



South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council

Food Safety Service Plan

2019/2020

SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL/WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICE

JOINT FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN – 2019/2020

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Overview

This Service Plan has been produced in order to give clear details of the food safety services provided across South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council and how they will be carried out during the financial year 2019/2020. It also shows how the function contributes to the Corporate Themes and the Environmental Health Community of Practice Work plan.

This Service Plan attempts to show the variety, depth and complexity of the work carried out. Food safety is a statutory function and has serious implications to public health and wellbeing should food safety standards fail.

We are at the forefront of protecting the consumer from ill health. We protect the community by using enforcement powers where appropriate and also providing advice. The food safety service provides a combination of interventions. These include inspections, enforcement, investigations, education, partnership working and health promotion. We seek to work in partnership when the opportunities arise.

The food safety team are motivated and competent Officers who are committed to ensure that an effective and efficient service is provided. These Officers also undertake various other duties within the Environmental Health Community of Practice. As with many other services there is a lot of behind the scenes activity which goes unnoticed in the eyes of the public until there is a high profile investigation or emergency.

Prior to 2017 our resources were severely stretched and were failing to meet our inspection targets. Following a Food Standards Agency audit we put in place a work-plan to address these issues and re-prioritised resource towards achieving our inspection targets. In 2017-18 and 2018-19 we have achieved 100% completion of due interventions and have made significant progress with updating our intervention database.

Regular monitoring against the Service's progress with the plan is carried out. We are also required to check the consistency and quality of the work.

The service will also be required to react to unforeseen events – such as food poisoning outbreaks and other large investigations. These will impact upon the resources available for our programmed work.

We will continue actively exploring opportunities in the coming year to become more business orientated and be proactive with income generation opportunities.

The service plan has been produced in response to the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement on Local Authority Enforcement. This is a responsibility placed upon local authorities. The food safety service is highly governed to ensure compliance with the wide range of statutory requirements. Our activities and procedures take account of the Food Law Code of Practice (England) and other central guidance.

Introduction

This Service Plan is a requirement of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) under the Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement with local authorities and outlines both South Hams District Council's and West Devon Borough Council's statutory food safety function to ensure that national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally. The Plan seeks also to embrace the Food Standards Agency's strategy 2015-2020.

This Service Plan provides a focus for debate on key delivery issues providing an essential link with financial planning, sets objectives for the future and provides a means of managing performance and making comparisons and links to various corporate objectives. At the end of the financial year, we will review this service plan and report on our achievements and any reasons for variance or non-attainment of targets.

This joint Service Plan has been produced to ensure that local food businesses, members of the public, Council officers/Members and other stakeholders understand the approach to food safety adopted by the both the South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council and will help to ensure that the actions of the Council are in accordance with the Regulatory Delivery. It also reflects the FSAs Compliance and Enforcement Strategy. As a Service, we believe in fair regulation and reducing unnecessary burdens on businesses. The aims are very broad in order to allow for a wide range of activities in the promotion and enforcement of food safety laws and seek to embrace the ever changing food safety intervention programme in the UK.

We attach primary importance to the planned interventions in food premises and the prompt resolution of complaints and enquiries. Local and national food safety initiatives will be supported to the extent that available resources will allow. A number of these initiatives are detailed within this document.

In implementing our approach to food safety, we are mindful of the pressures on local businesses, particularly where, for example, the economy is seasonal and subject to fluctuation. We will seek to continue to work with local businesses by the provision of advice and guidance, using self-service principles. However, we will where necessary adopt a more formal approach where these interventions fail or where a risk to the consumer's health exists. Our approach to enforcement is detailed in the Council's enforcement policy.

In light of Government enforcement and partnership initiatives it is quite clear that the future of local authority food law enforcement activities and their role in public health intervention will alter considerably and require a greater and more varied input. We are also minded of our limited resources and the need to adopt greater business acumen and be able to compete favourably with the private sector. The Councils' Food Safety Service seeks to meet this challenge and be fit for the future.

Section 1 Service Aims and Objectives

1.1. Aims and Objectives

- 1.1.1. The aim of the Food Safety Service is to secure the safe production, storage, distribution and retailing of food and to reduce the risk liability of business enterprises by providing support and advice on food hygiene issues. Our vision is to ensure that food locally is without risk to the consumer and safe to eat through the provision of an effective enforcement service provided by motivated and competent officers.
- 1.1.2. We believe that everyone in the districts of South Hams and West Devon, whether they are residents or visitors are entitled to safe and wholesome food and drink. We also seek to ensure that food produced in the area and distributed nationally and internationally is safe and meets the required standards. We also recognise the importance of maintaining and enhancing the prosperity of businesses in the area and the needs of small and medium size business associated with the rural community.
- 1.1.3. Our main objectives are to protect public health by:
- Identifying potential risks and promote safe and hygienic conditions in food premises and places for which we have a statutory responsibility and to secure compliance with relevant legislation using all our enforcement 'tools' available.
 - Ensuring that by working with business using a variety of initiatives, we assist in reducing their risk liability.
 - Inspecting food produced in the South Hams and West Devon to ensure that is of a high standard and without risk to the consumer and that checks are included as part of our sampling programme.
 - Investigating the occurrence and spread of infectious disease and food poisoning and preventing further spread.
 - Investigating complaints and dealing with incidents and emergencies relating to food safety.
 - Ensuring enforcement is effective, consistent, proportionate and focussed.
 - Engaging in activities which encourage the promotion of health and food safety.

- Providing our service as good value for money and work with partners where necessary to deliver our service.
- Ensuring that officers delivering the service are properly trained and competent

1.1.4. The South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Councils are statutory food authorities and are tasked to exercise Official Controls by virtue of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004. We recognise our duty to act as enforcing authorities under the Food Safety Act 1990, the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 and the Official Feed and Food Controls (England) Regulations 2009 and miscellaneous laws made under the European Communities Act 1972 and to exercise our powers prescribed in these pieces of legislation. Our authorised officers use all available official controls and other measures to ensure that our objectives are met. Except where circumstances indicate a significant risk, our officers operate a graduated approach to enforcement of our powers. We believe that judgement by motivated, professionally competent officers is key to delivering our service. Our approach to enforcement and powers are documented in our policy. (See paragraph 2.5).

