

**Spelthorne Borough Council**  
**Food Safety Service Plan**  
**2017 - 2018**

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## Executive Summary

The Food Safety Service, provided by Environmental Health (Commercial Team) continued to be provided efficiently and effectively throughout 2015/16, and so far in 2016/17. We have achieved the following:

- a) In 2015/2016 the Commercial Team carried out 473 food hygiene interventions, including 75 new business visits.
- b) Between April 2015 and so far in 2016, the team successfully prosecuted two businesses for non-compliance with food law resulting in fines totalling £35,300.
- c) In 2016/17 we achieved a high level of satisfaction based on the customer care questionnaires returned by local businesses visited by our enforcement officers.
- d) Since April 2016 we have run 2 Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering training courses and 11 delegates have successfully passed.

In 2017/18 the Commercial team is committed to continue improving the food safety service provided to the local communities. Our main aims will be as follows:

- a) To achieve at least 98% of food hygiene inspections in accordance with the frequencies set out in the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice.
- b) To continue promoting the Food Standards Agency's national "Food Hygiene Rating Scheme" to improve and maintain hygiene standards in our food businesses.
- c) To sustain improvements to food hygiene standards in the Borough's food businesses.
- d) Continue to specifically target our high risk and non-compliant food businesses.
- e) Investigate and implement a new food hygiene training option/provider by late summer, due to the withdrawal of the CIEH accredited Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering in March 2017.
- f) Continue to actively take part in the healthy eating initiatives and encourage more local food businesses to achieve the "Eat Out, Eat Well" award.
- g) Complete the process of updating our operational food safety procedures.
- h) Continue to engage with local businesses to ensure that we achieve a high standard of customer care and provide a fair and professional service.
- i) To ensure that the remote working practices within the service continue to be a success in terms of improving the level of service provided to our customers.
- j) To complete the Competency Assessment Framework as set down in the Code of Practice for all officers undertaking official food controls.
- k) To continue progressing the recommendations made following the FSA's Inter-Authority Audit.
- l) To engage with our local schools, if approached, to promote safe food and good personal hygiene such as effective hand washing techniques.

## **1.0 SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.1 Service Aim**

1.1.1 Our Food Safety objectives will be set as part of the Service Improvement Plan when it has been updated as a result of the Council's wider "Towards a Sustainable Future programme". For 2017/18, the objectives which may be transferred into specific targets for the section are outlined as follows:

- To achieve 98% of all food hygiene inspections in accordance with frequencies set out in Food Safety Act Code of Practice and Practice Guidance.
- To ensure that the service provided meets the expectations of the local community and other customers. In 2015/16 and so far for 2016/17, 98% of businesses that responded to our Customer Care Questionnaires were satisfied with the intervention they received.
- To ensure that the service continues to provide for hard to reach groups.
- To offer Level 2 food hygiene training to food handlers, if a suitable alternative provider can be found.
- Complete the process of reviewing and updating our operational food safety procedures to take into account changes to legislation and the FSA's Food Law Code of Practice including the changes to the Competency Framework.
- Continue to promote the Food Standards Agency's "National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme" and sustain improvements to food hygiene standards in the Borough's food businesses. As of 31 December 2016, 92% of Spelthorne businesses included in the scheme have a food hygiene rating between 3 & 5 (generally satisfactory to very good).
- Actively take part in the Surrey healthy eating initiative to encourage targeted local catering businesses to provide more healthy options on their menus. Currently 12 businesses within Spelthorne hold an Eat Out Eat Well award.
- To ensure that remote working practices within the service continue to be a success in terms of improving the level of service provided to our customers.

In addition the Service has the following additional aims in terms of the level of service provided:

- To comply with all new legislative requirements imposed on the Borough regarding the enforcement of food safety.
- To respond to 90% of service requests within six working days.
- To ensure that at least 80% of letters sent out to food businesses, following an intervention/inspection, are done so within 7 working days.
- To ensure that the performance of the service is measured in the most appropriate way.

## **1.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans**

1.2.1 This strategy is a detailed part of the Service Plan for the Environmental Health Service, which in turn forms part of the corporate Performance Plan.

1.2.2 The food safety service, as part of the overall Environmental Health Service, plays an important role as outlined in the Performance Plan.

### **1.2.3 Cross Linkage to other Plans developed by the Authority**

We recognise that the work carried out by the food safety service interlinks with other strategic approaches and services. Some key areas where this is the case is:-

**Regulator's Compliance Code** - This Code replaced the previous voluntary "enforcement concordant" in April 2008. All local authorities' Environmental Health and Trading Standards departments have a legal obligation to have regard to the code in the provision of their services to the public and businesses.

**Local Plan** - We recognise the importance of food businesses to the local economy and work closely with Planning Officers to encourage food businesses to 'design out' potential problems in proposed food premises.

**Licensing** - We play an active role in the licensing of a variety of premises including food establishments providing late night refreshment after 11pm, night-clubs, regulated entertainment venues, outdoor events. Officers will ensure that all food safety problems that come to light during visits for other purposes are dealt with without delay.

**Delivery of Public Health duties** - Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 the public health role, previously delivered by the now abolished NHS PCTs, were transferred across to local authorities in April 2013. Spelthorne, along with other Surrey District Councils will have to work closely with Surrey County Council and Public Health England to ensure the public health of its residents is improved. One area within food safety where public health is being promoted is by encouraging local food businesses to offer healthy eating options on their menus. This is through the "Eat Out, Eat Well" award scheme, which Spelthorne is signed up to.

**Customer Care** - In addition to informal systems for resolving complaints and dissatisfaction, the Council has an open, clear, formal system for dealing with complaints. Clear corporate targets have been established for the speed and quality of response to letters (7 to 10 working days) and telephone calls (respond within 5 rings).

Customer consultation and feedback carried out to support national indicators has been used to set specific customer care standards and response times for work areas across the organisation, these are contained in the Service Plan for Environmental Health and Building Control.

## **Economic Development**

The policies set out in the local plan seek to achieve a balance between community health and development.

We aim to take a balanced approach to food safety enforcement that safeguards health, but does not act as a disincentive to business.

