

Sunderland City Council

City Services

Environmental Health and Trading Standards

Food Law Enforcement Service Plan

2010/11

Index

| Section | Subject |
|----------------|----------------|
|----------------|----------------|

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1. | SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES |
| 2. | BACKGROUND |
| 3. | SERVICE DELIVERY |
| 4. | RESOURCES |
| 5. | QUALITY ASSESSMENT |
| 6. | REVIEW / PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT |

FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2010/11

1. SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The Department's aim is to protect the health of all persons within the City in relation to food safety matters.

Our objectives are to proactively interact with food businesses within the City on a risk-based programme to improve the standard of food premises in the City. A variety of interventions are under consideration, with the Food Standards Agency approval, which will influence the actions at each premises during the year and the number of programmed inspections. Alternative strategies to inspection for enforcing standards in lower-risk premises are still being considered regionally with other interventions being considered. We will undertake a programme of food sampling, both microbiological and compositional. We will also respond appropriately to all food complaints, food alerts and food poisoning incidents.

We will also educate and advise the public and the food trade in matters of food hygiene and safety. Officers from the Food team will undertake the inspection of ships visiting the Port in accordance with current guidance.

1.2 Links To Corporate Objectives And Plans

The Sunderland Strategy for the years 2008-2025 sets out the framework for the work of everyone in the council. The full document can be viewed on the council's website. The Environmental Health section, in relation to Food, can impact on all of the five strategic aims to a greater or lesser extent.

They are;

1. To create a strong and diverse local economy that will provide jobs and careers for people in the city now and in the future.
2. To create a city that provides excellent health and social care services, where residents are supported to make healthy life and lifestyle choices.
3. To make Sunderland a place where everyone feels welcome and can be part of a safe and inclusive community.
4. To create a thriving learning culture where everyone can be involved in learning.
5. To ensure that Sunderland becomes a clean, green city with a strong culture of sustainability.

Of the five priorities set to achieve the goals, the Food section will be involved with – Prosperous city, Healthy city, Safe city and Learning city.

The Food teams are included in the following Corporate Improvement Objectives whilst undertaking their statutory and advisory roles;

- Delivering Customer Focused Services
- Being One Council
- Efficient and Effective Council
- Improving Partnership Working to deliver One City.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

Sunderland City Council covers an area of 138 sq. kilometres and contains a population of about 284,000. It is the largest City between Leeds and Edinburgh. The area is largely urban ("metropolitan") but contains a great diversity of settlements including the City Centre, Washington and former coalmining communities such as Houghton le Spring and Hetton le Hole.

2.2 Organisational Structure

The Council through a Leader, Cabinet and a total of 75 Councillors covering 25 wards, has an annual estimated budget of approximately £253 million for 2010/11. The Council employs 13,280 different individuals working full and part time across the City in a wide variety of jobs. The most recent estimate of the number of Council staff (Full Time Equivalents) currently employed is 10,037.35.

Current Structure;

Chief Executive + 4 Directorates; City Services, Children's Services, and Health, Housing and Adult Services, and Office of the Chief Executive.

Structure of City Services

City Services have five main service areas, Street Scene Services, Culture and Tourism, Customer Services Development, Community Services, and Project and Service Development.

Street Scene includes the Environmental Health, Licensing and the Trading Standards division as well as Cemeteries and Crematorium, Building Maintenance (Education and Civic Buildings), Drainage, Grounds Maintenance, Refuse Collection and Street Cleaning, and Highways & Transportation.

Within the Environmental Health division, the Commercial Food and Area Office team are involved in food related matters and Trading Standards are involved in primary production and feedingstuffs control.

With regard to the line of Management for food matters, the Executive Director of City Services is the Chief Officer and the Assistant Head of Street Scene (formerly Environmental Services) heads the Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards division. There is an Environmental Health Manager for Commercial

sections and Area Office, and a Principal Environmental Health Officer responsible for food matters. The Assistant Head of Street Scene is also line manager to the Trading Standards and Licensing Manager.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

The activities relating to food in the City are undertaken between the Commercial Food team, Area Office staff and the Health Promotion team.