1.1.5. The contents of this service plan will be put into effect by a range of officers i.e. Specialist, Case Managers and Locality Officers under the guidance of the Senior Specialist (Food Safety Lead Officer) and overseen by the Head of Environmental Health and Licensing. It will be supported by specific policies and procedural documents where necessary to assist staff in delivering a high quality and consistent service. These documents will be updated and reviewed as and when required.

1.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

1.2.1. This Service Plan links to the Councils' themes of Wellbeing and Economy.

1.2.2. As with a number of other services, particularly those having an 'enforcement' role, the food safety service may be subject to criticism or complaint either by a food business operator or member of the public about the service. These matters are usually resolved on an informal basis. However, if this action fails, our formal complaints procedure will be followed. Such complaints are very uncommon. From time to time, customer feedback questionnaires are used to monitor our service delivery and officers' performance and these have shown great satisfaction with the Service.

1.2.3. The Service is very much customer orientated and we seek to continue to provide a robust service as part of the 'Customer First' initiative and deliver both on our own and also corporate service standards.

1.2.4. This Service Plan also seeks to determine the future shape of our service delivery.

Section 2 Background

2.1 Profile of the South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Councils.

2.1.1. The South Hams covers some 906 sq km of South Devon and is predominantly rural in nature, situated between the unitary authorities of Plymouth and Torbay. It encompasses some 50 miles of coastline to the south and 19% of the Dartmoor National Park to the north. There is a resident population of greater than 88,000 which increases considerably during the summer months as a result of tourism. The centres of population are within the four main towns of Totnes, Ivybridge, Dartmouth and Kingsbridge. The operational base is Follaton House, Totnes.

West Devon Borough Council is very rural in nature and covers some 1160 sq km of which 45% is situated within Dartmoor National Park. The Borough borders Torridge and North Devon to the north and Cornwall to the west. There is a resident population in excess of 53,500. The main centres are the towns of Tavistock and Okehampton. The operational base is Kilworthy Park, Tavistock.

2.2 Organisational Structure

See Appendix A.

2.3 Scope of the Food Safety Service

2.3.1 Traditionally, the Service has been provided in-house by a small team of professional duly-appointed and dedicated officers, the structure of which is set out in the appendix to paragraph 2.2 above. This work is undertaken by the Customer First Specialist in Environmental Health.

In addition to food safety work, historically the 'Commercial' team also has an input into:

1. Occupational health and safety target inspections and investigations of accidents
2. The investigation and control of food poisoning and infectious diseases (including zoonoses),
3. Monitoring compliance and complaints with smoke-free laws,
4. Various licensing and registration issues including food premises, holiday caravan and camping sites, skin piercing activities, and licensing of zoos and dangerous wild animals,

5. Registration documents for the movement of shellfish from production areas,
 6. Issuing certification for food export.
- 2.3.2 External expertise is provided in the form of Food Examiners appointed by the Food, Water and Environmental Laboratory at Porton, Salisbury. This external service is subject to an annual service level agreement. We engage Food Analysts employed by Public Analysts Scientific Services Ltd (PASS) Wolverhampton and we appoint Proper Officers for Communicable Disease Control employed by Public Health England based in Totnes. We enter into an annual contract with Campden and Chorleywood Food Research Association for specialist advice for food technology/processing. We also have a close working relationship with Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading Standards service.
- 2.3.3 Health Promotion/Education - We run the Junior Lifeskills Event where Children aged 10-11 years from South Hams and West Devon Schools are involved in learning lifekills from professionals in a safe environment.
- 2.3.4. ICT Support - We have been using Civica app and W2. Majority of our records are held electronically and this generates our intervention programme. Our records are managed by the Case Management Team. We have the facility for working remotely using this software. Since December 2019, we have been using mobile devices for completion of our inspection reports.

2.4 Demands on the Food Safety Service

- 2.4.1 Service Delivery - The service delivery point for the South Hams District Council is Follaton House, Totnes, and Kilworthy Park for West Devon Borough Council. These are open during normal working hours. An out of hours service is available for emergencies.
- 2.4.2 Premises profile -
In total at the end of 2018/2019 there were some 1924 food businesses across both districts. Their profile is set out below and these statistics are based upon the returns sent to the Food Standards Agency and include unrated premises i.e. those not yet having received an inspection.

Type	No. SHDC	No. WDBC
Primary producers	2	11
Manufacturers/packers	92	43
Importers/exporters	2	0

Distributors/transporters	21	9
Retailers	265	137
Restaurants/caterers	842	500
Total	1224	700

2.4.3 'Approved' premises

Within the total above there are some 52 businesses 'approved' under specific hygiene regulations. These relate to products of animal origin and approval allows greater flexibility to trade under EU rules both nationally within the UK and in the EU. Checks require considerable officer input in order to ensure stringent requirements are met. These establishments would present a considerable risk to the Council and consumer at large if not properly monitored. Much input by specifically trained competent staff is needed as a consequence. Full inspections/audits can take 2-3 days and the formal approval process is complex in order to meet the high standard expected. These establishments reflect the rural and diverse nature of our districts. Given the diversification and increased business opportunities available for trade, particularly overseas, with these types of products, we have seen an increase in the number of approved premises over the years. We are also subject to audit by the inspectors from the EU and third countries.

South Hams District Council has close links with the local molluscan shellfish industry having designated harvesting areas at 3 locations which includes 10 classified beds. We have also 2 shellfish purification plants. Much work is involved in the monitoring programmes to ensure acceptable standards are maintained as part of the Council's statutory sampling role in these areas.

In West Devon together with traditional rural activities (reflected particularly in the dairy industry), there is a large cannery responsible for worldwide distribution of product together with one of the largest cheese factories in the country.

The profile for approved premises is as follows:

	Dairy	Shellfish	Fishery	Meat products/prep	Egg Packer	Other	Total
SHDC	9	2	11	7	6	2	37
WDBC	9	0	0	1	3	2	15

2.4.4 Seasonal variations to business

It is recognised that there is a considerable seasonal influx of visitors and this has an impact upon workload as regards new businesses opening up, changes of ownership, officer travel time/leave and additional complaints/service requests generated. Our inspection programme reflects the seasonal operation of businesses.

