



Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

**West Suffolk**  
working together

# **West Suffolk Food Safety Service Plan 2017/18**

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## **Preface**

The Food Standard Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement sets out what the FSA expects from local authorities in their delivery of official controls on food law including within service plans.

The Food Law Code of Practice states that each Competent Authority must have an up-to-date, documented Food Service Plan which is readily available to food business operators and consumers. The Plan must be subject to regular review and clearly state the period of time during which the Plan has effect.

The Plan must cover all areas of food law that the Competent Authority has a duty to enforce and set out how the authority intends to deliver Official Controls within its area. The Plan must include imported food responsibilities and the control arrangements in place. The Plan must include reference to the authority's approach to enforcement including its Alternative Enforcement Strategy for dealing with those premises rated as low risk under the Food Establishment Intervention Rating Scheme set.

Working together, Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council have developed this document with due regard to all available regulations, conditions, codes of practice, statutory guidance and practical experience of legislation. Should anything in future publications, legislative/regulatory changes or case law impact upon the content of this service plan document, then it will be taken into account and the document may be updated at a later stage and with due consideration to the resource implications for the Regulating Food Authority.

Since 2011 the West Suffolk councils have adopted several joint policies and strategies and also a shared constitution. This allows the councils to maintain their own local identity where appropriate, whilst simplifying how meetings are conducted, decisions are made, and decision-makers are held to account. The constitution is considered the foundation of every council and the shared document ensures there is a consistent decision-making process throughout all areas of both councils.

Throughout this service plan the term "West Suffolk Councils" and "The Team" should be read as jointly applying to both Councils' Food Authority functions, i.e. Forest Heath District Council and St. Edmundsbury Borough Council. Where the Statement applies to only one of the Councils, it will be stated which one.

This Food Safety Service Plan is meant to be read in conjunction with the Planning and Regulatory Services Business Plan for 2017/18, an extract of which is presented at Appendix 1.

For further information please refer to:

[www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)

[www.westsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk)

If you require this information in another format or language, please phone 01284 757400 or email [food&safety@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:food&safety@westsuffolk.gov.uk) to discuss your need.

## **1.0 VISION, PURPOSE, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### 1.1 Service Vision and Purpose

The Food Safety function is delivered by the Commercial Environmental Health Team, located within the Environmental Health Service in the Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate.

**To protect public health and safety and the environment, by carrying out programmed and reactive interventions, investigations and research to detect, eliminate and/or control hazards by applying fair, transparent and proportionate enforcement.**

### 1.2 Range of functions and activities

The range of food safety functions undertaken by the Commercial Environmental Health Team are varied and include the following:

- Programmed interventions/inspections and revisits in food premises for which the West Suffolk councils are the enforcing authority;
- Investigation of complaints concerning food, the full range of food establishments, and food handling practices;
- Providing food safety advice and support to new and existing food business operators, including help by promoting the Food Standards Agency's "Safer Food, Better Business" food safety management system;
- Food sampling in accordance with the programme prepared by the Public Health England and the Eastern Region Food Sampling Group;
- Investigation of suspected and confirmed food poisoning cases and outbreaks, and other notified infectious disease cases;
- Action in respect of Food Alerts issued by Food Standards Agency;
- Acting as "Originating Authority" to food manufacturers and producers within West Suffolk and issuing Health Certificates for those who export foodstuffs;
- Ensuring the removal of unfit food from the food chain by seizure, detention or voluntary surrender;
- Consultees for food safety guidance and policies, planning applications, etc.;
- Food Safety Promotional and Educational Campaigns;
- Health Development in areas related to the functions above, e.g. participation in the Eat Out Eat Well award scheme;
- Checks on inland imported food control at retail, catering and other establishments;
- Registration of all food establishments, including Approvals where appropriate.

### 1.3 Customers

Our customers are varied, however they mainly include the following:

- All members of the public residing in or visiting West Suffolk;
- Food establishments for which we are the responsible enforcing food authority;
- Public Health England;
- Food Standards Agency;
- Local Authorities;

- Trading Standards;
- Port Health;
- Internal Services.

