

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 30 MAY 2013  
title: FOOD HYGIENE INTERVENTION PLAN 2013/2014  
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
principal author: JAMES RUSSELL HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider and approve the Ribble Valley Borough Council's Food Hygiene Intervention Plan 2013/2014.
- 1.2 The Council's vision developed 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 peoples 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 any future 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". Subsequent guidance the latest of which was issued in April 2012, continues to require local authorities to produce a Food Hygiene Intervention Programme (Plan) relating to food law enforcement and set out how they will meet their statutory obligations.

2.2 The latest revision of the Food Safety Act Code of Practice titled 'Food Law Code of Practice ( England)' was also released in April 2012. This guidance consolidates and updates previous food control guidance to reflect changes in national and European Union Food Directives and Regulations. Local Authorities are required to implement and operate in accordance with this guidance.

### 3 ISSUES

3.1 Attached as an Appendix to this report is a recently completed annual Food Hygiene Intervention 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 41 '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 produce 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 had considerable implications in relation to increased complexity and time needed to complete audits for the small team of dedicated officers. *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 any problems with achieving targets, priority will continue to be given to inspecting the 'high risk' premises (category A to C) first.

3.6 Two years ago on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011, the National 'Food Hygiene Rating Scheme' was successfully introduced within the borough. To date, + 90% of local authorities in England, Wales & Northern Ireland are now operating this system The Food Standards Agency have made available a mobile phone 'App', to make the scheme more accessible and encourage greater consumer use. Unfortunately this scheme has had additional impact in necessitating greater time taken to undertake and complete an audit of a food premises. Generally the scheme has been well received and has been an undoubted success. I am pleased to report the ratings for the food premises in Ribble Valley have improved with more premises achieving a 5 rating in the past 12 months and are as follows, Risk Rating 5 being best;

**Risk Rating 5:** 357(317), **4:** 111(136), **3:** 38(64), **2:** 13(6), **1:** 0(2), and **0:** 0(1)

The above represents 97.5% of the borough's food premises being 'generally compliant'. This however has slightly reduced from last year's rate of 98.2%

Effort and resource will continue to be focused on the lowest 3 categories with the purpose to raise these premises to achieve at least 'general compliance' and a rating of at least 3.

- 3.7 As part of the food service 'quality control', as part of a Lancashire initiative, two inter authority audits were undertaken by food officers from two neighbouring Council's. In addition, the Food Standards Agency also undertook an audit of a dairy 'Approved Premise' in relation to granting a licence for export to Russia. I am pleased to report that the audits were generally successful and reassuring with only relatively minor issues being identified. These issues have subsequently been addressed.
- 3.8 A copy of the Food Hygiene Intervention Programme will also be placed on the Ribble Valley Borough Council website for reference purposes in the 'Environmental Health' section.
- 3.9 It is believed appropriate for the programme 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 Hygiene Intervention Plan 2013/14 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.

JAMES RUSSELL  
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL

MARSHAL SCOTT  
HEALTH 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) – April 2012.
3. 'Food Law Guidance (England) – April 2012.