2.4.5 Ethnic businesses

Ethnic food premises operated by persons whose first language is not English account for some of our premises, however, most of these are operated by the second generation. We seek to ensure that our approach with these businesses is clear and understood. On occasions we are required to seek the services of interpreters and business guidance in other languages.

2.4.6 Imported food

It is estimated that approximately 50% of all food offered for sale within the UK is imported. As we are outside sea or airport areas we are not at the front line of imported food control, however, we are classified as an inland port and have jurisdiction for assessing whether foodstuffs imported from outside the EU have been legally introduced and meet food safety requirements. In the main, this is undertaken during routine inspections, complaint investigation and sampling work. The Food Safety Service has the necessary arrangement in place to deal with imported food. Relevant officers have received the training by the Food Standards Agency and authorised to act in the event of illegally imported food being identified.

2.4.7 Interventions

A wide range of interventions are available for our use including inspections, audit, monitoring, surveillance, verification and sampling etc. These are known as 'official controls'. Other interventions such as education, advice etc and intelligence/information gathering are also available as part of our 'tool kit' however, these interventions are not official controls. Inspections are carried out in accordance with risk based criteria which are detailed in Codes of Practice issued by the Food Standards Agency. These range from category A to E i.e. high to low risk. We aim to inspect all our premises subject to the programme, however, if there is any slippage throughout the year we will focus on high risk premises (including Approved premises). Where necessary, inspections will be undertaken out of the Council's normal working hours when a particular business is operating.

However, the high volume of reactive work is still present. We are continuing to move much of this element to our Customer Service and Case Management team.

The table below shows the premises profile based on risk as at 01.04.19 although this will show some variation throughout the year as inspections are carried out and alter their rating in subsequent years. Given the risk rating scheme, all the premises below will not fall due within the current year.

Category and frequency of inspection	A 6 month	B 12 month	C 18 month	D 24 month	E Alternate enforcement every 3 years	Unrated	Total
No of premises SHDC	2	43	189	524	483	33	1274
No of premises WDBC	3	15	96	255	333	23	725

Performance data (see Service Delivery) shows that we are currently meeting targets i.e. those programmed or within the time period required.

The premises profile at 31.03.19 for types of premises within the districts is shown in paragraph 2.4.2 above and our achievement of the risk based programme is set out in paragraph 3.1.5 below although this will change from year to year as businesses close, open or change the particular nature of their business.

2.4.8 Health promotion/education

We seek to embrace the annual National Food Safety week initiative from The Food Standards Agency which promotes food safety work amongst businesses and the general public. This year the Food Standards Agency has decided to focus on the International Food Safety Week due to the ongoing BREXIT planning.

2.4.9 Food Alerts

These are administered by the Food Standards Agency and we must be able to react as necessary. (See paragraph 3.7).

2.4.10 Infection control

In respect of the control of food related disease, the function of the Service is to:-

- Contain the spread of any outbreak
- Identify the focus of infection
- Identify the causative organism
- Trace carriers and cases
- Trace the source of infection
- Determine the causal factors
- Recommend practices to prevent recurrence of disease; and
- Determine whether criminal offences have been committed.

The number of individual notifications of food poisoning/infectious disease 2019/2020 around 172 per annum for South Hams and 122 for West Devon. In addition, notifications of zoonotic infections are received, mainly as a result of the upsurge in TB in cattle which has ramifications for milk quality and its acceptance onto the market for human consumption. There is always the potential for a serious food safety incident to arise such as E.coli 0157 requiring investigation. These infections can result in fatalities with the very young or elderly. We must therefore ensure that we are capable and manage our resources to be able to meet any such local challenges.

2.4.11 Food export certificates

As part of our Service, food export certificates are issued to businesses in order to provide documentation which satisfies the Government of the importing Country that the incoming product is safe. In 2018/2019 **South Hams** issued **919** certificates (predominantly crab to China). Many of these are required at very short notice in order to meet the needs of business. This service creates an immediate demand at the expense of other food safety functions.

2.4.12 Shellfish Registration Documents

Shellfish registration documents are issued permitting the gathering of shellfish by persons at designated sites. Approximately 145 per annum are issued. Whilst this is a statutory service, it is not chargeable, however the demand on our overall service is minimal and viewed as an administrative exercise.

2.4.13 Voluntary Surrender

The demand for certificates for the voluntary surrender of unfit food has reduced considerably. However, this service continues to be available to businesses following for example, the breakdown of refrigeration/freezer equipment or damage of food as a consequence of flooding. These do not have significant resource implications however, it is a chargeable service and fees are reviewed annually.

2.4.14 Business/advice

Providing advice to food business has a valuable positive impact on food safety compliance across the Council's areas. However, providing advice is resource intensive. Last year we introduced a pilot for charging for advice visits in line with other Local Authorities on a cost recovery basis. Although we did not receive a high demand, for this service we will work towards promoting the service more this year with a view to increasing demand.

2.4.15 National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

In 2009 the Food Standards Agency agreed to adopt a national food safety rating scheme where following inspection of food premises selling food directly to the public, they are awarded a rating based on how they comply with the three key compliance

components i.e. food safety, structure and management. South Hams and West Devon along with majority of other Devon local authorities implemented the scheme in April 2011.

The intention of the scheme is to provide the consumer with a choice of whether they wish to purchase food from the premises based on their particular hygiene rating. Although not a legal requirement, the rating should be displayed at the entrance to the premises by a sticker. Unless the premises are of a sensitive nature, (including those caring for vulnerable persons) the ratings are given openly on the FSA website <https://ratings.food.gov.uk/>

There are safeguards for businesses (shown on the FSA website) in the form of appeals, the right to reply and also a request for re-inspection in order to improve their rating. Whilst there have been very few appeals to the Senior Specialist – Environmental Health or applications for the right to reply, we have however, seen an increase in the number of re inspection requests (these are separate to those re inspections as part of our enforcement actions). The scheme has now been rolled out across the UK, and local and national publicity given, businesses are keen to improve their 'image' and wish to use their ratings as a marketing opportunity. We now charge for the re-score inspections in line with other Local Authorities. The Food Standards Agency are looking to follow Wales and Northern Ireland where the display of the score on the premises is mandatory.

