

**FOOD SERVICE
RECOVERY
PLAN**

2021/22

Approved by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities on
26 October 2021

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Executive Summary

This Service Plan details the food safety enforcement work for 2021/22. The plan reflects the work required of food authorities by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in its COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan: guidance and advice to local authorities for the period from 1 July 2021 to 2023/24 (see Annex 1) and its national Food Law Code of Practice and guidance documents.

Between March 2019 and August 2021 (present), food service delivery was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For most of this period the 4.6 FTE officers dedicated to the service was reduced to 1.5 FTE or less, the rest being permanently dedicated to COVID-19 outbreak, advice and enforcement work. We operated in accordance with FSA guidance during this period offering a much reduced, risk based response.

This Food Service Recovery Plan sets how we will implement the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) guidance and advice to local authorities for the period from 1 July 2021 to 2023/24.

This Recovery Plan aims to ensure that, in line with the FSA guidance, during the period of recovery from the impact of COVID-19, our resources are targeted where they add greatest value in providing safeguards for public health and consumer protection in relation to food. It also aims to safeguard the credibility of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

This Recovery Plan re-starts the food intervention service for new food establishments and for high-risk and/or non-compliant establishments while providing flexibility for lower risk establishments. It also includes delivery of:

- Residual COVID-19 duties inc. outbreak management, complaints and advice;
- official controls where the nature and frequency are prescribed in specific legislation and official controls recommended by FSA guidance that support trade and enable export;
- reactive work including enforcement in the case of non-compliance, managing food incidents and food hazards, and investigating and managing complaints;
- sampling, and
- ongoing proactive surveillance.

The main focus of work in 2021/22 will be in the following areas:

- A planned programme of food safety interventions in accordance with the FSA COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan: guidance and advice to local authorities for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 March 2023;
- Continued maintenance of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme;
- To use intelligence and to target work towards businesses with low FHRS scores (2 or less);
- To inspect the 200 new businesses that register each year;
- To target COVID-19 controls and food safety at the increasing number of events and festivals through the Safer Communities Events Group;

- The improvement of self-help information and advice on food safety to food businesses and consumers.
- Investigation of food and food establishments complaints, outbreaks and incidents of food related illness in accordance with local protocol;
- To address any gaps in team competence as identified in the competency framework assessments;
- To move to a new software supplier to administer the food safety service by summer 2022;

There is a glossary of terms at the back of the Service Plan.

1.0 Introduction

The Council is responsible for the enforcement of food safety in 2082 food establishments within the district (2050 in the previous year). This includes establishments at all stages in the food chain ranging from farm producers of food, food manufacturers and processors through to retail food establishments, restaurants and other establishments involving catering.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA), as part of its national Food Safety Framework Agreement, requires all local authorities to prepare an annual service plan which reviews the implementation of the previous years plan and details the delivery of their food safety enforcement responsibilities for the following year.

This plan is seen as an important document ensuring that FSA's Recovery Plan and guidance addressed and delivered locally. This service plan will also:

- Focus debate on key delivery issues;
- Provide an essential link with financial planning;
- Set objectives for the future, and identify major issues that may cross service boundaries ;
- Provide a means of managing performance and making performance comparisons.

This Recovery Plan provides a balanced approach to local food safety enforcement. This is achieved by not merely directing resources towards FSAs Recovery Plan, but also by ensuring that adequate provision is made to address food complaints, food poisoning notifications and other reactive work, advice to businesses, and also the ability to follow-up on intelligence driven areas of work such as sampling, co-ordinated work coming out of the national 3x5x2 intelligence database and targeted visits.

The overall aim will be for the local authority to choose the most appropriate action to be taken to drive up levels of compliance by food establishments with food law.

2.0 Service Objectives and Links

2.1 Objectives

To ensure the safe and hygienic production, storage, distribution and sale of food and drink through the enforcement of legislation, the provision of advice and information to consumers, and the operators of food businesses by:

- An annual programme of food hygiene interventions including inspections and enforcement in accordance with statutory requirements, codes of practice and guidance and the FSA's COVID Recovery Plan;
- Where intelligence, guidance and resource dictates, using microbiological food sampling to support the programme;
- Investigating complaints within service standards and to take appropriate action in accordance with Code of Practice and Guidance;
- Maintaining our existing "primary authority" agreements where appropriate and supporting local businesses on fee paying basis;
- Supporting food businesses and consumers with targeted advice and educational initiatives; participating in FSA campaigns;

2.2 Links to the Corporate Vision, Aims, Values and Priorities

The Food Safety Service has the following links into the Council's ambition, values and priorities:

- Our Ambition:**
- To build on our heritage and be a progressive and vibrant place to live, work and visit.
- Our Values:**
- Delivering excellent customer service
 - Taking responsibility
 - Showing resilience
 - Working together
 - Leading by example
- Our Priorities:**
- A strong local economy;
 - A sustainable environment;
 - Supporting our communities;
 - Excellent public services.

