

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

For advice on this document please contact Clare Muir on 72119 or email Clare.Muir@reading.gov.uk.

Please contact the Project Management Office at pmo@reading.gov.uk for advice and/or support to complete this form from a project perspective.

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed: Food Service Plan 2025-26

Directorate: DEGNS

Service: Food & Safety, Public Protection

Name: Katie Heath

Job Title: Principal Environmental Health Officer

Date of assessment:

Version History

Version	Reason	Author	Date	Approved By
1	Screening	Katie Heath		Rob Abell

Scope your proposal

- **What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?**

This is an updated Food Service Plan to cover the period 2025-2026. It is a document produced by the team annually to meet our statutory requirement for all Local Authorities who undertake official food controls, as detailed within the Food Law Code of Practice set by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

- **Who will benefit from this proposal and how?**

By adopting the plan, all stakeholders will benefit from some certainty as to the work being conducted or prioritised for the year, and Reading Borough Council will be meeting its legal duty as well as contributing to strategic aims. It also allows the team to have detailed dialogue with the FSA on expectations and improvement areas identified.

- **What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?**

The outcome aimed for is stakeholder agreement on the proposed service levels and outputs as detailed in the plan. This includes numerical targets for inspections of food hygiene premises broken down by risk rated level, the same for food standards inspections, prioritisation of newly registered/unrated premises, and sampling activities.

- **Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?**

Members - To see the level of activity and rationale for priorities set.

Senior Managers - To ensure the statutory requirement is fulfilled. To assess/manage organisational risk in relation to failure points and FSA performance management.

Team members - A clear agreed plan of operation to provide certainty relating to their inspection targets.

Food businesses in the Borough - Context as to the regulatory environment they are subject to.

Residents & visitors - Consumer confidence they can safely eat in the Borough.

Assess whether an EqIA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; advancing equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

- **Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some groups may be affected differently than others (due to race, disability, sex, gender, sexuality, age, religious belief or due to belonging to the Armed Forces community or care experience)? Make reference to the known demographic profile of the service user group, your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.**

Yes / No (delete as appropriate)

Members are being given the opportunity to review the plan and make comment on it, and it is going through the normal scrutiny attached to the Committee process.

The plan references food hygiene/standards inspections to be carried out by the team on premises based on their risk rating. This is an objective tool which does not contain any information relating to protected characteristics. Food businesses are inspected not based on any other groupings, or with reference to demographic profile. Decisions on which premises to inspect are not based in any way on the profile of the business owner, their race, sex, age, or any other protected characteristic.

It is recognised that we have a diverse customer base as we regularly interact with business owners representing a wide spectrum of the community. This service plan does not have a bearing on that. The legislation we advise on and enforce applies across the board equally. Considerations we have in order to meet the customer needs from different sections of the community are taken outside of this food service plan which is focussed solely on quantitative numbers of inspections, rather than the qualitative way that we interact with those businesses.

- **Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Make reference to your complaints, consultation, feedback, media reports locally/nationally.**

Yes / No (delete as appropriate)

There are no known public concerns, complaints, consultation responses, feedback or media reports to flag any potentially discriminatory practices or impact.

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the above, you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If **No** you **MUST** complete this statement.

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because:

The Food Service Plan is completely neutral in terms of potential impact. It details the inspections to be conducted in relation to food businesses without any categorisation, prioritisation or difference in effect based on protected characteristics. It is impartially based on the standardised template under the FSA Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities. No groups are thought to be affected differently to others by way of adopting and implementing this plan. There are no known flags to give any cause to trigger a full EIA.

01/05/2025

X

[Signature]

Completing Officer
Signed by: Heath, Katie

X

[Signature]

Lead Officer

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

- **Consultation**
- **Collection and Assessment of Data**
- **Judgement about whether the impact is negative or positive**

Think about who does and doesn't use the service? Is the take up representative of the community? What do different minority groups think? (You might think your policy, project or service is accessible and addressing the needs of these groups, but asking them might give you a totally different view). Does it really meet their varied needs? Are some groups less likely to get a good service?

How do your proposals relate to other services - will your proposals have knock on effects on other services elsewhere? Are there proposals being made for other services that relate to yours and could lead to a cumulative impact?

Example: A local authority takes separate decisions to limit the eligibility criteria for community care services; increase charges for respite services; scale back its accessible housing programme; and cut concessionary travel.

Each separate decision may have a significant effect on the lives of disabled residents, and the cumulative impact of these decisions may be considerable.

This combined impact would not be apparent if decisions are considered in isolation.

Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation form do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice.

Consultation manager form - Reading Borough Council Dash

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted

Collect and Assess your Data

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation, research, your knowledge and the knowledge of people in your team, staff groups etc. describe how the proposal could impact on each group. Include both positive and negative impacts.

(Please delete relevant ticks)

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on racial groups**
- **Is there a negative impact?** Yes / No / Not sure

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on Sex and Gender identity (include pregnancy and maternity, marriage, gender re-assignment)**
- **Is there a negative impact?** Yes / No / Not sure

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability**
- **Is there a negative impact?** Yes / No / Not sure

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)**
- **Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure**

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on age**
- **Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure**

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief**
- **Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure**

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on the Armed Forces community (including reservists and veterans and their families)**
- **Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure**

- **Describe how this proposal could impact on care experienced young people and adults.**
- **Is there a negative impact? Yes / No / Not sure**

Make a Decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you **MUST** assume that there could be a negative impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

(Delete numbers below which don't apply)

- 1. No negative impact identified - Go to sign off**
- 2. Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason**

You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.

- 3. Negative impact identified or uncertain**

What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale

- How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?**

X

Completing Officer

X

Lead Officer