2.5 Regulation Policy

- 2.5.1 The approach to enforcement of both Councils is reflected in a joint Enforcement Policy detailing the range of powers placed upon Food Authorities by the food safety laws, including regulations and also codes of practice issued by the Food Standards Agency. The primary responsibility for ensuring food safety lies with proprietors of food businesses however, we view co-operation with proprietors and others who have duties under food laws as the best way of achieving compliance. The Council also takes into account various Industry Guides to Good Hygiene Practice and guidance issued by the Government's Office for Product Safety and Standards - Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) when assessing compliance.
- 2.5.2 It is our policy that enforcement action, be it verbal warnings, the issue of written warnings, statutory notices, or prosecutions, is primarily based upon an assessment of risk to public health and the seriousness of any alleged offence. Where we take legal proceedings, we adopt the Code for Crown Prosecutors issued by the Crown Prosecution Service.
- 2.5.3 We endorse and fully support the Regulator's Code issued by the Government's Better Regulation Delivery Office. We also endorse the European Convention on Human Rights.

- 2.5.4 We have a documented food safety enforcement policy which has been published on our websites. All decisions on enforcement action will be taken following the consideration of the Policy. We also have a separate policy when dealing with food complaints (see paragraph 3.2.4).

Section 3 Service Delivery

3.1 Food Premises Interventions

- 3.1.1 The main purposes of an intervention is to assess risk to the consumer, achieve improvement in standards and validate existing standards. In order to undertake this work (and other work assigned to the team) the human resources shown in organisational structure in Appendix A are provided.

We aim to visit and inspect food premises on a routine basis within 28 days of due date in accordance with the Food Standards Agency's risk rating scheme contained in their Code of Practice. However, in view of the number of premises, the geography of both districts and the resources available, our programme is subject to slippage. Where this happens the emphasis for inspection will be placed on premises where the level of risk is the highest. We seek to implement a strategy for our intervention programme.

- 3.1.2 Whilst the primary responsibility for identifying food hazards and controlling risks rests with food businesses, food hygiene interventions will be undertaken to:-

- Establish whether food is being produced hygienically;
- Establish whether food is safe to eat;
- To identify foreseeable incidences of food poisoning or injury as a consequence of consumption of food.

- 3.1.3 For the lowest risk premises the Food Standards Agency has allowed for an alternative enforcement strategy to be adopted which removes many of these type of premises (typically, premises selling shelf stable wrapped food, or those handling open low risk food such as fruit and vegetables) from the routine inspection programme. However, these premises will receive an initial visit following registration and other occasional visits as necessary. The strategy adopted by this Council (in common with many other local authorities) is to subject these premises to a self-assessment questionnaire and to follow up as appropriate. This approach is reviewed for these premises every 3 years. We make this approach less cumbersome on our specialist resources by utilising our Case Management team at the initial stages. We are also implementing Intelligence monitoring inspections in line with the Code of Practice for our D rated premises.

The total number of interventions carried out is set out below (see paragraph 2.4.7 about the description of an intervention).

Year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
No. SHDC	642	435	797	594	489
No. WDBC	347	272	310	432	233

The number of interventions has decreased as the number of interventions due has decreased (as the inspection regime is a risk based system). Both Council areas have carried out 100% of inspections due in both 2017/18 and 2018/19. The number of inspections due in 2019/20 is likely to increase.

3.1.4 Food premises registration.

In accordance with the legal requirements, we maintain a register of food premises. The number of registered premises does fluctuate due to business closures and new ones opening. All applications for registration or approval of premises are processed and in accordance with internal procedures. Premises registering with the Council for the first time, or where registration details require amending on the Councils' register e.g. a new food business operator, an inspection is required.

Year	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
No. SHDC	102	91	168	158
No. WDBC	59	61	77	85

- 3.1.5 Our performance for premises inspection is set out below and gives the percentage of those achieved against those programmed for an intervention. The data has been separated to show those premises subjected to active input and those category E premises mentioned in paragraph 3.1.3 above. The inclusion of the category E data into the main dataset can skew the overall information but is included for completeness.

We seek to achieve 100% inspection of those premises in the high risk categories ie A, B and C.

South Hams District Council

Risk category	2015/2016			2016/2017			2017/2018			2018/2019		
	Number Programmed	No. Completed	% completed	Number programmed	No. Completed	% completed	Number Programmed	No. Completed	% completed	Number Programmed	No. Completed	% Completed
A	8	7	87.5	35	35	100	12	12	100	3	3	100
B	57	49	85.9	63	62	98.4	43	43	100	47	47	100
C	164	119	78.6	153	136	88.8	108	108	100	96	96	100
D	246	122	49.5	241	187	77.6	231	231	100	195	195	100
E	92	55	59.7	307	306	99.7	117	117	100	36	36	100
Unrated	112	83	74.1	117	71	60.9	144	144	100	112	112	100
Total	686	435	63.4	916	797	87.0	655	655	100	489	489	100

West Devon Borough Council

Risk category	2015/2016			2016/2017			2017/2018			2018/2019		
	Number programmed	No. Completed	% completed	Number programmed	No. Completed	% completed	Number Programmed	No. Completed	% completed	Number Programmed	No. Completed	% Completed
A	18	18	100	11	11	100	2	2	100	2	2	100
B	20	18	90	39	36	92.3	18	18	100	25	25	100
C	81	71	87.7	75	49	65.3	80	80	100	39	39	100
D	136	110	80.9	81	39	48.1	132	132	100	78	78	100
E	62	25	40.3	202	131	64.9	145	145	100	21	21	100
Unrated	95	30	31.6	83	44	53.0	68	68	100	68	68	100
Total	412	272	66.0	491	310	63.1	445	445	100	233	233	100

Source: Environmental Health Civica app Software

- 3.1.6 We use the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice risk rating scheme for food premises. Within the scheme the three compliance components i.e. hygiene, structure and management are not only critical for the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme as described in paragraph 2.4.15 above, but we are also able to use them as a performance indicator to assess percentage of premises who have achieved a 5 rating.

In 2019/20 we aim to achieve 100 % inspection of those premises in the high risk categories i.e. A, B and C's, and 100% D's.

We aim to carry out 100% of interventions for Cat E (this may be achieved by an alternative intervention approach).

