

Food Recovery Plan 2021/22



Contents

Executive Summary

1.0 Introduction

2.0 How did we perform in 2020/21

3.0 Plan for 2021/22

Appendices:

Food Safety Action Plan 2020/21 Review

Food Recovery Action Plan 2021/22

Executive Summary

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

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 In many cases pre-pandemic inspection plans have not been deliverable, are out of date, or may not reflect the emerging priorities that have arisen.

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

Hart District Council has a major role to play in promoting food safety and protecting consumers from food poisoning and food related allergic reactions. This Food Recovery Plan, which replaces the annual Food Safety Plan, is produced in accordance with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency. It reflects on the achievements and performance of the Team 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, including:

- ✓ Inspection of food businesses based on risk
- ✓ Promotion of the FSA's Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)
- ✓ Investigating complaints and concerns regarding food safety
- ✓ Investigating allegations of food poisoning or allergic reactions
- ✓ Providing information, advice, and training

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;

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

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).

If you would like further information regarding our Service, or would like to speak to an officer for advice on food safety matters, please contact us at:

Email: EH@hart.gov.uk

Tel. 01252 774421

1.0 Introduction

Hart District Council's Food Recovery Plan, which replaces the annual Food Safety Plan, covers the work of the Food Safety team for 2021/22. The Food Recovery Plan's change in emphasis reflects the change in emphasis from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to set new priorities as the Country moves out of the Covid-19 lockdowns. The Environmental Health team is currently responsible for enforcing food safety in 783 food premises in Hart district, including: restaurants, hotels, pubs, schools, and shops.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA), which regulates the enforcement of food legislation, expects service plans to be submitted to a relevant Member forum for approval. The standard of work carried out is in accordance with national legislation, Food Law Code of Practice and guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the Food Safety service 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.

The Food Safety team works with 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. The Council participates in the national food hygiene rating scheme (www.food.gov.uk/ratings) and encourages businesses to display their rating.

The key objectives of the Food and Safety team in relation to food safety enforcement during 2021/22 are:

- to carry out programmed food hygiene inspections, in accordance with the statutory code of practice and guidance;
- to approve, register and license relevant premises in accordance with relevant legislation, statutory code of practice and guidance;

- to investigate food complaints in accordance with the Service's food complaint procedure, and to respond to complaints;
- to provide advice to businesses and members of the public in Hart with respect to food hygiene and allergens;
- Promotion of the FSA's Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)
- to promote a range of food hygiene training courses;
- to promote national food safety campaigns which aim to raise awareness of food issues among catering businesses and the public;
- to produce and implement a sampling programme based on national priorities and local needs;
- to investigate all food poisoning notifications (except campylobacter) and outbreaks in collaboration with Public Health England (PHE);
- to respond to all food alerts in accordance with the relevant instructions and where necessary notify food incidents to the relevant national body in accordance with the statutory code of practice;
- to ensure that the Service's authorised officers adhere to the Council's enforcement policy when making enforcement decisions; and
- to continue to ensure the Service's authorised officers are suitably qualified, experienced, and competent to carry out the range of tasks and duties they are required to perform, including providing additional training where required.