#### 1.4 Aims and Objectives

In conjunction with the Planning and Regulatory Services Business Plan 2017-18, the West Suffolk councils have responsibilities as Food Authorities.

Our aims are:

- “To work with businesses and consumers to promote and secure high standards of food safety, and minimise risks to the health of residents and visitors, by ensuring that all food processes, premises and food handlers within West Suffolk maintain good levels of hygiene.”
- “To seek to continually improve health, safety and welfare standards and to reduce health inequalities of all individuals working in and visiting places of work within the district.”
- “The protection of public health and safety by carrying out targeted inspections (interventions), enquiries, investigations and research to detect, eliminate and/or control hazards by applying fair, proportionate and transparent enforcement.”

These aims are supported by a number of objectives:

1. Carry out an annual planned programme of food hygiene inspections in accordance with Food Standards Agency framework guidance, codes of practice and relevant statutory requirements.
2. Investigate food and food premises complaints and take appropriate action in accordance with our service standards, procedures and national guidance.
3. Inform businesses of their legal obligations under relevant legislation.
4. Carry out routine microbiological sampling in accordance with national guidance and participate in local, regional and nationally coordinated surveys.
5. Investigate and monitor reports of infections and notifiable diseases in partnership with Public Health England.
6. Respond to food alerts issued by the Food Standards Agency in accordance with local and national guidance.
7. Act as originating authority for certain food businesses and investigate or respond to any enquiries made by other authorities or agencies.

8. Provide advice, assistance, training and development opportunities to both businesses and consumers. Help businesses improve their standards by promoting best practice, self-regulation and enhancing the competence skills of employees.
9. Promote food safety and, where appropriate, participate in local and national campaigns.
10. Provide appropriate training and development opportunities for staff to ensure an appropriate level of competence.
11. Work in partnership with other agencies to help secure and promote good food hygiene.
12. Ensure the work of the Service conforms to West Suffolk Councils policies.

### 1.5 Links to the Strategic Plan

West Suffolk's Strategic Plan sets out what both councils aim to achieve together, with our partners, local businesses, communities and residents. This means focusing our efforts and resources in the areas that are the biggest priorities for West Suffolk.

Our strategic priorities are:

- Increased opportunities for economic growth;
- Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active;
- Homes for our communities.

We review our Strategic Plan regularly in order to ensure that it remains relevant and is kept up to date. Progress towards delivery of our Strategic Plan is set out in the West Suffolk annual report.

More information on the Strategic Plan can be found on our website:

[http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Policies\\_Strategies\\_and\\_Plans/strategic\\_plan.cfm](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Policies_Strategies_and_Plans/strategic_plan.cfm)

### 1.6 Enforcement Policy

Forest Heath District Council and St. Edmundsbury Borough Council currently have separate written Enforcement Policies. Work is underway to produce a Joint West Suffolk Council's Enforcement Policy, providing a framework for all of the regulatory services delivered by the Councils, including the food safety service.

The policy will reflect recent changes brought about by the Regulators Code which establishes how non-economic regulators should interact with those they are regulating. The new Code requires regulators to:

- Carry out their activities in a transparent way that helps those they regulate to comply and grow;
- Design simple and straightforward ways to engage with and hear the views of those they regulate;

- Base their regulatory activities on risk and share information about compliance and risk; and
- Ensure clear information, guidance and advice is available to help those they regulate meet their responsibilities.

Officers, including those with responsibility for the enforcement of food and health and safety laws, must have regard to the Enforcement Policy when making enforcement decisions.

## 2.0 **SERVICE DELIVERY**

### 2.1 Demands on the Food Safety Service

There are 1,864 food establishments approved/registered under food safety legislation in West Suffolk. A profile of registered/approved food establishments classified in accordance with the FSA's main use codes is given in Table 1.

