

COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

27 SEPTEMBER 2016

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Cabinet Member: Cllrs Colin Slade and Margaret Squires

Responsible Officer: Simon Newcombe, Public Health and Professional Services Manager

Reason for Report: To provide members with an update on current partnership and collaborative working to increase the resilience of the Environmental Health team and achieve public health objectives.

RECOMMENDATION(S): That Cabinet acknowledge the role of Environmental Health as key partners in contributing to the health, safety and wellbeing of people, communities and the environment in Mid Devon.

Relationship to the Corporate Plan: Priority Area Community - Promoting physical activity, health and wellbeing. The statutory functions of Environmental Health directly protect the health and wellbeing of residents, workers and visitors across Mid Devon.

Financial Implications: There are no specific financial implications.

Legal Implications: If the partnerships are not accepted the Council may not fulfil its statutory functions.

Risk Assessment: There are no major risks. A failure to develop key partnerships will prejudice the delivery of the Public Health Business Plan.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Environmental Health team, working with and alongside other public health professionals, are key partners in local and national efforts to protect, improve the health and quality of life, and reduce health inequalities of the individuals and communities in Mid Devon.

1.2 The following information summarise some of the issues around the areas of environmental health partnership working and the connection with benefits to public health.

2.0 Environmental Health – Partnership Working

2.1 Food

2.2 Environmental health protect the public from food poisoning including serious diseases from E.coli and Salmonella outbreaks. Food inspections ensure the production, manufacture and preparation of safe food in restaurants and cafes, schools and food manufacturer's improves the health of the population through the provision of safe and nutritious food. Liaison arrangements are in

place with neighbouring south west local authorities, Trading Standards, Food Standards Agency, Animal and Plant Health Agency to share intelligence, information and best practice and to ensure consistent enforcement of food law across nearly 1000 food premises in Mid Devon.

- 2.3 Environmental health manage the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in partnership with the Food Standards Agency. This scheme provides transparency to consumers about hygiene standards in individual food businesses at the time of our inspection visits and each of the 511 businesses in Mid Devon will receive a window sticker to display. Levels are presented on a simple numerical scale from '0' at the bottom to '5' at the top. The scheme encourages businesses to improve and promote hygiene standards (and increase the number of customers through the door) with the overarching aim to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness.

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme 2016

Food,

- 4 premises have a rating of 1 (<1%)
- 5 premises have a rating of 2 (1%)
- 14 premises have a rating of 3 (2.7%)
- 50 premises have a rating of 4 (9.8%)
- 438 premises have a rating of 5 (85.7%)

- 2.4 Environmental health are actively involved in tackling food fraud, which can be very harmful to public safety, economic development and fair business competition. In the past we have conducted the following investigations, working with relevant agencies, to target criminals supplying the food chain.

- (i) An illegal on-farm slaughterhouse and meat cutting plant operating near Templeton, Tiverton was shut down and more than a tonne of illegal meat seized and destroyed. The multi-agency raid involved officers from Environmental Health, Devon and Somerset Trading Standards and Tiverton Police Station. Investigating officers gathered evidence at the scene and police seized two shotguns and a small quantity of ammunition. Environmental health are prosecuting the individual, who has pleaded guilty to 16 offences under Food Hygiene Regulations at Exeter Crown Court, and are currently applying to the Court for a Confiscation Order, under the Proceeds of Crime Act, for £40,000.
- (ii) A multi-agency raid followed to establish the full extent of poaching operations in and around Mid Devon involving officers from Cullompton Police Station, a Police Support Unit and environmental health. The police seized shotguns and a small quantity of ammunition in the raid while environmental health officer's gathered evidence and intelligence at the scene.
- (iii) A premises in Mid Devon was implicated with distributing poor quality 99-pence priced sandwiches to Bangladesh independently owned small retail shops and petrol stations throughout the south west. The low quality products originated from a manufacturing unit in Middlesex and became of national concern. Environmental health routinely

gathered intelligence and reported back to the Welsh Food Fraud Co-ordination Unit to co-ordinate action nationally. The premises in Mid Devon are no-longer trading.

- (iv) The South West Illegal Meat Group was established by the Food Standards Agency to tackling deer poaching, illegal slaughter, livestock theft, shellfish and fish issues across the south west with the inclusion of other interested parties including Environmental Health, Police Rural and Wildlife Crime Officer's, National Crime Agency, HMRC, the Deer Initiatives, Angling Trust, Environment Agency, National Farmers Union, Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, Animal and Plant Health Agency, and Trading Standards Intelligence Officer's.