1.2 Profile of Hart district

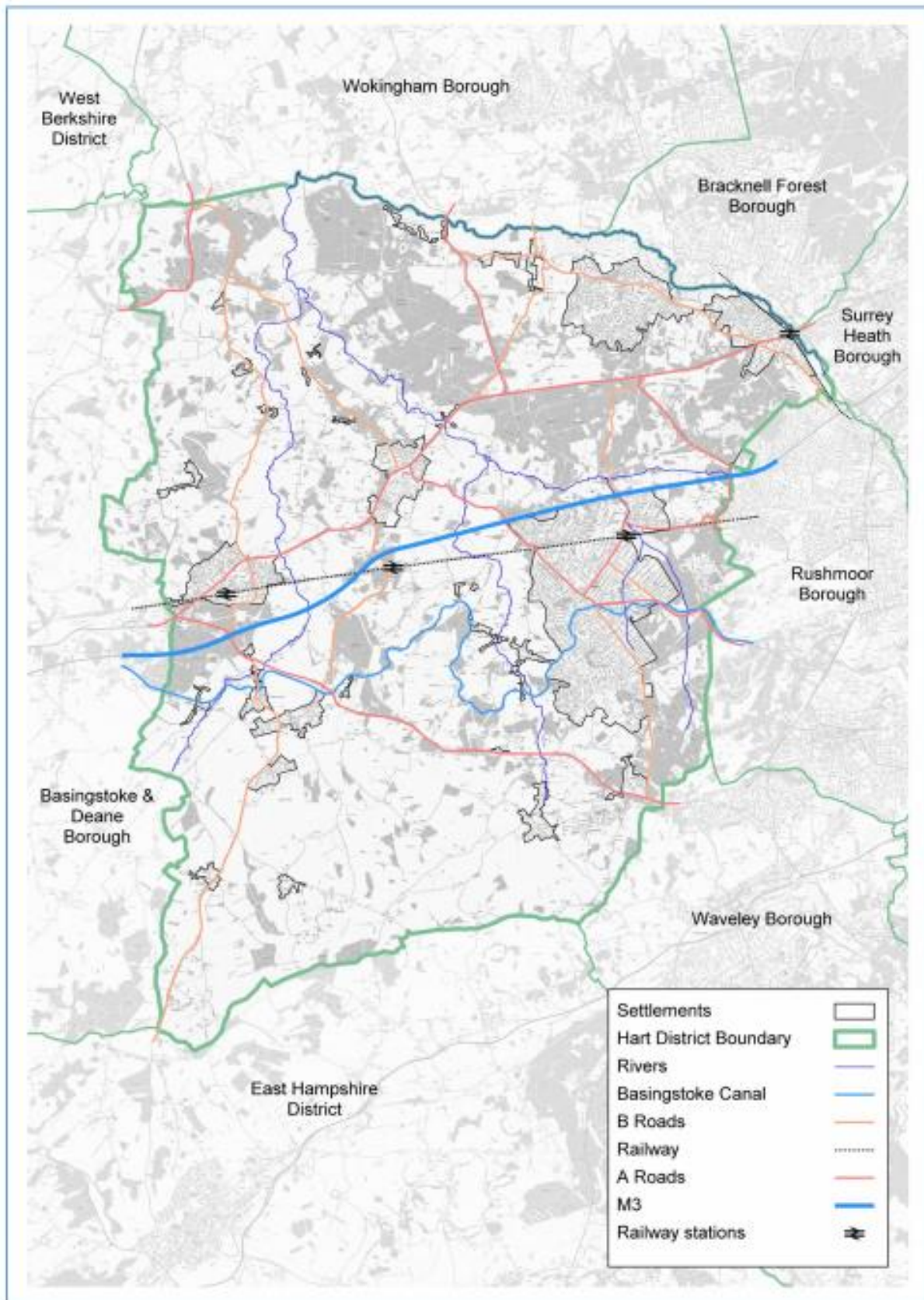
Hart district is primarily rural, covers some 21,500 hectares (83 sq. miles) and is situated in north-east Hampshire, bordering both Surrey and Berkshire.

The main towns are Fleet (comprising Elvetham Heath, Fleet and Church Crookham), Yateley, Blackwater and Hawley. Hook, Odiham, and Hartley Wintney are the larger villages in the district whilst other settlements are mainly small, dispersed villages and hamlets.

The district is bisected by the main line railway from Waterloo to Southampton and east to west by the M3. These enable good access to London, Southampton and other key employment areas such as Basingstoke, Camberley and Farnborough. However, movement patterns are complex and vary with the purpose of the journey. Some key services such as main hospitals and larger shopping centres are provided outside the district, particularly in Basingstoke, Guildford, Reading and Camberley.

The district is a popular place to live as it benefits from low unemployment, low crime rates and good schools. It has a healthy, active population with high participation in sports and leisure.

There are approximately 95,000 residents in the district with an ageing population. The district has a complex geography comprising a collection of diverse and distinct settlements. The larger settlements are suburban in character and have grown significantly in the last 30 years. There are an estimated 35,500 homes in the district with 30% of the population living in rural areas.



1.3 Link to the Corporate Plan, Vision and Objectives

Vision for Hart

Hart District Council published its Vision for 2040 in 2019. The Vision is for Hart:

“To become the best Place, Community and Environment to live work and enjoy”

The Council's Vision provides a clear direction for Hart and will help to improve the use of resources and align our strategies to reach the outcomes our community deserves. The Vision informs our future work programme across four themes:

Theme One: To become the best Place to live, work and enjoy by creating a connected environment

Theme Two: Design the Community to live in, work with and enjoy by helping our community to thrive

Theme Three: Enhance the Environment to live in, work in and enjoy enhancing our environment

Theme Four: Develop the Organisation which can deliver working in partnership

1.4 Delivering the Council's Vision for Hart through Environmental Health

The primary objective of the Environmental Health service is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the community through education and effective regulation.

The service links to each of the four Corporate Themes as follows:

To become the best place to live, work and enjoy by creating a connected environment

The Service promotes a level playing field through its Enforcement Policy, which takes a graduated approach to enforcement based on risk. We carry out our duties in an open, fair and consistent manner that promotes economic development.

We recognise that most businesses want to comply with the law, therefore, we want to support and enable businesses to meet their duties without unnecessary cost. We aim to deliver a healthy regulatory environment where good businesses thrive by using risk-based, proportionate and targeted enforcement. Firm action will be taken, however, where there is a blatant and/or persistent disregard for the law.

The Environmental Health Team routinely help new and developing businesses by providing advice based on best practice and signposting businesses to other agencies and resources. The team also provide training events, newsletters and advisory visits.

Design the Community to live in, work with and enjoy by helping our community to thrive

The Environmental Health team responds to a wide range of enquiries and complaints received from the community including: issues relating to statutory nuisance; licensed premises; food complaints and reports of alleged food poisoning.

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme provides an open and transparent platform for all food businesses, giving the public the opportunity to view the hygiene rating of businesses at: ratings.food.gov.uk/. The public can then choose whether to visit those food premises based on how well they comply with food law.

