

Cabinet – 12 September 2012

Food Law Enforcement Plan 2012/13

Portfolio: Councillor Zahid Ali, Public protection

Related Portfolios: The Leader of the Council - Public Health
Councillor Andrew – Regeneration

Service: Environmental Health

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 risks to health, is correctly labelled and meets appropriate compositional and microbiological standards. The Food Law Enforcement Plan attached as **Appendix A** explains how the work of these Divisions seeks to achieve this and **Appendix B** sets out the staffing resources available to the Authority. 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.

1.2 With the transfer of the Director of Public Health and their functions into the local authority the Department of Health has an expectation that health and well being will be included in all policies and be at the heart of everything councils do to help people lead healthier lives. The aims and objectives of the Food Law Enforcement Plan, contribute significantly to the health agenda and the Marmot Policy Review Objectives of 'strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention' and to 'create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities'.

2. Recommendation

That Cabinet approve the Food Law Enforcement Plan 2012/13.

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 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 Plan which identifies its strategy and the resources required to fulfil its Food Safety function each year.

4. Council priorities

- 4.1 The direct day to day involvement of Regulatory Service staff with both business and residents places them at the forefront of customer engagement. The ability to assist business in becoming efficient and legally compliant, alongside the implementation of the Food Hygiene Rating System and scoping work to become a Primary Authority significantly contributes to the economic success of the Borough. The ultimate aim of Regulatory Services in the protection of public health contributes significantly to the health and well being priority of the Council but also to the National Marmot Policy Objectives and the priorities contained within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- 4.2 This report relates to the Regeneration Portfolio, as the Environmental Health Service provides advice and assistance to new businesses and existing businesses wishing to expand or alter their operations in order to stay competitive

5. Risk management

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

There are no financial implications within this report.

7. Legal implications

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.

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.

The Food Law Enforcement plan adopts parts of the "service plan template" set out in the Framework Agreement.

- 7.1 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
- 7.2 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 within this Report.

9. Staffing implications

The Environmental Health and Trading Standards service has been restructured twice since 2009 as part of the budgetary process and staffing numbers have fallen. The services will need to look at reprioritisation in order to achieve the standards set out in the report..

10. Equality implications

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.

11. Consultation

The 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 Division is also part of the West Midlands Food Liaison Group consisting of representatives from the seven 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

Author

David Elrington
Area Manager Environmental Health
☎ 654020
✉ elringtondj@walsall.gov.uk

Jamie Morris
Executive Director



3 September 2012

Councillor Ali
Portfolio Holder



3 September 2012



Walsall Council

**Food Law Enforcement
Service Plan 2012/13**

DRAFT

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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 act within the standards set in the services Enforcement Policy when considering enforcement as the most appropriate course of action.
- To support a climate that allows for a thriving local economy and where existing companies and jobs are sustained.

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 or existing businesses wishing to expand or alter their operations in order to stay competitive.
- To continue 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 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 appropriate prepare reports for prosecution
- 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 produce and undertake a food sampling programme with emphasis on manufacturing premises and to undertake reactive sampling as required in connection with outbreaks of disease or service requests.
- To respond to requests for advice, and where appropriate liaise with and advise businesses in accordance with the Home Authority Principle or the Primary Authority scheme.

1.1 LINKS TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVES AND PLANS

The Council has published a Corporate Plan for the period 2011 - 2015 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 purpose of the Council as set out in the Corporate Plan is to

“Maintain and improve the physical and economic environment for the health and well-being of all our residents within financial constraints. Operate efficiently and collaboratively within a one council model and with partners to ensure value for money for tax payers and other funders”

This will be achieved through embedding the culture of ‘working smarter’ into the Council which is underpinned by 9 key principles for all employees.