3.0 Environmental Protection

- 3.1 The inspection and regulation of 38 permitted installations across the district ensures that certain industrial processes, that have the potential to cause pollution, are controlled. The partnership between Environmental health and the Environment Agency as co-regulators of industrial installations and processes across Mid Devon continues to work more closely than ever before to protect and improve resident's health and the environmental impact while supporting businesses to achieve compliance. Liaison arrangements are in place with neighbouring south west local authorities, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and the Animal and Plant Health Agency to share information and best practice and to ensure consistent enforcement of environmental law.
- 3.2 The service undertake monitoring at a number of points across the district in fulfilment of our local air quality management duties and partnership working arrangements with DEFRA. This includes a real-time continuous air quality monitoring station in Crediton and NOx tubes monitoring across the district and in support of the Air Quality Management Area's in Crediton and Cullompton that have been put in place to protect people's health and the environment.
- 3.3 Environmental health assess contamination of sites proposed for new development and control noise and statutory nuisances from a variety of activities to mitigate the effects on residents mental and social health. We work with other public health professionals and agencies to tackle pollution and other nuisance issues, including:
 - (i) A raid was carried out to seize noise equipment from a domestic property for breach of a noise abatement notice. The action was supported by the Police
 - (ii) Regular action is taken on filthy and verminous premises that are considered dangerous to health. We deal with such instances sensitively, working in partnership with Social Services and other organisations, general practitioners or the RSPCA prior to serving any statutory notice requiring the property to be cleansed and all rubbish and filthy articles removed.

- (iii) We support safety at outside events and in public places by working with the Police, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Ambulance Service and other organisations through the local Safety and Advisory Group meetings.

4.0 Control of Communicable Disease and Health Protection

- 4.1 Working in collaboration with Public Health England, Environmental Health are actively involved in surveillance, reporting and raising public awareness of the causes and prevention of around 130 communicable diseases in Mid Devon each year. Controlling communicable disease outbreaks and preventing secondary spread or preventing the transmission of blood borne viruses in tattoo and body piercing studios directly impacts the health of residents and communities.
- 4.2 Outbreak control plans are in place between Public Health England South West Centre and Environmental Health for the control of communicable disease and on the public health aspects of control of chemical and radiological hazards in the South West. The plan will also provide the gateway to a range of expert national advice in the areas of infectious diseases, chemical, radiation and nuclear hazards.
- 4.3 The work of local authority environmental health services in promoting and enforcing the introduction of the smoke-free legislation has been acknowledged by the Department of Health as vital in achieving high levels of compliance and achieving truly significant health outcomes. This resource is one element of environmental health efforts to build on this successful partnership between health partners and demonstrate ways in which similarly effective partnerships can be developed to address future challenges such as tackling skin cancer, obesity and poor nutrition.

5.0 Occupational Health and Safety

- 5.1 The partnership between Environmental Health and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as co-regulators of health and safety has seen Mid Devon, responsible for 800 premises, incorporate national priority topics relevant to our local communities in routine inspections. This approach, targeting activities such as gas safety, asbestos awareness, accident investigations, infection control, and migrant workers as more likely to lead to injury and ill-health, is most likely to result in real improvements in working conditions.
- 5.2 Requests to specialist HSE inspectors continued and included assistance on the following accident investigations:
 - (i) The tragic fatality of a child while watching a football match required the specialist assistance from the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) in investigating the incident.
 - (ii) A specialist electrical inspector has been requested to examine a commercial plate warmer that allegedly electrocuted an employee. Investigations have involved the Better Regulation Delivery Office's

(BRDO) Primary Authority Scheme to provide reliable advice for environmental health officers to take into account when dealing with accidents and non-compliance.

Overall, HSE and environmental health services continue to work more closely than ever before and will continue with the possibility of transfer of premises and joint warranting leading to more efficient targeting of resources to those areas where risks are greatest and benefits to the local communities most likely.

6.0 Private Water Supplies

6.1 The Environmental Health team carry out duties to ensure that private water supplies are safe and drinking water quality is acceptable to consumers in over 1300 premises. The partnership between the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) and Environmental Health as co-regulators of drinking water supplies provides assistance on the risk assessment of water supplies, the taking of and the analysis of water samples, and the investigation into the reasons why the results of some tests breach the regulatory standards.

7.0 Better Business for All

7.1 Better Business for All is part of a national government initiative to reduce the regulatory burden on business and is endorsed by the Better Regulation Delivery Office, which is part of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills. It is a local partnership between businesses, business support and regulators and across Devon & Somerset to promote local economic prosperity, whilst maintaining public protection.

7.2 Environmental Health have formed a regulatory services partnership with representatives from all 15 Local Authorities, Devon and Somerset Trading Standards, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue and representatives from local regulated businesses, the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, Better Regulation Delivery Office and Economic Development.

7.3 The Partnership are determined to influence a behavioural change within regulation to ensure we have the right attitudes and behaviours to support local businesses; actively listening and embracing negative feedback from consultation and identifying new ways of working to turn the negatives into positives

8.0 Summary

8.1 Local and National partnership working will be pivotal to continuing the drive to improving and delivering better public health outcomes for the residents, businesses and communities of Mid Devon.

8.2 The scope of work and partnerships outlined briefly in this report shows the positive impact upon health made by the Environmental Health team.

8.3 Environmental Health will continue to adopt a leadership role in supporting delivery of local and national level initiatives which will deliver real benefits in

terms of service deliver and public health outcomes for residents, communities, businesses and the environment in Mid Devon.

Contact for more Information: Jeremy Pritchard, Lead Officer – Environmental Health 01884 244605 or jpritchard@middevon.gov.uk or Simon Newcombe, Public Health and Professional Services Manager 01884 244615 or snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk

Circulation of the Report: Cabinet Member for Community Well-Being (Cllr Colin Slade), Cabinet Member for Working Environment and Support Services/Public Health (Cllr Margaret Squires), Management Team