

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2014  
title: REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE 2013/14  
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 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".

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 August 2013 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 has again not proved 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 then Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 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 being 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 409 premises, although in the end it was necessary to undertake a total of 428 premise inspections & assessments. 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.
- 3.2 In the past year, the section has been particularly occupied with several significant 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 1 June 2011. These will be added to by the introduction of the UK Food Surveillance System and the transfer of enforcement responsibility for food allergens.
- 3.3 I am pleased to report that last year, 428 (of 409 target) inspections & audits were undertaken. Food premises inspection & regulation continues to be "the priority" within the environmental health inspection team.

#### Health and Safety

- 3.4 Last year 23 'High Risk' inspections and 23 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, the limited number of 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 ongoing part time vacancies and the maternity leave of the EHO (Health & Safety) to meet the response times contained in the Environmental Health

Plan, it was not possible to undertake more inspections. Due to the ongoing situation, 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 25 process inspections/audits were undertaken to ensure all processes due an inspection were visited. 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 appointment of the EHO (Pollution & Housing) it is envisaged that the annual inspections will be completed in house 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 2014 Quality 'Update Screening Assessment' was submitted to DEFRA in April for consideration and validation. Inexplicably, the report identifies that Nitrogen Dioxide levels within the borough's only AQMA with levels, whilst still high and of concern, have averaged just below the national air quality objective level of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>. As such, detailed monitoring and the preparation of an action plan will need to continue.

Caravan Sites

- 3.11 Ribble Valley has a total of 17 licensed caravan sites. Last year, 3 site licences were reviewed and re-issued. It is intended for a further 3 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 I am pleased to report that following the appointment of the 'fixed term' EHO (Pollution & Housing) it has been possible to make significant inroads with the sampling and risk assessment of the 123 private water supplies serving commercial and 'multiple domestic' properties. Providing no unforeseen circumstances intervene, the necessary work should be completed by the 31 December 2014 deadline.

#### *Pest Control and Dog Warden Service*

- 3.16 Last year again saw a further busy year with a total of 385 pest control service requests being received and actioned. I am pleased to report that 90% 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 462 service requests of which 416 (90%) were responded to within 2 working days. With regard to tackling the ongoing issue of dog fouling, I can report that in 2013/14, a further seven Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in relation to dog fouling. This now means that a total of 67 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 6 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, these arrangements continue to work satisfactorily and in budget. A new contract is being renewed in 2014 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 2013/14, 1389 service requests were received representing in the order of 116 per month. Last year, an average of 81% of service requests were actioned within 2 working days, which is exceptional although below our service target of 90%.

#### *Emergency Planning*

- 3.21 The past year has continued to be busy. Every year, several major documents need review & updating resulting in the re-issue of the updated plans reflecting the

changes of staff. In particular, the District Emergency Plan has been reviewed and developed into an electronic format, maintained off site but accessible. Work is ongoing on the similar development 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.

#### 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 and caravan site relicensing 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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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Appendix – Environmental Health Performance Summary.

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

## Commercial Environmental Health Performance Summary

## Appendix 1

	Target	2010/2011	Target Achieved	2011/2012	Target Achieved	2012/2013	Target Achieved	2013/2014	Target Achieved
Food Premise Initial Inspections/Audits	N/a	326 (414)	(79%)	418 (423)	100%	374 (274)	100%	428 (409)	100%
Health and Safety Initial Inspections	N/a	32 + 76 (200) campaigns	(16%) + campaigns	15 + 110 campaigns		38 (80) High Risk + 31 campaigns		23 (36) + 23 campaigns	64%
EPA	N/a	15 (15)	100%	2 (6)	33%	17 ( 12)	100%	25	100%
Licensing Inspections	N/a	145 (145)	100%	64	N/a		N/a		N/a
Smokefree Premises	250 pa	156 (26)	62%	121(250)	48%	4	N/a		N/a
	Working Days		Within target		Within target				
Food Complaints	within 2 days	160 (150)	94%	268 (256)	96%	332 (322)	97%	221 (199)	90%
Health and Safety	within 2 days	30 (28)	93%	37 (39)	95%	45 (44)	98%	42 (38)	90%
Abandoned Vehicles (initial removal)	within 1 day within 1 day	8 (8)	100%	12 (12)	100%	6 (6)	100%	12 (12)	100%
Air Pollution [dust, odour, smoke]	within 2 days	70 (60)	86%	16 (15)	94%	52 (49)	94%	75 (62)	83%
Environmental litter	within 2 days	432 (333)	77%	547 (426)	78%	445 (371)	83%	524 (412)	79%
Noise	within 2 days	222 (196)	88%	147 (127)	86%	138 (121)	88%	201 (119)	59%
Licensing	within 2 days	63 (46)	73%	23 (11)	48%	213 (178)	84%	222 (207)	93%
Smokefree Premises	within 2 days	5 (4)	80%	3	100%	2 (1)	50%	1	100%
Miscellaneous	within 2 days	54 (49)	91%	83 (76)	92%	88 (86)	98%	91 (81)	89%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1044 (874)</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>1136 (965)</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>1311 (1178)</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>1389 (1131)</b>	<b>81%</b>
Pest Control	within 2 days	568 (556)	98%	504 (490)	97%	314 (309)	98%	385 (347)	90%
Dog Warden	within 2 days	362 (346)	96%	389 (365)	94%	384 (372)	97%	462 (416)	90%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>930 (902)</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>893 (855)</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>698 (681)</b>	<b>97.5%</b>	<b>847 (763)</b>	<b>90%</b>

## Commercial Environmental Health Performance Summary

## Appendix 1

	Target	2010/2011	Target Achieved	2011/2012	Target Achieved	2012/2013	Target Achieved	2013/2014	Target Achieved
	Within 1 day	121	100%	136	100%	125	100%	102	100%
Food Sampling	83		230	N/a	215	N/a		113	n/a
Accident Investigations	Infectious Disease	30 (38)	93%	21	100%	18	100%	27	100%
Animal Welfare	[Riding]	2	100%	2	100%	3	100%	3	100%
	[Animal Boarding]	8	100%	8	100%	8	100%	8	100%
	[Dog Breeding]	2	100%	2	100%	2	100%	1	100%
	[Pet Shops]	4	100%	3	100%	3	100%	3	100%
	[Zoo & Wild Animals]	2	100%	2	100%	2	100%	2	100%
Planning Applications		108		12		158		87	
Housing related complaints	within 2 days			106 (99)	93%	106 (98)	93%	71 (58)	82%
Drainage	within 2 days			94 (93)	99%	82 (79)	96%	73 (28)	62%
Caravan site inspections	Within 2 months of Planning Approval			5 (8)	62%			3	100%