3.1.7 Paragraph 2.4.15 explains our involvement with the national food hygiene rating scheme. The Scheme categorises premises into bands 0-5 where 0 requires 'urgent improvement' and 5 'very good'. The majority of our businesses meet the rating band of 3 i.e. 'satisfactory' and many the highest rating of 5. This data is moveable as inspections are made and ratings alter, rating can be found at www.food.gov.uk/ratings .

Rating	SHDC (no of premises)	WDBC (No of premises)
5	1115	651
4	119	48
3	28	14
2	10	6
1	10	10
0	2	1
Percentage overall of 4 and 5 rated premises	96%	95.7%

3.1.8 Re inspections/re-visits

Re-visits/re-inspections are determined by conditions found on the initial inspection and are not required in many cases. These visits are undertaken where an Officer is concerned about standards and seeks to ensure improvements are made. This is usually the first step of enforcement action.

In addition to our enforcement revisits, we undertake requested revisits as part of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (see paragraph 2.4.15).

The revisit data is set out below. 'Enf' refers to enforcement and FHRS to the Rating Scheme

	2015/16 Enf.	FHRS	2017/18 Enf.	FHRS	2018/19 Enf.	FHRS
SHDC	14	3	13	8	21	6
WDBC	13	9	5	4	20	5

3.1.9 Enforcement action

Paragraph 2.5 above outlines our approach to enforcement. The table below shows the type of action taken and volume.

Type of action	2015/2016		2017/2018		2018/2019	
	SHDC	WDBC	SHDC	WDBC	SHDC	WDBC
Written warnings	131	76	120	199	185	115
Hygiene improvement notices	3	0	1	0	4	0
Closure of premises	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prohibition of persons	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0	0	0	0	0

3.1.10 External assistance.

We are confident that outside resources such as Food Examiners, Food Analysts and others such as Proper Officers for Communicable Disease Control are readily available and accessible. We have an annual Service Level Agreement with the Food, Water and Environmental Laboratory and, due to the infrequent use of the Public Analysts Laboratory a SLA is considered inappropriate, although we have entered into a contract.

3.1.11 Officer competency.

We will ensure that officers engaged in food safety work are appointed and authorised within their competency and ability and that they are appropriately trained and experienced and, this is particularly so in respect of our high risk processes and approved premises. Authorisation and training are subject to procedural documents and appraisal.

3.2 Food Complaints.

- 3.2.1 Investigation into complaints about food will normally be commenced within 24 hours of receipt, and will reflect the relevant risk posed and condition of the food.
- 3.2.2 We will liaise with any local authorities signed up to Primary Authority Partnerships via the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) regarding matters associated with the particular company's policies or procedures. We will have regard to information/advice received as a result of any such liaison and will advise these authorities of the outcome of our enquiries.
- 3.2.3 A number of complaints are received each year about food purchased within our districts and about premises or the practices within. It is anticipated that there will be little increase in service demand in this particular area. The following table sets out the profile of the total complaints received.

	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
SHDC	31	65	52	80
WDBC	21	27	54	53

- 3.2.4 Our joint Food Complaints Policy has been reviewed recently and sets the matters with which we will investigate and those which we will not. This document is readily available.

3.3 Primary Authority Partnerships

- 3.3.1 Councils work together to coordinate enforcement and advice to businesses that distribute goods or trade in more than one area. The Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 sets up the Primary Authority scheme which gives for the first time the right for companies operating inside or outside our area to form a statutory partnership with us as a single point of contact. The objective of this is to provide robust and reliable advice on compliance that other Councils must take into account when carrying out inspections or dealing with non-compliance. We have worked with Trading Standards on the administrative side of the Primary Authority Partnership Agreement so that we are able to offer businesses Trading Standards functions alongside Food Hygiene functions to support businesses further. We currently have 2 Primary Authority Partnerships whereby this has had some impact upon our team. The scheme does allow for cost recovery.

3.4 Advice to Business

- 3.4.1 We support the Council's objective to maintain and enhance the prosperity of business and it is our policy to support businesses in complying with food safety laws and good practice by whatever means available. Often such is given when businesses start up and during our inspections. Our main source of advice will be via our websites and by telephone with our Customer Services and Case

Management Team. Advice to businesses and individuals detracts from the food safety inspection programme. We re-examined business advice as part of our approach to generating income, and started introducing a cost recovery charge for advice during 2018. Advisory visits to food manufacturers (particularly those subject to formal 'approval') is common and allows for better administration of the Councils approved premises process and reduces the burden on business within this specialised sector.

We continue to promote the Safer Food Better Business pack for smaller businesses to help businesses comply with the legal requirements to have a documented food safety management system. We provide these packs to business for a cost recovery charge.

3.4.2 Business advice is a requirement of the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement with local authorities and, as a result we have participated in the review of the information and guidance available on the Councils website; this is ongoing. We are also considering best practice for engaging with businesses.

3.4.3 We will review our advice strategy throughout this year and identify what additional resources are needed and identify various ways of providing advice so as to meet our service demands and the requirements of the Food Standards Agency. We will also continue to seek to work with all our partners both internally and externally to ensure that the most accurate advice is given in the most appropriate manner.

3.5 Food Sampling

3.5.1 On an annual basis we review our policy for food sampling and also our programme for the year. This reflects the nationally required programmes, our statutory requirements under specific regulations and requirements of the Food Standards Agency including the sampling of any imported foods. Local initiatives and local products are also included. The programme incorporates any work following liaison with the Devon and Cornwall Food Liaison Group and Public Health England.

3.5.2 Reactive sampling takes place as a result of food poisoning investigations or complaints received. In addition to the programme, we take samples (including swabs) during inspections as the situation dictates. It is anticipated that sampling levels for complaints will remain static but our proactive programme last year was underachieved and is likely to be in this current year due to resources available. The South Hams District Council's statutory role as regards shellfish harvesting area sampling and toxic algae monitoring programmes should remain unaffected as resources are appropriately allocated, however, enhanced monitoring required by Government throughout the year especially during summer months, as regards toxic algae will create a considerable additional burden at the expense of the normal food sampling and other proactive work such as our inspection programme.

3.5.3 Arrangements under the Service Level Agreement with the local Food, Water and Environmental Laboratory allow our sampling programme to operate by a mechanism of 'credit' values and the more complex the examination or type of food sample, the greater the credit utilisation. Currently, this is a non-chargeable service under the auspices of Public Health England. In the event of the credit allocation being exceeded, charges will be made. To date, we have not exceeded our allowance. Underutilisation of credit allocation may result in charging for wasted resources. This will be kept under careful scrutiny.

