

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 29 AUGUST 2013
title: REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE 2012/13
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 2012/2013.

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".

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 May 2012 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 'caravan site', 'private water supply' and 'health and safety' premise programmes intended due to reasons given 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 274 premises, although in the end it was necessary to undertake a total of 374 premise inspections. 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 several gastro-enteric incidents in local institutions, which by their nature are highly resource intensive and also the ongoing maintenance of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme introduced on 1st June 2011.
- 3.3 I am pleased to report that last year, 374 (of 274 target) inspections were undertaken. Food premise inspection continues to be "the priority" within the Environmental Health Section.

Health and Safety

- 3.4 Last year 38 'High Risk' inspections and 31 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 issues in particular in relation to spa baths installed in caravan parks. 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. As a result of maternity leave, it is unlikely 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. As explained in last years Health & Safety Intervention Plan due to general good levels of compliance, intervention is only being made as a result of complaint or observed non compliance.

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 29 EPA and one A2 PPC process. Last year all processes received a minimum of 1 visit in order to review and amend their permits and risk assessment categories. Currently we have 4 processes which require 6 monthly inspection, 12 processes which require annual inspection, 2 processes requiring 2 yearly and 12 processes which now require a 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 required to undertake a full review on a three yearly basis and complete and submit an annual Update Screening Assessment on intervening years. The 2013 Quality 'Update Screening Assessment' was submitted to DEFRA in May 2013. The mandatory annual air quality report has recently been completed and submitted to DEFRA for consideration and validation. Unfortunately, the report identifies an increase in average Nitrogen Dioxide levels monitored in the Whalley Road, Clitheroe Air Quality Management area at 2 sampling points in excess of the national air quality objective of 40 ug/m3.

- 3.9 This will now require careful evaluation and consideration with regard to potential impact upon the planning process and is likely to now require the development of an action plan to be devised with all relevant agencies/bodies.

- 3.10 We have continued to undertaken a detailed assessment for Nitrogen Dioxide in Whalley, 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.

Caravan Sites

- 3.11 Ribble Valley has a total of 16 licensed caravan sites. Last year 1site licence was reviewed and re-issued. It is intended for a further 7 to be prioritised, reviewed and reissued in the next 12 months.

Private Water Supplies

- 3.12 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.

- 3.13 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.
- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 As a result of pressures of work, it has not been possible to make satisfactory progress with achievement of the 2012 end of calendar year target for sampling of the programmed Private Water Supplies for commercial and multiple domestic systems. As a result of DWI Risk Assessment guidance not being issued until very late in the year, a very small number of systems have been visited and samples 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 continue the risk assessment of these supplies in 2013 as resource permits. It is becoming increasingly unlikely that the December 2014 deadline for completion of Private Water Supply Risk Assessments and required sampling can be achieved within the available resource.

Pest Control and Dog Warden Service

- 3.16 Last year again saw a further busy year with a total of 314 pest control service requests being received and actioned. I am pleased to report that 98% 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.
- 3.17 With regard to the dog warden service, we received 384 service requests of which 372 (97%) were responded to within 2 working days. With regard to tackling the ongoing issue of dog fouling, I can report that in 2012/13, a further six Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in relation to dog fouling. This now means that a total of 60 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 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. However, 7 of these hours each week are used for the emptying of dog waste bins.
- 3.18 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 6th 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 in 2011 with the existing provider for a further 3 years.

General Complaints

- 3.19 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.
- 3.20 In 2012/13, 1311 service requests were received representing in the order of 109 per month. Last year an average of 90% of service requests were actioned within 2 working days, which is exceptional and inline with our stated target of 90%.

Emergency Planning

- 3.21 The past year has continued to be busy. Every year, several major documents need review resulting in the re-issue of the updated plans reflecting the changes of staff. In particular, the District Emergency Plan has been rewritten and updated in response to the findings of Exercise Watergate. Work is ongoing on the redrafting of the Council's Business Continuity Plan. 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 successful delivery of property flood protection grants to 27 properties in Ribchester.

