



Title: **Food Safety Service Plan 2012/13**

Public Agenda Item: **Yes**

To: **Council**

Date: **12<sup>th</sup> July 2012**

Wards Affected: **All Wards**

Key Decision: **Yes Ref: I008927**

Change to Budget: **No**

Change to Policy Framework: **Yes**

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## **1. What are we trying to achieve?**

- 1.1 By approving the contents of the Food Safety Service Plan required annually by the Food Standards Agency, Members will ensure that residents and the business community of Torbay continue to be provided with a statutory food safety service.
- 1.2 By targeting our interventions based on risks created by businesses, we can ensure the public's health, safety and welfare is not compromised due to poor practices. Food Safety work is focused on assessing, correcting and preventing the impact of poor practices on the health of the local population. Much of the work undertaken by the team is "unseen" by the wider population, yet it impacts on every person's daily life.

### **Recommendation(s) for decision**

- 1.3 That the Food Safety Service Plan 2012/13 set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report be approved.

## **2. Reasons for recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 The production of a Food Safety Service Plan is a requirement of the Food Standards Agency. Detailed guidance on the format and the content of the Plan is contained in the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement. The appended Food Safety Service Plan adheres to the guidance and is a factual account of this statutory service.
- 2.2 The developments and actions for the coming year are in line with supporting wider policies addressing inequalities in health e.g. closing the gap, tackling childhood obesity and food safety in the home.

## **3. Other options considered**

- 3.1 No other options considered as it is a statutory plan.

#### **4. Combined Impact Assessment (CIA)**

The CIA is a tool which helps officers to fully consider the impact of the proposed decisions on the community.

I confirm that a Combined Impact Assessment has been completed and is available as a background document on request from the report author.

**For more detailed information on this proposal please refer to the supporting information attached.**

**Frances Hughes**  
**Executive Head of Community Safety**

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### **Supporting Information**

#### **5. Introduction and History**

- 5.1 Food Standards Agency guidance entitled Framework Agreement for Local Authority Food Law Enforcement details many requirements for Local Authorities, which had to be implemented from April 2001. These requirements include the production and implementation of an annual Food Safety Service Plan and a Food Sampling Policy. The guidance provides information on how enforcement service plans should be structured and what information they contain. Service plans developed under these arrangements will provide the basis on which Local Authorities are monitored and audited by the Food Standards Agency.
- 5.2 The document shown in Appendix 1 is the Food Safety Service Plan prepared by the Community Safety Business Unit. It includes food standards and food hygiene requirements in accordance with the Food Standards Agency prescribed format. It builds on the previous years Plan and details matters such as achievements in service delivery, a review of last years implementation and this years work plan for 2012/13, this may alter during the year as the service is very reactive and responds to changes in legislation as and when is necessary.
- 5.3 The Commercial Team works in an environment where more effective joint working between the various professional disciplines of the teams has been achieved, thereby allowing resources to be utilised more effectively. This in turn improves the customer experience and we continually aim to work on new approaches as to how we deal with the business community to support their business development and in doing so secure compliance with public health legislation.
- 5.4 In 2012/13 the Food Safety Team will be implementing a number of risk based interventions with the aim of improving compliance with food safety legislation. These are focused on high risk businesses making sure that our resources are targeted to best effect. The main focus of work will as 2011/12 be to continue the implementation of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme mentioned below in 5.5.
- 5.5 In November 2011 the Council implemented the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme which allows the Authority to publish the food hygiene rating of food

businesses in Torbay following their food hygiene inspections. This now provides our customers with increased information and allows them to make informed choices about where they eat. It is also now evident that this scheme in many cases is driving up compliance and encouraging businesses to obtain a high standard of food safety in their premises. Over 500 premises have been rated so far and of the premises requesting a rescoring visit many have gone from a rating of 1 (major improvement needed) to a 5 (very good). Full implementation of the scheme remains a priority for 2012/13 particularly focusing in on those premises who are assessed as non compliant with a rating of less than 3.

