

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

TRADING STANDARDS JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: 4 NOVEMBER 2024

**LEAD OFFICER: AMANDA POOLE, HEAD OF TRADING STANDARDS /
ANDREW POLLARD, DEPUTY TRADING STANDARDS
MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: OFFICIAL FOOD STANDARDS AND FEED CONTROLS
SERVICE PLAN 2024-2025**

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

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'). The Plan is given as Annex A.

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.

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.

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:

It is recommended that:

**The Joint Committee approves the Official Food Standards and
Feed Controls Service Plan 2024-2025 (the FSA Plan).**

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

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:

1. The Plan reflects the implementation of the revised risk scheme and Code of Practice that was introduced in June 2023. Our service participated in the pilot run by the FSA that developed the new scheme. It was not possible to integrate the effect of the risk scheme into our existing information management database so it was managed on a parallel basis using spreadsheets and we continue to do this. The FSA have begun work with our database provider to integrate the new scheme into the database with the aim that it will be useable from spring 2025 onwards.
2. The new scheme presents a more dynamic and targeted approach to risks posed by food businesses. The businesses have an inherent risk that can be adjusted on the basis of information and intelligence received, such as complaints, and then appropriate interventions can be considered. This requires us to review our risk profile on a more frequent basis and unlike the previous scheme risk can be changed in year which makes managing the work more challenging. It does however mean our work dealing with the greatest risks during the year is recognised by the FSA.
3. 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 higher tier Councils having the role as the lead for Public Health, we are liaising with both 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 into the Public Health work being led by the Councils to ensure coherent messages.

4. CONSULTATION:

No external consultation has taken place. The draft Plan has been shared with the Trading Standards Board for consideration.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

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 could also be a substantial reputational loss.

6. Financial and Value for Money Implications

The provisional resource allocated to the provision of the controls is £252,645. This includes staff and sampling costs and is within the existing joint service budget.

7. Legal Implications

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 FSA plan at Annex A has been prepared 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.

8. Equalities and Diversity

There are no implications from the Plan

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- The controls are currently being implemented by the service

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Consulted:

Annexes:

Annex A: Official Food Standards and Feed Controls Plan 2024-2025

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