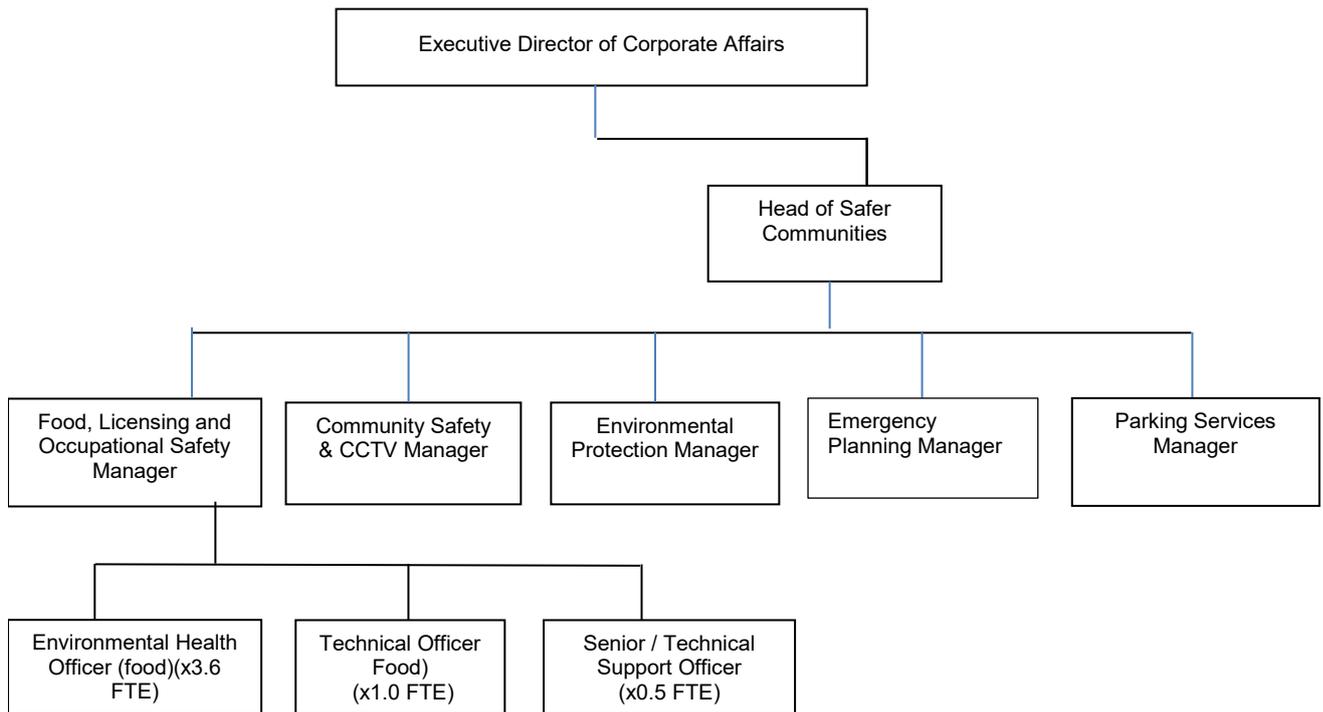
3.0 Background

3.1 Profile of the Local Authority

One of seven District Councils within the area of the North Yorkshire County Council
 160,500 Population
 131,000 hectares
 40 Local District Councillors
 147 Parishes
 88 Parish Councils (this includes City and Town Councils and Parish meetings)
 3 large towns: Harrogate, Ripon, Knaresborough
 3 smaller towns: Pateley Bridge, Masham, Boroughbridge
 3 Parliamentary Constituencies

Mixed area of urban and rural landscape. Predominant employment from rural/farming, tourism and conference trade together with a high level of service support businesses.

3.2 Organisational Structure and Reporting Lines



3.3 Political Arrangements

Under the Councils constitution, Food Safety falls under the terms of reference of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Communities with the exception of Food Registration, which falls to the Licensing Committee. The Food Service Plan is reported to the Cabinet Member for adoption.