**Table 1 - Profiles of registered/approved food establishments in Forest Heath and St. Edmundsbury. Source: M3 Database 04/05/2017**

<b>FSA Category</b>	<b>Number of establishments</b>
<b>Primary producers</b>	43
<b>Manufactures/Processors</b>	78
<b>Importers/Exporters</b>	4
<b>Distributors/Transporters</b>	55
<b>Retailers</b>	357
<b>Restaurants and Caterers</b>	1327
<b>TOTAL</b>	1864

The number of food establishments approved/conditionally approved under EU Regulation 853/2004 is:

Forest Heath: 7 (2016 = 8)

St. Edmundsbury: 7 (2016 = 10)

Source: M3 database 04/05/2017

The West Suffolk councils have approved establishments that produce meat, fish, dairy and egg products.

West Suffolk attracts many tourists and visitors due to the range of things to do, from outdoor family fun and historical events to live music. Events and activities such as the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre, Newmarket Races, and Forest Live see the Commercial Environmental Health (CEH) Team working with the event organisers and others during the planning and delivery of their events to ensure that the food stored, prepared and served is safe to eat and complies with food safety laws.

The CEH Team perform out-of-hours inspections where this is necessary, e.g. some large outdoor events and Sunday/farmers' markets. Some food businesses that are open for business at night, at weekends or in the early hours of the morning, are identified for occasional inspection at these times.

There are a large number of food businesses associated with and/or operated by the ethnic minorities within the districts - including Chinese/Cantonese, South Asian, Turkish, Greek, Thai, Portuguese and Polish. The majority of food businesses run by these groups are takeaways, restaurants and retail shops. The CEH Team makes use of translated information made freely available by the FSA, e.g. advisory leaflets. Additional translation services may be used where there is a legal requirement to do so, where it is necessary to help ensure that Food Business Operators understand where action needs to be taken to protect against serious risk to public health, or to assist in efficient and effective service delivery. These additional translation services are rarely needed as part of our routine work.

Letters sent to food business operators or customers known to have a poor understanding of English may include sentences in appropriate languages/alphabets advising the recipient of the legal importance of the letter and the need to obtain a full translation.

Several food businesses cater specifically for people who are vulnerable e.g. as a result of age or disability. This is taken into account by appropriate risk scoring criteria used in the risk rating of such premises to determine interventions and inspection frequencies.

The CEH team also actively support the Bury St. Edmunds Christmas Fayre and other events, with the whole CEH team carrying out high-profile interventions at relevant stalls each year.

## 2.2 Interventions at Food Establishments

The CEH Team aim to ensure that food in the West Suffolk area is fit for human consumption, and that outbreaks of food poisoning and other infectious diseases are controlled. To achieve this, inspections and interventions at food establishments are carried out using a risk-based approach, in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice. Specialist computer software is used to record all food business establishments. These records are updated daily and are used to administer the programme of risk-based inspections and other interventions.

The Food Law Code of Practice requires that all food establishments should receive an initial inspection. This should normally take place within 28 days of registration or from when the Authority becomes aware that the establishment is in operation. This reflects the importance of ensuring new food establishments are complying with food law.

Food establishments are risk-rated using criteria set out in the Food Law Code of Practice. Establishments receive a risk rating according to:

- the nature of their business, e.g. the risk associated with the type of food handled, processing methods, number and vulnerability of customers; and
- the standard of food safety achieved, i.e. compliance with food safety law.

Establishments may be rated as higher risk either because of the high-risk nature of the food and processing methods at their business, because of the low standards of food safety, or a combination of both. Establishments receive a risk rating ranging from A (highest risk) to E (lowest risk). Unrated establishments include new businesses that are waiting for an inspection to be carried out. Some establishments are outside the risk-based intervention and inspection programme, such as primary producers. The procedure for handling food registrations, including the initial action to be taken where businesses should be registered but are not, is set down in working procedures.

Profiles of the food establishments by risk are shown below in table 2.

