

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 31 MAY 2012  
title: REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE 2011/12  
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
principal author: JAMES RUSSELL – HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To review service delivery key local performance indicators within the environmental health service for 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".

The Environmental Health Service makes an essential and important contribution to the Council delivering this vision.

1.3 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – This document reviews the performance of the Environmental Health Service and the contribution to two of the three stated ambitions, namely:
  - "to help make peoples lives safer and healthier"; and
  - "to protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area".
- Community Objectives – To promote and support healthy environmental, economic and social well-being of people who live, work and visit the Ribble Valley.
- Corporate Priorities - To 'promote a healthier environment and lifestyle' and 'ensure a well managed Council providing efficient services based on identified customer needs'.
- Other Considerations – This document provides an important performance review function and purpose with regard to service delivery and planning.

1.4 The content of this document will be a principal constituent of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Environmental Health Service Review where resource demands will be assessed corporately alongside other service reviews later in the year.

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Environmental Health Section's performance was last reviewed by Health and Housing Committee in June 2011 when 'ongoing high performance was noted throughout the previous 12 months in most areas and especially in relation to response times to service requests. However, it was again not possible to achieve

the required 'food safety', 'pollution control' and 'health and safety' premise inspections indicated due to reasons outlined' later in the report.

2.2 The Environmental Health section has continued to receive significant numbers of service requests in this last year. There continues to be great effort and hard work by all staff to achieve set targets.

2.3 The work undertaken by the Environmental Health staff is summarised in the Appendix attached to this report.

### 3 KEY ISSUES

#### Food Hygiene

3.1 In September 1995, the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations became operative and introduced the concept of risk assessment. To mirror their requirements, local authorities are required to inspect food businesses according to an assessment of risk. Inspection frequency is determined by the Food Safety Act Code of Practice, which can vary from a minimum of 6 months for the highest risk category to a maximum of 3 years for the lowest risk. Last year the annual target was 418 premises. Following the Lanarkshire E.coli 0157 food poisoning incident and growing demands of EU regulation, the Food Standards Agency continues to produce additional service guidance requiring increasingly detailed and complex inspections, systems and records. The Food Standards Agency audited the food safety function in the autumn of 2001 and pleasingly concluded that "the Authority was providing an effective food law enforcement service".

3.2 In the past year, the section has been particularly busy with an ongoing elevated number of gastro-enteric incidents in local institutions, which by their nature are all highly resource intensive and also the introduction and maintenance of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011.

3.3 I am pleased to report that last year, 423 (of 418 target) inspections were undertaken, however, it was only possible to undertake 389 of the 418 identified in the 2011/12 programme, which represents 94% of the programmed inspections. The outstanding 6% were generally low risk and have been carried forward into this years programme. Food premise inspection continues to be "the priority" within the Environmental Health Section.

#### Health and Safety

3.4 Last year 15 inspections and 110 campaign visits and/or recorded interventions under Health and Safety provisions, plus a number of outdoor events were audited. We continue to apply the previous year's policy to focus available resources on the inspection of 'higher risk' non-food premises wherever possible. Considerable involvement has also been required to investigate a number of complex health & safety related reported incidents. During the past year inspections continued to be undertaken in line with HSE/HELA guidance to be topic based concentrating on slips and trips, asbestos, falls from heights, workplace transport, stress and musculo-skeletal disorders and the national disease reduction programme.

3.5 Every effort continues to be made to address the inspection performance of non-food premises, however, with the continuing elevated service demands in relation to reactive work, two unfilled vacancies and to meet the response times contained in the Environmental Health Plan, last year it was not possible to undertake more

inspections. It is anticipated that more resource will be available for health and safety in the coming year.

- 3.6 In addition, Smokefree Workplace legislation was introduced on 1 July 2007. Last year a total in excess of 121 inspections were undertaken.

