in response to complaints and new areas of concern however for 2013/14 the budget for food and non food sampling combined has been maintained at just £13,497 which has had a significant impact on the nature and extent of the sampling programme.

In addition since 2008 substantial funding has been obtained from the Food Standards Agency to carry out sampling under their imported food surveillance programme. We continue to identify such sources of funding however these are also becoming more limited as central government also reduces expenditure. The Authority's application for this funding for 2013/14 has been submitted but the outcome is still awaited. The Authority also successfully contributes to regional sampling programmes conducted by the 14 authorities that comprise the Central England Trading Standards Authorities (CEnTSA). This provides economies of scale, associated value for money and a greater impact from a larger results base. We also participate in LGR and additional FSA food authenticity projects.

3.8 THE CONTROL AND INVESTIGATION OF OUTBREAKS OF FOOD POISONING AND FOOD/WATER RELATED INFECTIOUS DISEASE

General Practitioners across the Borough report suspected cases of food poisoning to the Consultant for Communicable Disease Control (CDDC) at Public Health England. The Local Medical Laboratory advises the CDDC of positive results for food poisoning and food/water related illness. The Food Safety Team is then advised and carries out investigation of such outbreaks.

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

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Number of individual investigated cases	284	343	299	266

3.9 FOOD SAFETY INCIDENTS

The Food Standards Agency declares food safety incidents from time to time and notifies Food Authorities of these by means of a 'Food Alert' procedure. Some of the notifications require immediate action depending on the local distribution of food and products.

The Authority has a procedure for dealing with Food Safety Incidents that is in line with the requirements of Food Safety codes of Practice. A central log of all Food Alerts is maintained.

3.10 ADVICE TO BUSINESSES

The Authority has always provided appropriate and competent advice, through a variety of different means, to local businesses and residents, within available resource constraints.

In 2012/13 we continued to use social media for communicating food safety messages. An average of 50 Tweets per month on issues relating to the work of Environmental Health are made by one of the EHO's within the section. We currently have 513 followers from a broad range of backgrounds and who often re-tweet messages thereby broadcasting messages to an even wider network. The Regulatory Services Facebook site is updated continually on a range of subjects including links to FSA and other Government websites and documents.

Food hygiene and food safety advice is routinely given as part of an inspection or intervention visit and is complemented by the use of targeted business updates, national and local publicity campaigns and other promotional activities.

From 1st January 2006 legislation changed to require all food businesses to have a written food safety system in place based on the principles of HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point). The Food Standards Agency programme, Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) is supported by the Authority. Under the scheme, a pre-printed pack of material is available for catering and retail businesses. Officers discuss SFBB at the time of inspection and coaching visits are carried out to help businesses get to grips with the system. Last year we undertook coaching at 23 food businesses to assist in raising standards as well as 166 revisits to premises for a variety of purposes to ensure food business operators were complying with advice given or confident in implementing recommendations of legal requirements.

3.11 NATIONAL LIAISON WORK

Home Authority Principle

The Home Authority Principle has been developed by Food and Trading Standards Authorities as an aid to good enforcement practice. Practices which protect the consumer, encouraging fair trading, consistency and common sense. It aims to:

1. Encourage Authorities to place special emphasis on goods and services originating within their area.
2. Provide businesses with a Home Authority source of guidance and advice.
3. Support efficient liaison between Local Authorities.
4. Provide a system for the resolution of problems and disputes.

The principle commands the support of Local Authorities, central Government, Trade and Industry Associations, Consumer and Professional Regulatory bodies. Local Authorities have three distinct roles as:

1. **Home Authority:** the authority where the relevant decision making base of an enterprise is located - it's head office
2. **Originating Authority:** an authority in whose area a decentralised enterprise produces goods and services - the manufacturing base
3. **Enforcing Authority:** all authorities when undertaking an inspection, sampling or investigative role

Primary Authority

The primary authority principle has its basis in law and builds on the well established home authority principle. The authority is permitted to recover its costs for advice given under the scheme and if the business follows the “assured advice” then prosecutions in the area in question by other authorities can be blocked. One major business wishes to proactively explore such an agreement this year.

Walsall Council

1. Endorses the principles laid down in the Home Authority Principle.
2. Will act as the Home Authority for local businesses as necessary.
3. Where enforcement action impacts on a business's national policy, the Home Authority or Originating Authority will be consulted.
4. The Home Authority will also be consulted regarding, or informed of, local actions.
5. Whenever such consultation/information may be helpful, or indicative of matters with potential national implications.
6. Is exploring the possibility of a primary authority relationship with a major national business based in the area.