Enhance the Environment to live in, work in and enjoy enhancing our environment

The service also tackles filthy and verminous premises, unsecured buildings and land attracting vermin. This can also positively impact the likelihood of crime and the perception of crime in these areas.

Develop the Organisation which can deliver working in partnership

The Environmental Health Service works with several partners including:

1. working closing with the Shared Licensing Service in partnership with Basingstoke & Dean Borough Council
2. working closely with Public Health (England) in relation to infectious disease notifications and outbreak investigations.
3. chairing the Council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG), which ensures public events are well managed and safe in consultation with partner organisations such as the emergency services, Highways and the Licensing Authority

The Environmental Health Service continues to provide cost efficiency by ensuring Environmental Health staff are competent and multi-skilled, which improves resilience within a small team. The flexible skills of the Environmental Health team have been particularly demonstrated during the current Covid-19 pandemic where they have:

- supported diversification of food businesses;
- enforced business closures legislation;
- supported the re-opening of businesses by advising on social distancing and risk assessment;
- Supported the Food Hub in getting food and pet food donations;

1.5 Demands of the Service

On 1 July 2021, there were 783 food premises in Hart district. The number of food premises has remained relatively stable since 2018 at approximately 800 premises.

The hygiene rating of the food businesses in Hart, which determines how frequently they are inspected was as follows in July 2021:

Premises Risk Category	Frequency of Inspection	No. of Premises 2020	No. of Premises 2021
A	6 months	0	2
B	12 months	13	20
C	18 months	114	119
D	24 months	231	236
E	Alternative intervention and full inspection every 9 years	322	405
New/ Unrated		52	76
Total		732	782

Table 1. Number of Food Premises by Category of Risk in Hart

There are more unrated premises, as outlined in Table 1 above, than usual as we have not been able to carry out inspections of new businesses during Covid-19. All businesses, however, have been contacted by a Food Officer. The Food Hygiene Risk Ratings for food premises in August 2021, which are derived from the risk rating scores above, were:

Food Hygiene Rating	Meaning of Hygiene Rating	No. Premises 2020	No. Premises 2021
5	Very Good	406	460
4	Good	92	84
3	Generally Satisfactory	29	30
2	Some Improvement Necessary	10	3
1	Major Improvement Necessary	4	2
0	Urgent Improvement Necessary	0	2

Table 2 Number of Food Premises by Food Hygiene Rating in Hart

The figures in Table 2 do not include Childminders and other businesses excluded from the risk rating scheme, for example, military premises.

Premises that are rated 0 to 2 are always revisited as they are deemed to be failing to meet their legal obligations. The aim of the revisit is to determine whether improvements have been made within the business and to ensure that it is complying with the law. Revisits will be undertaken until such time as the business complies with the law. Should the business continue to fall short of their duties, our enforcement policy is followed in escalating enforcement action until such time that compliance is attained, or formal action is taken.

1.6 Imported Food Control

Hart is an inland Local Authority with no registered food brokers/importers and Blackbushe Airport is not used to import food. Therefore, the Authority does not have any imported food responsibilities at point of entry. However, the Food Team will respond to intelligence received from agencies including the Food Standards Agency.

2.0 How did we perform in 2020/21

Our Food Safety Plan is reviewed on an annual basis and provides the opportunity to record our achievements and identify those key issues that still may need to be redressed. A review of how we performed against the Food Safety Plan 2020/21 is included in Appendix 1.

It should be noted that the ability to conduct inspections was constrained by Covid-19 restrictions, loss of key staff, and prioritisations of Environmental Health resources.

In the meantime, the highest risk food premises have been contacted to offer advice and to enquire how they are managing food hygiene during the pandemic.

2.1 Food Hygiene Inspections

All Local Authorities have a duty to inspect the food premises in their area based on a frequency determined by a national risk rating scheme.

In 2020/21 we inspected 185 food premises.

2.2 Food Complaints & Enquiries

We continue to receive consumer enquiries and complaints about standards of hygiene in food premises and food contamination. We investigate all such complaints based on risk. 53 enquiries in relation to food premises were received in 2020/21.

The most common type of complaint that we receive as a Service is in relation to allegations of food poisoning. Many people associate an illness with the last meal that they have eaten, whereas food poisoning symptoms can take between 12 hours to 10 days to manifest.

2.3 Support for Local Businesses and the Community

We supported local businesses and the community through:

- ✓ Food Safety and Health and Safety newsletters
- ✓ Press releases and social media posts throughout the year in relation to key subjects
- ✓ Collating and distributing critical information to local businesses during Covid-19 pandemic
- ✓ Collating a “Businesses Open during Covid-19” spreadsheet, which was updated weekly to provide information to the local community and to support our local businesses
- ✓ Securing food donations from local food premises to support the local community during the pandemic
- ✓ A Primary Authority partnership agreement with British Car Auctions (BCA) providing specialist health and safety advice to improve standards in their sites throughout Great Britain. We recover full costs for providing this service to BCA

2.4 Food Enforcement Action

We adopt comprehensive measures to protect consumers and promote food safety. We actively work with businesses to meet these shared goals.