## **Social Inclusion and Diversity**

The Food Safety Service provided by the Council is committed to social inclusion and diversity within its communities. This is achieved in the following ways:

- a) Food hygiene advice leaflets are available in a number of different languages.
- b) We periodically send out a newsletter to all our food businesses to provide them with information and inviting them to contact us for further advice.
- c) We will make use of the Council's translation services, where necessary.
- d) We must have regard to the Regulator's Compliance Code, which requires us to deal with all businesses with fairness and consistency.
- e) Customer Care Questionnaires are sent out to all food businesses, who have received an inspection, to ascertain levels of satisfaction with the Commercial Section's services.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Profile of Spelthorne**

#### **2.1.1 The Borough**

Spelthorne lies 15 miles west of Central London and sits in the far North West corner of Surrey close to the boundary of Berkshire. The Borough is also bordered by the London Boroughs of Hillingdon, Hounslow and Richmond. The Borough is at the inner edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt, with 45% being urban and the remainder protected as Green Belt.

The main centres of population are the towns of Staines-upon-Thames, Ashford, Sunbury-on-Thames, Shepperton and Stanwell.

#### **2.1.2 The People**

Spelthorne's resident population is some 95,600, based on the 2011 census, an increase of over 5,000 compared to the previous census in 2001 (90,390).

The population is predominantly white with other ethnic groups making up 12.8% of the population compared with the national average (15.5 %), based on the 2011 census, showing an increase of 7.1% compared to the of 2001 census (5.7%).

#### **2.1.3 The Local Economy**

The local economy includes manufacturing and service industries, research, agriculture, the professions and many administration sites. A number of large commercial organisations have their main UK offices in the Borough.

**2.2 Organisational Structure**

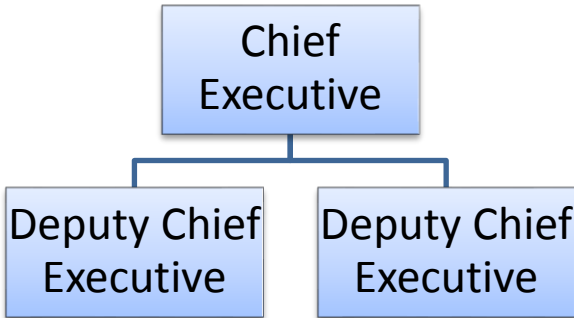
**2.2.1 The Political Structure**

The Council implements a 'cabinet' style committee structure.

The Cabinet is responsible for deciding matters relating to food and water safety, however the Overview and Scrutiny Committee examines the work we do in relation to food and water safety, monitors progress against targets and makes recommendations to the Cabinet.

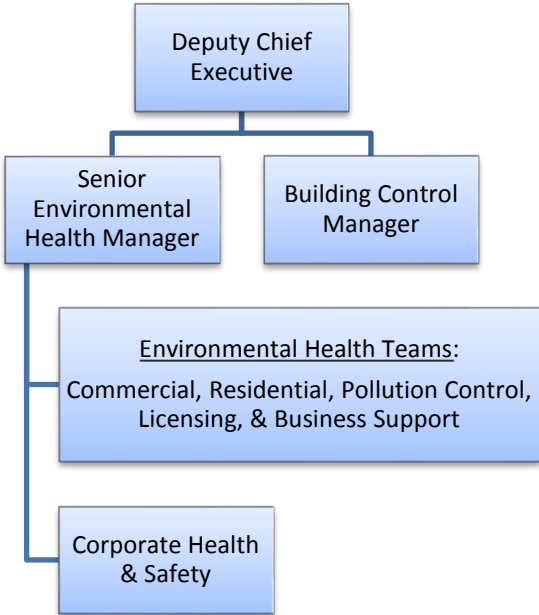
**2.2.2 The Council's Management Team**

The services provided to achieve the Council's strategic objectives are delivered under the direction of the Council's Management Team led by the Chief Executive. The Management Team comprises the following three Senior Officers:



**2.2.3 The Environmental Health & Building Control Service**

The Department structure is as follows:



The Principal Environmental Health Officer (Commercial) oversees the day-to-day activities of the Commercial Team and works closely with the Senior

Environmental Health Manager to ensure that the aims and objectives of this service plan are met.

## **2.3 Scope of the Food Service**

2.3.1 The Council provides a comprehensive service to food consumers and food businesses in Spelthorne. We have the main responsibility for enforcing the provisions of the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 and associated European Community regulations made under the European Communities Act 1972 in all food premises located within the Borough.

The main elements of the service are:-

- a) **Food Hygiene Inspections** - Regular inspection of our 808 food premises (as of 31 December 2016) to check food safety standards and to promote good hygiene practices.
- b) **Food Hygiene Rating Scheme** – to participate in the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme to enable consumers to make informed choices about the places where they eat out or shop for food.
- c) **Food Complaint Investigations** - Investigation of complaints relating to food safety, including poor hygiene, foreign objects in food (e.g. metal, glass, insects), unfit food, and food alleged to have caused food poisoning.
- d) **Infectious Disease Control** - Investigation of notifications and outbreaks of food poisoning and gastrointestinal infection to (a) control and prevent further cases from source of disease; (b) identify source and; (c) prevent spread from primary case.
- e) **Food Sampling Programme** - Sampling of foodstuffs for microbiological examination, on (a) a programmed basis (including participation with Food Standards Agency/Public Health England sampling programme), (b) in response to cases of outbreaks of food poisoning or specific investigations and, (c) in accordance with relevant Commercial Team work procedures and statutory guidance, as detailed in the sampling strategy.
- f) **Health Promotion Programme** - Provision of accredited food hygiene training courses for food handlers, and food safety advice to managers and proprietors of food businesses and implementation of the Commercial Team's Health Promotion initiatives, e.g. "Eat Out, Eat Well" Award Scheme.
- g) **Food Premises Database** – We will maintain the database of food premises in the Borough and take steps to ensure that the information is accurate and up to date.

