



FULL COUNCIL
Wednesday, 22 November 2023

Subject	East Suffolk Council’s Food and Health & Safety Service Plan 2023-2024
Cabinet Member	Councillor Jan Candy Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health
Report Author(s)	Catherine Hickling Lead Food and Safety Officer catherine.hickling@eastsoffolk.gov.uk 07827 820506
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Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable.
Wards Affected:	All Wards

Purpose and high-level overview

Purpose of Report:

The Council is required to produce a service plan for its food and health & safety regulatory functions, in a format prescribed by

- for food and imported food, the Food Standards Agency in its Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities, and
- for health & safety, the Health and Safety Executive, as set out in the National Local Authority Enforcement Code – Health & Safety at Work England, Scotland and Wales.

East Suffolk Council operates Suffolk Coastal Port Health Authority (SCPHA) and therefore official controls carried out by SCPHA are also included.

Given close linkages to the Corporate Health & Safety Team, the work of this team is also included.

This service plan combines the above in a single plan which must be submitted for member approval. It identifies the council's performance against the previous service plan (2021/2023), any variance from it and areas for improvement

Options:

The plan may be approved with or without amendments being required.

Recommendation/s:

It is recommended that Full Council:

1. notes performance against the service plan for 2021/23, and
2. considers and comments on the service plan for 2023/24, and
3. approves the service plan for 2023/24,
4. delegates authority to the Head of Environmental Services and Port Health to make any minor changes to the service plan for 2023/24 required as a result of legislative updates, typographical errors or to address formatting issues.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

Regular Community Health Briefings will be held with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health. Performance against targets is reported in the Service Plan for 2023/24, including summaries of annual reporting to the Food Standards Agency Local authority end of year return and the Health and Safety Executive's LA intervention and enforcement activity return.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

East Suffolk Strategic Plan 2020-2024

East Suffolk Economic Strategy 2022 – 2027

East Suffolk Environmental Policy to 2023

Environmental:

The service plan includes a section on Caring for our Environment and takes into account East Suffolk's environmental policy objective to be an exemplar in efficient and responsible use of natural resources.

Equalities and Diversity:

An Equality Impact Assessment (Reference: EQIA557035880) has been undertaken for the plan: no mitigation action identified.

Financial:

There are no new financial implications for the council from the proposals within the service plan. Targets and service improvements will be met from budgets already approved for the delivery of the services in 2023/24.

Human Resources:

No resource implications for the recommendation included in this report.

ICT:

No resource implications for the recommendation included in this report.

Legal:

No resource implications for the recommendation included in this report.

Risk:

Delivery of the types of functions set out in the service plan are well established, planned and monitored against the Food Law Code of Practice and relevant national and corporate requirements. The service can flex and adapt in response to changing expectations and demands.

External Consultees:

An online consultation process on a draft of the service plan has taken place, involving business associations and networks, food businesses and publicly via the council's social media channels. No views were received that were unsupportive of the contents of the service plan.

Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal: (Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
T01	Growing our Economy		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T03	Maintaining Financial Sustainability		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T04	Delivering Digital Transformation		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T05	Caring for our Environment		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
How does this proposal support the priorities selected?			
Public health and safety is protected, including through regulatory services.			

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	<p>The Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement and the Health and Safety Executive's National Local Authority Enforcement Code require the council to review its performance against the 2021/23 Food and Health & Safety Service Plan, identify any variance from the plan and areas for service improvement.</p> <p>As well as reviewing past performance, the council is also required to approve a new Food and Health and Safety Service Plan for 2023/24 (Appendix A).</p> <p>The content and layout of the plan follows the Framework Agreement with appendices providing data and more detailed information relevant to it.</p> <p>Review of performance, identification of any variation from the previous plan and areas of required improvement are set out in the review section on pages 52 to 58. A section on caring for our environment is at page 59.</p> <p>Throughout 2021/23 the Food and Safety Team worked conscientiously and at a faster pace to meet the expectations of the FSAs post covid pandemic Recovery Plan. The team achieved a high level of performance against the Recovery Plan, and this is reported in detail on page 24 and in appendix 6 on page 68.</p>
2 Current position	
2.1	<p>Suffolk Coastal Port Health Authority:</p> <p>The final Border Target Operating Model (BTOM) sets out a new approach to controls at the border. This will introduce changes in the rules for bringing food into the UK from the EU after 31 January 2024. Our Port Health Team may see an increase in the number and frequency of checks it performs.</p>
2.2	<p>Food and Safety Team:</p> <p>Recently recruited staff, who are new to the profession, require ongoing support and training. This requires input from more experienced officers. Filling vacant posts continues to be a challenge. Both issues are having an impact on meeting Food Standards Agency targets.</p>
3 How to address current situation	
3.1	<p>Suffolk Coastal Port Health Authority:</p> <p>A report was submitted to Full Council on 27 September 2023 outlining the challenges and opportunities of the final BTOM. SCPHA may need to increase the size of its workforce as the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) looks to introduce new import controls for EU goods as part of its Border Target Operating Model (BTOM).</p>

3.2	<p>Food and Safety Team:</p> <p>Recently recruited staff are progressing very well and the current level of support provided is expected to reduce over time. Recruitment remains a priority. Service delivery is being supported by temporary contractors. Our environmental health degree apprentices are expected to qualify in approximately two years' time.</p>
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4 Reason/s for recommendation	
4.1	The Council is required to produce and submit a Food and Health and Safety Service Plan for member approval.

Appendices

Appendices:	
Appendix A	Draft East Suffolk Food and Health & Safety Service Plan 2023/24.

Background reference papers:		
Date	Type	Available From
2010	FSA Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities.	environment@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
Refer to online document.	HSE National Local Authority Enforcement Code Health and Safety at Work.	https://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/la-enforcement-code.htm
06/06/2023	Equality Impact Assessment Reference: EQIA557035880.	environment@eastsoffolk.gov.uk