

Cabinet

DATE OF MEETING: 7th October 2021

TITLE OF REPORT: Food Recovery Plan 2021/22

Report of: Environmental Health Manager

Cabinet Member: Cllr Sara Kinnell, Regulatory

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider the Food Recovery Plan 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Cabinet approves the draft Food Recovery Plan 2021/24.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Council is currently responsible for enforcing food safety in 783 food premises, including: restaurants, hotels, pubs, schools and shops in Hart district.

3.2 As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic Local Authority Environmental Health services have been put under significant strain to maintain regulatory functions; including those of Food and Health and Safety inspection. Similarly food businesses have experienced extensive periods of closure, restricted trading, and Covid-19 related impositions on their core business activities. As a consequence there has been a significant turn over; with existing food businesses closing, new starts up within the district, and new food business models emerging across the industry. In many cases pre-pandemic inspection plans have not been deliverable, are out of date, or may not reflect the emerging priorities that have arisen.

3.3 The Food Standard Agency (FSA) has set out a plan for recovery of local authority delivery of official food controls and related activities. Their plan has two phases and runs from 1 July 2021 to 30th September 2021; and 1st October 2021 to April 2023 and beyond. It focusses on re-starting the regulatory delivery system in line with the Food Law Codes of Practice for the highest risk establishments while providing greater flexibility for lower risk establishments.

3.4 When the Food Recovery Plan 2021/22 was reported to Overview & Scrutiny it was confirmed that of the 76 businesses which were planned to be visited by the 30th September 2021, 70 had already been inspected, and therefore it was expected to complete all inspections by the deadline.

3.5 The FSA Food Recovery Plan seeks to provide the basis for Council's food safety inspection programme.

3.6 This Food Recovery Plan, which replaces the annual Food Safety Plan, is produced in accordance with the requirements of the FSA. It reflects on the achievements and performance of the service for the year 2020/21, and identifies the work currently being undertaken and planned for 2021/22, in partnership with businesses, to promote and enhance food safety in Hart district.

3.7 The aims of the Food Recovery Plan are:

- to ensure that food and drink intended for sale for human consumption, which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed within Hart is without risk to the health or safety of the consumer;
- to investigate suspected and confirmed food poisoning incidents, to locate the source of contamination and to prevent it spreading to protect the health of the public; and

to provide information and advice on food safety matters for business and members of the public.

3.8 The Food Safety team works with the food businesses to ensure they comply with legislation and adopting best practice to control the risks to health that may be associated with food storage, preparation, processing, and handling. In so doing, this helps promote a high level of public confidence in the safety of food prepared, handled and sold in Hart district, including by participating in the national food hygiene rating scheme (www.food.gov.uk/ratings).

3.9 The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the Food Safety Plan 2021/22 at its meeting on 21st October 2021, and agreed the approach for consideration by Cabinet subject to the following recommendations:

- Some consideration (if possible) on any potential risks there may be to the delivery phase.
- Detail on the publicity and smaller campaigns that may be used to highlight the plan.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This Service Recovery Plan and the Service Planning process form part of the Council's existing performance management framework.

5 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Food Safety Recovery Plan sits under the Service Plan for Place and is consistent with the agreed budget for 2021/22. Should Members wish to introduce new or expanded work streams then additional resources will first need to be identified.

6 MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 6.1** If the Council does not adopt a Service Recovery Plan with clear targets and tasks that are aligned with its budget, there is a risk that it could fail to deliver its objectives and priorities.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** There are no significant carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations. The inspection regime for our food businesses does necessitate travel from Officers, which mainly involves travel by car. However, the implications of this Food Recovery Plan 2021/22 would not increase the number of visits to a significant effect, therefore the Climate Change implications of this report is neutral.

8 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1** There are no direct equalities implications arising from the recommendations.

9 ACTION

- 9.1** Cabinet is requested to approve the Food Recovery Plan 2021/22.

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APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Food Safety Recovery Plan 2021/22