Any enforcement action taken will be graduated, proportionate and in line with Hart District Council’s Environment Health Local Enforcement Policy (adopted July 2021). A copy of the policy can be found at:

[Licensing and regulations | Hart District Council](#)

2.5 Health & Safety

Hart District Council is designated as an Enforcing Authority under the Health & Safety (Enforcement Authority) Regulations 1998. It is responsible for the enforcement of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and its associated Regulations in Local Authority enforced premises, which include: retailers, wholesalers, offices, catering premises, hotels, residential care homes and leisure centres.

In line with the Health & Safety Executive's National Code, Local Authorities now adopt a risk-based intervention approach to health and safety enforcement, rather than undertaking proactive / routine inspections.

Gas safety and chemical safety have remained a priority when officers are undertaking routine food hygiene inspections. Compliance with gas safety is an on-going issue and, as a result, officers routinely request a copy of the business' current Gas Safe Certificate.

The safe use of chemicals and correct use and provision of personal protective equipment is also assessed during routine food inspections due to on-going concerns regarding unreported dermatitis and misuse of chemicals in food businesses.

Promotion of national guidance and good practice for minimizing Covid-19 risks will be an ongoing consideration for Environmental Health

2.6 Investigation of Workplace Accident, Ill-Health and Dangerous Occurrences

Businesses are responsible for reporting certain types of accidents, ill-health and dangerous occurrences that occur in association with their business.

When a notification is received, an assessment is carried out by the investigating officer to determine whether there:

- ✓ has been a serious breach of health and safety; or
- ✓ is a pattern of on-going accidents that may require attention.

If either of the above criteria are met, an accident investigation will be carried out.

2.7 Health & Safety Complaints

During the 2020/21 year the Service received 260 enquiries and complaints in relation to health, safety and welfare issues. This included:

- 14 x RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) reports; and
- 246 x Covid-19 related service requests or calls for investigations.

For comparison, within pre-pandemic financial year 2019/20, the service received 52 Health & Safety related service requests and 42 RIDDOR reports.

2.8 Health and Safety Enforcement Action

Last year, Hart was (assumed to be) the first Local Authority in the UK to serve a 'Covid-19 Improvement Notice'. The notice was served in respect of Covid-19 related offences at a food business.

A programme of targeted, and high visibility, Covid patrols was undertaken by Environment Health. This sought to provide direct covid advice to members of the public, and on-site enforcement /advice to local businesses.

A fatal accident prosecution is on-going.

3.0 Plan for 2021-22

3.1 Work for 2021/22

We always strive to move the Service forward. To achieve this, we set targets and identify areas for development during the coming year. Appendix 2 outlines the Action Plan for 2021/22 with proposed timeframes.

3.2 Staff Resourcing

The Food Service sits within the Environmental Health Team and currently employs 2 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff members.

Two authorised officers undertake a range of enforcement activities, including food hygiene inspections and food complaints. There are currently three officers authorised to undertake health and safety enforcement.

The authorised officers are directly managed by the Environmental Health Manager. The Environmental Health manager currently reports to the Head of Place Service

3.3 Quality Assurance

The Service will continue to oversee the work of its officers to ensure that it complies with its legal requirements, the Food Law Code of Practice and internal policies and procedures.

3.4 Staff Development

The Council is committed to ensuring that officers have the required qualifications, skills, experience and competencies commensurate with their work requirements. A range of training events were attended by staff to improve their competency in specific areas and to meet the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's Continuing Professional Development requirements.

The Food Law Code of Practice Competency Framework (FSA 9th July 2021 Version 2) sets out the competencies required for local authority and port health authority officers undertaking official food controls, other official activities and other activities related to these. These are in addition to the required suitable qualifications detailed in the relevant statutory Food Law Code of Practice.

The framework sets out how local authority and port health authority officers must be assessed. Local authorities and port health authorities are required to follow the framework in line with the requirements of the relevant statutory Food Law Code of Practice and associated Practice Guidance.

Hart District Council commits that all designated inspecting Officers will review and complete the Competency Matrix by 31st March 2022.

3.5 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

A review of KPIs for the Food Safety and Health and Safety service will be undertaken, in 2021. The review will be conducted in consultation with the service portfolio holder.

The review will consider the fundamentals of customer service, response, and performance across the service. This will seek to include more focused performance monitoring measures, and determination of SMART based targets.

The review will look to ensure that KPIs best reflect the key milestones of the Food Recovery plan, the wider FSA objectives.

It is understood that new data reporting requirements are likely to be introduced by the FSA from October 2021 going forward.

A Food Hygiene Training programme did not take place due to Covid-19 restrictions and wider service priorities.