**Table 2 - Profiles of food establishments according to risk. Source: M3 database 04/05/2017**

<b>Risk Category:</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Unrated*</b>
<b>Number:</b>	7	38	238	648	708	230

\*Unrated consist of either new premises awaiting inspection, outside the inspection programme, or premises requiring database recoding e.g. as a non-food premises.

The minimum intervention frequency as required by the Food Law Code of Practice, and the estimated time per intervention for each risk category, are set out below in table 3.

It should be noted that all estimated times in the following sections are based on our previous experience.

The range of available interventions for food establishments includes inspections, monitoring, surveillance, verification, audit, sampling, education, advice, coaching, information and intelligence gathering. The regulatory burden is minimised by selecting the most appropriate intervention for the risk category of the establishment. Alternative enforcement strategies include the use of questionnaires for lower risk category E food business establishments.

**Table 3 – Food Law Code of Practice minimum intervention frequency and locally estimated time per intervention for each risk category.**

Category	Minimum intervention frequency	Estimated time per intervention (hours)
A	6 months	6
B	12 months	6
C	18 months	5
D	24 months	3
E	Alternative enforcement every 3 years	2
Unrated / Uncategorised	-	2

The numbers of food interventions due (including outstanding) for 2017/18 by risk category are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4 - Number of food interventions due (including outstanding) 2017/18 (2016/17).**

Risk Category	Number Due 2016/17	Estimated Time to complete (Hours)
A	7 (6-monthly inspection) (4 (6-monthly inspection))	84 (48)
B	35 (48)	210 (288)
C	161 (155)	805 (775)
D	394 (328)	1182 (984)
E	422 (309)	844 (618)
Uncategorised	18 (13)	36 (26)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1037 (857)</b>	<b>3161 (2739)</b>

The food interventions at predominantly lower risk premises that were not completed in 2016/17 will be carried forward into 2017/18 and are shown below in table 5.

**Table 5 - Number of food interventions being carried forward into 2017/18 (Figures included in Table 4 above).**

Risk Category	Outstanding	Estimated Time to complete (Hours)
A	0 (0)	Included in Table 5
B	0 (0)	
C	13 (12)	
D	90 (33)	
E	191 (88)	
Uncategorised	9 (3)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>303 (136)</b>	

Missed lower-risk inspections, arising as a result of access issues such as infrequent and erratic trading or because the team resources were focused on higher-risk premises during a period of staff shortages, will be picked up during 2017/18.

Interventions are undertaken following documented procedures. The date of a primary inspection may be brought forward, e.g. in response to a complaint, a new food registration, a material change in the business, receipt of information from the FSA, an outbreak, or being a seasonal business that may be closed at the time of the next date due. Other interventions are carried out at other times, e.g. in response to customer complaints, alleged cases of food poisoning, food hazard warnings, sampling, revisits and requests for advice.

Most food businesses that supply food direct to the public receive a rating under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS). These ratings range from **0** (urgent improvement necessary) to **5** (very good). Businesses that receive a rating of 0, 1 or 2 have a poor level of compliance with food safety and hygiene law.

Businesses that are broadly compliant with these laws will receive at least a rating of **3** (satisfactory) and currently over 97% in West Suffolk are rated **3-5**. Businesses that have a good level of compliance with food safety law will receive the top rating of **5**.

Interventions will be undertaken more frequently for poorly compliant businesses as their risk-rating is reviewed. These interventions aim to achieve better and sustained compliance rates at poorly compliant food businesses. Revisits of poorly compliant businesses due in 2017/18 will be carried out as necessary.

The recent changes to the Food Law Code of Practice have enabled local authorities to charge for FHRS Re-Scores, though there is currently no requirement to introduce a charge. The councils are currently undertaking research to determine whether to charge for FHRS Re-Scores, and what amount to charge should this be brought in. There are numerous costs/benefits to be considered and these are being discussed at the Suffolk Food Liaison Group meetings.

It is expected that the impending mandatory display of FHRS stickers by businesses will lead to a significant increase in the use of the FHRS Re-Score option by businesses. This would impact on the staff resources currently available within the CEH Team which will be reviewed accordingly.

