

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOODS

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 NOVEMBER 2018		
TITLE:	FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2018/19		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR HOSKIN	PORTFOLIO:	HEALTH, WELLBEING & LEISURE
SERVICE:	REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	ALL
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to review the Council's Food Service plan 2018/19. The plan sets out how the Council undertakes its statutory duties to deliver safe food for Reading's residents. The report also sets out progress against an action plan agreed with the Food Standards Agency following their audit.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Members review and agree the content of the Food Service Plan and action plan following the FSA Audit.
- 2.2 That the Food Service Plan is reviewed and agreed on an annual basis prior to the start of the subsequent financial year and published on the Council's website.

Appendices

- Food Service Plan 2018/19

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Food Standards Agency is an independent Government department responsible for protecting public health and consumers' wider interests in food. Part of their role is to ensure that local authorities comply with the 'Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities'. This agreement details:

- publicly available local service plans to increase transparency of local enforcement services should be published (i.e. the Food Service Plan).
- agreed feed and food law enforcement standards for local authorities
- enhanced monitoring data with greater focus on inspection outcomes and which provides more detailed information on local authority performance
- an audit scheme aimed at securing improvements and sharing good practice.

- 3.2 Through the Framework agreement, Codes of Practice and legislation, the Council's Food & Safety team delivers a range of preventative and enforcement

services to protect the public's health, raise consumer awareness and ensure food standards.

- 3.3 Reading has over 1400 premises producing, retailing or serving food. This figure varies annually, with a high degree of churn being experienced particularly in the takeaway market.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 As part of the Framework Agreement, the Food Standards Agency carried out an audit of the Council's Food & Safety team in November 2017. As part of the audit, the Council was required to produce an action plan to address areas where improvements could be made. This action plan is an appendix to the Food Service Plan attached to this report.

- 4.2 One of the recommendations published on the FSA's website arising from the report, was that the Council should take its Food Service Plan to Housing, Neighborhoods and Leisure Committee for scrutiny and the plan should be published on the Council's website. These recommendations were issued by the FSA to the Council in June 2018.

- 4.3 The Food Service plan operates on an annual review. This is due to the significant in year variations associated with churn of food businesses which means that the risk based inspection program cannot be forecast accurately more than a year in advance.

- 4.4 Trends indicate that there is an increasing demand on the Food & Safety team resulting from:

- consumer complaints
- requests from businesses for advice and
- increased food poisoning notifications.

- 4.5 Despite this and against a backdrop of staff shortages arising from a national shortage of competent officers, in 2017/18, the team delivered 100% of Category A-E food hygiene inspections (916 inspections). It was also able to deliver an inspection rate of 89% of all unrated premises (177 inspections) and 100% of those premises falling outside the standard rating scheme (126 inspections (e.g. festival traders)).

- 4.6 Food Standards inspections, which are non-statutory have been impacted by prioritising statutory functions and higher risk. This is an area where targeted action is plan for 2019/20.

5. Options Proposed

- 5.1 As part of the Framework Agreement, the Council must submit monitoring data annually to the FSA. This data is uploaded to a national database and reviewed by the Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services prior to submission. These returns are submitted in April and are the basis on which the annual Food Service Plan is updated.

- 5.2 In order for the plan to be published at the beginning of the year, inspection targets will need to be forecast rather than using the actual data.

- 5.2 To provide scrutiny of the plan and inspection programme, it is proposed that a report is brought to HNL Committee annually and that the Committee signs off the plan for the year ahead.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

7.1 This report supports the following objectives in the corporate plan:

- Securing the economic success of Reading
- Protecting and enhancing the lives of vulnerable adults and children
- Keeping Reading's environment, clean, green and safe

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Not relevant to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Food Service plan is written in accordance with the nationally agreed Framework Agreement with the Food Standards Agency. It sets out how the authority will meet its statutory obligations.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Food Service plan sets out the service budget and resources required to deliver the Council's statutory services.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Food Standards Agency Audit November 2017