LIAISON WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The Authority is represented on the CEnTSA (Central England Trading Standards Authorities) and refers food issues to this body whenever appropriate. The Authority participates in a discussion forum to ensure consistent enforcement, supports sampling, investigative and publicity initiatives to ensure maximum effect in the use of resources for the benefit of the citizens of Walsall.

The Authority is also a member of the West Midlands Food Hygiene Liaison Group which aims to:

1. Act as a forum to provide consistency of enforcement.
2. Act as a facilitator for benchmarking activities.
3. Provide ‘standardisation’ exercises to facilitate consistency.

It fully supports decisions taken at the group and actively engages in the programme of activities arranged by the group.

The Authority also works in partnership with the following organisations either on an ongoing basis or as the result of targeted work programmes.

1. Food Standards Agency
2. HPA/Public Health England
3. Director of Public Health and Public Health consultants
4. FSA South West & West Midlands Regional Office
5. School Foods Trust
6. The Primary Care Trust.
7. Walsall Catering Services
8. Worcestershire Scientific Services
9. Staffordshire Scientific Services
10. Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust

11. Department of Health (West Midlands).

4.0 RESOURCES

4.1 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The table below shows the cost of the Environmental Health Food Safety service for last year and includes an estimate of its cost for 2013/14.

	12/13 (Expenditure)	13/14 (Estimate)
Staffing Costs	376,114	394,260
Support Services	1,569	1,213
Supplies and Services	13,236	15,844
Transport Costs	12,867	15,156
Income	-6,257	-3,332
Expenditure	403,786	426,472

The table below shows the cost of the Trading Standards Food Standards service for last year and includes an estimate of its cost for 2013/14.

	12/13 (Expenditure)	13/14 (Estimate)
Staffing Costs	68,930	64,808
Support Services	213	623
Supplies and Services	4,535	6,928
Transport Costs	2,547	2,616
Income	-1,325	-698
Expenditure	76,225	74,975

4.2 STAFFING ALLOCATION

Environmental Health Food Safety Services are delivered in one Borough wide team of 9 Environmental Health Officers and 1 Food Safety Officer all lead by a Principal EHO. This equates to 6 FTE officers allocated to the Food Safety service. Environmental Health Officers all possess a BSc. or MSc. in Environmental Health. The Food Safety Officer has a Higher Certificate in Food Premises Inspection from the Environmental Health Officers Registration Board (EHORB). All Environmental Health Officers hold a registration from EHORB and other appropriate qualifications.

The Environmental Health Officers in the Food Teams are also responsible for Occupational Health and Safety, waste control, planning/licensing applications, and nuisances associated with food premises.

When vacancies in the teams occur during the year the work programme is reprioritised and some areas of work may not be carried out. Whereas previously appropriately qualified contractors have been used to fill anticipated shortfalls in inspection targets with the current budgetary constraints this is no longer a realistic option.

Staff Allocation to Food Safety Service

Post	Level of Competency
1 Service Manager 25% FTE	Registered with EHORB
1 Principal Officer 75% FTE	Registered with EHORB
5.55 FTE Environmental Health Officers	Registered with EHORB
1 Food Safety Officer 40% FTE	Higher certificate

In 2012/13 there were 6.35 FTE officers dedicated to Environmental Health Food Safety work.

In 2013/14 due there will be 6 FTE officers dedicated to food hygiene work. Some additional income received in order to run food related projects should result in an additional post for at least part of the year.

Food Standards Law enforcement is predominantly carried out by the following staff:-

1 x Principal Trading Standards Officer
4 ½ x Trading Standards Officers (FTE)
2 ½ x Assistant Trading Standards Officers (FTE)

Approximately 20% of their time is spent on food work providing 1.5 full time equivalents for this type of work. The above Officers are qualified to carry out Food Standards work in accordance with Chapter 1.2 of the Food Law Code of Practice (England) 2008.

Over the last 4 years, trading standards has lost 2 Principal Officers and 1.7 Assistant Trading Standards Officers who are all food qualified due to budget cuts. This has had an impact on all work of the team as well as food related work and a number of the remaining officers are approaching retirement age and therefore, the service has a significant challenge in training other staff to obtain the food qualification to be able to sustain service delivery in the long term.

4.3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Walsall Council has a regime of annual Employee Performance Assessments for staff where discussions take place with staff and in the light of the service plan objectives, action plans are drawn up for each individual.