3.4 The Scope of the Safer Communities Food Service

As a district council the authority is responsible for the full range of food hygiene duties under the Food Safety Act 1990 as amended, Food Hygiene and Safety (England) Regulations 2013 as amended and associated EC Regulations.

Food Standards and Animal Feeding Stuffs are the responsibility of the North Yorkshire County Council Trading Standards. Trading Standards also take a lead on allergen enforcement.

Further to a recent Government decision, all seven district local authorities in North Yorkshire (exc. York) and North Yorkshire County Council will be disbanded on 1 April 2023 to be replaced with one unitary authority. This aligns well with the FSA's Recovery Plan which ends on 31 March 2023. From that point, a Food Service Plan will be established to cover the new unitary authority.

Within the Safer Communities Service the Food, Occupational Safety and Licensing Team also deliver the following service alongside food safety

Occupational Health & Safety	Public Drinking Water Quality
Licensing services (Alcohol, entertainment, animal welfare, trading, and hackney carriages)	

3.5 Specialist External Services/Partners

Food Examiner	Public Analyst Scientific Service
Microbiological Services	Public Health England (PHE) FW&E Microbiology Laboratory, York
Proper Officer	(PHE) – Yorkshire and the Humber Consultant in Communicable Disease Control
Health Protection	North Yorkshire County Council – Director of Public Health

NOTE: PHE becomes the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) on 1 October 2021.

3.6 Service Delivery Points:

Safer Communities	Tel	01423 500600
Harrogate Borough Council	Web Site	www.harrogate.gov.uk
PO Box 787	Email	fos@harrogate.gov.uk
HARROGATE	Out-of-Hours:	01423 556300
HG1 9RW	Opening Hours:	08.30 - 17.00 Monday – Thursday 08.30 - 16.30 Friday

3.7 Demands on the Food and Occupational Safety Service

The area contains a mix of manufacturing, retail and catering establishments. Catering and retail are the dominant sectors within this mix. The businesses are predominantly small to medium sized establishments.

		Estimated Number of establishments (As at 01/04/20)
Establishments	Primary producers	9
	Manufacturers and packers	108
	Importers/Exporters	5
	Distributors/Transporters	53
	Retailers (including large supermarkets and smaller retailers)	394
	Restaurants/caterers/cafes/canteens/hotels/guest houses/pubs/clubs/takeaways/caring establishments/ schools/colleges/mobiles	1513
Total		2082
Of which:	Establishments Approved	21

Overall establishments numbers have increased slightly since the last plan from 2050 to 2082.

External factors impacting on service delivery: -

- The COVID-19 pandemic;
- Tourist trade and an increasing number of events in the district; e.g. Great Yorkshire Show, village shows, Deershed Festival, Nidderdale Show, Christmas markets, Large cycling events;
- Conference and exhibition trade;
- FSA promotions / initiatives;
- Complex enforcement work e.g. Arising from incidents that may occur e.g. large outbreaks of illness, food fraud, illegal slaughter, food alerts, imported food and food damaged by clandestine travel.

Since recommencing full on-site food hygiene inspections in July 2021 it appears that standards have deteriorated significantly in some premises. This seems to be partly due to changes in Food Business Operator during the lockdowns whilst we were unable to carry out full on-site inspections. Some existing traders have just let standards slip. During July, August and September there were three voluntary closures and two Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Orders were issued. There were none in 2019/20 and just one voluntary closure in 2018/19. This is having a significant impact on resources due to the input needed by officers e.g. making statements, serving notices, attending court and multiple revisits. It is worth noting that the number of FHRS 0 rated premises is currently rising when comparing the same month in the last 3 years:

	2018	2019	2020	2021
FHRS 0	0	0	0	3
FHRS 1	0	4	4	4
FHRS 2	1	6	7	4

3.8 Enforcement Policies

Safer Communities Enforcement Policy. Download a copy - [SaferCommsEnfPolicy](#)

3.9 North Yorkshire Food Safety Management System

The Council is a signatory to the co-ordinator of the North Yorkshire Food Safety Management System. It is the Council's policy to carry out all areas of food service delivery in accordance with this system and in particular to fulfil the inter and intra authority audit requirements as set out in the management system and in line with the FSA Standard on peer review.

