

## **ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 11 JUNE 2020**

### **FOOD AND SAFETY SERVICE UPDATE**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the work of the Food and Safety during the 2019 – 2020 year. The key achievements of the team are illustrated and explained in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.2 The proposed work plan for the forthcoming year is set out in Appendix 2. This work plan is subject to change based on the impact that the coronavirus pandemic is having on workplaces. Any changes to the work undertaken will be in line with guidance from the Food Standards Agency, Central Government and other relevant bodies.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The role of the Food and Safety Service is primarily to protect and improve public health across the New Forest. The team works to ensure that all food prepared and sold from local establishments is safe to eat. This is achieved by carrying out a programme of interventions at food businesses, sampling and responding to service requests.
- 2.2 The work is supplemented by the:
  - Investigation of complaints concerning food safety and handling practices across the full range of food establishments;
  - Providing food safety advice and support to new and existing food businesses, including help using the Food Standards Agency's "Safer Food, Better Business" food safety management system;
  - Investigation of suspected and confirmed food poisoning cases and outbreaks, and other notified infectious disease cases;
  - Actioning Food Alerts issued by Food Standards Agency;
  - Acting as Primary Authority to food businesses and manufacturers within the District and issuing Health Certificates for those who export foodstuffs;
  - Removing unfit food from the food chain by seizure, detention or voluntary surrender.
- 2.3 The team is also responsible for the enforcement of workplace health and safety in a range of business sectors across the district, licensing of caravan sites and animal welfare establishments, and registration and inspection of businesses undertaking skin piercing activities.
- 2.4 The Food and Safety Team provide a comprehensive food safety service which benefits consumers and the business community and has a considered balance between investigation, advice, education and enforcement.

#### **3. ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019-2020**

- 3.1 The achievements in the 2019 – 2020 year are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.2 The team were on track to complete 99% of the high risk inspections during the year, however due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on food businesses, only 93%

could be completed. These outstanding inspections will be prioritised once the businesses are operating again.

- 3.3 A total of 95% of all other programmed inspections were completed and resources were targeted on the poor performing businesses and those carrying out highest risk activities.
- 3.4 The National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is continuing to encourage food businesses to improve their standards and over 97% of food premises in the District are now rated as 3 (generally satisfactory) or better.
- 3.5 The team investigated approximately 1500 service requests in 2019 – 2020 relating to complaints about food businesses, notifications of infectious diseases and food poisoning, workplace accidents and requests for advice from businesses and residents. Officers take a staged approach to enforcement and work to resolve issues informally wherever possible.
- 3.6 In addition to completing the programmed inspections for food safety, health and safety and caravan sites, a large number of visits involved offering advice and guidance to new businesses.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The attached report details the work undertaken by the Food and Safety Team in 2019 – 2020 to fulfil their statutory functions. The team's activities focus on the protection of public health, safety and welfare through the provision of advice, guidance and the regulation of those businesses which pose the greatest risk. and providing information to consumers in order that they can make informed choices on where to eat.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 That the panel reviews the performance of the food and safety service over the past year as set out in the Service Review Report (Appendix 1) and agrees the proposed work plan for the forthcoming year (Appendix 2).

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