2.3.2 The food safety service is provided by the Commercial Team who also provide a health and safety enforcement service, process, monitor and enforce various licensing/registration regimes, such as all animal licensing and beauty treatments in relevant premises, and implement the Council's Health Promotion Programme across all Environmental Health Services.

## **2.4 Demands on the Food Service**

2.4.1 We currently have 808 food premises within the Borough of Spelthorne, with more than half being classed as restaurants and other caterers (56%). Food retailers



make up the second most significant group (21%), with food producers, distributors, importers and manufacturers accounting for the remaining 2% of premises. The number of businesses will fluctuate during the year as new ones open, others close or change hands.

- 2.4.2 During the financial year 2015-2016 we had 9 “A” rated premises. These are our highest risk premises and are visited at least every six months as required by the Food Law Code of Practice. This again will fluctuate depending on successful interventions, or on falling standards identified during inspections.
- 2.4.3 Food premises of significance include two “approved” premises, both of which are in-flight catering companies.
- 2.4.4 Spelthorne’s Environmental Health does not have any “Primary Authority” arrangements with any business. There are 3 food manufacturers in the Borough. Being close to Heathrow, within Spelthorne there are 5 Remote Internal Temporary Storage Facilities (warehouses) and 2 External Temporary Storage Facilities) through which foods of non-animal origin are imported from time to time. Responsibility for checking and dealing with imported food from our existing remote Internal Temporary Storage Facilities was transferred to Hillingdon Borough Council in 2006, through a Memorandum of Understanding.

## **2.5 Accessing the Service**

The service can be accessed by: -

- Calling in person to the Spelthorne Borough Council, Knowle Green, Staines upon-Thames, TW18 1XB. The Offices are open from 9am to 5pm Mondays to Thursdays and 9am to 4.45pm on Fridays. The office is closed in the evenings and at weekends.
- Telephoning the support staff (01784 446291).
- By phone officers through their direct line telephone numbers.
- By emailing the Commercial Team at [eh.commercial@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:eh.commercial@spelthorne.gov.uk)
- Emailing officers directly via their individual email addresses.
- Food safety emergencies can be dealt with by telephoning our 24-hour out-of-hour’s emergency service where the on-call officer will contact a senior officer from environmental health.
- Information and advice can be accessed via the Council’s website at [www.spelthorne.gov.uk](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk)
- Submitting information through the Food Standards Agency website portal.

## **2.6 Enforcement Policy**

- 2.6.1 Enforcement will be carried out in a fair, equitable and consistent manner in accordance with the Regulator’s Code and the Environmental Health Enforcement Policy. The policy was last updated and published in October 2014. It is published and made available to businesses and consumers in printed format, if requested and on the Council’s website.

- 2.6.2 We recognise that most businesses want to comply with the law. We will therefore endeavour to help food businesses and others meet their legal obligations without unnecessary expense, while taking firm action, including prosecution where appropriate, against those who flout the law or act irresponsibly. Enforcement action will always be proportional to the risk to public health.
- 2.6.3 In considering enforcement action we work with our Legal Team to consider statutory Codes of Practice, the Code for Crown Prosecutors, guidance from the Food Standards Agency, UK or EU Industry Guides to Good Hygiene Practice, and Local Government Regulation guidance and advice. In addition we must also have regard to any relevant guidance produced by the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO).
- 2.6.4 All authorised officers will follow the policy when making enforcement decisions. Any departure from the policy must be exceptional, capable of justification and approved by the Senior Environmental Health Manager.
- 2.6.5 The Council's enforcement policy will be regularly reviewed and amended.

### **3.0 SERVICE DELIVERY**

#### **3.1 Food Premises Inspections**

- 3.1.1 Whilst the primary responsibility for identifying food hazards and controlling risks rests with food businesses, food hygiene inspections undertaken by Spelthorne Borough Council's team of environmental health professionals serve the following purposes:
- To establish whether food is being handled and produced hygienically. This includes, as an in-land authority, identifying imported food being sold or used by the food business, and assessing whether or not it has legally entered the UK;
  - To establish whether food is, or will be having regard to further processing, safe to eat;
  - To identify foreseeable incidences of food poisoning or injury as a consequence of consumption of food.
- 3.1.2 With this in mind the main objectives of a food hygiene inspection are the:
- Determination of the scope of the business activities and of the relevant food safety legislation that applies to the operations taking place at the premises.
  - Thorough and systematic gathering and recording of information, from observations and discussions with food handlers, managers and proprietors.
  - Identification of potential hazards and associated risks to public health.
  - Assessment of the effectiveness of process controls to achieve safe food.

- Assessment of the food safety management system operated by the business.
- Identification of specific contraventions of food safety legislation.
- Consideration of appropriate enforcement action, (proportionate to risk), to secure compliance with food safety legal requirements.
- Provision of advice and information to food business proprietors and food handlers.
- Recommendation of practical, good food hygiene practices, in accordance with Industry Guides and relevant sector specific codes of practice where appropriate.
- The promotion of continued improvements in food hygiene standards through the adoption of good practice.

3.1.3 EU Food Consolidated Regulations came into force on 1 January 2006. The legislation now used to enforce food hygiene provisions in food businesses comes under the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013, and associated EC Regulations 852/2004 and 853/2004.

The main change was the requirement for all food businesses to have a written food safety system in place, based on HACCP principles. LAs continue to promote a written system to existing small businesses, with no hazard analysis in place, based on Safer Food Better Business (SFBB). This will inevitably continue to impact on officer time during inspection visits, in the forthcoming year.

3.1.4 We aim to undertake 98% of food hygiene inspections of premises within the Borough at a frequency which is in accordance with the inspection framework set out within the statutory Food Law Code of Practice made under the Food Safety Act and Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013.