The Commercial Food team carry out a programme of food hygiene and food standards inspection duties as well as responding to requests for service and infectious disease notifications. Sampling of foodstuffs, both microbiological and compositional, is also undertaken. The team enforces health and safety at work in most food premises. Officers also respond to Port Health requests and food hygiene inspections are part of the Ship Sanitation Certificates required under International Health Regulations.

Trading Standards Officers within the Department specialise in the primary production and animal feedingstuffs response.

The services of Health Protection Agency laboratories and the County Analyst, Durham complement the work of the two teams.

The Health Promotion team provide Level 2 (Basic) and Level 3 (Intermediate) Food Hygiene Training Courses. Advanced Food Hygiene training can be made available on request and was conducted successfully last year. Officers organise campaigns and undertake visits to educational establishments in connection with food hygiene. The Heartbeat award and Healthy Home Award schemes are promoted and managed by the team, with inspections being undertaken of relevant premises.

The Joint Authorities in the region have co-operated with training for new businesses in a partnership arrangement between the Authorities and funded by the participants.

The food service operates from the Civic Centre and the Houghton Office, which are open to the public in normal working hours throughout the week, 8.30am to 5.15pm (4.45pm Friday), although officers work in a flexi-time scheme. There is an evening and weekend service arrangement for contacting management for out-of-hours emergencies. There are no formal planned "out of hours" arrangements for field Officers, however visits are conducted at events or as necessary outside normal working hours.

The Council website www.sunderland.gov.uk encourages the public to communicate with the Department by email and makes information constantly available. Letters from the Department to customers / companies encourage the use of email. The facility to contact the Department and individual Officers by direct telephone lines is also promoted.

The Council has commenced displaying food hygiene ratings (“Scores on the Doors”) on the sunderlandcitycouncil.com website, which is also linked from the sunderland.gov.uk website (Food Hygiene). This Authority is committed to joining the Food Standards Agency national scheme as soon as it is available – probably later this year and received a grant for preparatory work in March 2010. This work included seminars for businesses, free training and work to validate data to be displayed on the website.

The Authority has a limited rural community, principally arable with a limited number of livestock holdings. The Trading Standards Division carries out the enforcement of primary production and feedingstuffs legislation and advice to farmers / retailers.

2.4 Demands on the food service

- There are 2142 food premises currently operating in the City, including 1 Primary Producer.

| Food Premises in the City of which; | No. | Food Hygiene High Risk (a) | Food Hygiene Medium Risk (b) | Food Hygiene Medium Risk (c) | Food Hygiene Medium Risk (d) | Food Hygiene Low risk (e) | Unrated / unclassified | Outside the programme |
|---|------|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Primary producers / manufacturers / processors | 80 | 0 | 19 | 40 | 7 | 11 | 3 | |
| Packers / Importers / Exporters / distributors, etc | 36 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 17 | 10 | 3 | |
| Retailers | 557 | 0 | 5 | 260 | 204 | 56 | 26 | |
| Restaurant / Other Caterers | 1469 | 1 | 177 | 886 | 244 | 69 | 91 | |
| Contact Materials and articles | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Total Food Premises | 2142 | 1 0.05% | 202 9.5% | 1191 55.6% | 472 22.0% | 146 6.8% | 123 5.7% | 7 0.35% |

- The majority are classified in the Restaurant / catering outlet group (1469) whilst there are 557 food retailers.
- The unrated / unclassified premises are those which have recently opened or changed proprietor since the last inspection. These premises are revisited for further inspection and rating within 6 months to make a better judgement of on-going standards.
- The Stadium of Light can accommodate over 40,000 seated spectators, with significant catering from the outlets within the stadium. International events

are also hosted at the site. This year one major music event is planned in June at the Stadium that will involve the food team.