Appendix 1: Food Safety Action Plan 2020/21 Review

Hart Priority	Intervention	Target	Date	Outcome of Intervention	Performance Review 2021
Covid-19 emergency response then recovery	Delivery of the Council's response to Covid-19 pandemic	<p>Ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act.</p> <p>Support for our town and village centres</p> <p>Support the local economy</p>	Ongoing	<p>Staff have been redeployed from business as usual activities to assist with delivery of the following elements of the council emergency response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hart Response Hub • Introduction of social distancing measures in Hart's retail centres and submission of bids for government funding • Support for Business and Economy 	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
New Ways of Working	Working with the Council's operational recovery team to identify and implement opportunities for new ways of working	Green	Ongoing	<p>Most staff have worked remotely during the lockdown period</p> <p>Facilities have managed the safe return to offices and reopening of the reception</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
The Place to Enjoy – enhancing our	Continue to Deliver Programme of Food Hygiene Inspections	100% inspection of all food hygiene inspections due in line	March 2021	All food businesses rated according to risk and appropriate enforcement	Covid-19 restricted

environment and health		with Food Hygiene Rating Scheme		action taken in line with enforcement policy	
	Produce seasonal food safety and health & safety newsletters for food business operators within Hart	To produce two food safety and health & safety newsletters per year for distribution to relevant commercial premises within Hart	March 2021	Improved knowledge and understanding of food safety and health and safety risks and how to control them in local businesses	Not achieved due to Covid-19 prioritisation of resources
	Undertake proactive health and safety interventions targeted at premises where local intelligence suggests that controls may not be sufficiently managed.	To target at least 20 warehouse / barn type premises that undertake high risk operations to improve health and safety standards in warehousing and barn-type premises	March 2021	Improved health and safety standards and greater protection of workers and customers in 20 premises in District.	Covid-19 focused enforcement prioritised
	Continue to focus on Gas Safety and Chemical Safety during routine inspections to Food Premises	Seek gas safety certificates from all food businesses inspected	On-going	Monitoring of maintenance of high risk catering equipment with a view to protecting health and safety of employees	Achieved Ongoing

	Continue to act as Primary Authority for BCA Marketplace Plc	Provide a designated health and safety officer to offer specialist advice and guidance and to liaise with other Local Authorities in relation to the business	On-going	Supporting growth of national business Income generation	Achieved Ongoing
Create Efficient Council Services	Aim to become best Environmental Health Service in the UK	<p>Devise an Action Plan including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review national statistics to determine current performance. 2. Learn from the best in class; 3. Improve resilience of Service through cross skilling and enhancing procedures; 4. Enhancing the information on our website to enable more effective self-service; 5. Consider how to improve customer engagement and feedback; 	<p>Overall Aim March 2025</p> <p>Objectives 1 to 6 Summer 2021</p>	Delivering a first class Environmental Health Service to the residents and businesses in Hart	Not achieved due to Covid-19 prioritisation of resources

		6. Review Customer Excellence Award criteria and devise Action Plan			
	Review all webpages relating to the Service to ensure they are helpful, up to date, relevant, easy to navigate and comply with the accessibility requirements	Helping our customers help themselves Part of a responsive and helpful council	September 2020	Helping our customers help themselves Part of a responsive and helpful council	Ongoing
	Produce seasonal food safety and health & safety newsletters for food business operators within Hart	To produce two food safety and health & safety newsletters per year for distribution to relevant commercial premises within Hart	March 2021	Helping our customers help themselves Part of a responsive and helpful council	Not achieved due to Covid-19 prioritisation of resources
	Review fees and charges across Environmental Health and Licensing	Review fees and charges to ensure they are set at a rate which is fair and reasonable, and reflects the real costs of providing the service	Autumn 2020	Ensure the fees and charges reflects the real costs of providing the service	Achieved

Appendix 2: Food Recovery Plan 2021/22

Background

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) looks to provide national direction to Local Authorities for achieving their statutory duties in respect of food safety inspection and enforcement. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic Local Authority Environmental Health services have been put under great strain to maintain regulatory functions, including those of Food and Health and Safety inspection, as well as supporting the regulation of Covid-19 priorities. Similarly, food businesses have experienced extensive periods of closure, restricted trading, and Covid-19 related impositions on their core business activities. As a result, there has been a significant churn in existing food businesses closing, and new starts up within the district, and new /or temporary food business models developing across the industry.

In recognition of this the FSA has provided direct guidance to Local Authorities seeking to direct food safety inspections and resources to targeted Covid-19 recovery. The Local Authority Recovery Plan (LARP) has considered the risk around new, or unrated food business and sought develop a consider approach to re-establishing Local Authority food inspection programmes. In many cases pre-pandemic inspection plans have not been deliverable, are now out of date, and may not reflect the emerging priorities that have arisen. As a result of this the LARP has sought to provide a strong regulatory steer to Local Authorities, and to reset the existing arrangements, whilst providing a phased approach forward.

Hart District Council will adopt the FSA Local Authority Recovery Plan (LARP) as its basis for food safety inspections for the period 1st July 2021 and looking forward to 31st March 2024.

Aim

In adopting the LARP it is considered that a risk based programme for food inspections and regulatory interventions can be devised and maintained by Hart District Council. This will be in accordance with National FSA guidance and good practice. The LARP will run from 1st July 2021 to 31st March 2024.