The Trading Standards Department of Suffolk County Council has responsibility for food standards matters. Liaison arrangements are in place through the Suffolk Food Liaison Group to develop joint work plans and to help ensure that matters of joint interest, such as food labelling, imported food, BSE controls, animal by-products, avian influenza and genetically modified foods are discussed. Joint visits with Trading Standards Officers are made where appropriate. Copies of all food registrations received are forwarded to Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards Department.

### 2.3 Food hygiene practices/hygiene of premises complaints

Officers investigate food complaints in accordance with documented procedures and, where necessary, liaise with Primary, Originating and Home Authorities during the course of investigations. In determining an appropriate course of action, the CEH Team take into consideration any reports received from the Primary, Home or Originating Authorities, and the food business identified as the cause of the complaint, and will have regard to the Councils' Enforcement Policy.

**Table 6 - Food Hygiene Complaints 2016/7 (2015/16)**

<b>Complaint Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Estimated Time per Task</b>	<b>Estimated Time to complete (Hours)</b>
Unsatisfactory Practices	44 (51)	6	264 (306)
Unsatisfactory Premises	38 (42)	6	228 (252)
Food Complaint (Biological)	2 (6)	6	12 (36)
Food Complaint (Foreign Body)	14 (15)	6	84 (90)
Food Complaint (Labelling)	0 (1)	5	0 (5)
Food Complaint (Other)	76 (51)	5	380 (255)
Food Complaint (Chemical)	1 (1)	4	4 (4)
Food Complaint (Undercooked)	9 (4)	6	54 (24)
<b>Total</b>	<b>184 (156)</b>		<b>1026 (974)</b>

The increased number of complaints received may be due to improved ease of reporting incidents, for example via the FSA website, or the raising of the general public's food safety awareness.

### 2.4 Food Sampling Policy

Microbiological food sampling makes an important contribution in protecting the general public and discharging the Councils responsibility in food law enforcement. Microbiological food sampling is used as part of a planned approach to gather information about the microbiological quality, and possible presence of harmful microorganisms, in particular foods which are produced and/or sold locally. Based on this information appropriate action can be taken to protect the consumers.

The councils are committed to providing the resources necessary to carry out a sampling programme. Environmental Health Officers are responsible for undertaking the food sampling functions. The councils have a food sampling programme for microbiological purposes. The food sampling is prioritised to concentrate upon one or more of the following criteria:

- foods which are produced within the Councils' districts;
- the risk ratings of the premises; and
- any local, regional or national coordinated sampling surveys or programmes.

The majority of food samples, including hygiene swabs, are taken informally,

for the purpose of monitoring, surveillance and intelligence gathering. Formal samples will be taken where enforcement action is anticipated and these samples will be taken in full compliance with the legislation, relevant Code of Practice and consideration of the Councils' Compliance and Enforcement Policy.

Official laboratories as designated by the FSA will be used for samples obtained during the sampling programme. For West Suffolk Councils the designated laboratory is the Public Health England Laboratory at Collindale, London. Other samples will be sent to the Council's Public Analyst, Public Analyst Scientific Services Limited.

Samples will be recorded using the Northgate M3 database. The FSA's UK Food Surveillance system (UKFSS) may be used to record samples in the future.

Samples may be taken during manufacturing/production processes for the purposes of ensuring food safety and establishing the effectiveness of the critical controls in the process. The manufacturer will be notified of the result of any such sample analysis or examination.

The Councils do not currently act as a Home Authority or Primary Authority for any food business. Where sampling identifies a problem with food manufactured outside the districts, the relevant primary, home or originating authority will be notified and a copy of the certificate of analysis or examination will be forwarded to them.

Food sampling will not normally be undertaken as a constituent part of food safety inspections. It may take place if, during the inspection, the authorised officer identifies a particular problem that needs further investigation.

Samples of food received as a food complaint may require microbiological examination, chemical analysis or expert identification.