- There are a significant number of outdoor events held regularly each year (e.g. Air Show, International Friendship Festival) which are attended by up to 1.5 million visitors, with various mobile caterers and food businesses from around the region and beyond visiting the Authority to cater at the events.
- The additional element of work regarding port health inspections which requires inspections of food hygiene and standards on board vessels coming into the port was manageable due to the number, type and previous destinations of vessels arriving in the Port. The provision of Ship Sanitation Certificates has continued to be requested from the Authority.
- Increased vigilance continues to be expected regarding the inland enforcement of imported food legislation in an effort to prevent the spread of disease in food animals.
- The Freedom of Information Act can impact on the workload of the Department due to the administration of requests and time spent recovering the information. Press and other enquiries to Local Authorities in the region continue to request specific information regarding comparative businesses in each Local Authority. Whilst there is a legal duty to respond, this can place a burden on resources that would otherwise be productively used in providing the service. In the past year, again there have been 6 formal requests for information regarding food premises in the financial year 2009 to April 2010.
- Information regarding local food premises is available on-line i.e. "Scores on the Doors", from our own council website. This involves the publication of a food safety star rating for catering premises in the City based on standards of structure and hygiene ratings and confidence in management scores assessed during programmed inspections. Following inspections, the written communications to business owners advise them that the information may be released on the website in the future and in response to third party requests as required by Freedom of Information legislation. The Food Standards Agency national scheme will be created and this Authority has expressed a commitment to join the national scheme. In March this Authority was successful in an application to the Food Standards Agency for a financial grant to prepare for the national website. This was used effectively to advise businesses and prepare / validate data prior to publication.
- The Licensing function continues to impact on the workload. Officers consider new licences and applications for amendments to licences as part of the Responsible Authority consultation.
- There is some potential for any large outbreak of food poisoning or illness, or a serious accident at a food premises, to impact significantly on the routine service operated by the Authority. There was a major investigation into Salmonella illness last year involving an establishment which cares for the elderly. (See page 13)

- There are no other likely major impacts e.g. significant food imports, seasonal variations or high numbers of food manufacturing businesses other than local catering businesses. Where food alerts necessitate a significant response, this will impact on other areas of the service.
- Food alerts have continued to be notified. During 2009 there were a total of 35 alerts plus 4 updates. In the first three months of 2010 a further 10 alerts were received with 1 updates. (Many of these alerts have been product recalls where response from this Authority has been minimized). The alerts have included hazards associated with the contamination of rice and pasta with insects, cans produced on premises served with a Prohibition Order, leaking baby food pouches, high levels of benzoic acid in a drink, possible contamination of chocolate, beefburgers and frozen pies with plastic, salmonella in sesame seed products, frozen diced undercooked chicken breast and metal in mayonnaise and other sauces. Details of all the food alerts are available on the Food Standards Agency (FSA) website, www.food.gov.uk.
- The FSA system of allergy alerts, separate from food alerts, continue with many instances of food labelling errors or contamination of specific ingredients. There were 50 such alerts in 2009 and 14 have been received in the first quarter of this year. Whilst not critical to the general public health they can have serious effects on persons who are allergic to specific ingredients.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Department has a documented Enforcement Policy, which has due regard to the Tyne and Wear Food Enforcement Policy. The Authority works in accordance with the principles of the Regulators' Compliance Code, and future review will take into consideration guidance from the Better Regulation Office.

The Code of Practice requires that any breaches of food law that may be detected in premises where the Authority is itself the proprietor of a food business should be brought to the attention of the Chief Executive, without undue delay. There have been no instances in the past year where such action was necessary.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 Food Control

3.1.1 Food Premises Inspections

Officers routinely inspect high risk premises on a risk based basis. This year there is to be more emphasis on targeting non-compliant businesses. It is envisaged that those premises which are found not to be complying as indicated by poor structures,

poor hygiene standards or where there is low confidence in management, will progress into a structured scheme to require improvements.

The National Performance Indicator (ni 184) set last year for the percentage of food businesses that are broadly compliant has been withdrawn, although Local Authorities will continue to send relevant data annually to the FSA. Premises that are not broadly compliant will also be indicated on the scores on the doors information on the web. Businesses with less than 3 stars are not broadly compliant.

There will still be risk rating for all premises inspected and the Food Standards Agency still anticipate the frequency of inspections for high risk premises being governed by the rating.

Whilst it has been the Department's ongoing annual target to inspect all food premises at a risk rated frequency in accordance with guidance from the Code of Practice, the FSA are encouraging Authorities to spend more time at targeted businesses rather than spread over the whole range in future. The lowest rated categories will be subject to programmes of alternative enforcement strategies. This scheme is being negotiated and agreed regionally to promote consistency and uniformity for businesses and Authorities across the region. Highest risk premises which require specific approval will receive interventions as required. They will be subjected to risk rating and intervention frequency will be determined on an individual basis.