4.0 Service Delivery

4.1 Food Establishments Interventions

It is normally the Council's policy to carry out programmed interventions in accordance with the minimum frequencies specified in the current Food Law Code of Practice i.e. within 28 days of due date or within 28 days of registration or intended start date. However, the FSA COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan (see Annex 1) introduces a different programme until 1 April 2023 to assist local authorities to deal with a backlog of new businesses and routine interventions that could not be achieved during the COVID pandemic. The Recovery Plan targets higher risk premises and newly registered businesses in the first instance before moving to the C and D category premises that are not "broadly compliant"*.

Inspections/audits are all prioritised in accordance with the food safety risks posed by the establishments. This is assessed in particular, in relation to the nature of the food handling involved, the level of compliance, and the confidence in management.

Premise Profile (Risk Categories A-F)	Number of Establishments (As at 01/04/21)	Number of interventions normally required during the year (01/04/21 - 31/03/22)	Number of interventions required by the FSA Recovery Plan during the year (01/04/21 – 31/03/22)
Category A	2	8	0
Category B	58	47	43
Category C	289	151	0
Category D	648	330	0
Category E **	687	386	0
Unrated	284	171	70
Currently outside the programme	114	181	61
Outstanding from previous year	532	415	9
New businesses	170	197	197
Estimated no of revisits	60	80	80
Total	2,508	1,744	460

The FSA Recovery Plan reduces the intervention burden significantly during the 2021/22 period. The Plan does, however, confirm that interventions outside of the initial scope may be targeted if resources provide. Inspecting officers are tasked with achieving five interventions per week meaning that around 650 should be achieved during the period of this Service Plan. As mentioned on page 10, a reduction in standards in some food businesses since on-site inspections resumed is significantly increasing the amount of resource needed for some interventions.

Local Areas of targeted inspection:

- Category A, B and premises that are not currently "broadly compliant"* with the food safety legislation;
- Approved establishments (food manufacturers not selling to the final consumer);
- Events, festivals and shows.

* A broadly compliant (Food hygiene) establishment has an intervention rating score of not more than ten points under each of the following parts of Annex 1: Food hygiene scoring system Part 2: Level of (Current) Compliance - Hygiene and Level of (Current) Compliance – Structure; and Part 3: Confidence in Management.

** Normally, alternative enforcement strategies will be considered for the majority of these low risk food establishments in accordance with the Food Safety Act Code of Practice, and the North Yorkshire Chief Environmental Health Officers Management System procedures. This will involve questionnaire surveys to assess the hazards and risks associated with the businesses. Where risks are perceived as low information packs will be sent out to businesses to assist them with compliance with food safety legislation and good practice. Where intelligence through complaints or routine sampling, for example, suggests that problems may exist, all such establishments will be inspected as a matter of course.

Inspection of newly registered businesses:

- 238 food registration forms were received in 2020/21. There were 243 in 2019/20.

Performance Indicators	Target	Achieved 2020/21
High Risk food establishments inspections carried out	99%	100%
Other food establishments inspections carried out	95%	24%
Newly registered business inspected within 60 days	90%	16%

A significant number inspections, (382), particularly category D and E, have been carried forward to 2021/22 due to COVID-19 restrictions and the diversion of staff into COVID advice, enforcement and outbreak management. During the COVID-19 Pandemic limited inspections were delivered in accordance with the FSAs guidance and advice to local authorities on delivery of official food and feed controls during the lockdown (see Annex 2). The guidance recognised that local authorities could carry out remote audits in targeted high risk premises rather than physical inspections. Physical inspections were only permitted where a high risk had been identified. However, these did not count as inspections for monitoring purposes.

The FSA COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan and this plan deals with the carry forward through to 1 April 2023, as detailed in the Executive Summary. The FSA will introduce a revised intervention strategy to implement 1 April 2023.

The Harrogate Borough Council Local Plan confirms this additional factor quoting that:

“The district boasts a healthy, entrepreneurial economic environment with a high rate of business start-ups and above average number of enterprises and business units

per head of population (estimated 13,500 businesses, 2015).

There are high levels of employment with 95,000 jobs in total and (historically) the highest business start-up rates within the Leeds City Region, with the district's residents some of the most qualified in the north of England."

4.2 Food Information Regulations and 'Natasha's Law'

The authority has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) Trading Standards Service in 2014. The MoU confirms that Harrogate Borough Council will provide information and signposting to FBO's on allergens during programmed interventions and refer non-compliance to them.