Objectives

In adopting the LARP it is considered that the following considerations and objectives will be met:

- Clear priority towards identifying, and establishing risks from currently unrated or new food businesses;
- Timely programme for maintaining inspections of Higher risk (cat A) premises;
- Time based programme for maintaining inspections in relation to risk categories and recommend inspection frequencies;
- There will be the consider opportunity for LAs to effectively reset their existing inspection programmes following periods of significant distortion, from business closure periods and limited opportunities for on-site inspection by officers; and
- HDC resources will be targeted towards a manageable and resourced level of inspections.

Implementation:

1. The Recovery Plan sets out the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) guidance and advice to local authorities for the period from 1st July 2021 to 31st March 2024. The associated Covid-19 Local Authority Recovery [Q&A](#) supplements the Recovery Plan.
2. The guidance and advice aim to ensure that during the period of recovery from the impact of Covid-19, local authority resources are targeted where they add greatest value in providing safeguards for public health and consumer protection in relation to food. It also aims to safeguard the credibility of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).
3. The Recovery Plan provides a framework for re-starting the delivery system in line with the Food Law Codes of Practice (for England, Wales and Northern Ireland) for new food establishments and for high-risk and/or non-compliant establishments while providing flexibility for lower risk establishments. This should be implemented alongside delivery of:
 - Official controls where the nature and frequency are prescribed in specific legislation and official controls recommended by FSA guidance that support trade and enable export;
 - Reactive work including enforcement in the case of non-compliance, managing food incidents and food hazards, and investigating and managing complaints;
 - Sampling; and
 - Ongoing proactive surveillance.

4. All local authorities are expected to have regard to the guidance and advice in the Recovery Plan. This will apply from 1 July 2021 at which time it will supersede the guidance and advice provided in response to the Covid-19 pandemic that applies to 30 June 2021.
5. It is recognised and acknowledged by the FSA that local authorities will be starting from different positions in terms of the impact that Covid-19 has had to date, the challenges they will face during the recovery period and the resources that they have available.
6. It is understood that Hart along with other Local Authorities can, move at a faster pace in realigning with the intervention frequencies and other provisions set out in the Food Law Codes of Practice.
7. Hart will commit to keeping national guidance and advice under close review and will amend and update it as necessary in response to changes in the Covid-19 situation.

Recovery Plan timeline

8. There are two phases to the Recovery Plan:

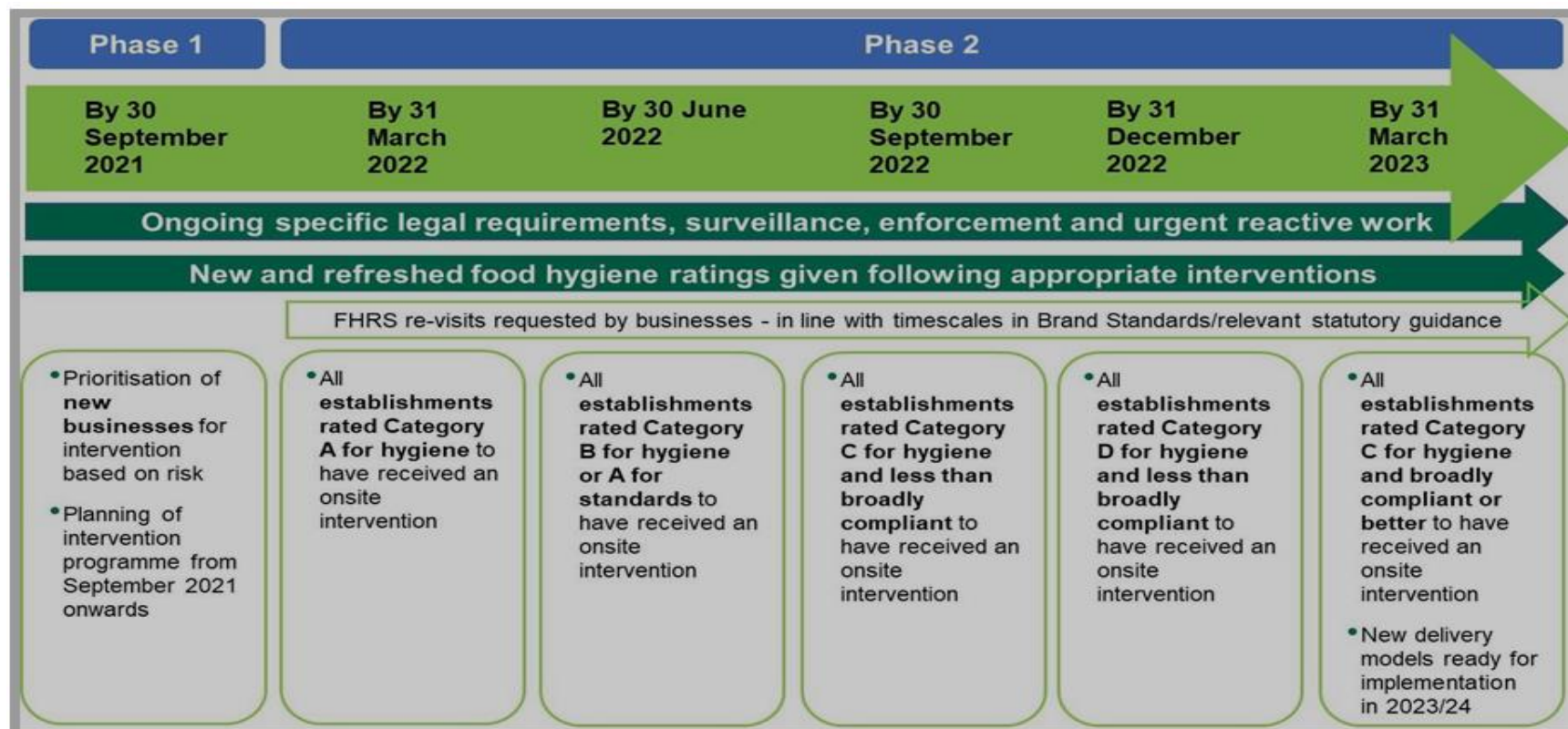
Phase 1 – 1st July 2021 to 30th September 2021