3.1.5 All food premises in the Borough are categorised according to potential risk and the frequency of inspection depends on this category. The rating system takes account of management practices and past compliance with legislation in determining likely future risk. Premises are inspected within the following minimum frequencies:

<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Minimum frequency of Inspection</u></b>
A	At least every 6 months
B	At least every year
C	At least every 18 months
D	At least every 2 years
E	Alternative Enforcement Strategy

In the financial year 2015-16 the number of programmed inspections (excluding new business inspections and those risk rated "E") was 366. The risk profile relating to this inspection programme is illustrated in the table below:

Category	No. of Inspections
A	22
B	73
C	146
D	125

- 3.1.6 Risk category "E" premises are not part of the programmed inspection programme, but are included in an "Alternative Enforcement Strategy". As of November 2016 there were 372 food businesses within this risk category. Self-assessment questionnaires were sent out to all E rated premises in October 2015 and officers are currently working through returned completed questionnaires and have been, and will continue to, follow-up with those businesses that have failed to return the questionnaires and/or require a food hygiene rating.
- 3.1.7 The Council recognises that some food businesses present a higher risk to consumers than others. We plan to visit all categories (A-C) of food premises within their due date.
- 3.1.8 Prior notice of an inspection will not normally be given in accordance with the statutory Code of Practice. Exceptions will be made for home caterers, including childminders, bed and breakfast businesses, charitable groups, church and community centres and certain large organisations in order that key personnel and documents may be available.
- 3.1.9 Food premises will be inspected during normal trading hours. We recognise that certain food businesses operate in the early hours of the morning, late at night and at weekends and indeed that some businesses are busiest at these times and would therefore benefit from a visit at these times, so the inspections programme will include food hygiene inspections outside of normal working hours.
- 3.1.10 Food hygiene inspections of all new premises will be undertaken within 28 days of registration. When we become aware of unregistered premises we will send information to require the business to register and if they do not reply, will inspect as soon as possible, subject to other priorities. We receive information regarding change of occupation from business rates on a monthly basis to assist this process.
- 3.1.11 Wherever it is practicable and appropriate to do so, we will combine a food hygiene inspection with another visit for food hygiene purposes (e.g. food complaint or a request for advice) to help make effective use of resources to prevent duplication of effort and to minimise disruption to business.

In addition, where we discover or are notified of a new food premises, we shall endeavour to undertake an initial health and safety inspection in conjunction with the initial food hygiene inspection, so that new proprietors of businesses are aware of their main priorities.

Wherever it is practicable and appropriate to do so, where a food business is due a programmed food hygiene and programmed health and safety inspection in the

current year, we will combine both inspections to help make effective use of resources to prevent duplication of effort and to minimise disruption to business.

- 3.1.12 We will reschedule our proactive food hygiene inspection programme in exceptional circumstances or if requested to do so by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in order to take specific urgent action to protect public health. We will co-operate with the FSA and will provide them with any information and assistance as may be necessary.
- 3.1.13 All food hygiene inspections will be conducted by appropriately qualified and appropriately authorised officers who satisfy the requirements of the Food Safety Act Code of Practice and are fully aware of advice contained in the current Codes of Practice, Industry Guides and BRDO/LGA guidance.
- 3.1.14 If we identify serious contraventions of food hygiene legislation and/or poor practices during a programmed inspection and formal action is not appropriate as laid out in the enforcement procedure, we will undertake a revisit to the premises after an appropriate time period to check that matters have been attended to. We will revisit to check compliance with all notices served.
- 3.1.15 The resources required to deliver the programmed food hygiene inspection programme and associated re-visits in 2017/18 are estimated to be **2.1 FTE**.

## **3.2 Food Complaints**

- 3.2.1 Our policy is to investigate food complaints concerning extraneous matter, chemical or microbiological contamination, unfitness and food alleged to have caused food poisoning, provided that the food was purchased within Spelthorne's area, in accordance with the departmental food complaints procedure and enforcement procedure, last updated in December 2015. We will also investigate, where appropriate, allegations concerning illegally imported food, poor hygiene or food complaints in food premises located within the Borough.
- 3.2.2 Due to the proximity of Spelthorne to Heathrow Airport we are occasionally notified of food imports that have bypassed the border inspection post and ended up in one of our bonded warehouses (known as External Temporary Storage Facility). These may have to be detained, destroyed or re-exported to the country of origin. However, most imported food consignments from Heathrow that are moved into the Borough for temporary storage go into one of our two Remote Internal Temporary Storage Facilities. These are dealt with, on our behalf, by authorised officers employed by London Borough of Hillingdon.
- 3.2.3 We will refer any food complaints relating to premises outside the Borough to the relevant food authority. We will refer any complaints regarding food labelling, food allergens or composition to Surrey County Council Trading Standards Department together with any other matter which is their responsibility.
- 3.2.3 Our main aims in undertaking independent investigations of food complaints on behalf of members of the public are:
- To identify what caused the problem and assess the likely risk to public health;

- To prevent a recurrence of the complaint by securing improvements in food hygiene standards and/or food handling practices and procedures;
  - To take enforcement action where appropriate.
- 3.2.4 We aim to respond to food complaints as soon as possible after receipt, or notification in accordance with our documented procedures and relevant statutory Codes of Practice and other guidance.
- 3.2.5 The depth and scope of investigation required will depend on the nature of the complaint and whether the food was produced within a food premises for which the Council has food safety enforcement responsibility. If the foodstuff concerned is produced outside Spelthorne Borough, we liaise with our counterparts in the local authority responsible for the premises where the food was manufactured to obtain detailed information about the effectiveness of existing food safety management systems. Should this part of the investigation give cause for concern, a more detailed investigation will be carried out.
- 3.2.6 In certain circumstances, where there is a possibility that formal proceedings may be taken or it is considered in the interests of consumer protection for samples to be formally analysed, we send food complaint samples to the Public Analyst for examination. This service is currently provided by Eurofins Ltd.
- 3.2.7 All complaints are thoroughly investigated and complainants advised of the outcome.
- 3.2.8 If the number of food complaints and enquiries for 2017/2018 is consistent with recent years the human resources required to deliver the service equates to 350 hours of full time equivalent officer time (**0.2 FTE**).
- 3.3 Primary Authority Partnerships**
- 3.3.1 The Primary Authority Principle (PAP) is a formal recognition of the importance of the relationship between a food business and a specific local authority, where the business trades across more than one local authority.
- 3.3.2 It is a statutory scheme set up the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO). It means that all local authorities will have to have regard to it when considering enforcement action in relation to a food business which has a number of branches or units in other food authority areas and a decision making base in another area, the relevant “Primary Authority” must be consulted before taking formal action. The only exemption to this requirement is when a local authority needs to take urgent action to avoid a significant risk of serious harm to human health.
- 3.3.3 Prior to undertaking an intervention, an officer must take appropriate steps to find out if the business concerned participates in a PAP and if so the conditions of that partnership. Any inspection plan devised as part of the PAP arrangement must be adhered to.
- 3.3.4 Spelthorne do not have PA arrangements with any business at this time.