In October 2021 'Natasha's Law' was introduced to protect allergy sufferers and give them confidence in the food they buy. The reforms cover labelling requirements for foods that are prepared and packed on the same premises from which they are sold – such as a packaged sandwich or salad made by staff earlier in the day and placed on a shelf for purchase. Previously these foods, known as pre-packed directly for sale, were not required to have product labels which provide information on the full ingredients or the allergens contained.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/natashas-legacy-becomes-law>

Harrogate Borough Council will be assisting the NYCC Trading Standards service and local businesses with compliance in 2021/22.

4.3 Food/Food Establishments Complaints

It is the Council's policy to give a first response within to all food and food establishments complaints within a specified time. The performance target is to respond to 99% of complaints within 10 days and 95% of urgent requests within 24hrs. In 2020/21 we achieved 99% of standard and 100% of urgent.

	Actual 2019/20	Actual 2020/21	Est 2021/22
No. of food/food establishments complaints	102	67	120

The number of complaints dropped during the COVID-19 'lockdowns'. It is expected that the number will increase in 2021/22 with businesses fully open again and also due to the reduction in compliance being evidenced.

4.4 Primary Authority Principle

The Council is actively involved in the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme administered by the Dept of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy allowing businesses to reduce regulatory burden. The Council has six Primary Authority Agreements. See the public register for details - <https://primary-authority.beis.gov.uk/par>

4.5 Approved establishments

The Council recognises the importance of EC approval and is committed to regular interventions and sampling in all its establishments. One of the biggest cold stores in Europe is situated in the district providing major employment and a significant throughput of imported food. At the time of drafting this plan 20 approved premises existed in the district.

4.6 Export of food post EU exit

Harrogate Borough Council have implemented additional resource in this area of work by having a specialist Environmental Health Officer lead on EU export and import in order to ensure regulatory requirements are achieved thus helping businesses to successfully export and import goods.

Where the EU previously offered barrier free trade, businesses now require Food Export Certificates (certified by a competent officer) and this work has increased and become more complex following post-transition trade rules. There is regular challenge from the constantly developing rules relating to export. This is a discretionary service (food export certificates) and we reviewed our fee framework prior to transition (through the Council's budget process) partly in anticipation of this impact.

Comparing June, July and August with the same period last year, export certificate requests have increased from 36 to 54 (a 50% increase). However, the increasing complexity and constant change brought about by EU exit means that the increase in workload is well in excess of 50%.

4.7 Food Safety Advice, Training and Charging for Services

Aside from Primary Authority advice the service implemented a pay for advice service in 2018/19.

The giving of advice has traditionally been seen as an important part of the work of the food safety service. It may be during interventions or as a result of telephone or personal enquiries. Paid advice is as and when resource permits.

During 2017/18 food hygiene training was introduced by the service on a fee paying basis to compliment a number of local trainers who run courses on a regular basis. One-off or special courses are run on demand according to resources. This is currently halted due to the resource constraints brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery phase.

The Council is continuing to update its website in order to improve, in particular, the access to specialist food safety advice

4.8 Food Sampling and Inspection

The general policy of the Council is to sample food and drink, supplied, produced

and sold within the Borough, in accordance with a planned sampling programme to assess its safety and quality and where necessary, in response to food complaints/investigations. The Council will also participate in North Yorkshire-wide, national and European sampling programmes where resources permit.

All formal food samples will be submitted to Public Analyst Scientific Services (<https://www.publicanalystservices.co.uk/services/>) for analysis or to the Public Health England Laboratory Service, York for examination.

4.9 The National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

On the 1 October 2010, the Food Standards Agency launched the 'Food Hygiene Rating Scheme' (FHRS). The FHRS has been designed to provide consumers with an indication of the food hygiene standards within establishments included in the scheme. The aim of the scheme is to give consumers an informed choice about hygiene standards when choosing where to eat or buy food.

Harrogate Borough Council launched the scheme in 2011. The promotion of the FHRS and the Brand Standard has been seen as a priority for the service since that date.

Appeals and requests for revisits to establishments are carried out in accordance with the FHRS Brand Standard and must be requested on the standard form available on the website. During 2018/19 a charge was introduced for revisits to reassess the FHRS score.

In 2021 87% (89% last year) of food establishments were in the FHRS top "very good" category compared with the national average of 74% (69% last year).

As detailed in 3.7 in the limited time since full inspections commenced (three months) post COVID-19 controls, the number of premises scoring 0, 1 or 2 is increasing. Compliance in some premises has deteriorated significantly.

4.10 Control of the Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

The Council investigates all outbreaks and some notifications of food related disease in accordance with procedures agreed with its North Yorkshire partners and advice from its Proper Officer. Close working links exist with PHE (UKHSA), local commissioning bodies and other health organisations and groups in the region.

