

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

TRADING STANDARDS JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: 29 MARCH 2018

**LEAD OFFICER: DAVID PICKERING, PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMPLIANCE
MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: OFFICIAL FOOD STANDARDS AND FEED CONTROLS
SERVICE PLAN 2018-2019**

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

1. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) requires Trading Standards services to produce an annual Official Food Standards and Feed Controls Service Plan (known as the 'FSA Plan').
2. The overall structure follows guidance from the FSA and includes the necessary facts and statistics to ensure the document is valid as a statutory plan.
3. This 'statutory' Plan is required to be submitted to the 'relevant Member Forum for approval'. In approving this Plan, the Committee will be establishing a framework that will meet the expectations of the Food Standards Agency.
4. Whilst the FSA Plan is a public document and will be made available via the website (and in printed version to anyone on request) we will produce additional information for the public in April in a more resident friendly and accessible format which reflects the work of the Service in this area for the past year.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

5. It is recommended that:

The Committee approves the Official Food Standards and Feed Controls Service Plan 2018-19 (the FSA Plan).

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

6. The approval of the Plan will meet the requirements of the FSA Framework Agreement and Code of Practice. It will also provide direction and structure for food standards and feed controls that will help to protect consumers and businesses in Buckinghamshire and Surrey.



DETAILS:

7. The Plan incorporates recommendations made by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in their audit of the Service provided in relation to feeding stuffs in the summer of 2016 which the Trading Standards Joint Committee considered in November 2016. It continues to reflect the change in emphasis by the FSA and the move away from a primarily inspection based regime in favour of a more varied suite of 'interventions' e.g. education, surveillance and monitoring, to increase business compliance whilst reducing the burden on compliant businesses.
8. The Committee should also be aware of the ongoing overarching review by the FSA of the way all food regulation is delivered entitled "Regulating our Future". This has not had an impact on the Service to date but potentially will affect the way we are involved in food regulation by 2020. The Service is monitoring developments closely. The Service's Public Health and Compliance Manager is involved in the review process through being on the professional expert panel, and is working with the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO) to raise queries with the way Regulation Our Future is developing with the FSA.
9. More information about the process can be found on the FSA website: <https://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/regulation/regulating-our-future>
10. As discussed at the Trading Standards Board meeting on 1 February, the impact of Brexit will also be felt in the legislation, and the support mechanisms available for it, which the Service deals with. The effect of this is not yet known and we are keeping a close watch so that as information becomes clearer we can support businesses through this change.
11. The focus of the FSA Plan continues to be on those food issues that most impact on the health, nutrition and economic welfare of Buckinghamshire and Surrey's consumers, particularly the vulnerable. With County Councils having the role as the lead for Public Health, we are liaising with the Directors of Public Health to ensure that interventions we carry out in this area are supporting this work appropriately. Where we provide consumer/business education and information, this is tied in to the Public Health work being led by the County Councils to ensure a coherent message. We will continue to inspect all of our high risk premises to ensure that controls on the composition and labelling of food are complied with. (NB. Food hygiene is dealt with by the District Environmental Health Officers.) We will investigate alleged occurrences of food crime.
12. Some of the statistics in the report will not be accurately known until 1 April 2018, however it has been decided to request the Joint Committee's approval of the report now, with good estimates of the figures, to give the Service focus for its work in this area from the start of the new financial year.
13. The FSA Plan contains information required by the Food Standards Agency to demonstrate full consideration of food and feed issues in Surrey and Bucks. This does lead to a report which is data heavy and which may be off-putting for many residents to read. To assist with engaging with residents and being transparent about the Service's work in this area, more resident friendly information will also be produced and published on our website in early April. This will be circulated to the Joint Committee Members for comment when

drafts have been produced, however it is not required to be formally approved.

CONSULTATION:

14. The FSA provided input into the structure of the FSA Plan via the Feed audit in summer 2016. No other consultation has taken place.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

15. If the service fails to provide controls deemed to be satisfactory to the Food Standards Agency's requirements the FSA could decide to provide the service for the authorities and impose the cost of this provision on the Councils. In addition to the monetary issue there would also be a substantial reputational loss

Financial and Value for Money Implications

16. The provisional resource allocated to the provision of the controls is £433,496. This includes staff and sampling costs and is within the existing joint service budget. This is an estimated amount based on last year's budget. We are waiting on confirmation of the available funding from the FSA for feed work in 18-19 before this can be finalised.

Legal Implications

17. The Food Standards Agency is an independent government department overseeing the protection of public health in relation to food safety. Under s40 of the Food Safety Act 1990, the Joint Committee must have regard to any codes of practice (statutory guidance) published by the Food Standards Agency in determining a strategy for food standards work. The annexed FSA plan has been prepared in order to comply with this requirement. Failure to have in a place a compliant FSA plan may result in the Service being sanctioned by the FSA.

Equalities and Diversity

18. There are no implications from the Plan

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

19. The controls are currently being implemented by the service.

Contact Officer:

Steve Ruddy, Head of Trading Standards, Tel: 01372 371730

Consulted:

Food Standards Agency

Annexes:

Annex 1 Official Food Standards and Feed Controls Plan 2018-19

This page is intentionally left blank