- Right first time
- Devolved problem solving
- Accountability for your actions
- Take personal responsibility
- Control exercised at the lowest possible level
- Unity of purpose - one council
- We exist only to serve residents
- Innovate to improve
- Mutual trust and integrity

The vision for the borough of Walsall is that “Walsall will be a great place to live, work and invest, where

- people get on well with one another
- people can get around easily and safely
- people support and look after one another
- there are more and better jobs for local people
- people can live an independent and healthy life
- there is a wide range of facilities for people to use and enjoy
- people consider the impact of what we do now on future generations
- there exist high-quality and distinctive designs of buildings and spaces
- growing up is as good as it can be and young people fulfil their potential
- people are our strength and have the skills and attitude required by employers
- everyone has the chance to live in a home fit for their purpose and fit for the future
- people feel proud to live.

The Vision provides a clear focus for the planning of Council services and the allocation of its resources.

For 2011/12 – 2014/15 the Council's priorities are:

- The Economy
- Health and Well Being
- Communities and Neighbourhoods.

These priorities provide a focus for the whole council and the Food Service directly supports and contributes to the priorities in the Corporate Plan, 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

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 254,500 (2007 mid-year estimate). 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.

A good deal of the housing stock in this area pre-dates 1950; much of it was municipally owned however now falls under the ownership of the Walsall Housing Group.

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

Housing in this side of the Borough tends to be more modern and predominantly privately owned.

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.

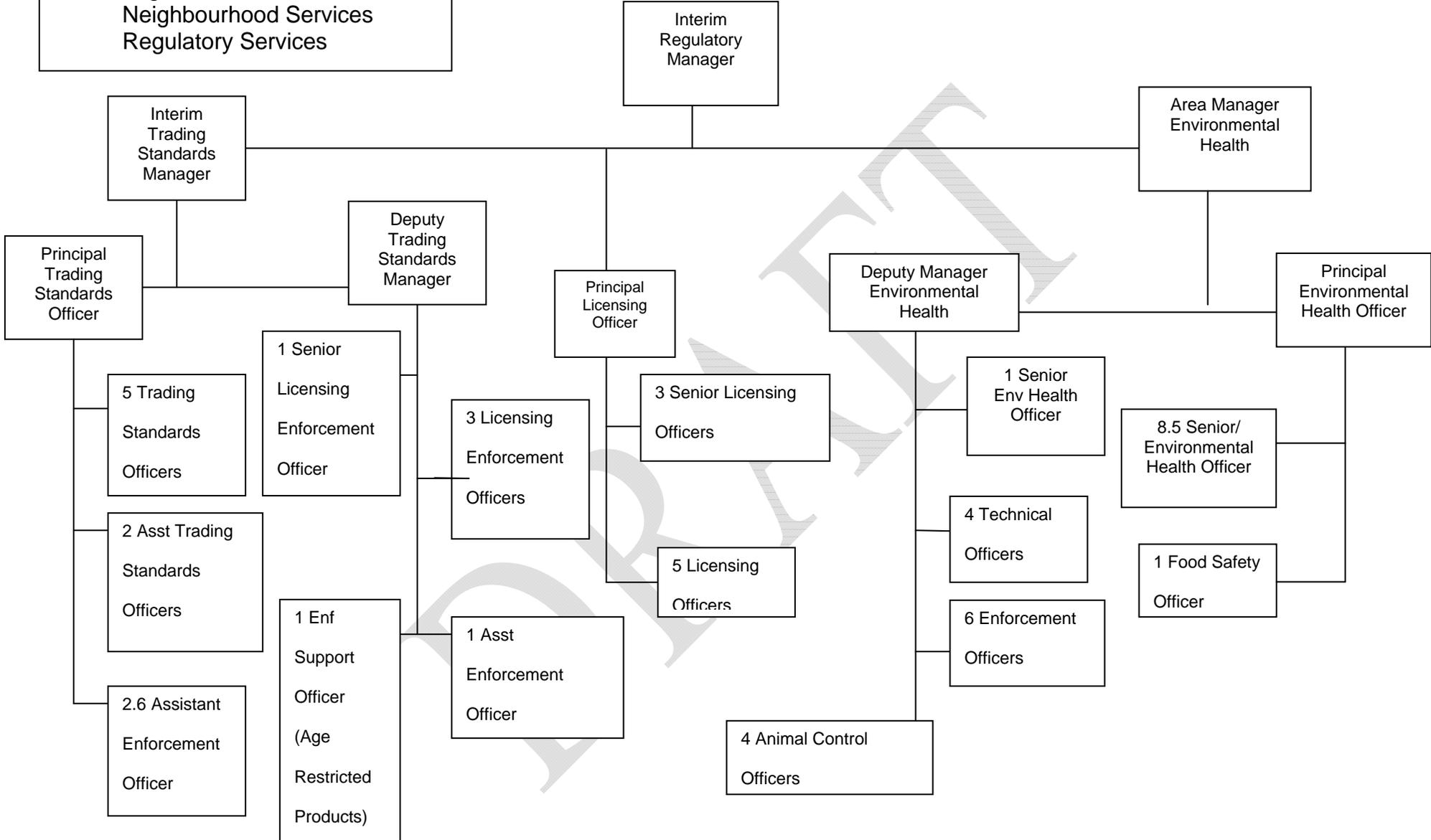
Of an overall total of 2126 food businesses registered within the Borough, 3 businesses are large-scale manufacturers, producing bread and associated products, and meat products.