Estimated number of notifications of food related infectious disease <small>*Routine notification of Campylobacter ceased in 2013</small>	68
Estimated number of outbreaks	2

4.11 Food Safety Incidents

It is the policy of the Council to comply with the Food Law Code of Practice in relation to the handling of national food safety incidents and alerts, which includes food Alerts. To improve the communication of incidents and alerts a specific link with the Food Standards Agency website can be accessed on the council website. This also includes details of any local action taken by the Food and Occupational Safety team.

Estimated number of food alerts for action	3
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4.12 Liaison with other Organisations

The Council participates with the following liaison groups or organisations related to food safety issues in an endeavour to ensure that the service and/or any enforcement action taken within the Harrogate district is consistent with those of neighbouring local authorities, that service improvements can be identified, and that competence based training can be accessed.

- North Yorkshire Chief Environmental Health Officers Group and Associated Liaison Group
- Northgate User Group (Environmental Health IT system)
- Care Quality Commission
- North Yorkshire District Control of Infection Committee (NYDCIC)
- Yorkshire and Humber Infection Control Committee
- Ad hoc North Yorkshire Theft and Illegal Slaughter Group
- Public Health England (UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA))
- Local GP commissioning bodies
- Yorkshire Zoonoses Group
- Public Health England (UKHSA) Microbiological Services Sampling Liaison Group
- Yorkshire Water
- North Yorkshire Specialist Health Promotion Service
- OFSTED

4.13 Food Safety Promotion

The Authority will be involved in the following promotional/training activities in relation to food safety:

Participation in FSA digital media campaigns – Christmas, Valentines etc.	3
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In 2018 the Council registered with Highfield Training to deliver a range of food safety training through its charging for services initiative. However, this activity is currently halted post COVID-19 and during the recovery phase.

Food hygiene training delivered	0
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Food hygiene training through local service providers will continue to be promoted through the Council's website.

4.14 Food Safety Training for Officers

It is the policy of the Council to comply fully with the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice in relation to staff training and the qualifications of Authorised Officers. This requires that appropriately trained and experienced officers must only undertake food safety work. This necessitates access to external training on

specialist topics, supplemented by regular in house update training for authorised food safety officers.

Online training through the FSA's website has become an increasingly important resource, especially during the COVID-19 control period. PHE (UKHAS) also continue to offer valuable training with microbiological results analysis and Stec training planned for 2021. North Yorkshire Chief EHO's Training Group also continue to offer bespoke training on demand for all member authorities.

It is anticipated that a significant amount of update training will again be necessary this year for all enforcement officers. This will be provided to ensure continued professional development and officer competency. In particular, export and import skills need constantly updating.

Officer training is reviewed annually during the staff appraisal and through the new competency framework assessments. Imported foods had previously been identified as a key development area. All officers have now received training with further cascade training planned for 2021/22.

4.15 Food Safety Formal Action

All enforcement action will be undertaken having regard to the Safer Communities Enforcement Policy. This may range from informal action, through to the service of formal hygiene improvement or hygiene emergency prohibition notices, or ultimately the issue of simple cautions or recommendations for prosecution. The main aim is to ensure that all food businesses within the district produce food that is safe to eat and that they comply with the requirements of the food safety legislation. This enforcement policy can be accessed through the Council's website.

<https://www.harrogate.gov.uk/downloads/file/134/safer-communities-enforcement-policy>

4.16 Use of External Contractors

Food safety contractors have been used to supplement the food safety inspection programme in previous years alongside local authority officers who have agreed to offer additional hours where they are not currently working full-time. Current resources will be sufficient to deliver the FSA COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan in 2021/22.

5.0 Resources

5.1 Financial Allocation

The Food Service financial costs are contained within the “Food and Occupational Safety” cost centre.

The budget for the cost centre is as follows. These figures also include income and expenditure related to Public Water Quality and none-food infectious disease work.