### **3.4 Advice to Business**

3.4.1 We recognise that the majority of food businesses seek to comply with the law and will provide such advice and assistance as may be necessary.

This includes:

- Running food hygiene training courses/seminars.
- Provision of business information sheets, including leaflets detailing other local providers of food hygiene courses, practical advice on hazard analysis and controlling food safety hazards, temperature control and guides to compliance with specific food safety legislation.
- On the spot advice during routine visits and inspections.
- Advice in written inspection reports.
- Provision of free telephone advice.
- Provision of a food safety newsletter as appropriate.

3.4.2 The resource required for business advice (excluding training) is **0.1 FTE** per annum.

### **3.5 Food Inspection and Sampling**

3.5.1 Food sampling provides useful information about the microbiological safety of food produced, prepared and sold within the Borough, and constitutes an important element of the intelligence driven side of the food safety enforcement mix.

3.5.2 We will ensure that food is inspected and sampled in accordance with our sampling procedure, relevant legislation, statutory Food Safety Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance to ensure that food meets the food safety requirements.

3.5.3 We will carry out sampling in accordance with our food sampling policy, procedures and programme. Our approach to food sampling is:

- We will continue to support and participate in the FSA/PHE national sampling programmes, where staff resources allow.
- Where appropriate, samples will be taken during routine inspection and if necessary as part of legal proceedings.
- Food complaint samples will be submitted on an 'ad hoc' basis where appropriate, as they arise.
- We will adopt a policy of re-sampling should any sample result be unsatisfactory, unacceptable or potentially hazardous.

3.5.4 Food samples will be submitted for analysis to Public Health England (PHE) in Porton Down, Salisbury, which currently holds UKAS accreditation for the microbiological examination of food samples.

3.5.5 It is estimated that the proposed food-sampling programme can be delivered by 70 hours of full time equivalent officer time (**0.05 FTE**).

**3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Diseases**

- 3.6.1 Public Health Laboratories and doctors are required by statute to notify cases of particular infectious diseases, including food poisoning, to the relevant Local Authority.
- 3.6.2 The Council will investigate notifications of food poisoning, suspected food poisoning and laboratory notifications of gastrointestinal infections such as campylobacter, cryptosporidium and giardia, in accordance with relevant central guidance, and the departmental procedures relating to the investigation of communicable diseases.
- 3.6.3 Our objective is to identify the source, to control and prevent further cases from the source if the suspected source is within the Borough, and to prevent spread from the primary case (e.g. if the case is a food handler, health worker or young child). We will work closely with our colleagues in Public Health England (PHE).
- 3.6.4 Certain cases will require exclusion, for example healthcare workers or very young children. Many of these cases will require additional faecal sampling and additional coordination with the Public Health England team, the public laboratories and occasionally employers. In certain circumstances exclusion can be enforced by us.
- 3.6.5 We received 112 notifications of food poisoning (including suspected food poisoning) or food borne disease in 2015/2016. The table below shows the numbers of cases reported over the past five years:

2015 - 2016	112
2014 - 2015	132
2013 - 2014	121
2012 – 2013	123
2011 – 2012	189

In 2016/17, up to mid-December 2016, 55 food poisoning cases have been reported to Spelthorne.

- 3.6.6 If the number of cases of food poisoning reported to the Council in 2017/2018 is consistent with last year, the service can be delivered in 100 hours of full time equivalent officer time (**0.06 FTE**).
- 3.6.7 In addition to the investigation of sporadic cases of infectious disease, the Council will also investigate outbreaks of infectious disease, such as food poisoning, in accordance with the joint PHE and Local Authority Outbreak Control Plan. The plan identifies action to be taken in order to manage infectious disease control in an outbreak situation and describes the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies concerned, including the Council.
- 3.6.8 In such outbreak situations there is a need for co-ordinated action between the Council, under the direction of the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC), at Public Health England South East Centre, County Hall North, Chart



Way, Horsham, RH12 1XA, the PHE laboratories at Brighton and Porton Down, and other national agencies such as the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in Colindale.

- 3.6.9 Outbreaks reported to the Council, thankfully, are rare. However, each outbreak does require a significant amount of officer time to investigate, control and to prepare a case for prosecution (where appropriate), depending upon the individual circumstances of the outbreak.
- 3.6.10 Demand for the service in 2017/2018 is impossible to predict, however if a major outbreak occurs, staff will be taken from other Environmental Health duties as appropriate.

### **3.7 Food Safety Incidents**

- 3.7.1 Food alerts notify the public and food authorities to serious problems concerning food that does not meet food safety standards or food that does not meet compositional standards. The way we deal with alerts is outlined in the Food Complaints Procedure. Food Alerts are issued centrally by the Food Standards Agency and disseminated to local authorities by email. Food Alerts fall into two categories, i.e. "For action" and "For information".
- 3.7.2 The content of all food alerts received will be assessed by the Principal Environmental Health Officer (Commercial) or the Senior Environmental Health Officer on the Commercial team, and appropriate action will be taken as specified in the notification. The notification inbox is monitored daily.
- 3.7.3 In addition, the Council will promptly notify the Food Standards Agency and all other relevant agencies if any potentially serious incidents are identified locally via food complaints, food sampling, notifications from GPs or manufacturers etc. in accordance with the Code of Practice.
- 3.7.4 It is impossible to predict with any degree of accuracy, the number of food alerts that the Council will have to respond to in the next financial year, but recent experience would suggest that the figures for 2015-16 are representative of the likely demand on the service. It is estimated that this relatively small demand can be met with 40 hours of full time equivalent officer time (**0.01 FTE**).