All Food Law Enforcement Officers receive training assessments and evaluation during their 6 monthly Employee Performance Assessment reviews. External and internal training provision is then identified in accordance with staff and service requirements. To maximise budgetary provision wherever possible support is given to courses provided by CeNTSA and the FSA who have proven to be the most cost effective training suppliers.

Officers are also able to identify forthcoming training via the CeNTSA annual training plan. In house development in the form of workshops and cascade training is also utilised where appropriate.

Although the recommended minimum training for each officer is 10 hours training specifically on the practical and/or legislative aspects of Food Standards work per year this may be exceeded as requirements demand.

5.0 QUALITY ASSESSMENT

5.1 QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The Food Safety Service utilises a staged and mentored approach to the authorisation of staff.

The Principal Officer makes periodic accompanied visits with Environmental Health Officers/Food Safety Officer. Monitoring includes the checking of formal notices served and paperwork. In addition there is an annual EPA and regular team meetings where pertinent issues can be discussed.

Officers also participate in regional standardisation exercises and peer reviews visits as organised.

The Service Manager undertakes a monthly check on the services progress with a more detailed quarterly and annual assessment of the overall Service's work.

6.0 REVIEW

6.1 REVIEW AGAINST SERVICE OBJECTIVES

Service objectives are reviewed on a quarterly basis the key performance measures from the year 2012/13 are:

Objective	Target	Actual
Number of inspections of food premises	100% of Inspections due	98% 1006 premises due for inspection were inspected 14 premises inspections remain outstanding and will be programmed into the forthcoming years work.
Number of Food Samples taken for microbiological examination	200	196 Samples taken
No. of reported cases of food borne disease receiving response within same working day	100%	Response rate achieved 96% 267 reports
No. of food and food premises complaints receiving a response within 3 working days.	100%	Response rate achieved 98% 331 complaints

Assist new businesses set up in compliance with appropriate Regulations.	No target	90 businesses engaged with
Assist existing businesses with timely advice in relation to legal compliance		67 businesses engaged with
First Response to complaints about trading practices received by the environmental health service within service standards		654 complaints 98% response

6.2 VARIATION FROM SERVICE PLAN

Officers are generally achieving an acceptable level of performance in what has been, and continues to be, a challenging time. The Division will continue to adhere to efficient and effective procedures and investigate and where possible implement good practice from Regional and National Groups.

The Authority started the year with a target of 1031 inspections. Due to various factors including the opening and closing of premises the anticipated target reduced during the year and so by year end 997 inspections had been completed with only 8 being left outstanding and these have been included in the schedule for the forthcoming year.

The outstanding inspections include 6 that are C rated and 2 D rated these have been prioritised with staff to ensure they are completed.

49 premises require investigation as they are presently unrated. These are predominantly businesses that have altered in some way resulting in new Registrations being received for what are essentially existing businesses.

The loss of a key officer to long term sickness has undoubtedly hampered the performance of the team. A delay in replacement of a vacant post for 12 months due to implementation of Pay and Grading within the Authority also left a backlog of inspections that required working through. Prioritisation and monitoring of staff performance will need to play an increasingly important role in future when taking account of factors such as these.

Calculations show that 75% of premises in the Borough achieve a rating of 3 or above on the National Food Hygiene Rating System. It is an important aim of the service to strive to increase this percentage

It will continue to be the Environmental Health Management Team's responsibility to react more swiftly to performance monitoring reports. This will include in the day to day supervision of Staff reflection on inspections where non-compliant premises are found to ensure the right level of intervention has taken place to raise the premises standards.

Responses to food borne disease notifications notably improved during 2011/12 and we will strive to ensure this continues.

Microbiological sampling continues to show how direct intervention during manufacture is vital to protect public health in the Borough, nationally and even internationally.

7.0 WORK PLAN FOR THE FOOD SAFETY TEAM 2013/2014

The Authority seeks to ensure that food produced, prepared and sold in the borough is safe and without risks to health and meets appropriate quality standards. This will be achieved by:

Key Service Activity	Service lead	Action	Action lead
Respond to food poisoning, infectious diseases and animal health incidences.	John Beavon	Respond to all disease notification within 3 working days	David Elrington
Maintain the Food Hygiene Rating System for inspections of food businesses	John Beavon	Maintain the Food Hygiene Rating System and use it to identify areas of weakness in food businesses within the Borough – notably those rated 1 and 0.	David Elrington
Ensure residents have access to safe and healthy food	John Beavon	Implement the microbiological food sampling programme focusing on high risk premises and manufacturers	David Elrington
	John Beavon	Implement the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan	David Elrington
	John Beavon	Carry out the Food Standards Plan.	Lorraine Boothman
	John Beavon	Undertake a Public Health funded project in relation to Healthy Retailer Award aimed at the provision of alternative healthy options at takeaway premises.	David Elrington
Investigate complaints and requests for service about business malpractice.	John Beavon	First Response to complaints about trading practices received by the environmental health and trading standards services within service standards.	David Elrington and Lorraine Boothman
Review and assess current inspection regime to ensure it reflects corporate priorities.	John Beavon	Monthly review of work undertaken to include business consultation, Government consultation, peer review and systems review.	David Elrington

APPENDIX B

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FOOD SAFETY SERVICE RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

FOOD PREMISES INSPECTIONS

There are **2224** food businesses on the premises database which are subject to inspection. The profile of premises due for inspection in 2013/2014 is:

A	(inspected every 6 months)	20
B	(inspected every 12 months)	187
C	(inspected every 18 months)	561
D	(alternative enforcement strategy)	114
E	(alternative enforcement strategy)	49

Total **951** premises inspections due

The Authority will aim to inspect 100% of all category A, B, C premises which fall due within the year. For category D and E's an alternative enforcement strategy will be considered.

Resource requirements 3804 hours

REVISITS

Revisits/ Secondary inspections will continue to be undertaken whenever necessary. To enable Officers to concentrate on risk and to safeguard resources, the 'Revisit Decision Tree' which forms part of the West Midlands Food Liaison Group Enforcement Policy has been introduced. Based on the number of secondary inspections undertaken in previous years it is expected that a similar number (160) will be undertaken during 2013/14.

As part of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme businesses can request a re-visit to check on actions taken to comply with outstanding matters raised at the initial inspection. They can then request the business is re-rated. The numbers of these requests will be recorded to indicate to the management team the potentially increased level of resource taken up by these revisits.

Resource requirements 200 hours

HACCP

The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006 were enacted on the 11th January 2006. The Regulations require businesses to implement food safety procedures based on HACCP principles. Following the 2009 Public Inquiry into the September 2005 outbreak of E Coli 0157 in South Wales, ensuring that businesses meet the HACCP requirement of this legislation will continue to be a priority of the team this year.

It is envisaged that a greater resource will be required for this. Businesses will be coached in the development of Safer Food Better Business, HACCP and E- coli guidance following inspections of suitable businesses.

Resource Requirement 200 hours

FOOD COMPLAINTS

Numbers of complaints received during 2012/13:

Food	116
Food hygiene	106

Total	222
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Complaints are dealt with according to the internal policies FHP6 and FHP7 which were developed in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice and LACORS guidance. It is anticipated that a similar number of complaints will be received in the forthcoming year.

Resource requirement 656 hours

HOME AUTHORITY PRINCIPLE

Walsall welcomes the opportunity to work closely with food businesses recognising the benefits to both the business and officers in gaining detailed experience of companies' food safety management systems. Walsall is keen to establish a home authority arrangement where appropriate.

Walsall does not currently act as formal Home Authority for any businesses but there are a number of businesses for which Walsall is the originating authority. This involves providing advice and information to these businesses and other local authorities in whose area they trade:

- One Stop Stores limited: Nationwide convenience stores
- Blakemores/ Spar: Nationwide convenience stores.
- Poundland: Nationwide convenience stores
- Highgate Foods: Cake manufacture and nationwide supply
- Baker Boy: Cake manufacture and nationwide supply
- T C Morris: Approved premises
- Midland Food Products: Approved premises
- G J Simmons: Approved Premises
- C A Gorman: Approved Premises
- Midland Pie Products: Approved Premises
- Piquant Sauces: Manufacturer
- Lawrence Meats: Approved premises
- ACE Pub Supplies: Manufacturing Premises
- Coopers Family Butchers: Approved Premis
- **Resource requirement 150 hours**

ADVICE TO BUSINESS/ CONSUMERS

Failure to make advice available can lead to food safety being compromised; this aspect of Walsall's service is therefore seen as essential. During 2012/2013 126 requests for food hygiene advice were received. In view of the emphasis on the requirement for food businesses to comply with the HACCP requirements it is envisaged that greater resources will be required in the forthcoming year.

Advice is also available to all businesses via the food web pages. The web pages will continue to be reviewed and updated according to the needs of our customers and when new guidance is published. Other methods of providing advice and communicating with businesses and the public will be explored as appropriate e.g. newsletters, social media and press releases.

