
Report for: **Community People and Equalities PDG**

Date of Meeting: 17 June 2025

Subject: **FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN ANNUAL
UPDATE 2025-26**

Cabinet Member: Cllr David Wulff, Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health

Responsible Officer: Simon Newcombe, Head of Health and Housing

Exempt: No

Wards Affected: All Wards

Enclosures: Annex A: Food Safety Service Plan 2025/2026

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This report intends to provide a service update for the statutory work of the Food Safety team within Public Health and Housing Options and the reviewed Food Safety Service Plan for 2025/2026 (Annex A).

Recommendation(s):

- 1. That the PDG notes the report**

Section 2 – Report

1 Introduction

- 1.1** An annual Food Safety Service Plan is required under the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The Plan provides a focus for service delivery outcomes and a framework for assessing performance against those outcomes.
- 1.2** The Service plan sets out how the competent authority intends to deliver and resource official food controls and other official activities in its area, and address any variance in meeting the outcomes of the previous service plan.

- 1.3 The 2025-2026 Food Service plan aligns with the corporate plan objective under Community, People and Equalities, of supporting the health, wellbeing, and safety of our residents, by keeping the public safe through rigorous public health inspections.
- 1.4 The primary aim of the food safety service is to ensure food safety across the district. This is delivered through interventions that aim to prevent food poisoning, food borne and water borne illness and to ensure, so far as is possible, that food and drink intended for sale for human consumption, which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or sold/consumed within the district is without risk to the health or safety of the consumer.
- 1.5 The FSA has a key role as the central competent authority in overseeing official feed and food controls undertaken by local authorities. It also seeks to work in partnership with local authorities to help them to deliver official feed and food controls. The FSA is therefore pro-active in setting and monitoring standards, and in auditing local authorities' delivery of official controls, in order to ensure that this activity is effective, risk based, proportionate and consistent.
- 1.6 Powers enabling the FSA to monitor and audit local authorities, and ultimately take over delivery of official controls, are contained in the Food Standards Act 1999 and in the Official Feed and Food Controls Regulations.

2 Service update

- 2.1 Mid Devon District Council has 960 registered food premises. Under the FSA Code of Practice all food premises are categorised with an inspection risk rating that determines the frequency of interventions from 6 months to 3 years.
- 2.2 New food business registrations are steady, with 134 received by the team in 2024/2025 which is approximately 2.5 a week.
- 2.3 During 2024/2025 63% of due interventions with established businesses were carried out.
- 2.4 747 businesses are currently in scope of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and are scored as follows:

Rating	5	4	3	2	1	0
Descriptor	Very good	Good	Generally satisfactory	Improvement necessary	Major improvement necessary	Urgent improvement necessary
Number *	652	46	33	6	10	0
%	87.2%	6.2%	4.5%	0.8%	1.3%	0%

*taken from FHRS public facing website 20/04/25

- 2.5 Any business scoring 0, 1 or 2 will have a compliance re-visit carried out and officers will consider what further actions are required to improve standards, this will range from sampling, education and guidance through to formal enforcement action. Enforcement action is delivered in accordance with the Mid Devon District Council Enforcement Policy PH/EP/09/20.

- 2.6 The team is responsible for investigation of infectious diseases, and this year 55 notifications of infectious disease were received and dealt with by the service. These included, 29 Campylobacter, 12 Salmonella, 12 Cryptosporidium and 2 Shigella.
- 2.7 A mini re-structure completed during 2023/24 identified 2 new posts that were needed to strengthen the team in terms of capacity and capability to deliver against our service objectives.
- 2.8 The Regulatory Officer post went live in December 2024 and has already had a positive impact within our lower risk food businesses. During quarter 4, the officer was able to action 23% of the due E rated interventions, an increase from 0% completed in quarter 3.
- 2.9 In relation to the production, handling and storage of Products of Animal Origin there are currently 17 approved establishments operating under Regulation (EC) 853/2004 in Mid Devon, summarised below:

Approved Premises Type	Number of Premises
Dairy Products	5
Meat Products	1
Meat Preparations	1
Cold Store	4
Fish Products	0
Egg products	1
Egg Packing Centres	5
Total	17