### **3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations**

- 3.8.1 The Council actively participates in liaison arrangements with a number of other local authorities, agencies and professional organisations in order to facilitate consistent enforcement, to share good practice and to reduce duplicity of effort.

- Surrey Food Liaison Group
- Surrey Infection and Environmental Health Group
- Surrey Environmental Health Managers' Group
- Liaison arrangements with Building Control, Planning, Licensing, Legal etc.
- Public Health England
- Surrey County Council Trading Standards

- Surrey Healthy Eating Award Steering Group

3.8.2 The food safety element of these groups accounts for approximately 50 hours, **0.03 FTE officer time.**

### **3.9 Promotion of Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)**

3.9.1 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 gives local authorities powers to take action which they consider is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of their area. Since 2012 this authority has been signed up to the Food Standards Agency's Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

3.9.2 Food hygiene ratings are published online at the FSA's website and businesses are encouraged to display their stickers on their premises. As yet, in England there is no statutory requirement for businesses to do so, however this is currently being reviewed; it is now mandatory in Wales.

3.9.3 By making food hygiene rating information available in the public domain it enables consumers to make informed choices about the places where they eat out or shop for food.

3.9.4 The scheme incorporates safeguards to ensure fairness to businesses, including an appeals procedure, a right to reply on the website and a mechanism for requesting a re-inspection for the purposes of re-rating when improvements have been made.

3.9.5 Since the introduction of the FHRS in Spelthorne there has been a significant increase in the number of premises receiving the top rating, however it has proven more difficult to achieve a consistent improvement among those at the lower end.

3.9.6 It is the Council's policy to focus resources on the businesses that fail to satisfy legal requirements. Social media has the power to positively influence the behaviour of businesses and this should be maximised.

3.9.7 We further publicise our five rated businesses, on the Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts as a positive recognition of their achievement. We wish to retain the option to publicise the poorer performing premises (0's and 1's).

3.9.8 Businesses may appeal the rating they have been awarded. Consequently their rating is not published anywhere until the appeal is heard and decided upon. Appeals are reviewed by the Lead Environmental Health Officer (Food) or the PEHO (Commercial) who will assess the actions taken by the inspecting Environmental Health Officer against the Food Law Code of Practice and the FHRS "Brand Standard".

3.9.9 After a stand-still period of at least three months a re-inspection can be made (this is a FSA ruling).

3.9.10 The Commercial Team received eight revisit requests in 2012 /2013, six in 2013/2014, 36 in 2014/2015, 25 in 2015/2016, and so far 16 in 2016/17 financial year.

3.9.11 All Surrey authorities participate in the FHRS.

3.9.12 The Communications Team has reported that the information provided is very popular and is getting a lot of views/shares/retweets.

3.9.13 Due to the positive response from businesses and the general public, it is our intention to continue with this activity. However, the likely mandatory display of FHRS stickers will have an impact on the service as poorer rated premises are likely to request a rescore inspection; these could all come at a similar time.

### **3.10 Food Safety Promotion**

3.10.1 In addition to enforcing food safety legislation in food businesses, we have sought for many years to achieve high standards of food safety in the Borough by promoting awareness of good food safety practices through our programme of food hygiene training and health education initiatives and by providing businesses with a regular newsletter of information regarding food safety.

3.10.2 In 2014/2015 we trained 34 food handlers to the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's (CIEH) Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering, generating an income of £2,240. Unfortunately, demand for these courses continued to fall in 2015/2016 generating an income of £2,123; demand has fallen due to an increase in the uptake of cheaper "online" training options. We have continued to run these courses through 2016/2017. From April 2017 the CIEH will no longer offer this course; consideration is being given to future provision, probably through a new supplier, but a decision will be made once the CIEH outlines future plans for its new courses within the next couple of months.

3.10.3 We routinely put articles in the Borough Bulletin to provide members of the public with information and advice on food hygiene matters. In 2015/16 we included 5 articles promoting the national food hygiene rating scheme, which contains information about food hygiene of food businesses in our Borough and other food hygiene messages. We have also regularly posted information on Social Media about current food safety messages, as provided by the FSA.

3.10.4 To assist food businesses, particularly small and medium sized businesses, to comply with legislation and improve hygiene standards, we will continue to provide a wide range of advisory information in the form of free verbal advice, leaflets and handbooks. We also will continue to ensure that the advisory information which can be used on our website is up to date and relevant in 2017/18.

3.10.5 A press release is issued following each prosecution action to ensure that an effective deterrent is set for local food businesses. This also keeps the public and other businesses informed.

3.10.6 We will assess the effectiveness of the programme by using a variety of methods, including customer questionnaires and surveys.

3.10.7 The resources required delivering this programme of training and health education initiatives in 2017/2018 will be about **0.2 FTE**.

## 4.0 RESOURCES

### 4.1 Financial

- 4.1.1 The gross cost of providing the food safety service, i.e. staff and budgetary expenses in 2016/2017 is £134,005. The budget for 2017/18 will be similar.

### 4.2 Staffing Allocation

Staffing Allocation for Food Safety Enforcement

NAME/ JOB TITLE	FTE	QUALIFICATIONS	FOOD SAFETY ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCE
Fidelda Harding Principal EHO (Commercial)	0.7	BSc (Hons) in Environmental Health,	10 years
Liz England Senior EHO	0.7	Diploma in Environmental Health Chartered member of the CIEH	34 years
Sally Lee Senior EHO	0.7	BSc (Hons) in Environmental Health; Higher Certificate in Food Premises Inspection.	20 years
Administrative Support	0.65		
Tracey Willmott- French; Senior Environmental Health Manager	0.15	BSc (Hons) in Environmental Health,	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2.9</b>		

This total of **2.65 FTE** includes time spent on inspections, complaints, advice to businesses, sampling, food poisoning investigations, food safety alerts, food safety promotion, primary authority work and liaison with other agencies.

In addition, **0.1 FTE** of EHO staff time is spent on duties such as checking notices, detailed investigations, small outbreaks and preparation for prosecutions etc. The team will also be delivering the Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering courses.