Local Authority Air Pollution Control (LAAPC) and Local Authority Pollution, Prevention & Control (PPC)

- 3.7 The current position within the Borough is that we have 25 EPA and one A2 PPC process. Last year it was only possible to undertake two programmed inspections as a result of the ongoing EHO (Pollution) Officer vacancy. Currently we have 3 processes which require annual/multi inspections and 22 processes which now require a once every 3 year audit. With the re-appointment of the part time EHO (Pollution) it is expected that the annual inspections will be completed within the coming year

- 3.8 With regard to Air Quality Management, we are now required to undertake a full review on a three yearly basis and complete and submit an annual Update Screening Assessment. The 2011 Quality 'Update Screening Assessment' was submitted to DEFRA in May 2011. We have completed the detailed assessment for Nitrogen Dioxide in Read, which concluded that no further action was required. As a result, a programme of monitoring has been ongoing to check potential traffic hotspots for Nitrogen Dioxide. The additional monitoring previously identified to be undertaken in the locality of Pimlico, Clitheroe in relation to 'possible' elevated levels of particulates arising from changes in one of the quarries, has not been undertaken due to the responsible process being removed from site.

Caravan Sites

- 3.9 Ribble Valley has a total of 16 licensed caravan sites. Last year 5 site licences were reviewed and re-issued. It is intended for a further 8 to be prioritised, reviewed and reissued in the next 12 months.

Private Water Supplies

- 3.10 Within the Ribble Valley, we have some 296 private water supplies serving approximately 600 premises, the majority of which are domestic properties. The source of private water supplies varies in quality, particularly following heavy rainfall. Some supplies are treated satisfactorily to remove impurities, whilst others, have inadequate treatment or none. Supplies with inadequate or no treatment pose a serious risk to human health, when and if contaminated, following rainfall events.

- 3.11 Examples of the variety and number of commercial establishments served by private supply include: 3 restaurants, 3 cafes, 5 caravan sites (including 3 static sites), 27 holiday cottages, 8 bed and breakfast, 2 education training centres, 3 works canteens, 39 dairy premises, golf club, ski club and a village hall.

- 3.12 The number of private supplies in the Ribble Valley has steadily increased due in large to the large number of barns that have been converted into residential accommodation, in remote locations not supplied by mains water. Also, some of the large commercial establishments have transferred from United Utilities mains to their own private borehole for financial reasons. The number of borehole supplies is now 108, which is a significant increase on the 73 recorded in 2001.

- 3.13 I am pleased to report the achievement of the 2011 end of calendar year target for sampling of the programmed Private Water Supplies for commercial and multiple domestic systems. A total of 45 systems have been visited with a range of samples being procured and submitted for analysis. The necessary DWI annual return was completed and submitted by the deadline of 31 January 2012 as required. It is intended to commence the new requirement for risk assessments of these supplies in 2012, following the Drinking Water Inspectorate issuing the new Risk Assessment Tool.

#### Pest Control and Dog Warden Service

- 3.14 Last year again saw a further busy year with a total of 504 pest control service requests being received and actioned. I am pleased to report that 97% of the service requests were responded to and appointments scheduled within the two working day target, which reflects the officer's dedication and hard work throughout this period.
- 3.15 With regard to the dog warden service, we received 389 service requests of which 365 (94%) were responded to within 2 working days. With regard to tackling the ongoing issue of dog fouling, I can report that in 2011/12, a further five Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in relation to dog fouling. This now means that a total of 59 Fixed Penalties have been issued since the introduction of the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act Provisions. The dog wardens are employed on a more flexible working hour arrangement and where possible undertake a significant proportion of their patrols 'out of office hours' including weekends and bank holidays. This approach continues to be successful and has resulted in the increased issue of Fixed Penalty Notices. In April 2009, the dog wardens hours were increased to a full time post and are undertaken on a job share basis.
- 3.16 A significant issue has been the recent introduction of the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act provisions removing of responsibility for stray dogs from the Police, which became operative on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2008. As reported previously, suitable arrangements have been put in place as a partnership with other East Lancashire local authorities to provide a 'stray dog' out of hours 'acceptance' service in line with DEFRA guidance. To date the new arrangements seem to be working generally satisfactorily and in budget. A new contract was renewed last year with the existing provider for a further 3 years.

#### General Complaints

- 3.17 Current staffing levels in environmental health were based on the expectation of processing 25 service requests/complaints per month. However, in line with national trends, numbers received continue to substantially exceed the anticipated figure.
- 3.18 In 2011/12, 1138 service requests were received representing in the order of 95 per month. Last year an average of 74% of service requests were actioned within 2 working days, which is exceptional but fall short of our stated target of 90%.