3.5.4 The shellfish harvesting monitoring programme for microbiological samples falls outside any credit allocation scheme and cost of this, both in officer time and laboratory examination continues to be a drain on resources. Examination of the samples is undertaken by the CEFAS laboratory (Centre for the Environment, Fisheries and Agriculture Science), a Government Agency.

3.5.5 The profile for food samples is as follows:

	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
SHDC	132	185	76	97
WDBC	92	45	36	80

3.5.6. Samples mainly relating to complaints are submitted to the Public Analysts laboratory in very occasional instances. The cost of these is met from existing resources and, in the event of legal proceedings, we will seek to recover sampling costs from the defendant.

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food related Infectious disease.

3.6.1 Food poisoning in the UK is estimated at costing the country £1.5 billion/yr and Public Health England report more than 1 million cases of food poisoning a year resulting in approximately 2000 cases admitted to hospital and 500 deaths. A procedural document gives specific guidance on this issue and links in with the Outbreak Communicable Disease Control Plan developed by Public Health England.

The profile for notifications of infectious diseases and food poisoning is as follows:

	2016/17	2017/2018	2018/2019
SHDC	109	122	170
WDBC	62	65	116

3.6.2 The number of notifications of zoonotic infections (i.e. those infections transmissible between animals and humans) has increased over recent years and this is principally

due to notifications of TB in cattle. This can have a potential for the spread of the infection to humans via untreated milk consumption.

- 3.6.3 The Service undertakes to commence investigation where appropriate of all relevant notified or suspected cases of food poisoning and infectious diseases within 24 hours. However, in the case of outbreaks or infections of high significance, we will commence our enquiries immediately i.e. Ecoli 0157, etc. Current systems in place and resources available permit this target to be met, although this will be at the expense of other proactive/reactive work.

3.7 Food Safety Incidents

- 3.7.1 Food alerts are notified to us by the Food Standards Agency and they alert the public, businesses and local authorities to problems or potential problems in food products nationally. Our role where necessary, is to ensure that these products are removed from the food chain. The speed and nature of response is determined by the category of notification received, however, with many notifications, no action is needed. We recognise that some notifications however do require an immediate response and sufficient resources are available. However, this is at the detriment of our other functions.
- 3.7.2 We have an out-of-hours emergency service whereby food safety incidents can be acted upon where necessary and we have the capability to receive all notifications via e-mail and text messages to officers' mobile phones. A documented procedure for responding to food safety incidents etc is in place.

3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations

- 3.8.1 The Councils' food safety remit is represented and actively participates in the Devon and Cornwall Food Liaison Group where topical issues of mutual concern and policy/procedural matters are debated. The Group also co-ordinate training and peer review exercises throughout the region. Formal meetings are held every six weeks and specialist officer working groups are set up to consider particular issues who then report back to the main group. Ad hoc meetings are held where necessary to consider emerging and urgent issues so as to ensure a common approach and understanding. The core of the Group comprises of food safety lead officers in all Devon Council's, Cornwall Council, Trading Standards, the Public Health England's food, water and environment laboratory microbiologists and consultants in communicable disease control and also the Food Standards Agency.
- 3.8.2 Officers attend Branch and Centre meetings of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and seek to maintain their CPD credit status as members of their professional body.

- 3.8.3 Officers' maintain regular working contact and have good liaison with the Public Health England, Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading Standards, Food Water and Environment laboratory, Food Standards Agency, LGR, CEFAS, APHA, Environment Agency, South West Water, Devon and Severn Inshore Fishery and Conservation Authority and Care Quality Commission, Ofsted on day to day issues. We also regularly engage with our internal services such as planning, economy, licensing, pollution and legal services etc In addition, given that the Food Standards Agency now has regional representation, we are able to work with a key Government agency at a more local level.
- 3.8.4 The Food Safety Service recognises along with all other services, the need to be cost effective and deliver their service in an efficient manner. We also need to look forward to the 'bigger picture' in service delivery and partners who can assist this objective. By working in partnership, we will be able to respond more easily to those emerging technologies raising food safety concerns and meeting the challenges of shared training and knowledge. There is a need to move forward with the national and regional 'public health' agenda. We will achieve this by continued effective liaison.

3.9 Food safety promotion

- 3.9.1 Due to available resources, the Council does not currently undertake food hygiene training instead, the need is met by other local authorities, private enterprises and local education establishments. However, we will review this approach when we examine opportunities for income generation. We participate in the National Food Safety Week in May/June each year via our communications team. Officers do, from time to time provide talks to local interest groups or specific business sectors. We shall be reviewing our approach to business engagement and also the broader public health agenda. We shall be looking to deliver training opportunities for business by working in partnership with others because of our limited and stretched resources.

Section 4 Resources

Resource projection for the Food Safety Service Delivery 2019-2020

South Hams			
Service Function	Projected demand	Estimated time per unit (hours)	Total Food Officer resource required p/a (hours)
Category A interventions	2	10	20
Category B interventions	45	10	450
Category C interventions	104	5	520
Category D interventions	277	2	554
Category E interventions	255	0.5	127.5
Unrated	21	5	105
New Registrations	158	5	790
Re-visits	10	5	50
Complaint Investigations (based on last year's data)	80	2	160
Infectious Diseases	170	0.5	85
Business advice (exc unrated businesses)	80	1.5	120
Enforcement activity eg illegal meat, joint TS ops	0	0	0
Mandatory Competency training	3 Officer	30	90
Internal Monitoring, database maintenance and FHRS administration	52 Weeks	7	364
Primary Authority Partnership	3	72	216
Food Service meetings, regional liaison group	Meetings / consistency meeting pcm	9	18
	1 x 4.5 hour regional meeting	4.5	70
Sampling projects and interventions and follow up	97	2.5	242.5
TOTAL OFFICER HOURS REQUIRED p/a			3982
Available Officer hours p/a	2.6 FTE	3920	