The Senior Environmental Health Manager spends **0.15 FTE** overseeing service provision including reviewing service plans, officer performance, service development, budget controls.

### 4.3 Staff Training and Development

- 4.3.1 We recognise the need for all officers engaged in food safety work to be trained, not only to the level required by law, but also to a level commensurate with the work they carry out. We also recognise the need to develop the personal skills needed in order to work effectively in the field and for EHOs' to meet the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme.

The Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement requires Local Authorities to appoint a sufficient number of authorised officers to carry out food enforcement work and that they shall have

suitable qualifications, training and experience consistent with their authorisation and duties in accordance with the relevant Food Safety Code of Practice.

The Food Safety Code of Practice requires the Local Authority to ensure that every officer receives structured on-going training, which is managed, assessed and recorded. The minimum on-going/update training for each officer should be at least 20 hours per year, of which at least 10 hours must be food based.

4.3.2 Each member of staff receives one annual appraisal and bimonthly one to one meetings per year at which development needs are identified and a plan agreed to address these.

4.3.3 Training and development is provided by a range of methods including:-

- i. Post Entry Training - Nominations for formal training courses/qualifications are considered annually and in appropriate cases members of staff are sponsored on formal academic and practical courses.
- ii. Short Course Training - Where appropriate, short courses, seminars and workshops can provide valuable updates for staff. We support attendance at such events through the Council's short courses training budget.
- iii. In-house Training - We encourage in-house training as this helps to develop individual's presentation skills as well as cascade information to other members of staff.
- iv. Cascade Training - Staff are encouraged/required to cascade information skills and knowledge they possess or have gained through attendance at Seminars and short courses to other members of staff at in-house training sessions.
- v. Peer Review - Through the use of peer review, during joint visits, and in monitoring work performance we encourage exchange of expertise and skills between staff.
- vi. Team Meetings - These provide useful forum for exchange of information and experience amongst team members, and assist in achieving a uniformity of approach to food safety issues.

4.3.4 We will ensure that the Council's training plan is used effectively to identify general and personal training and development needs for all members of staff and ensure that these are addressed through the officers' appraisal scheme.

## **5.0 QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

### **5.1 Internal Monitoring**

5.1.1 We have set up a number of documented internal monitoring procedures to monitor compliance with the statutory Code of Practice and our own internal procedures and policies. The Principal Environmental Health Officer (Commercial) occasionally checks post-inspection risk score, and always where risk ratings are lowered from "A" or a "B", and correspondence that is sent out. Buddy visits are carried out each quarter along with internal monitoring of letters, complaints etc.

Customer Care Questionnaires are sent out to all food businesses that have received an inspection, to ascertain levels of satisfaction with the service.

5.1.2 Between April 2015 to March 2016, 369 Customer Care questionnaire forms were sent out to businesses who had received either a food hygiene or health & safety inspection. In terms of whether they were treated fairly by the EHO, 100% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed. The following comments were also made:

- *“We received excellent service and advice, the Inspector gave advice that was very useful and helped us improve our standard”*
- *“All good – thanks for your service”*
- *“Nice lady – made us feel at ease”*
- *Very helpful and was very supportive during the visit”*
- *“The most courteous, helpful, professional civil servant I have met in England”*
- *“Helpful service and clear instruction”*
- *“We were dealt with very professionally”.*

## **5.2 External Monitoring - Food Standards Agency (FSA)**

5.2.1 Our food safety enforcement service was externally audited by the FSA in October 2014. No significant areas of concern were identified and the Audit identified a number of strengths within the team including service planning and review and the management of the food premises database. Following the FSA’s Final Audit Report an action plan was devised to address any matters requiring our attention. We provided an update to the FSA in November 2015 and the final action remaining was to provide them with evidence that the changes we outlined in our update are implemented effectively. This was done by April 2016.

5.2.2 We currently submit a significant amount of additional information on our food safety service on an annual basis to the FSA. This is a requirement for all Local Authorities.

5.2.3 Our implementation of the FHRS was audited in December 2015 as part of an inter-authority audit organised by the Surrey Food Liaison Group and funded by the Food Standards Agency. It examined our arrangements for consistent operation and implementation of the FHRS looking at relevant aspects of service planning, food premises database/website management, FHRS procedures, food premises interventions, officer training and internal monitoring. The audit highlighted one of our strengths as having experienced, professional staff with a good level of training. We have completed some of the action points and will be completing the outstanding recommendations made in the final report in 2017.

## **6.0 REVIEW**

### **6.1 Review against the Service Plan**

6.1.1 This section should be read in conjunction with the Environmental Health’s Performance review.

6.1.2 Both this document and the local key performance indicators set by Spelthorne are used to determine individual and team targets through the annual appraisal process and performance is reviewed through a variety of mechanisms. These include:

- i) Bimonthly 1-2-1 meetings with individual officers
- ii) Environmental Health service meetings every two months and monthly commercial team meetings
- iii) Peer Review

6.1.3 The four principal performance measures used are:-

- i) Performance against the food safety inspection programme targets. Our target is to achieve 98% of inspection targets for all food premises.
- ii) Percentage ratio of businesses scoring a food hygiene rating between 3-5, as compared to 0-2 (92.0:8.0 in 2015/16) and percentage of food businesses with food hygiene rating scores of 0-1 (4% in 2015/16). In 2017/18 we shall aim to improve this ratio and set a new target of 94.6
- iii) Performance against local response targets for Food Safety service requests. Our target is to respond to 95% of service requests within 6 working days.
- iv) Number of reports sent out within target times (7 working days from date of visit). Our target is to send out 95% of reports within 7 working days.