The Department has again achieved high rates on inspection of food premises and in 2009/10 visited 1442 different food premises and undertook 1585 inspections. A total of 1896 visits were made including inspections, revisits and sampling.

The estimated number of inspections programmed for the year 2010/11 at the time of preparation of this report is approximately 1410 plus any new businesses commencing within the year. As stated previously, alternative strategies for lower risk premises, once agreed will determine a change in priority resulting in fewer premises being visited but potentially more visits being made to those premises to promote and confirm improved standards.

We aim generally to inspect the premises within one month of the due date for inspection, the only exceptions being those businesses that operate seasonally and those who may be subject to alternative enforcement strategies, a principle encouraged by the FSA.

Secondary inspections (including revisits) to premises are carried out as necessary in order to ensure that material defects are rectified. Those premises which are not broadly compliant will be followed up with a view to enforcing compliant standards.

The Department is participating in a Business Transformation Programme (BTP) giving consideration to computer systems that are more sustainable.

Participation with neighbouring Authorities in sampling and other food related matters ensures that the Authority works in a co-ordinated and compatible way.

3.1.2 Food Complaints

The Authority is committed to investigating all food complaints, the extent of the investigation depending on the merits of the complaint. This can range from re-assuring the complainant to the more formal process, including reference to home or originating Authorities in accordance with the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) guidance and the Code of Practice. Officers also refer to any Primary Authority, a scheme promoted by legislation and the Better Regulation Office.

In 2009/10, 273 requests for service requiring a response from Officers were made, including 88 complaints relating to food standards or labelling, and 33 requests relating to suspected food poisoning. The staff resources required to deal with these requests are drawn from existing Commercial Food and Area Office teams. It is estimated that the time expended on food complaints in 2010/11 will be equivalent to 0.25 officers (full time equivalent).

3.2 Primary Producers and Feedingstuffs Control

3.2.1 Premises Inspection

The Trading Standards Section of the Department has the delegated duty to enforce legislation in relation to primary production and feedingstuffs control. Inspection and sampling of products at farms, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers is undertaken on a risk-assessed basis.

As part of the animal health visits, feedingstuffs inspections are undertaken.

3.2.2 Feedingstuffs Complaints

Due to the relatively few number of feedingstuffs establishments, it is not anticipated that there will be a significant number of complaints received by the Authority. Any complaints will be investigated in line with Departmental procedures. The Authority last year received one complaint which related to pet food and not feedingstuffs for animals intended for human consumption. One formal sample was taken. Sampling as necessary will be undertaken where circumstances warrant or intelligence indicates a problem.

3.3 Primary Authority Principle

This was introduced by legislation governed by the Better Regulation office whereby businesses operating in more than one Local Authority area can choose to partner individual Authorities in connection with a selection of regulatory elements.

In these early stages, the future local impact of food safety enforcement is difficult to gauge, however this Authority will comply with all legal requirements in the enforcement of legislation under this principle.

Another scheme called "Home Authority" continues to operate under LACoRS organisation.

3.4 Advice to Business

The Authority seeks to assist local businesses as part of the City / Community Strategy. The Authority is committed to promote the Food Standards Agency (FSA) project “Safer Food, Better Business”, (SFBB) which is aligned to supporting certain food businesses in complying with the food safety management principles. There will continue to be great efforts to educate businesses in complying with the requirement for them to have implemented a suitable food safety management system.

In correspondence to food businesses, a standard invitation is given to them to seek advice from the Department.

Larger manufacturing businesses and small–medium enterprises have both expressed their approval of the department's dealings with their business and readiness to assist with advice, a policy of the Department for many years.

In routine inspections and visits to businesses, Officers pay special attention to advising and explaining matters appropriate to the situation.