West Devon			
Service Function	Projected demand	Estimated time per unit (hours)	Total Food Officer resource required p/a (hours)
Category A interventions	3	10	30
Category B interventions	13	10	130
Category C interventions	67	5	335
Category D interventions	163	2	326
Category E interventions	98	0.5	49
Unrated	20	5	100
New Registrations	85	5	425
Re-visits	4	5	20
Complaint Investigations (based on last year's data)	35	2	70
Infectious Diseases	122	0.5	61
Business advice (exc unrated businesses) e.g. identified through planning & licensing regimes or service	50	1.5	75
Enforcement activity eg illegal meat, joint TS ops	1	10	10
Mandatory Competency training	1 Officer	30	30
Internal Monitoring, database maintenance and FHRS administration	52 Weeks	7	364
Food Service meetings,		9	18
Sampling projects and interventions and follow up	80	2.5	200
TOTAL OFFICER HOURS REQUIRED p/a			2243
Available Officer hours p/a	1.4 FTE	2195	

Financial Allocation

- 4.1.1 Budget details for the Food Safety function are shown in 'Appendix B'.
- 4.1.2 Staff costs are the predominant cost to the service. £101,242 in South Hams and £63,637 in West Devon.
- 4.1.3 The South Hams sampling budget of £7,000 covers the examination costs of South Hams District Council's statutory shellfish sampling role, although due to increased costs and further sampling demands the budget is exceeded. As detailed above, the cost of the microbiological examination of food (for non-shellfish food items) is carried out by a system of credit allocation and costs are met by Central Government Funds, see paragraph 3.5.3 above. The sampling budget in West Devon is £2500
- 4.1.4 There is a small budget in West Devon for inspection work (£3200). This is an historic arrangement to supplement inspection work carried out by Specialist Staff. There is no such budget in South Hams.
- 4.1.5 The Council has a duty to provide export licence certification when requested to do so by businesses in its area that export food to countries outside of the EU. (Current charge £61 per certificate).
- 4.1.6 In the event of successful legal proceedings being taken, the Council endeavours to recover all costs from the defendant where possible. No separately identifiable budget within the Community of Practice - Environmental Health Service is provided for the pursuance of legal action. Resources are provided within the corporate budget.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

- 4.2.1 This Service Plan recognises the need for staff engaged in food safety issues to be adequately trained and competent (see paragraph 3.1.11). It also has been stated personnel providing the food safety service also undertakes various other functions (see paragraph 2.3.1).
- 4.2.2 Details of the food safety human resources are detailed in Appendix A. The majority of the teams work is devoted to food safety and other non-food safety work such as health and safety enforcement and caravan site licensing might not always receive the necessary priority. However, where there is a need to react to a situation, the team are flexible. Clearly, given the work demands, routine food safety inspection targets are under high pressure. We do also employ a contractor to carry out some food safety inspections in order to achieve our 100% target.

4.2.3 All Officers undertaking food safety work meet the requirements set out in the Food Standards Agency's Code of Practice. Further training is provided to supplement these competencies although the most appropriate training is not always available locally. We are satisfied that officers are appropriately trained and competent in accordance with the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice although new competency requirements were introduced in 2015. We are subject to internal procedures re training, authorisation and quality monitoring. We recognise that sufficient financial resources are made available to ensure a professional and competent workforce.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

4.3.1 The Council operates an annual appraisal scheme which identifies individual's strengths and development needs. These needs are identified and individual work plans are produced which also seek to develop professional expertise and competency and this will include maintain chartered status with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. Additionally, team meetings are held which may highlight the need for training in particular areas. Training is provided where both the mutual needs of the individual officer and the Council are met. One to one sessions are also held throughout the hierarchy.

4.3.2 The Council is committed to ensuring that Officers are able to meet their CPD training requirement as set out in the Food Standards Agency's Food Law Code of Practice. All staff are trained to a high standard linked to their level of authorisation and training records show very few shortcomings.

4.3.3 Team members are actively encouraged to attend training courses so as to enhance competency in specialist areas. This has been achieved in the past with respect to the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, HACCP evaluation, shellfish, milk pasteurisation, cheese making, canning and aseptic packaging, food factory enforcement, Police and Criminal Evidence Act, imported food enforcement and ISO 9000, ISO 20002 Lead Auditor. Records of staff training and appraisals/core competencies are kept as required by the framework agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement issued by the Food Standards Agency. Assessment of competency is on-going and forms part of a quality monitoring process. This will need to be re-assessed due to the halt on free courses by the FSA.

4.3.4 The professional specialist team are supported by our Case Managers and Locality Officers and will be subject to the appropriate level of training to handle initial enquiries, administration and the lower level of work. Training will be provided and familiarisation work away from the office will be part of their training. Given the shared services arrangements, flexibility is available between both service delivery centres

- 4.3.5 Last year we were able to support a student in their professional development and they successfully passed their Environmental Health qualifications. We are currently looking into a training placement for a trainee Environmental Health Officer. We also from time to time assist other local authorities enforcement staff with their training plan.

Section 5 Quality Assessment

5.1 Quality Assessment and Internal monitoring

We seek to ensure that a quality service is delivered so as to achieve our aims and objectives. This is met by internal quality assessment and auditing against this Service Plan and our Environmental Health Work-plan, individual appraisal plans, peer review and other documentation. Checks are also made on our approved premises documents, food complaints sign off and legal notices/referral for enforcement action. We value customer feedback questionnaires as a valuable source of quality checks.

- 5.1.1 An internal audit report of the West Devon Food Safety Service gave an audit opinion of 'good' and stated that 'the majority of the areas reviewed were found to be adequately controlled. Generally, risks are well managed but a few areas for improvement have been identified'.
- 5.1.2 In addition to internal monitoring, the Council's food safety service embraces inter-authority auditing as a measure of quality performance with other authorities within Devon and Cornwall. Since the inception of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme a system of peer review exercises has been developed to promote the consistency of premises rating by all food safety officers within the region. Currently, these exercises are undertaken on a monthly basis. It is reported that officers of the South Hams and West Devon show consistency with officers employed elsewhere. The Food Standards Agency have recently carried out their first National Peer Review exercise. We were engaged in an Inter Authority Audit for the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in January 2016.

We are from time to time audited externally. This usually occurs under the auspices of the Food Standards Agency. The EU Food and Veterinary Office carry out audit programmes also with a view to assessing whether legislation is being implemented consistently across the European Community.