Where a particular premises or food produced in the districts is implicated with a case, or cases, of foodborne disease, food samples may be taken and submitted for examination, for the purpose of identifying any likely source of infection, and controlling any risk to public health. These samples are likely to be formally taken and examined.

Food samples may be taken and submitted as part of a special investigation, e.g. in response to a food hazard warning or other intelligence received about potential food safety and quality issues.

**Table 7 - Food Samples 2016/17 against anticipated in 2017/18:**

	<b>Number of Samples</b>	<b>Estimated Time Per Sample</b>	<b>Total Time (Hrs)</b>
Actual 2016/2017	42	2.5	105
Anticipated 2017/2018	100	2.5	250

2.5 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

The CEH Team will assess and respond accordingly to reports of communicable diseases, including food-associated illness. The investigation of outbreaks of food poisoning is conducted in liaison with the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC), having regard to the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Joint Communicable Disease Incident/Outbreak Management Plan. Information relating to certain infections will be collected as a matter of urgency and passed to the Anglia Health Protection Team, Public Health England, in accordance with the East of England Standard Approach to Investigating Gastro-Intestinal Disease Cases.

The CEH Team response to a report of communicable disease, including food-associated illness, is undertaken following documented procedures.

**Table 8 - Gastrointestinal disease cases notifications 2016/17 against anticipated in 2017/18:**

	<b>Number of Reported Cases (Individuals)</b>	<b>Time Per Case (average)</b>	<b>Total Time (Hrs)</b>
Actual 2016/2017	145	2	290
Anticipated 2017/2018	150	2	300

Joint civil contingency and emergency stand-by arrangements exist to respond to suspected or confirmed outbreaks of infectious disease or food poisoning with either the potential to cause serious harm or death to any person, or debilitating illness or disease to significant numbers of people, or illness or disease to particularly vulnerable populations.

2.6 Food Safety Incidents

Arrangements are in place to receive FSA Food Alerts for Action and take specified action on behalf of consumers.

During 2016/17, 91 food alerts were notified by the FSA. Very few of these required formal action, i.e. dedicated visits to local food establishments. All food alerts are logged and recorded on our specialist database.

**Table 9 - Food Alerts Requiring Action 2016/17 against anticipated in 2017/18:**

	<b>Number of Alerts requiring local action</b>	<b>Time Per Case (average)</b>	<b>Total Time (Hrs)</b>
Actual 2016/2017	3	4	12
Anticipated 2017/2018	3	4	12

## 2.7 Primary Authority and Home Authority Schemes

The Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 introduced into law the principle of the Primary Authority (PA). All local authorities are required, by law, when considering enforcement action against a business with multiple outlets, to follow advice agreed between the business and its PA. The purpose of these requirements is to achieve greater consistency in enforcement action in large, multi-outlet businesses.

The CEH Team supports the PA and Home Authority (HA) schemes. Where PA partnerships are registered with the Regulatory Delivery (formerly the BRDO), an officer will contact the PA to ensure that proposed actions are not contrary to appropriate advice that the PA has previously issued.

## 2.8 Advice to Business

The CEH Team are highly successful at supporting businesses and helping them to grow and become a success. The team provides advice to businesses, for example:

- the promotion of information guidance notes to assist businesses comply with the law and good food hygiene practices;
- directing enquiries to relevant sources of competent and reliable advice, e.g. FSA website;
- distribution of FSA and other guidance to businesses relating to specific and topical issues;
- provision of advice to businesses during inspections;
- mailshots; and
- responding to requests for advice from businesses and members of the public.

**Table 10 - Requests for Advice 2016/17 against anticipated in 2017/18:**  
Source: M3 database 05/05/2017

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Time Per Case (average)</b>	<b>Total Time (Hrs)</b>
Actual 2016/2017	248	4.5	1116
Anticipated 2017/2018	275	4.5	1237.5

Many of these enquiries and advice requests take time for the officers to research and compile the advice, with some requiring visits to premises and businesses. For example, people seeking advice about the setting up a small business from home, e.g. home catering, whilst these tend to be low-risk activities they can involve some time in tailoring appropriate and specific advice.