Over the last year, as part of Regulatory Services Performance Indicator (NI 182), surveys of businesses have been conducted to ascertain whether businesses felt that they had been treated fairly and whether they had been given good information and advice. The results have been particularly encouraging and the table below shows the results;-

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1 | I felt my business was treated fairly | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Strongly agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Disagree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Strongly disagree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i> | 10 12 3 0 0 0 |
| 2 | I felt the contact was helpful | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Strongly agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Disagree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Strongly disagree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not applicable</i> | 10 12 3 0 0 0 |

Close links have been made with many business organisations in the City and informal agreement reached to cooperate more fully with businesses through these contacts.

3.5 Food Inspection and Sampling

The Department is committed to sampling foods for compositional standards, bacteriological standards and food standards compliance. Sampling is undertaken proactively involving imported and locally produced foods, as well as participating in national and regional surveys with Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) and Health Protection Agency Laboratory Service.

The Department undertakes local sampling surveys from its own intelligence and from liaison with the Health Protection Agency.

As a consequence of "demand" i.e. complaints, food alerts, food poisoning outbreaks, etc. further samples will be taken. Last year 568 samples were taken, limited by the change in transfer of work to the Leeds laboratory.

An estimated 700 samples will be taken for bacteriological examination / compositional analysis in the year 2010/11, including 30 water samples.

Formal agreements with the Durham County Analyst exist who hold the classification of a Public Analyst. We also used the Health Protection Agency Laboratory Service in Newcastle for Bacteriological sampling. This Laboratory has however now closed with all samples being transported up to daily as necessary from the region by courier to Leeds but still remains within the Health Protection Agency. Close liaison exists with the laboratories management and neighbouring Authorities to ensure the most effective and coordinated programme with flexibility for local peculiarities.

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

The Department, with the Health Protection Agency, operates under the updated "Guidelines – Preventing person-to-person spread following gastrointestinal infections"

A local Consultant for Communicable Disease Control is employed by the Health Protection Agency. Dr. Tricia Cresswell is available to the Department for any advice regarding specific problems relating to infectious disease.

New legislation has been enacted which changes the exclusion of persons from work. Local policy will need to align with guidelines which are anticipated. A greater emphasis is being placed on the responsibility of individuals suffering from specific illnesses being required to notify their employer who then should take the necessary action to prevent the spread of illness.

Advice on food poisoning is available on the Sunderland.gov.uk website by inserting "food poisoning" in the search box on the home page (top right) and following the links.

The number of reported cases of food poisoning depend on persons suffering attending their GP or hospital, where, if samples are taken, and found to be positive, the medical practitioner has a legal duty to inform the Authority. There are close liaisons between the laboratories, Health Protection Agency and the Department to follow up all positive cases.

The Department has maintained close links with the Health Protection Agency as a partner in tackling ill health. Regular meetings to discuss various matters relating to food poisoning cases and sampling programmes take place. The County Analyst and Health Protection Agency (ex-Public Health Laboratory Service) are contracted to assist with expertise where any additional problems arise. During last year the support of the HPA during the Salmonella outbreak was particularly beneficial. Networks exist within the region, nationally and with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS).

The Department investigated the outbreak of Salmonella Enteritidis Phage Type 14b in persons connected with a Care Home for the Elderly last year. Several employees and residents contracted Salmonella infections and sadly two elderly residents died. The date for the Coroner's hearing is likely to be after the summer this year, although an interim report into the outbreak has been compiled by the Health Protection Agency. The investigation involved close cooperation between several Departments and Agencies and the management of the home. Nationally the Health Protection Agency and Food Standards Agency identified links of the same organism to eggs from a Spanish farm.

Statistics of cases investigated over recent years

| Year to March 31 st | Campylobacter | Salmonella | Cryptosporidia | Food poisoning & suspected FP | Shigella | Esch. Coli | Other miscellaneous organisms | Totals |
|--------------------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------|------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| 2006 | 346 | 86 | 25 | 35 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 497 |
| 2007 | 282 | 69 | 69 | 21 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 452 |
| 2008 | 292 | 53 | 28 | 13 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 396 |
| 2009 | 306 | 58 | 26 | 24 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 423 |
| 2010 | 357 | 52 | 38 | 12 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 471 |