TO BE UPDATED	2020/21 Controllable	2021/22 Controllable
	£k	£k
External income		
Controllable expenditure		
Transfers		
Net Budget		
Additional expenditure		

Section 4.1 confirms that 460 inspections are required in 2021/22 to achieve the basic requirements of the FSA Local Authority Food Service Recovery Plan. The country entered stage 4 of the Government COVID on 19 July 2021. This gave businesses the chance to trade more freely and for local authorities to fully inspect again. At that point, nearly 4 months of the 2020 inspection programme had passed. With 8 months remaining to deliver the plan and, taking into account annual leave and other duties, this leaves an estimated 6.5 months or 28 weeks of working time. With a staffing of 4.6 FTE and a target of 5 inspections per week this gives a potential for 644 inspections which is enough to meet the basic requirements of the FSA Local Authority Food Service Recovery Plan. However, it is likely that most inspections will be higher risk and more time consuming in 2021/22 so the target of 5 may not be fully achieved. The FSA has made it clear that their Plan that it outlines the very basic requirement with an additional available resource to be priority targeted at higher risk premises. Intelligence and previous assessments will be used to target this resource effectively.

5.2 Staffing Allocation

The Food & Occupational Safety Team is responsible for the delivery of a range of services in addition to food safety i.e. health and safety, health promotion.

Food enforcement officers (EHO's and TO)	4.6 (FTE)
Food administrative support	0.5 (FTE)
Overall resource to deliver the food safety service	5.1 (FTE)

Staff have been targeted with achieving 5 inspections per week, with a mix of high and low risk. However, it is likely that most inspections will be higher risk and more

time consuming in 2021/22.

5.3 Staff Development Plan

It is proposed that for the year 2021/22, the food safety service will largely be delivered within existing resources with £1,350 identified in the 2021/22 budget. Delivery routes are detailed in 4.14. If, during the course of the year, it becomes apparent that the service may be under resourced, priorities in other areas of work will be reassessed and additional resources will be directed to the food safety services in order to deliver service objectives to the necessary standard.

5.4 Identified risks for 2021/22

There is risk that the winter period may see an increase in the COVID-19 infection rate or new variants putting stress on the NHS. Should further local or national controls be put in place, team resource may need to be dedicated to advice, enforcement and infection control again.

Since recommencing full on-site food hygiene inspections in July 2021 it appears that standards have deteriorated significantly in some premises. This seems to be partly due to changes in Food Business Operator during the lockdowns whilst we unable to carry out full on-site inspections. However, some existing traders have just let standards slip. During July, August and September there were three voluntary closures and two Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Orders were issued. There were none in 2019/20 and just one voluntary closure in 2018/19.

The service remains heavily involved in ensuring that events in the district are both COVID-19 and food safe as well as health and safety compliant. Some of the members of the Food Safety Team are also members of an internal events group which meets every two weeks at present.

The project to move from the existing environmental health database to a new supplier will start to take up staff resource again during 2021/22. This was stalled due to internal priorities and the COVID-19 pandemic. Once implemented, this will achieve service efficiencies and cash savings.

To mitigate these risks, some temporary funding has been received to assist recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This is available until the end of March 2022 and could be used if and when needed until that date.

6.0 Review

6.1 Review Against the Service Plan

The Service Plan will be reviewed at least annually and reported to the Cabinet Member. The review will link into the annual budgetary process.

Performance is monitored monthly with a quarterly management review of progress.

6.2 Identification of Any Variance from the previous Service Plan

Section 4.1 identifies that there were shortfalls in the targets specified in the previous service plan. 100% of high risk establishments inspections (cat A to C) were achieved against a target of 99%. 24% of lower risk establishments inspections (cat D to E and others) were achieved against a target of 95%. Only 16% of new business inspections were achieved against a target of 90%.

Reasons for variance previous and potential impacts for 2021/22

The shortfalls identified above were entirely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A significant project to move from the existing environmental health database to a new supplier commenced in 2018 but was stalled due to internal priorities and the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will start to take up staff resource again during 2021/22. Once implemented, this will achieve service efficiencies and cash savings.

As identified last previously, significant and continued increasing work is being put into events which are in increasing in number and complexity every year. These have included large cycling events e.g. the Tour de Yorkshire, Deershed Festival, the Knaresborough Bed Race, the Great Yorkshire Show, Fake Festival, the Autumn Flower Show etc. Events are attracting traders from out of district with a huge variance in compliance. An internal group has been set up to co-ordinate and prioritise this work.