The CEH Team contributes updates to the councils' website pages. These offer a range of information on setting up a new business, Safer Food Better Business, commonly used forms to download, how to make complaints or make an enquiry, general food safety information and a link to the FSA's website for more information.

We recognise the importance of social media to a highly effective means to improve awareness and extend our reach and use Facebook and Twitter.

## 2.9 Better Business for All

Supported by Regulator Delivery (RD) within the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), we are working with other Suffolk regulatory services and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), covering Norfolk and Suffolk, to explore developing a stronger link to the LEP in order to improve the effective and efficient delivery of regulatory services. The core aims of the Better Business for All initiative are to:

- Raise the profile of the regulatory services provided by local authorities;
- Improve the co-ordination of information flows between the various regulators;
- Develop a greater understanding of what businesses need from local regulators;
- Improve stakeholder access to regulatory information and guidance.

## 2.10 Liaison with other Organisations

The CEH Team has extensive liaison in place with a wide range of other organisations. For food safety matters these include:

- Food Standards Agency;
- Suffolk Food Liaison Group;
- Eastern Region Sampling Group;
- CCDC and the Anglia Health Protection Team, Anglia and Essex Public Health England Centre;
- DEFRA;
- Immigration Compliance and Enforcement Team - East of England (Home Office);
- West Suffolk Council's Planning and Building Control teams (to review relevant applications);
- Trading Standards/Environmental Health Departments nationally as required;
- Care Quality Commission;
- Suffolk Adult Safeguarding Board; and

- Suffolk Regulatory Services and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Working Group.

### 2.11 Food Safety Promotion

The CEH team promotes food safety using materials made available by the FSA that are intended for businesses or the public. Examples include:

- helping business operators meet regulations on food hygiene through promoting and supporting the FSA's Safer Food
- Better Business packs, and
- the use of FSA materials during Food Safety Week.

We support the annual Crucial Crew events promoting food safety messages to year 10 school children. Nearly 900 children attended the July 2016 Crucial Crew event in Bury St. Edmunds, with over 450 children attending the Mildenhall Crucial Crew event held in February 2017.

### 2.12 Healthy eating – Eat Out Eat Well

The CEH Team promote the Suffolk Eat Out Eat Well (EOEW) award scheme, encouraging businesses to develop and promote healthier options in their menu's and premises. The team achieve this by promoting the EOEW scheme during routine inspections and other visits, providing information and advice to interested groups and businesses, and by the publication and promotion of EOEW award successes through their social media and corporate media outlets.

By 31 March 2017 West Suffolk Councils had awarded 32 EOEW awards (incorporating 2 Bronze, 14 Silver and 16 Gold). The total number of awards issued in Suffolk was 77.

West Suffolk has set itself an ambitious target to award its 50<sup>th</sup> EOEW award at the end of August 2017 and will be looking to maximise publicity for this.

## 3.0 **RESOURCES**

### 3.1 Financial Allocation

Details of budgetary provision are included as annual Corporate budgets, published annually on our website.

The Councils maintain their own legal services to provide support to service areas. There is also financial provision made to enable the use of external legal services, where appropriate.

### 3.2 Staffing Allocation

The CEH Team consists of (Full Time Equivalent FTE):

Commercial Environmental Health Team Leader	1.0 FTE;
Environmental Health Officers	3.2 FTE;
Technical Officer	1.0 FTE.

The Council's current staff allocation is considered sufficient to its responsibilities within the service plan. Additional unplanned work may require reprioritisation within the plan in the event of its occurrence.

The Commercial Environmental Health Team Leader is the Lead Officer for food hygiene and food safety matters, in accordance with the Food Safety Act Food Law Code of Practice.

In addition to the food safety work undertaken by the CEH team, the officers also carry out many other statutory and discretionary duties, including accident investigations, health and safety regulation and enforcement, managing the West Suffolk Safety Advisory Group, active participation in other groups such as the Mid-Anglia Environment Safety and Health Group, skin piercing registration and regulation, smoke free regulation and enforcement.