Section 6 Benchmarking

- 6.1 The service has carried out some benchmarking against National Indicators provided by APSE. The following show some comparisons of South Hams and West Devon with National figures;

Number of food complaints per 1000 premises in 16/17 average was 82 nationwide; in SHDC/WDBC 18/19 it is 63

Cost of food hygiene service per head of pop National average is £1.75; in South Hams and West Devon it is £1.61

Section 7 Review

- 7.1 Review against the Service Plan

The Environmental Health Service Plan is subject to scrutiny and includes performance relevant to food safety. On an annual basis we will report on the achievements of our targets set out in this Plan and the reason for non-attainment.

- 7.2 Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan

If during the year we have had reason to change or approach our targets we will explain the reason for this when we review the Plan.

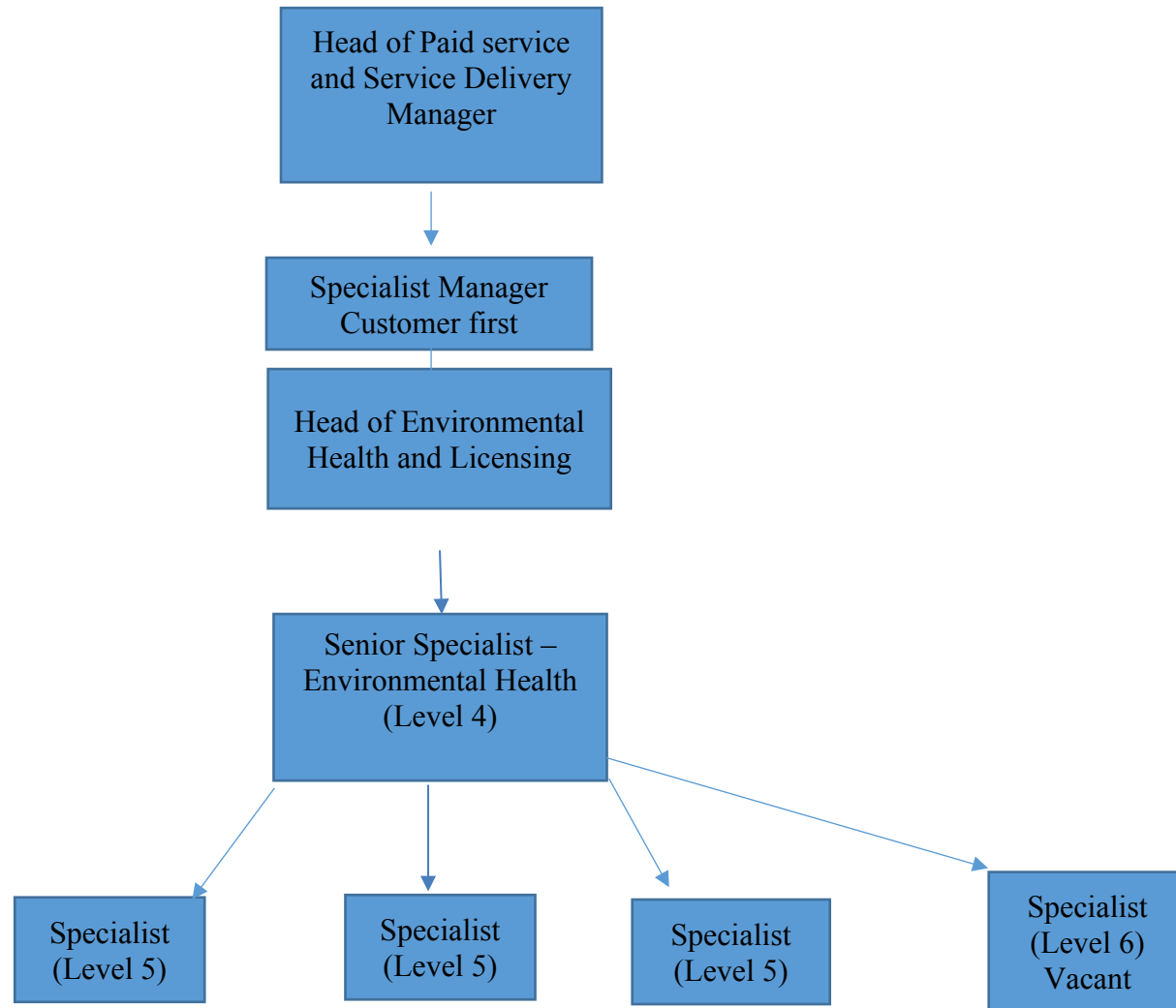
- 7.3 Areas for Improvement and Future Development

- Continue to integrate case managers, specialist and locality officer roles into the related work streams with a view to freeing up of officers to deliver service at the appropriate level.
- Critically examine the cost elements of our work and identify opportunities for greater business development and competitive within the marketplace.
- Identify further areas for cost saving within the service and the apportionment of work.
- Develop key performance indicators, monitor compliance and individual officer performance.
- Examine opportunities for greater engagement with business
- Develop further with partners our role in the wider 'Public Health Agenda'.
- Continue to benchmark with other local authorities as appropriate.
- Develop more fully the alternative enforcement strategy for low risk premises

This Service Plan will be reviewed annually to assess whether objectives have been met, take into account the altering needs and aspirations of internal and external stakeholders, changes in levels of service, new legislative requirements and directions from Government. Review of the Service plan is subject to Member approval.

**Appendix A – Organisational Chart
Environmental Health and Licensing**

Note – Specialist officers carry out licencing and health and safety work in addition to food safety work



Appendix B

Food Safety Budget

2018/19 (predicted)		SHDC		WDBC
Staff Resource costs				
Specialist	0.5 x L4 (0.8)	20,923	0.5 x L4 (0.8)	20,923
	1.6 x L5	54,569	0.8 x L5	27,284
Case Management	0.5 x L8	10270	0.5 x L8	10270
L6 Specialist	0.6 x L6	15,480	0.2 x L6	5160
Total Staff		101,242		63,637
Training	as per Customer First budget		as per Customer First budget	
Consumable (equipment, ancillary costs)		0		1000
Travel		2500		2500
Inspections		0		3200
Sampling		7000		2500
Total other		9500		9200
Food Safety advice and FHSRS revisits		2000		2000
Total income		2000		2000