

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 22 SEPTEMBER 2011  
title: FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2011/2012  
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
principal author: JAMES RUSSELL

## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To consider and approve the Ribble Valley Borough Council Food Service Plan 2011/2012.

1.2 The Council's vision shared with the Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership states that we aim to ensure Ribble Valley will be "an area with an exceptional environment and quality of life for all; sustained by vital and vibrant market towns and villages acting as thriving service centres meeting the needs of residents, businesses and visitors".

This function of environmental health should be recognised as making an important contribution to the Council delivering this vision.

1.3 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – This key service document sets out how this Council is to fulfil its duties in relation to food safety "to help make people's lives safer and healthier".
- Community Objectives – To promote and support health, environmental, economic and social well being of people who live, work and visit the Ribble Valley.
- Corporate Priorities – To promote healthier environment and lifestyle.
- Other Considerations – This document meets the Food Standard Agency's food law enforcement framework and requirement to produce an annual service plan complying with the national template.

1.4 The content of this document will be a principal constituent of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Environmental Health Service Plan with the items contained within the action plan being incorporated accordingly.

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 In October 2000 the Food Standards Agency published initial detailed guidance to local authorities entitled "A Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement". The latest guidance was issued in June 2008, part of which continues to require local authorities to produce an annual service plan relating to food law enforcement and set out how they will meet their statutory obligations.

2.2 In March 2006, the Food Standards Agency issued a substantial revision of the Food Safety Act Code of Practice titled 'Food Law Code of Practice and Statutory Guidance', which consolidated and updated the previous guidance and introduced

new inspection requirements required by European Union Food Directives and Regulations. The most recent revision issued in June 2008 has revised and improved the guidance and returned approved premise inspection to being based on 'risk'.

### 3 ISSUES

- 3.1 Attached as Appendix to this report is a recently completed annual Food Service Plan in relation to Ribble Valley Borough Council.
- 3.2 I would, in particular, draw your attention to the contents of Part 7, which reviews the performance of the service against last year's performance plan and also sets out the proposed areas for improvement for the forthcoming year. I am also pleased to report again that we have received no complaints against the delivery of the service.
- 3.3 In 2005 the revised Food Standards Guidance removed the lowest risk Category F premises, which required inspection every 5 years resulting in all food premises requiring an inspection or audit every 3 years. However, the guidance also introduced an option for the Category E 'lowest risk' premises to be dealt with by way of an alternative inspection strategy/scheme. As a result a self-assessment audit was produced and used successfully to audit 48 'lowest' risk premises and advise them of new statutory requirements. It is intended that this be continued in the next year.
- 3.4 The advent of the Food Safety Hygiene Regulations 2006 introduced the requirement for all food businesses to have a documented risk assessment system, and preferably adopt the Safer Food Better Business recommended scheme. The Food Standards Agency are requiring local authorities to actively promote and encourage the adoption of this scheme, this work is ongoing.
- 3.5 The above has considerable implications for the small team of inspection officers. Due to significant changes and demands affecting environmental health in relation to food safety, health and safety smokefree workplace legislation, industrial pollution regulation, clean environment and animal welfare. *It should be remembered that any premises not inspected in the programme this year must be taken forward and will increase the next year's programme accordingly.* In the event of experiencing the anticipated problems, priority will be given to inspecting the high-risk premises (category A to C) first and consultant contractors will be engaged to undertake any shortfall subject to available budgetary resources.
- 3.6 As explained in the accompanying report, an application was successfully made to the Food Standards Agency to implement the nationally agreed 'Scores on the Doors' Food Premise Rating Scheme within the borough. This was a substantial piece of work being achieved on time and in budget going live on 1 June 2011.
- 3.7 A copy of the Food Service Plan will also be placed on the Ribble Valley Borough Council website for reference purposes in the 'Environmental Health' section.
- 3.8 It is believed appropriate for the Plan to be submitted to the relevant members forum for approval to ensure local transparency and accountability.

### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:
- Resources – There are no immediate implications but Committee is asked to recognise the ongoing demands on the service.

- Technical, Environmental and Legal – There are no environmental or legal implications. Failure to provide this document contravenes Food Standards Agency requirements and could result in an audit of the service. This is also an essential performance management and review document.
- Political – This document confirms the Council's intended service provision in relation to this important statutory function.
- Reputation – This document meets this Council's obligations in relation to producing an obligatory annual Food Safety Service Plan in accordance with national framework.

## 5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Approve the Ribble Valley Borough Council Food Service Plan 2011/12 for implementation in the current financial year.
- 5.2 Note the satisfactory performance in relation to the identified areas for improvement in the previous year's Food Safety Plan.
- 5.3 Reconfirm the continuing priority of food premises inspection for environmental health service provision.

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for James Russell, extension 4466.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement - July 2004
2. 'Food Law' Code of Practice (England) – June 2008.
3. 'Food Law' Practice Guidance (England) – June 2011.