**Table 1: Commercial Team Performance 2012-2016**

Performance Measure	2012/13	2013/24	2014/15	2015/16
<b>Food Safety Inspection Programme</b>				
Target % of Programmed Inspection	98%	98%	98%	98%
% achieved % (in brackets)	(87%)	(87%)	(95%)	(88%)
Rating A-C No. planned inspections carried out	177	147	243	244
Rating A-C % inspections carried out	90%	90%	98%	98.8%
Rating D No. inspections carried out	55	46	101	125
Rating D % inspections carried out	90%	70%	95%	85%
No. of new/unplanned inspections carried out	70	63	103	75
<b>Response to Commercial Enquiries</b>				
Target - to respond to within 6 working days	95%	95%	95%	95%
Number Investigated	174*	183*	158*	181
% Responded to within 6 working day target (Average across the Commercial team for food related functions carried out)	98%	98%	93%	88.8%

\* These figures only relates to the number of Food Hygiene/Safety related service requests.

#### 6.1.5 Commercial Team Performance against Target – 2015/16

**Food Safety Inspection Programme** - 88% of the programmed inspections were carried out. While the 98% performance target was not achieved, the inspection

performance target for higher risk premises (A-C) was exceeded; 98.8% of high risk premises were inspected.

**Response to Commercial Enquiries** - The team received a total of 181 service requests relating to food hygiene/safety matters for 2015/2016. They responded to 88.8% of these service requests within the target time of 6 working days.

**Reports following inspections** – In 2015/16 the team provided a total of 250 written reports following food hygiene and health and safety inspections. 93.6% of these reports were sent out within 7 working days of the date of inspection, as required.

#### 6.1.6 Other achievements

- a. It is essential that the Service complies with all new legislative requirements imposed upon local authorities regarding the enforcement of food safety legislation. The Commercial team has managed to keep pace with all main legislative requirements in 2015/16 and so far in 2016/17.
- b. The FSA's national FHRS has continued to prove effective in sustaining improvements in food hygiene standards in local food businesses. The number of 5 and 4 rated premises (very good and good, respectively) increased from 262 and 134, at the start of the scheme (April 2012), to 357 and 150 respectively, by the end of March 2016.
- c. The Commercial Team has taken two successful food hygiene prosecutions against food businesses for persistent non-compliance with minimum legal standards. The first case was heard before Redhill Magistrates Court on 14 April 2015 and the food business operators received fines and costs of £25,800. The second case was heard before Redhill Magistrates Court on 20 October 2015 and the food business operator received fines and costs of £12,816, which was reduced to £9,500 on appeal.

#### 6.1.7 Comments on Commercial Team Performance

During 2015/16, the Environmental Health Service has undergone a departmental restructure, the Commercial Team has been integral part of that restructure. The Commercial team, along with the rest of the Environmental Health Service, has implemented new flexible working arrangements which included a temporary office re-locate and the introduction of new ICT hardware which has taken time to embed. During 2016/17, the team has also been short of officer resource as one EHO left and another is on 12-months maternity leave. Both posts have been temporarily backfilled by contract EHOs, and the vacant post has now been recruited too.

In spite of the above challenges, the Commercial team has performed well and managed to maintain a high level of service delivery. While it has not been possible for the team to achieved all its set targets it did ensure that it met its targets and controlled the risks associated with the high risk premises by continuing to prioritise interventions to the highest risk food businesses and target those businesses who consistently fail to comply with food law.



The team has also managed to continue to implement the systems improvements arising from the FSA audit.

In October 2015, 214 self-assessment questionnaires were sent out to all the low risk food businesses as part of our alternative enforcement strategy. To date approximately 150 completed self-assessment questionnaires have been returned. The questionnaires are being reviewed to identify any businesses that require a follow-up visit and inspection where appropriate. It is anticipated that this work should be completed by April 2017. After this follow-up and visits will be made to those businesses who failed to return the questionnaires.

For the financial year 2016/17 until 22 December 2016, the team had completed 208 food hygiene interventions; a further 116 businesses (A–D) are due to receive a programmed inspection before the end of March 2017.

## **6.2 Identification of any variation in the Service Plan**

During 2015/16 and into 2016/17 officer time was allocated to reviewing and updating our documented procedures and significant progress has been made with this. This work shall be completed in 2017/18.

## **6.3 Areas of Improvement**

6.3.1 As well as continuing to review and update our operational procedures, many of which are due their annual review, the following actions will be taken during 2017/2018 to ensure continuing improvement against the objectives:

- a. Ensure that we continue to improve the service provided to local businesses. This will be delivered by continuing to provide staff with relevant training and guidance. We will also act on any feedback we received from our satisfaction surveys, provide improved information on the Council's website.
- b. Ensure that the Service is inclusive and is provided to hard to reach groups. This will include continuing to provide Safer Food Better Business information in other languages to relevant food businesses when this information.
- c. To ensure that a 100% of our Food Safety Services remain "e-enabled" we will ensure that any new services introduced comply with this requirement. We already participate in the FSA's National Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme to ensure as many of our residents and visitors know how to use it to find out food hygiene information about local food businesses.

6.3.2 In order to ensure that we meet our relevant food safety enforcement objectives for 2017/2018 we will undertake the following:

- a. The Service Management Team will continue to carry out performance monitoring meetings to ensure that service standards and service objectives are being met and to discuss any staff issues.
- b. Development needs of all staff will be considered during regular staff appraisals and they will be provided with training and support to enable them to meet service objectives.

- c. The food service will use the allocated expenditure budget for the purpose of providing a quality, cost effective service. This budget will be monitored regularly to ensure that expenditure does not exceed that allocated.
- d. The service will ensure that technology is used efficiently to record information necessary to deal with customer queries, provide FSA returns, provide information on service available to customers in an electronic format, and to integrate with other departments to improve service to customers.

## **APPENDIX I - Glossary of Terms**

<b>CCDC</b>	-	Consultant in Communicable Disease
<b>CIEH</b>	-	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
<b>TO</b>	-	Technical Officer
<b>EHO</b>	-	Environmental Health Officer
<b>FSA</b>	-	Food Standards Agency
<b>FHRS</b>	-	Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme
<b>LGA</b>	-	Local Government Association
<b>PHE</b>	-	Public Health England
<b>HACCP</b>	-	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
<b>LAs</b>	-	Local Authorities
<b>BRDO</b>	-	Better Regulation Delivery Office
<b>SFBB</b>	-	Safer Food Better Business