There are 38 butchers premises and 16 premises approved to produce products of animal origin for distribution throughout the UK and Europe. Most other businesses are either engaged in the retail or wholesale selling of products prepared or manufactured elsewhere in the UK or abroad.

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 14% 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	Challenge Building, Hatherton Road, Walsall. WS1 1YG
Hours of Opening	Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 5.15pm Friday 8.45pm to 4.45pm
Telephone numbers	EH 01922 652210 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 and which is subject to regular review. 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 2012

RISK CATEGORY	A	B	C	D	E	U	TOTAL
FREQUENCY OF VISITS	6 mths	12 mths	18 mths	2yrs	Alternative intervention strategy		
INSPECTIONS SCHEDULED	18 x 2 36	226	548	210	11	0	1031

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 develop 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 2011/12 the Food Safety service dealt with:

- 1067 inspections
- 106 complaints about food eaten or purchased being unfit
- 96 new business advisory visits or discussions
- Registered or confirmed existing Registration of 248 Food Businesses.
- 126 advisory visits or discussions with existing businesses
- 299 Infectious disease notifications
- 402 Planning and Licensing consultations
- 116 complaints of waste at commercial premises
- 153 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 2011/12

66 Hygiene Improvement Notices served on 37 different premises requiring improvement to standards at their premises

1 prosecution of a food premises Pirate Pizza for failure to comply with 4 Hygiene Improvement Notices and for not keeping a food premises clean and maintained in good repair and condition. Contrary to Regulation 17 (1) and 17 (2) of The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006 made under section 2(2) of European Communities Act 1972

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

Noise abatement notices served against 2 licensed (food) premises

3.3 FOOD HYGIENE: ACTIVITIES FOR 2012/13

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 one year of operation we have a clearer idea of how the rating Scheme relates to businesses in Walsall with

232	Rated 5 Very Good
209	Rated 4 Good
174	Rated 3 Generally Satisfactory
63	Rated 2 Improvement Necessary
171	Rated 1 Major Improvement Necessary
13	Rated 0 Urgent Improvement Necessary
59	exempt

During 2012/13 the service wishes to support those businesses who wish to improve their standards and therefore their rating through advice and intervention. Particular emphasis needs to be given to those businesses rated as 1 as these are likely to be some of the most high risk businesses in the Borough. The 1 rated premises account for 18% of businesses rated so far and are therefore statistically significant.