Phase 2 – 1st October 2021 to 31st March 2024

9. In essence, Phase 2 will continue until a new food standards delivery model and a revised food hygiene intervention rating scheme are in place. The new delivery model for food standards is being piloted in England and Northern Ireland until the end of December 2021. Subject to the findings of an evaluation of the pilot and stakeholder consultation, it is anticipated that the new model will be rolled out nationally from April 2023. Work to review and revise the food hygiene intervention rating scheme is planned to commence shortly with a view to implementation in 2023/24.

10. An outline of the recovery plan is provided at Figure 1.

Figure 1: Outline of the Recovery Plan



Notes:

The key milestone dates within the Recovery Plan for higher risk establishments are shown.

For lower risk establishments not shown in the figure, local authorities have the flexibility to defer planned interventions and only undertake intervention where information/intelligence suggests that risks have increased/standards have fallen or if the establishment is otherwise considered a priority for intervention due to the risk posed.

In the case of food standards, the impact on the business of the new requirements on allergen labelling for products prepacked for direct sale - that apply from 1 October 2021 - should also be taken into account.

Principles common to Phase 1 and Phase 2

11. Some important principles underpin both Phase 1 and Phase 2:

- When intelligence suggest risks have increased (irrespective of the risk category) local authorities should undertake interventions to assess and address those risks
- When an onsite intervention is undertaken, local authorities should programme subsequent interventions in line with the Codes of Practice
- Local authorities should give new food hygiene ratings where appropriate interventions are undertaken and the establishment falls within the scope of the FHRS
- Where non-compliance is found at any intervention, local authorities should take appropriate action to secure compliance including formal enforcement action where necessary.
- Remote assessment may be used in certain circumstances – this includes to facilitate the targeting of what to focus attention on at subsequent on-site visit, to help inform the need for onsite intervention at lower risk premises where an intelligence /information based approach is being used, and in England, in certain limited cases for FHRS requested re-visits.

12.

Phase 1 (1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021)

In Phase 1, local authorities are expected to deliver the following:

- Official controls where the nature and frequency are prescribed in specific legislation and official controls recommended by FSA guidance that are undertaken to support trade and enable export
- Reactive work including enforcement in the case of non-compliance, managing food incidents and food hazards, and investigating and managing complaints
- Sampling in accordance with the local authority sampling programme or as required in the context of assessing food business compliance, and any follow-up necessary in relation to the FSA Surveillance Sampling Programme
- Ongoing proactive surveillance to obtain an accurate picture of the local business landscape and to identify open/closed/recently re-opened/new businesses; as well as businesses where there has been a change of operation, activities, or Food Business Operator (FBO)
- For 'new businesses', consideration of registration information and intelligence with appropriate onsite interventions carried out where there are concerns around public health/consumer protection
- For 'new businesses' where consideration of registration information and intelligence indicates low risk, initial visits should be prioritised and undertaken in accordance with the Codes of Practice and Practice Guidance taking account of the flexibilities provided
- Planning for resumption of planned intervention programmes for high-risk category and non-compliant establishments in Phase 2

Phase 2 (1st October 2021 to 31st March 2024)

13. In Phase 2, local authorities are expected to deliver the following:

- official controls where the nature and frequency are prescribed in specific legislation and official controls recommended by FSA guidance that are undertaken to support trade and enable export
- reactive work including, enforcement in the case of non-compliance, managing food incidents and food hazards, and investigating and managing complaints
- sampling in accordance with the local authority sampling programme or as required in the context of assessing food business compliance, and any follow-up necessary in relation to the FSA Surveillance Sampling Programme
- ongoing proactive surveillance to obtain an accurate picture of the local business landscape and to identify open/closed/recently re-opened/new businesses; as well as businesses where there has been a change of operation, activities or FBO
- for 'new businesses', consideration of registration information and intelligence with appropriate onsite interventions carried out where there are concerns around public health/consumer protection
- for 'new businesses' where consideration of registration information and intelligence indicates lower risk, initial visits should be prioritised and undertaken in accordance with the Codes of Practice and Practice Guidance taking account of the flexibilities provided
- implementing planned intervention programmes for high-risk category and non-compliant establishments in accordance with the timeline in Table 2
- implementing an intelligence / information-based approach for lower risk category establishments
- responding to FHRS requested re-visits in line with the timelines specified in the FHRS Brand Standard for England or the statutory guidance in Wales and Northern Ireland