3 Current challenges and opportunities

- 3.1 Section 2.2 of the plan provides the organisational structure, and details the staffing resource required to deliver the service plan. We currently have 1FTE post vacant, due to recruitment challenges and internal movement.
- 3.2. Whilst recruitment into the Regulatory Officer role was successful, we were unable to attract any suitable candidates to the Lead Officer role.
- 3.3 A second recruitment attempt, offering a temporary market supplement, did not attract any external applicants, however an internal candidate has stepped into the role for a temporary 12 month secondment. This has diverted 0.6FTE Specialist Officer away from Food Safety duties, prolonging the impact on our ability to meet our statutory requirements. The real impact of this is compounded by further vacancies within the Licensing team, due to the nature of the Lead Officer post having shared responsibility across the two distinct functions.
- 3.4 During quarter 1, the service manager will review the vacancies as a priority and will seek to address these ongoing recruitment challenges.

- 3.5 During 2024/2025 a part time Specialist Food officer retired.
- 3.6 Following a procurement process in quarter 3 and 4, we are now using an external contractor to support with the delivery of food interventions over the next financial year. More information is provided in Section 5 (Future Plan) below.

4 KPIs

- 4.1 Current performance measures for 2024/2025 are as follows.
- 4.2 **The percentage of interventions due at each risk category carried out** (should be 100% at each risk category). This is a measure of our capacity to deliver the number of due interventions in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice. We have not met the target of 100%, and delivered 63% of due interventions during 2024/25. Resource is wherever possible targeted at higher risk premises, or where intelligence indicates that there are non-compliances within a premises, even if it is sitting in a lower risk category.
- 4.3 **The movement of businesses from 0 to 2 rating at subsequent interventions.** There is some work required within the database to enable us to extract and interrogate the data to provide this (aim to see an upward movement). This is a measure of the effectiveness of our interventions. As show below:

Movement of FHRS	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
FRHS improved	89	90	100	100
No change in FHRS	11	10	0	0
FHRS decreased	0	0	0	0

5 Future plan

- 5.1 The Public Health team are further considering the local structure and roles with a view to addressing recruitment challenges.
- 5.2 Whilst working towards the full structure and compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice, the focus will remain on the higher risk premises and processes, new registrations, and premises where intelligence suggests that the risk may have changed.
- 5.3 The team will continue to utilise the Food Safety contractor until the new structure is in place. The contract has been set up with an option to extend to 36 months if required. This gives us some reassurance that we can work towards compliance with the Food Law code of practice during the 2025/2026 year and beyond in order to meet the FSA target for interventions whilst there is a resolution of the structure and implementation of more permanent arrangements.

Financial Implications: Failure to deliver against the service plan has the potential for financial implications, as the FSA have authority to deliver official controls where a Local Authority fails in its obligations, this is done on a cost recovery basis.

The review of posts is likely to result in an increase to the required FTE allocation, which will have associated cost implications. There will need to be approval for any increase to budget.

Legal Implications: The Authority have a statutory obligation to deliver food safety official controls in accordance with The Official Feed and Food Controls (England) Regulations 2009.

Risk Assessment: Failure to deliver official controls in accordance with the Food Law code of Practice, as laid out in the service plan, presents a risk to members of the public, due to drop in food hygiene standards within food establishments. Failure to deliver official controls in accordance with the Food Law code of Practice leaves the Authority at risk of reputational damage and financial cost due to potential FSA intervention.

Impact on Climate Change: There is no direct impact on climate change as a result of this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment: An equality impact assessment is not required in respect of this update report.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: This report links directly to the corporate plan objective under Community, People and Equalities, of supporting the health, wellbeing, and safety of our residents, by keeping the public safe through rigorous public health inspections.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer
Date: 5.6.25

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 5.6.25

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford
Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director
Date: 5.6.25

Performance and risk: Steve Carr
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager
Date: 29/05/2025

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Harriet Said, Team Leader (Commercial), Public Health or Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing

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Background papers:

Food Standards Agency, Food Law Code of Practice [Food law code of practice \(England\)](#)

Framework Agreement on official Feed and Food control by Local Authorities [THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON LOCAL AUTHORITY FOOD LAW REGULATION](#)

Food Standards Agency Food Law Practice guidance (England) [FSA Communications \(food.gov.uk\)](#)

The Official Feed and Food Controls (England) Regulations 2009 [The Official Feed and Food Controls \(England\) Regulations 2009 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

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