These additional duties, and those within this Food Safety Service Plan are carried out by a professional team of Environmental Health Officers who have the qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience to undertake such a wide variety of activities.

The Technical Officer post, created in September 2016, is a developmental one. The current Technical Officer has enrolled on a Post-Graduate course at Birmingham University, starting in September 2017, which will enable them to carry out the full range of food safety interventions and enforcement. This course will take two years to complete, with the officer gaining practical experience and training during this period as they carry out their usual duties.

### 3.3 Staff Development Plan

The councils have a single performance review scheme. As part of the scheme, officers formally discuss and agree individual performance targets and training/personal development plans with their line manager every 12 months. Progress with the plan is reviewed periodically so any issues can be raised and addressed.

Relevant training areas are identified to ensure the requirements for authorised officers in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice are met. The FSA's Authorised Officer Competency Assessment form is used to help identify training and development needs.

The Team ensures that all enforcement officers are appropriately qualified and receive regular training to maintain and improve their level of competency. All officers are expected to have access to the equivalent of at least 10 hours update training, which is monitored through the team's internal Service Plan. A mixture of both internal and external training is provided for officers to achieve this aim. The Team will take advantage of opportunities for low cost training offered by the Food Standards Agency.

## 4.0 **QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

### 4.1 Quality Assessment

The Team has a range of documented procedures which are subject to monitoring and review. In 2015/16 a countywide common procedure template, aligned to the 2015 Food Law Code of Practice, was designed. The documented procedures are due to be reviewed during 2017/18 to reflect changes in the 2017 Food Law Code of Practice and the FHRS brand standard.

### 4.2 Inter Authority Audits and Peer Review

The principle of inter authority audits (IAA) is fully supported. The CEH Team has previously undertaken inter-authority inspection and quality monitoring, with some benchmarking against our similar neighbouring authorities of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. Peer review also takes place amongst the team, e.g. discussions during team meetings and joint visits.

### 4.3 Internal Monitoring Arrangements

The CEH Team is implementing the following arrangements to assist in assessing and improving the quality of the work carried out:

- reviewing the documented work procedures;
- checking samples of post-inspection reports, letters and notices;
- undertaking a number of shadow-inspections or follow-up visits;
- file reviews during team meetings;
- performance reviews during team meetings based on the Food Safety Service Plan and the Environmental Health Service Plan; and
- one-to-one meetings.

The contents of statutory notices will be discussed and agreed with the CEH Team Leader or other colleagues before service, where appropriate.

### 4.4 Benchmarking

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) publishes on their website the food safety enforcement activity carried out by all local authorities in the UK. This information is collated from the Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS) statistical returns provided by local authorities and provides a useful tool for benchmarking performance with other local authorities. The FSA also reports this performance data to Government and Europe.

Monitoring performance against the standards set out in the West Suffolk Councils Food Safety Service Plan will be via management meetings and the corporate Balanced Scorecard.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Extract from the Planning & Regulatory Services Business Plan 2017-18

Action / objective	Link to strategic priority	Funding	Timing	Monitoring	Lead Officer and Portfolio Holder(s)
Through appropriate interventions, advice and enforcement, ensure that all food establishments comply with food safety requirements	Families and communities that are healthy and active	Within existing revenue budget	2017/18	Service/Directorate Balanced Scorecard	Richard Smith/ Councillors Pugh & Stanbury
Improve the understanding and knowledge of good food hygiene and safe working practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice to businesses</li> <li>• Use of Facebook</li> <li>• Eat Out Eat Well promotion</li> <li>• Participation in Crucial Crew</li> </ul>	Families and communities that are healthy and active	Within existing revenue budget	2017/18	Service	Richard Smith/ Councillors Pugh & Stanbury
Investigate and take action, where appropriate, to deal with infectious and Communicable Diseases	Families and communities that are healthy and active	Within existing revenue budget	2017/18	Service	Richard Smith/ Councillors Pugh & Stanbury