#### Emergency Planning

- 3.19 The past year has continued to be busy in the aftermath of the Summer 2007 floods and the issue of the Pitt Report findings. Work continues with other agencies to preparing specific local plans to deal with flood warning area incidents and to better inform and engage the residents at risk, and the public in general, with regard to emergency preparedness. Local flood plans have been produced and delivered to residents in the 4 Ribble Valley Flood Warning Areas.

- 3.20 The Emergency Planning function is also deeply involved with implementing the Council's Event Safety Policy and engaging with major event organisers to achieve compliance and to achieve safe, considerate and successful local events. Last year, over 80 outdoor events took place over 100 days. Again, this work is time consuming.
- 3.21 Every year, several major documents need review resulting in the re-issue of the updated plans following the significant changes of senior staff. The Council was also required to produce a revised format Multi-agency Flood Response Plan for the Borough. This has been completed and submitted. In addition, the Business Continuity software (Connie) and the Council's Risk Management system (Grace) continue development and use.
- 3.22 In addition last year, a dedicated team of officers dealt with the delivery of property flood protection grants to a further 27 properties in Ribchester. This included the arrangement of a Flood Fair in Ribchester in January 2012.

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Ongoing high performance has been achieved throughout the past 12 months in most areas and especially in relation to response times to service requests. However, it has again not been possible to achieve either the programmed 'food safety' and 'health and safety' premise inspection target last year due to a variety of operational reasons. However, it must be appreciated that the service continues to receive significant levels of complaints and every effort will continue to be made to achieve all service targets.

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#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Appendix – Environmental Health Performance Summary.

For further information please ask for James Russell, on 01200 414466.

H&H/310512/JAR/EL

## Commercial Environmental Health Performance Summary

## Appendix 1

|                                       | Target                       | 2008/2009          | Target Achieved      | 2009/2010         | Target Achieved      | 2010/2011               | Target Achieved      | 2011/2012          | Target Achieved      |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Food Premise Initial Inspections      |                              | 415 (373)          | 100%                 | 334               | 313 (94%)            | 326 (414)               | (79%)                | 418 (423)          | 100%                 |
| Health and Safety Initial Inspections |                              | 98 (215)           | 46% + campaigns      | 200               | 167 (83%)            | 32 + 76 (200) campaigns | (16%) + campaigns    | 15 + 110 campaigns |                      |
| EPA                                   |                              | 36 (38)            | 95%                  | 24                | 20 (100%)            | 15 (15)                 | 100%                 | 2 (6)              | 33%                  |
| Licensing Inspections                 |                              | 98 (100)           | 98%                  | 100               | 100 (100%)           | 145 (145)               | 100%                 | 64                 | N/a                  |
| Smokefree Premises                    |                              | 248 (250)          | 99.2%                | 250               | 202 (81%)            | 156 (26)                | 62%                  | 121(250)           | 48%                  |
|                                       | <b>Working Days</b>          |                    | <b>within target</b> |                   | <b>within target</b> |                         | <b>Within target</b> |                    | <b>Within target</b> |
| Food Complaints                       | within 2 days                | 114 (136)          | 84%                  |                   | 94%                  | 160 (150)               | 94%                  | 268 (256)          | 96%                  |
| Health and Safety                     | within 2 days                | 45 (39)            | 87%                  | 28 (24)           | 86%                  | 30 (28)                 | 93%                  | 37 (39)            | 95%                  |
| Abandoned Vehicles (initial removal)  | within 1 day<br>within 1 day | 33 (33)<br>2 (2)   | 100%<br>100%         | 26 (26)<br>0      | 100%                 | 8 (8)                   | 100%                 | 12 (12)            | 100%                 |
| Air Pollution [dust, odour, smoke]    | within 2 days                | 80 (74)            | 92.5%                | 83 (70)           | 84%                  | 70 (60)                 | 86%                  | 16 (15)            | 94%                  |
| Environmental litter                  | within 2 days                | 960 (658)          | 83%                  | 666 (545)         | 82%                  | 432 (333)               | 77%                  | 547 (426)          | 78%                  |
| Noise                                 | within 2 days                | 222 (197)          | 89%                  | 257 (226)         | 88%                  | 222 (196)               | 88%                  | 147 (127)          | 86%                  |
| Licensing                             | within 2 days                | 10 (6)             | 60%                  | 44 (33)           | 77%                  | 63 (46)                 | 73%                  | 23 (11)            | 48%                  |
| Smokefree Premises                    | within 2 days                | 15 (14)            | 93%                  | 10 (7)            | 70%                  | 5 (4)                   | 80%                  | 3                  | 100%                 |
| Miscellaneous                         | within 2 days                | 30 (27)            | 90%                  | 39 (38)           | 97%                  | 54 (49)                 | 91%                  | 83 (76)            | 92%                  |
|                                       | <b>Total</b>                 | <b>1371 (1196)</b> | <b>86.5%</b>         | <b>1309 (199)</b> | <b>87%</b>           | <b>1044 (874)</b>       | <b>84%</b>           | <b>1136 (965)</b>  | <b>85%</b>           |
| Pest Control                          | within 2 days                | 559 (559)          | 100%                 | 651 (648)         | 99.9%                | 568 (556)               | 98%                  | 504 (490)          | 97%                  |
| Dog Warden                            | within 2 days                | 361 (338)          | 93%                  | 391 (372)         | 95%                  | 362 (346)               | 96%                  | 389 (365)          | 94%                  |