5.6 In 2011 the Food Standards Agency started to undertake a review of food safety enforcement across England. This review is looking at how food enforcement currently operates in England in consultation with the business community and enforcement authorities alike. The proposed timescale for the completed review is 2014 and depending on its finding may have an impact onto how food safety enforcement is delivered in Torbay. Although still in its early stages the changes introduced by the Public Health White Paper may also have an impact onto the way in which the Food and Safety Team works particularly in relation to the area of infectious disease control and it is hoped that a more effective joined up approach between the different partner agencies will be achieved.

5.7 In November 2011 the Food Standards Agency inspected Torbay as a result of the food safety statutory returns submitted to them. The key issues highlighted in their report were:

- the large volume of seasonal businesses and the fact they need to be inspected quickly;
- the backlog of medium risk premises that require an intervention.

An action plan has been developed and agreed with the Food Standards Agency to mitigate the issues raised however with the current level of resources allocated to this service the Food Team is not able to carry out 100% of interventions in all the premises as laid out in the statutory Food Law Code of Practice.

Members can however be reassured by the appended report that food safety and therefore the health of the local population is being proactively protected in the highest risk premises by the work of the Food and Safety Team. Some of the Food and Safety Team's highlights and achievements of 2011/12 can be seen on Page 2 of the appended Report.

## **6. Summary of Combined Impact Assessment**

### **6.1 Equalities, Consultation and Engagement**

In relation to the Council's requirement to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations the Combined Impact Assessment outlined the following potential consultation and equalities implications and impacts. Most of the work contained in this service plan is of a statutory nature so consultation in these areas is limited however the views of different sectors of the business community are gathered during inspections and then any necessary changes made such as providing information in other languages etc. As the Business Unit undertakes food safety work in a wide range of businesses such as residential homes and children's nurseries, the proposals in this

report will have a positive impact on the elderly and young within our society. The Business Unit uses a variety of methods to ensure that its service is accessible to all sectors of the community, these include regular newsletters in both paper and electronic form, a range of information and support on their web pages and face to face contact with businesses via inspections and also at targeted events such as the seminar that was organised for the Bengali and Chinese food business operators through the use of interpreters.

## **6.2 Environment**

The issue has been analysed in light of implications against the following environmental criteria:

- energy and carbon;
- sea level rise and extreme weather events;
- natural environment;
- built environment; and
- waste and water.

No impact

## **6.3 Economic Development**

The issue has been analysed in light of the impacts against the following criteria:

- economic growth of Torbay;
- perception of Torbay as a place to invest;
- promotion of new employment opportunities in Torbay;
- promotion of higher value economic activity in Torbay; and reduction of economic deprivation in Torbay
  
- The introduction of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme has meant that businesses are being encouraged to perform well in the area of food safety thereby encouraging customers to eat in their premises and encouraging economic growth, this scheme provides a level playing field for food businesses as small independent businesses are capable of achieving a food hygiene rating equal to a large national company.
- Clean well run food businesses help to promote the Bay as a clean, healthy place to live and work in. The Business Unit also supports the tourist economy by helping to ensure that the Bays attractions and accommodation such as hotels are safe to eat in.
- The Food Safety Service provides guidance to new food businesses setting up in the Bay and are often the first point of contact for the prospective business owner. The service encourages businesses to get it right first time ensuring compliance and a healthy well run premises.

## **6.4 Identified Risks**

(a) No identified risks.

**6.5** In light of 6.1 to 6.4 above, the following course of action is recommended:

**Outcome 1: No major change required** - CIA has not identified any potential for adverse impact in relation to equalities, the environment and economic development and all opportunities to promote equality, the environment and economic development have been taken.

## **7. Summary of resource implications**

7.1 Within current budget

### **Documents available in members' rooms**

None

### **Background Papers**

The following documents/files were used to compile this report:

- Combined Impact Assessment (CIA)
- Community Plan 2011 onwards

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Food Safety Service Plan 2012/13