Resource requirement 404 hours

FOOD INSPECTION AND SAMPLING

Although due to budget pressures there is no longer a dedicated sampling budget Walsall Council has an allocation of 200 credits from the Health Protection Agency laboratory and these are used to conduct targeted food sampling.

Analysis and examination of food complaints is undertaken by the Public Analyst and routine food samples are analysed by the Consultant Microbiologist at HPA Good Hope Hospital.

Walsall has committed to sampling its manufacturing premises on a yearly basis.

In addition Walsall participates in relevant LACORS/HPA annual sampling programmes and sampling exercises agreed by the West Midlands Food Liaison Group.

Resource requirement 400 hours

CONTROL AND INVESTIGATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Walsall investigates notified cases of food borne illness as directed by the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC). The Team's target is to investigate all cases within 24 hours of notification: Notifications of Campylobacter are dealt with by sending a standard letter. Notified cases of infectious diseases are investigated by officers in accordance with procedure FHP9, to determine their source, prevent further spread of infection and to provide advice to patients. In 2012/2013 266 notifications of infectious diseases were investigated.

Procedure FHP9 outlines the investigation of infectious diseases and requires the CCDC to be contacted in all cases of an outbreak. There is also a Community Outbreak Control Plan drawn up by the CCDC in consultation with the West Midlands Authorities and the Health Protection Agency.

Regular meetings are held between the Principal Environmental Health Officer, CCDC and the Health Protection Agency's infection control nurses.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been established between the local authorities within the West Midlands to provide support in terms of staff and resources should there be a cross boundary outbreak.

Resource Requirement 1703 hours

FOOD ALERTS

Policy FHP10 outlines the procedure for dealing with Food Alerts: Alerts requiring action will be dealt with as soon as they are received. A central log is kept of all Food Alerts received and the action taken.

Resource requirement 100 hours

LIAISON WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Walsall regularly participates in the West Midlands Food Liaison Group (WMFLG), which has a direct link to LGR (formerly LACORS). The terms of reference for the WMFLG include ensuring consistency throughout the West Midlands Authorities. Joint projects are undertaken and the group also arranges training opportunities for officers across the group, which promotes consistency of enforcement.

The Joint Meat Enforcement Working Party was established through the WMFLG in recognition of the various bodies involved with enforcement issues in respect of meat. This Working Group provides a forum for representatives from local authorities, MHS and OVS to exchange views and share practice with the aim of improving communication and consistency.

The PHE Laboratory User Group meets regularly to discuss sampling issues and issues relating to sampling results and emerging trends. The meeting is attended by Sampling Officers from the West Midlands Authorities and representatives from the HPA laboratories.

Liaison with the Public Health England and the CCD is carried out through regular meetings. There is regular contact with the Public Health England to discuss sampling programmes and training sessions are held to ensure consistency with regard to infection control issues.

Officers regularly consult the Licensing Team in relation to the licensing of street traders and advise Planning Services in relation to planning applications. As hot food takeaways become more prevalent throughout the

Borough the need to provide comment of these consultations is important to protect residents and other businesses from noise, odours and other nuisances. It is also important to ensure that prior to purchasing or designing new kitchens that companies have taken into account legal requirements and money is not wasted on incorrect fixtures and fittings.

The Team regularly communicates with OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission in relation to nurseries, childminders and residential care homes. Liaison takes place with Walsall Catering Service through inspection of school kitchens.

Resource requirement 500 hours.

FOOD SAFETY PROMOTION AND NATIONAL FOOD HYGIENE RATING SYSTEM

The Environmental Health Division regularly publishes press releases relating to emergency closures, prosecutions, food alerts and other important aspects of food safety.

The Environmental Health Division introduced the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme on the 1st April 2011. In order to ensure files are uploaded onto the National database in line with correct procedures and at the appropriate times Officers will have to take additional care to manage the inspection process.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The inputting of inspections onto the M3 database, the drafting of inspection reports, drafting of Notices and completion of the file inspection report sheet is carried out by Officers.

Resource requirement 1600 hours

STAFF DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

Annual staff appraisals and performance reviews are undertaken in accordance with corporate requirements. Procedure FHP14 details the policy for the monitoring of Officer competency.

Training needs are identified and training is undertaken in accordance with the agreed training plan but the current financial climate places significant financial constraints on the training budget.

The West Midlands Competency/Training Matrix is used to ensure the competency of newly qualified and returning staff.

Resource requirement 595 hours