## Commercial Environmental Health Performance Summary

## Appendix 1

|                                   | Target                          | 2008/2009        | Target Achieved | 2009/2010          | Target Achieved | 2010/2011        | Target Achieved | 2011/2012       | Target Achieved |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Total</b>                      |                                 | <b>920 (897)</b> | <b>97.5%</b>    | <b>1042 (1020)</b> | <b>98%</b>      | <b>930 (902)</b> | <b>97%</b>      |                 |                 |
| <b>Infectious Disease</b>         | <b>within 1 day</b>             | <b>87</b>        | <b>100%</b>     | <b>115</b>         | <b>100%</b>     | <b>121</b>       | <b>100%</b>     | <b>136</b>      | <b>100%</b>     |
| <b>Food Sampling</b>              |                                 | <b>288</b>       |                 | <b>253</b>         |                 | <b>83</b>        |                 | <b>230</b>      |                 |
| <b>Accident Investigations</b>    | <b>within 1 day</b>             | <b>28</b>        | <b>100%</b>     | <b>12</b>          | <b>100%</b>     | <b>30 (38)</b>   | <b>93%</b>      | <b>21</b>       | <b>100%</b>     |
| <b>Animal Welfare</b>             | <b>[Riding]</b>                 | <b>4</b>         | <b>100%</b>     | <b>3</b>           | <b>100%</b>     | <b>2</b>         | <b>100%</b>     | <b>2</b>        | <b>100%</b>     |
|                                   | <b>[Animal Boarding]</b>        | <b>10</b>        | <b>100%</b>     | <b>8</b>           | <b>100%</b>     | <b>8</b>         | <b>100%</b>     | <b>8</b>        | <b>100%</b>     |
|                                   | <b>[Dog Breeding]</b>           | <b>5</b>         | <b>100%</b>     | <b>2</b>           | <b>100%</b>     | <b>2</b>         | <b>100%</b>     | <b>2</b>        | <b>100%</b>     |
|                                   | <b>[Pet Shops]</b>              | <b>5</b>         | <b>100%</b>     | <b>3</b>           | <b>100%</b>     | <b>4</b>         | <b>100%</b>     | <b>3</b>        | <b>100%</b>     |
|                                   | <b>[Zoo &amp; Wild Animals]</b> | <b>1</b>         | <b>100%</b>     | <b>1</b>           | <b>100%</b>     | <b>2</b>         | <b>100%</b>     | <b>2</b>        | <b>100%</b>     |
| <b>Planning Applications</b>      |                                 | <b>2</b>         |                 | <b>56</b>          |                 | <b>108</b>       |                 | <b>12</b>       |                 |
| <b>Housing related complaints</b> |                                 |                  |                 |                    |                 |                  |                 | <b>106 (99)</b> | <b>93%</b>      |
| <b>Drainage</b>                   |                                 |                  |                 |                    |                 |                  |                 | <b>94 (93)</b>  | <b>99%</b>      |
| <b>Caravan site inspections</b>   |                                 |                  |                 |                    |                 |                  |                 | <b>5 (8)</b>    | <b>62%</b>      |