| Year to March 31 st | April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November | December | January | February | March | Totals |
|--------------------------------|-------|-----|------|------|--------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|---------|----------|-------|--------|
| 2006 | 42 | 35 | 46 | 54 | 53 | 69 | 49 | 38 | 30 | 18 | 33 | 30 | 497 |
| 2007 | 23 | 20 | 60 | 51 | 51 | 73 | 49 | 44 | 32 | 13 | 12 | 24 | 452 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 2008 | 19 | 33 | 42 | 46 | 58 | 44 | 39 | 40 | 19 | 13 | 18 | 25 | 396 |
| 2009 | 19 | 35 | 50 | 48 | 48 | 41 | 50 | 36 | 22 | 20 | 28 | 26 | 423 |
| 2010 | 28 | 38 | 66 | 44 | 40 | 56 | 56 | 41 | 24 | 21 | 24 | 33 | 471 |

The Authority is committed to a response to all cases and outbreaks notified. The scale of the investigation and response will be measured and as appropriate to the causative organism and potential for further spread. Many cases appear to be the result of foreign travel or home acquired, and some infections e.g. Cryptosporidiosis may be acquired from the environment rather than from a food source within the City.

As in previous years, the Norovirus (“Winter Vomiting disease”) continued to affect many residential establishments in the City and regionally.

This infection is commonly spread environmentally from person to person rather than being food-borne. Officers work closely with the Health Protection Agency to limit the spread of this infection environmentally and ensure an appropriate response is made, commensurate with the necessity to identify the infection and limit the impact.

Notification of Campylobacter infections continue to be prominent throughout the country, and the investigation of cases can be time consuming with little chance of identifying the sources. The HPA are working with EHOs regionally regarding investigations and a policy has been adopted by Local Authorities and the HPA regionally which will reduce the workload created by investigating Campylobacter notifications.

3.7 Food Safety Incidents

The Authority is committed to responding appropriately to all Food Alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency in accordance with the Code of Practice on this subject. The level of response is determined by the category of response required and individual circumstances of the incident / local impact. Information is available to the public through Press releases and a link on the Council website to the Food Standards Agency.

3.8 Liaising with other organisations

A new liaison body has formed during 2009. The Authority now joins with the six other Authorities – Tyne & Wear plus Durham and Northumberland, in a North East Food Liaison Group. There is also the Sampling Group and Health Protection Agency / Local Authority Liaison group, which includes representatives from the relevant analytical and bacteriological laboratories and Communicable disease specialists. The Authority continues to be represented on the User Group for the National Food Sampling database. A manager from the Authority has invited and has joined the FSA IT Users Group to facilitate progress on the national FSA food hygiene rating scheme (scores on the doors).

Trading Standards Officers meet frequently at North East Trading Standards Association (NETSA) meetings when any topical subjects can be considered.

Relevant Building Control and Planning Applications are referred to the Department for consideration and comment.

There is frequent liaison with other Departments and sections in connection with food matters, including Facilities Management (City Catering), School Meals, Procurement, Housing, Health and Adult Services and regarding premises licences. Potential conflicts of interest are being considered and the enforcement policy will be amended appropriately at the next review in accordance with the anticipated Code of Practice.

The section has positive liaison with the local office of the Health Protection Agency, Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust, City Hospitals Sunderland, local food federations and guilds.

3.9 Food Safety and Standards Promotion

Whilst Officers in the course of inspections and other visits give advice and information, the Health Promotion Team offer training for the Level 2 Award Food Hygiene, the Level 3 Intermediate Certificate in Food Safety and Level 1 Foundation Certificate in Nutrition. The Team also undertake campaigns during the year.

Following last year's success, this year the team will continue to promote a "Curry Chef of the Year" competition which will require, as part of the terms of entry, consideration of the standards of hygiene of the businesses involved. A joint final was held with South Tyneside in 2009. Other LAs in the region have also been expressed interest in joining in the competition.

The Heartbeat Award has been running in Sunderland since 1990 and the Healthy Home award commenced in this Authority in 1997. Each of these award schemes has food hygiene related elements. A total of 143 Heartbeat awards and 19 Healthy Home awards were given in 2009/10.

During 2009/10:-

- 4 Food Hygiene Refresher Training Courses were held for 71 delegates.
- 25 courses were held in Level 2 Award Food Hygiene attended by 279 delegates.
- 12 delegates attended Level 3 Intermediate Certificate training.