Microbiological Food Sampling

In terms of Microbiological Food Sampling 2011/12 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. In 2012/13 we have added 2 further manufacturers to our list of premises and anticipate cutting back on samples at premises that have a good track record of compliance and have their own sampling regime. We will also attempt 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. One example being Hog Roasts where in the last couple of years poor standards and practices associated with these products have led to food poisoning outbreaks in other areas. We have received expressions of interest from persons in the Borough about starting up Hog Roasts. As Hog Roast operators tend to attend large events around the region we need to be sure they are effectively managed so that large and wide ranging outbreaks of disease do not occur. Sampling would be an important aspect of the investigation as to whether we are satisfied with the Food Business operation.

Alternative Intervention Strategy Food Standards and Safety

The Food Standards Agency has recognised the importance of concentrating resources on high and medium risk rated premises. Therefore, Category C premises that are "Broadly Compliant" can be inspected using an alternative method on alternate planned inspections. The alternative methods that can be employed for food hygiene inspections are detailed below;

1. Postal questionnaire for childminders/traders information
2. Topic based inspections (e.g. temperature control/ stock rotation)
3. Special projects/ surveys covering specific trade areas/ problems
4. Targeted sampling

More work is needed for us to utilise our computer system to better identify the broadly compliant businesses for these interventions to be successful. For category D and E premises, an alternative enforcement strategy will be trialled this year for food hygiene inspections: All businesses in these categories will either receive a postal questionnaire or phone call from an Officer. Dependent on the information provided or failure to return the questionnaire, inspections may be undertaken.

Food Safety Week and Know Your Town

The service will attend the 6 Know Your Town Events in the District Centres of Walsall. This will mean officers are available on a local level to discuss food related matters with both the public and those food business operators who wish to discuss the National food Hygiene Rating scheme or other related matters.

The service will contribute to the National Food Safety Week campaign during June 2012. This year we believe the campaign focuses on food safety on a budget.

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 have to be considered. However, it should be noted that current budget constraints are presenting a major challenge and risk that the compulsory CPD requirements will not be met.

3.4 FOOD PREMISES – STANDARDS AND FEEDINGSTUFFS

Trading Standards Profile of Food Premises – April 2012

FOOD CATEGORY	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	TOTAL
NO. OF PREMISES	6	0	28	1	0	37	572	955	0	22	1621

***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 non analytical 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	63	63
Medium	1091	218*
Low	303	60
Totals	1457	341

The required target is 50% (531) 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 2011/12 the following actions were undertaken by Trading Standards Officers:

- 1 69 food standards warnings were issued by Trading Standards Officers during the inspection of food premises 2010-2011. By the end of the year 90% of those food premises that were inspected had achieved food standards compliance.
- 2 95 food complaints were received by the Trading Standards Service. These were resolved by a variety of enforcement methods which ranged from LGR / FSA / Home Authority Referrals to business advice and written warnings.
- 3 43 food samples submitted to the Public Analyst were reported as incorrect. This resulted in 1 prosecution, 4 FSA national alerts and product recalls, 13 officer cautions and 25 referrals for action by other Authorities

- 4 A survey looking at the descriptions of lamb curry dishes at takeaways discovered that out of twelve meals sampled, 5 contained meat that was not declared on the menu and two contained no lamb at all. One take away was the subject of a prosecution for supplying a lamb curry which did not contain any lamb. The proprietor was fined £350 plus £1,460 costs.
- 5 31 off-licences and convenience stores were also inspected for illicit alcohol. Nine premises were found to be selling alcohol that was either counterfeit, bootleg or non-duty-paid resulting in £1,900 of product being seized. The sale of such alcohol poses 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. None of the alcohol seized in Walsall was found to be unsafe.

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	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Number of complaints	181	258 Env Health 89 Trading Standards	181 Env Health 95 Trading Stds

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 the Health Protection Agency using Heartlands Hospital in Birmingham. 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 2011/12 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.