Table 1 - Sector specific official controls and official controls that must be undertaken to support trade and enable export

Activity	Requirements
Import controls at points of entry	Official controls in accordance with relevant legislation taking account of agreed temporary contingency measures to be taken at Border Control Posts (BCPs) during Covid-19
Granting of approval under Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004	Granting of approvals in accordance with the relevant legislation and the Food Law Code of Practice 'Distance communication' can be used in exceptional circumstances prior to physical visits to minimise time onsite

Table 2 – Detailed timeline for Phase 2 of the recovery plan (1st October 2021 to 31st March 2024)

Activity/Category	Timeline	Expectation
Food/feed import controls at points of entry	Ongoing	In accordance with relevant legislative requirements
Conditional and full approval visits	Ongoing	In accordance with relevant legislative requirements

Activity/Category	Timeline	Expectation
<p>Proactive surveillance to obtain an accurate picture of the local business landscape and to identify:</p> <p>Open/closed/recently re-opened/new businesses</p> <p>Change of operation, activities or FBO</p>	Ongoing	<p>Active review of registration information and intelligence on the food business establishment identified through surveillance</p> <p>Undertake appropriate onsite interventions where there are concerns around public health/consumer protection</p>
<p>New food business establishments where consideration of registration information/intelligence indicates low risk</p>	Ongoing	<p>Initial visits should be prioritised and undertaken in accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice</p>
<p>Management of food incidents and hazards (including outbreaks of foodborne illness)</p>	Ongoing	<p>In accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice</p>
<p>Investigation and management of complaints</p>	Ongoing	<p>In accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice</p>

Enforcement action in case of non-compliance	Ongoing	In accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice and the local authority's enforcement policy
FHRS requested re-visits	Ongoing	England – within three months of request if a charge is made and within six months if no charge but with use of remote assessment in place of onsite visit in limited circumstances on a trial basis
Sampling	Ongoing	In line with local authority sampling programme or as required in the context of assessing food business compliance, and any follow up necessary in relation to the FSA Surveillance Sampling Programme
Category A for hygiene	Over the period to 31 March 2022	All establishments should have received an onsite intervention and thereafter be back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice

Activity/Category	Timeline	Expectation
Category B for hygiene	Over the period to 30 June 2022	All establishments should have received an onsite intervention and thereafter be back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice
Category A for standards	Over the period to 30 June 2022	All establishments should have received an onsite intervention and thereafter be back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice
Category C for hygiene – less than broadly compliant (FHRS 0, 1 or 2)	Over the period to 30 September 2022	All establishments should have received an onsite intervention and thereafter be back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice
Category D for hygiene – less than broadly compliant (FHRS 0, 1 or 2)	Over the period to 31 December 2022	All establishments should have received an onsite intervention and thereafter be back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Food Law Codes of Practice

Category C for hygiene – broadly complaint or better (FHRS 3, 4 or 5)	Over the period to 31 March 2023	<p>For establishments with two consecutive food hygiene ratings of 5 (or equivalent standards if outside the scope of FHRS) one intervention may be missed and then the establishment put back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Codes of Practice (so the due intervention date would be moved forward by 18 months)</p> <p>For other establishments – those with hygiene ratings of 3 or 4 (or equivalent if outside the scope of FHRS) - should have received an onsite intervention and thereafter be back in the system for interventions in accordance with the Codes of Practice</p>
Category D for hygiene – broadly complaint or better (FHRS 3, 4 or 5)	Ongoing	No interventions will be required during the recovery period unless intelligence/information suggests that risks have increased/standards have fallen or if the establishment is otherwise considered a priority for intervention due to the risk posed

Activity/Category	Timeline	Expectation
Category E for hygiene	Ongoing	No interventions will be required during the recovery period unless intelligence/information suggests that risks have increased/standards have fallen or if the establishment is otherwise considered a priority for intervention due to the risk posed
Category B for standards	Ongoing	No interventions will be required during the recovery period unless intelligence/information suggests that risks have increased or if the establishment is otherwise considered a priority for intervention due to the risk posed or because of the impact on the establishment of the new requirements on allergen labelling for products prepacked for direct sale
Category C for standards	Ongoing	No interventions will be required during the recovery period unless intelligence/information suggests that risks have increased or if the establishment is otherwise considered a priority for intervention due to the risk posed or because of the impact on the establishment of the new requirements on allergen labelling for products prepacked for direct sale

Useful Websites:

Food Standards Agency (FSA)	www.food.gov.uk
Food Hygiene Ratings	https://ratings.food.gov.uk/
Safer Food, Better Business	https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business
Allergen Guidance for Businesses	<u>www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/allergen-guidance-for-food-businesses</u>
Free Allergen Training	https://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	www.hse.gov.uk
The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)	www.rospace.com