The Health Promotion team also respond to requests from schools and other educational and community organisations for information and talks on subjects pertaining to food. Talks and presentations were given to 6 schools on food safety and the importance of washing hands properly.

Training on the "scores on the doors" and "Safer Food, Better Business" in 6 separate sessions to local businesses free of charge.

Basic food hygiene information for consumers is available on the Council Website. Similarly advice is also available on food poisoning organisms and what to do in the event of suspecting that you are ill from consuming contaminated food.

4. RESOURCES

4.1 Financial Allocation

For 2010-11 the total net budget for food control (CC2090) is £404,698. This includes environmental health support charges of £270,487 and a sampling budget of £14,671. In addition to this, there is a General Health Promotion net budget of £106,968. This includes a budgeted income target of £24,275 which is partly achieved from food hygiene training.

It is therefore estimated that a total of £511,666 of the Department's total budget will be available for use in relation to food safety.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

Staffing resources allocated to Food work currently are as follows;

Food Team

- 1 Principal Environmental Health Officer / Team Leader (Full Time)
- 2 Senior Environmental Health Officers (Full time)
- 1 Environmental Health Officer (newly qualified)
- 1 Technical Officer (Full time – working towards Higher Certificate)
- Clerical Support

One part time EHO post was removed from the establishment.

Area Office

- 2 Senior Environmental Health Officers (Part time food)
- 1 Technical Officer (Part time food - Ordinary Certificate)

All of the full-time Senior Environmental Health Officers currently employed have over 2 years experience in food matters. The newly qualified EHO has a food career background and, under supervision, is gaining experience.

Health Promotion

- 1 Principal Environmental Health Officer / Team Leader (Part time on food matters)
- 1 Health Promotion Assistant (Part time on food matters)

Trading Standards

- 1 Trading Standards Officer (Part time fertiliser and feedingstuffs)
- 1 Trading Standards Officer (Part time Primary Producers)

Estimated Total Full-time equivalent = 6.5 Officers on the establishment.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

Staff Appraisals are undertaken annually and the findings form the basis of individual staff development and training plans.

Individuals are sent to specific training where appropriate and all Environmental Health Officers are required to maintain a training log in order to comply with Continuing Professional Development.

Training days and training sessions on subjects are programmed as necessary.

Any members of staff "new" to the food team are supervised and receive training commensurate with the Code of Practice.

Environmental Health Officers in other sections also receive update training in food matters.

5. QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Monitored inspections will continue to be recorded within the food premises database during this year.

The necessary arrangements were made, with assistance from the IT section, for the new annual return of statistics for 2008/9 (LAEMS – Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System). The 2009/10 return is well on schedule to be provided to the Food Standards Agency by the required internet method, as required before the deadline of 1st June 2010. The return gives specific information about every food business in the City rather than collated statistics as required in the past.

6. REVIEW / PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

6.1 Review against Service Plan

A review against the service plan is undertaken mid-year with consideration of achievements against targets. In the interim periods, line management monitors progress, including utilising the very effective in-house database software.

Monthly targets are set for each officer and teams of officers are expected to achieve the required inspection rate to reach annual service level targets.

The Corporate Improvement Plan and an Annual Report is produced to define achievements made during the previous year.

The Service Plan and Annual Report are submitted to the Chief Executive for consideration by the Council as part of the Director's Performance Agreement.

6.2 Identification of any variance from the Service Plan

The food control teams performed extremely well against the Service Plan for 2009 / 2010 in all areas of Service Delivery.

The comprehensive review of procedure and policy documents is an on-going task.

6.3 Areas for Improvement

- Implement the Food Hygiene Star Rating Award system on the FSA website when created.
- Agree and implement alternative enforcement strategy for low risk businesses with LAs in the region.
- Continue to implement the requirements / guidance of the Local Better Regulation Office in relation to the Regulatory Reform Act.
- Contribute fully to regional training and support all peer review, Inter Authority Audit and / or internal monitoring exercises between LAs in the region.
- Continue to promote the use of Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) to appropriate food businesses in the City via visits by Officers.
- Progress any necessary actions as a result of future determination of the BTP re departmental computer software.

END