At Premises 1, 3 different types of bacteria were found in pork pies. Upon investigation the cause was identified as using a glazing machine for both raw and cooked foods leading to cross contamination. Working alongside the business owner practices were amended and further samples were satisfactory upon retest.

At Premises 2 Listeria monocytogenes was found in sandwich fillings. Due to the serious potential health consequences for vulnerable people including the elderly and pregnant women contracting Listeria a National Product Recall was required to remove these products from sale. A review of the manufacturers operations focusing on shelf life tests and temperature control was undertaken and upon further sampling results were satisfactory.

Premises 3 Imported salami from Italy was identified by another Local Authority as containing Salmonella. Environmental Health Staff in conjunction with the Food Standards Agency, Health Protection Agency and Public Health Laboratory took further samples and working with the business initiated a national product recall.

Premises 4 Staphylococcus was found in raw cabbage used in the preparation of food stuffs. Investigations by Environmental Health staff identified poor practices in the washing of cabbages which have subsequently been rectified. High levels of Bascillus spp were also found in spices and marinades and again following investigation and advice practices changed to prevent further problems.

Food Sampling Programme 2012/13

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	Oct 2012
Dorothy Pattison Hospital	Alumwell Close, Walsall	Sept 2012
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/HPA National Surveys:

Survey	Description	Due
Liver Pate	From delicatessens that are independent or part of supermarkets	Through out the year
Reactive Response	Provides a rapid response to an issue of public concern which arises during the year.	As an issue arises

West Midlands and Warwickshire Food Surveillance Group Surveys

Survey	Description	Due
Swabs	focus on chopping boards	Throughout the year
Dish Cloths		Throughout the year
Ready to Eat pies, samosas etc		Throughout the year
Meats	Vacuum packed joints, sliced and repacked	Throughout the year
Hog roasts	testing throughout the year as events are held	Throughout the year

Where unsatisfactory microbiological samples are taken, businesses are given support to identify any problems in the storage and handling of foodstuffs. Actions necessary to secure improvements are highlighted. Return samples will then be taken to ensure that the necessary improvements have been implemented.

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

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 2011/12 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 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 the Health Protection Agency. 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	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Number of individual investigated cases	283	284	343	299

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 2011/12 major steps were taken with regard to the use of Social Media for communicating Food Safety messages. An average of 22 Tweets per month on Food Hygiene related issues by one of the EHO's within the section currently has nearly 300 followers from across the media and food industry.

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.

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. FSA South West & West Midlands Regional Office

3. School Foods Trust
4. The Primary Care Trust.
5. Walsall Catering Services
6. Worcestershire Scientific Services
7. Staffordshire Scientific Services
8. Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust
9. 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 2012/13.

	11/12 (Expenditure)	12/13 (Estimate)
Staffing Costs	268,082	292,206
Support Services	638	1,068
Supplies and Services	19,065	13,949
Transport Costs	12,494	15,309
Income	-15,147	-2,933
Expenditure	300,280	334,598

4.2 STAFFING ALLOCATION

Environmental Health Food Safety Services are delivered in one Borough wide team of 10 Environmental Health Officers and 1 Food Safety Officer all lead by a Principal EHO. This equates to 6.35 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 and therefore at least 10 – 15% of their time is allocated to non-food work.

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
5.45 FTE Environmental Health Officers	Registered with EHORB
1 Food Safety Officer 90% FTE	Higher certificate

In 2011/12 there were 6.35 FTE Officers dedicated to Environmental Health Food Safety work.

In 2012/13 it is estimated that there will also be 6.35 FTE Officers dedicated to Environmental Health Food Safety work.

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.