6.3 Key Service Achievements 2019/20

In addition to routine work significant progress has been made in relation to overall service improvements as identified in the previous plan. Key service achievements over the period of the plan include: -

- Good progress was made to address outstanding category D inspections carried over from 2018/19;
- 3 new approvals for manufacturing were issued;
- new businesses inspections were carried out;
- We worked with Y2019 and community groups to ensure safe food was served at the UCI World Road Cycling Championships and ancillary events;
- Food safety was targeted at the increasing number of other events and festivals in response to problems identified over the previous year;
- We used alternative interventions as defined by the FSA code for businesses

that were 'broadly compliant';

- We investigated food and food establishments complaints and outbreaks and incidents of food related illness;
- We continued to address any gaps in team competence as identified in the competency framework assessments e.g. imported foods;

6.4 Customer Satisfaction Survey

Customer satisfaction surveys for 2020/21 were halted due to huge reduction in inspection work and the redirection of staff to COVID-19 advice, enforcement and infection control work.

6.5 Key Issues for 2021/22

The following areas of service development have been identified for 2021/22:

- A planned programme of food safety interventions in accordance with the FSA COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan: guidance and advice to local authorities for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 March 2023;
- Continued maintenance of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme;
- To use intelligence and to target work towards businesses with low FHRS scores (2 or less);
- To inspect the 200 new businesses that register each year;
- To target COVID-19 controls and food safety at the increasing number of events and festivals through the Safer Communities Events Group;
- The improvement of self-help information and advice on food safety to food businesses and consumers.
- Investigation of food and food establishments complaints, outbreaks and incidents of food related illness in accordance with local protocol;
- To address any gaps in team competence as identified in the competency framework assessments;
- To move to a new software supplier to administer the food safety service by summer 2022;
- Engagement with the implementation of local government in North Yorkshire scheduled for 2023.

7.0 Glossary Of Terms

Approved Establishments

Establishments that require specific approval from the local authority under Regulation EC 853/2004. These are primarily establishments that manufacture food for sale to retailers and wholesalers, not to the final consumer.

Authorised officer

An officer authorised by the local authority with the necessary qualifications and experience making them competent to deliver official controls for food safety. The officer will undertake assessments of compliance and use enforcement tools in accordance with the law and local policy.

'Broadly Compliant'

"Broadly compliant", in respect of food hygiene, is defined as a food business that has an intervention rating score of not more than 10 points under each of the following three parts of Annex 5 of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice:

- Level of (Current) Compliance – Hygiene;
- Level of (Current) Compliance – Structure; and
- Confidence in Management

Service Enforcement File

A manual, produced in consultation with the Council's Legal Services, to provide legal guidance to Officers, particularly with respect to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. The guidance is practical in nature and includes standard forms and procedures.

Duty Holder

The individual or corporate body with the primary responsibility for meeting the legal requirements in the area under consideration.

Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice

See also 'Hygiene Improvement Notice'. Notice served by an Authorised Officer of the Safer Communities Service of Harrogate Borough Council where there is an imminent risk to health because of a serious and acute hygiene problem.

Interventions

These are activities that are designed to monitor, support and increase food law compliance within a food establishment. They include, but are not restricted to, monitoring, surveillance, verification, audit, inspection, and sampling and analysis.

In addition, interventions may also include other activities that are effective in supporting food businesses to achieve compliance with food law, such as the provision of targeted education and advice that takes place at food establishments, or information and intelligence gathering.

Hygiene Improvement Notice

See also 'Emergency Prohibition Notice'. Notice served by an Authorised Officer of the Safer Communities Service of Harrogate Borough Council to secure a necessary improvement within a given time period.

LGR

Stands for 'Local Government Regulation'. A central Government agency that has the responsibility of raising standards and promoting consistency amongst food safety enforcement bodies.

North Yorkshire Chief Environmental Health Officers (NYCEHO) Food Safety Management System

A food service management system developed the 8 local authorities in North Yorkshire to ensure consistency of food safety enforcement within the region and to meet peer review requirements.

Portfolio Holder

Elected Councillor with specific responsibility for food safety matters.

Primary Authority Scheme

A scheme introduced under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 to ensure consistency of enforcement against National Companies. Requires an LA/business entering into a contractual agreement.

Safer Food Better Business

An established food safety management system for businesses developed by the FSA in England in 2005, to assist small businesses with compliance.

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is a national public information service where you can find the official local authority hygiene ratings for food businesses. It is an invaluable tool to help improve levels of compliance with food safety legislation in a cost effective and efficient manner. It can be accessed at the following web address:

<http://ratings.food.gov.uk/>

Simple Caution

A documented acceptance of guilt by the offender as an alternative to an outright prosecution, where the latter could be seen as harsh (in terms of adverse publicity or the likely fine) for a variety of reasons.

Stakeholder

A person or body, both within the community or the organisation in question, who either uses, or is affected by, or has some interest in, the service in question.