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 the programmed 'health and safety' premise inspection target, caravan site relicensing or private water supply risk assessment and sampling programmes 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.

JAMES RUSSELL
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Appendix – Environmental Health Performance Summary.

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

JR/EL/290813/H&H

Commercial Environmental Health Performance Summary

Appendix 1

	Target	2009/2010	Target Achieved	2010/2011	Target Achieved	2011/2012	Target Achieved	2012/2013	Target Achieved
Food Premise Initial Inspections/Audits	N/a	334	313 (94%)	326 (414)	(79%)	418 (423)	100%	374 (274)	100%
Health and Safety Initial Inspections	N/a	200	167 (83%)	32 + 76 (200) campaigns	(16%) + campaigns	15 + 110 campaigns		38 (80) High Risk + 31 campaigns	
EPA	N/a	24	20 (100%)	15 (15)	100%	2 (6)	33%	35 (34)	100%
Licensing Inspections	N/a	100	100 (100%)	145 (145)	100%	64	N/a		N/a
Smokefree Premises	250 pa	250	202 (81%)	156 (26)	62%	121(250)	48%	4	N/a
	Working Days		within target		Within target		Within target		
Food Complaints	within 2 days		94%	160 (150)	94%	268 (256)	96%	332 (322)	97%
Health and Safety	within 2 days	28 (24)	86%	30 (28)	93%	37 (39)	95%	45 (44)	98%
Abandoned Vehicles (initial removal)	within 1 day within 1 day	26 (26) 0	100%	8 (8)	100%	12 (12)	100%	6 (6)	100%
Air Pollution [dust, odour, smoke]	within 2 days	83 (70)	84%	70 (60)	86%	16 (15)	94%	52 (49)	94%
Environmental litter	within 2 days	666 (545)	82%	432 (333)	77%	547 (426)	78%	445 (371)	83%
Noise	within 2 days	257 (226)	88%	222 (196)	88%	147 (127)	86%	138 (121)	88%
Licensing	within 2 days	44 (33)	77%	63 (46)	73%	23 (11)	48%	213 (178)	84%
Smokefree Premises	within 2 days	10 (7)	70%	5 (4)	80%	3	100%	2 (1)	50%
Miscellaneous	within 2 days	39 (38)	97%	54 (49)	91%	83 (76)	92%	88 (86)	98%
	Total	1309 (199)	87%	1044 (874)	84%	1136 (965)	85%	1311 (1178)	90%
Pest Control	within 2 days	651 (648)	99.9%	568 (556)	98%	504 (490)	97%	314 (309)	98%
Dog Warden	within 2 days	391 (372)	95%	362 (346)	96%	389 (365)	94%	384 (372)	97%
	Total	1042 (1020)	98%	930 (902)	97%	893 (855)	96%	698 (681)	97.5%

Commercial Environmental Health Performance Summary

Appendix 1

	Target	2009/2010	Target Achieved	2010/2011	Target Achieved	2011/2012	Target Achieved	2012/2013	Target Achieved	
Infectious Disease	Within 1 day	115	100%	121	100%	136	100%	125	100%	
Food Sampling	As per Lancashire Food Group Plan	253		83		230	N/a	215	N/a	
Accident Investigations	Within 2 days	12	100%	30 (38)	93%	21	100%	18	100%	
Animal Welfare	[Riding]	Once per annum	3	100%	2	100%	2	100%	3	100%
	[Animal Boarding]	Once per annum	8	100%	8	100%	8	100%	8	100%
	[Dog Breeding]	Once per annum	2	100%	2	100%	2	100%	1	100%
	[Pet Shops]	Once per annum	3	100%	4	100%	3	100%	3	100%
	[Zoo & Wild Animals]	Once per annum	1	100%	2	100%	2	100%	2	100%
Planning Applications		56		108		12		158		
Housing related complaints	within 2 days					106 (99)	93%	106 (98)	93%	
Drainage	within 2 days					94 (93)	99%	82 (79)	96%	
Caravan site inspections	Within 2 months of Planning Approval					5 (8)	62%			