4.3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Walsall Council has recently introduced 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 assessment of the 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 2011/12 are:

Objective	Target	Actual
Number of inspections of food premises	100% of Inspections due (1145)	93% 1067 premises due for inspection were inspected 93 premises inspections remain outstanding and will be programmed into the forthcoming years work.
Number of Food Samples taken for microbiological examination	200	203 Samples taken -
No. of reported cases of food borne disease receiving response within same working day	100%	96% (299 reported cases of food borne disease) performance measure much improved on previous years 88%
No. of food and food premises complaints receiving a response within 3 working days.	100%	99% (181 complaints were received relating to food, premises and personnel)

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 1145 inspections as well as 30 carried over from the previous year. By year end 1067 inspections had been completed. As at the 1/4/2012 122 premises still require an intervention of some kind and they have been included in the schedule for the forthcoming year.

Of these inspections 1 was an A rated premises and 12 were B rated these have been prioritised with staff to ensure they are completed.

45 of the premises were C rated discussions have continued throughout the year as to the type of intervention allowed at broadly compliant premises such as within this category. A task for the year ahead is to ensure we are able to correctly identify which of our C rated premises are broadly compliant so that we can effectively implement an alternative inspection strategy.

53 premises were premises at D and E which we considered took less preference than those at A – C however further work is needed again to intervene at those premises using alternative strategies allowed for within the Code of Practice.

12 premises require investigation as they are presently unrated. It is considered that these are businesses who have altered in some way resulting in new Registrations being received for what are essentially existing businesses.

The loss of 2 key officers to long term sickness has undoubtedly hampered the performance of the team. A delay in replacement of a vacant post for over 3 months due to implementation of Pay and Grading within the Authority also left a backlog of inspections that we are still 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 71% of premises in the Borough achieve a rating of 3 or above on the National Food Hygiene Rating System. Now the system has been in place for 12 months we will start considering what the data is showing us about what sectors, areas or types of premises are underachieving and what the service may do to assist.

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.

The amount of Microbiological sampling also increases and previous sections show the major benefits continuing that regime have on the safety of the food not only in the Borough but nationally and even internationally.

7.0 WORK PLAN FOR THE FOOD SAFETY TEAM 2012/2013

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
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

APPENDIX B

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FOOD SAFETY SERVICE RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

FOOD PREMISES INSPECTIONS

There are **2085** food businesses on the premises database which are subject to inspection. The profile of premises due for inspection in 2012/2013 is:

A	(inspected every 6 months)	36
B	(inspected every 12 months)	226
C	(inspected every 18 months)	548
D	(alternative enforcement strategy)	210
E	(alternative enforcement strategy)	11

Total **1031** 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 trialled this year for food hygiene inspections: All businesses in these categories will receive a postal questionnaire. Dependent on the information provided or failure to return the questionnaire, inspections may be undertaken.

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 (122) will be undertaken during 2011/2012.

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.

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 and HACCP following inspections of suitable businesses.

FOOD COMPLAINTS

Numbers of complaints received during 2011/12:

Food	106
Food hygiene	222
Total	328

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.

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 Premises
- A E Poxon & Sons: Approved Premises
- Chicken Joes: approved Premises
- Tican Chilled: Approved Premises
- Potters Pork Products: Approved Premises
- A & S Foods: Approved Premises

- Empire Cold Storage: Approved Premises
- Baker Boy: Approved Premises

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 2011/2012 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 and press releases.

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.

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 2011/2012 299 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.

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.

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 HPA 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 Health Protection Agency and the CCD is carried out through regular meetings. There is regular contact with the Health Protection Agency 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.

Relationships with other Directorates of the Council continue to be developed wherever possible.

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. An Officer will also have to be delegated to print and post the certificates at least monthly or sooner for premises rated at 5. It is hoped that in time and once officers are used to the new system the time requirement here will subside but in the first year it is likely to have significant resource implications.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The inputting on 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.

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.

Wherever possible the Environmental Health Division will run a CPD programme, which involves lunchtime talks on a variety of Environmental Health related subjects. All staff are invited to attend these sessions.

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