

# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

14 SEPTEMBER 2021

## COVID 19 – RECOVERY PLAN FOR THE FOOD SAFETY SERVICE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides Members of the Community, Partnerships and Wellbeing Panel with information on how the Food and Safety Service will deliver food law controls over this financial year.
- 1.2 The action plan is in line with the Food Standards Agency - Covid 19 Recovery Plan and takes a risk-based approach that ensures our resources are targeted where they will have greatest value to protect and improve the public's health in the New Forest.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 During the coronavirus pandemic, officers in the Food and Safety Team have worked hard with sustained commitment to protecting the public's health by safeguarding the community and controlling the spread of the disease.
- 2.2 The impact of the pandemic resulted in resources being diverted from food law controls to address the wider unprecedented challenges and risks posed and Members have received presentations at previous meetings on the work undertaken by the Service over the past 18 months.
- 2.3 The Government moved to step 4 of the roadmap on 19 July 2021, a new phase of continued caution whilst managing the risks of Covid 19. Many of the legal restrictions imposed have now been lifted and businesses are operating with controls in place to mitigate risks as the country starts to live with Covid.
- 2.4 It is important now that the focus is progressively shifted back to the delivery of food law regulatory controls, to ensure business compliance with food law requirements and that food prepared and sold from local establishments is safe to consume.

### 3. THE ACTION PLAN FOR FOOD SAFETY IN 2021/22.

- 3.1 The action plan attached in **Appendix 1** illustrates the priorities for the Food and Safety Team over the next few months and closely follows the framework set out by the Food Standards Agency.
- 3.2 The action plan initially prioritises critical enforcement work, ensuring controls are in place to support trade and enable export, as well as the triage and inspection of new, previously uninspected food businesses. The second phase of the action plan ensures that existing businesses receive onsite inspections on the basis of risk, focussing on the poor performing businesses in the first instance.

3.3 The Food Standards Agency will be monitoring Local Authorities delivery against the expectations and timelines set out within the plan and whilst they appreciate delivery may be challenging, they emphasise the importance of commitment to the plan.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

4.1 This report and the food safety action plan attached as Appendix 1 details the strategy the service will take to deliver food controls and safeguard the health of residents in the New Forest. This will be achieved by targeting resources where there is greatest risk to consumers.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 That the panel supports the proposed work plan for the forthcoming year.

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