

# **RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SECTION**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

#### **FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2023/2024**

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## **FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2023/2024**

Runnymede Borough Council is designated as a Food Authority with statutory duties to enforce food law and carry out activities in accordance with an approved code of practice. We are required to produce a Food Service Plan annually in accordance with the Framework Agreement on Food Controls by Local Authorities. This plan sets out how we deliver our functions and our current work programme.

### **1. SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Priorities are generally established on the basis of risk and in response to consumer concerns.

#### **1.1 Aims and Objectives**

- 1.1.1 To ensure that food purchased and produced in the Borough of Runnymede is safe for consumption.
- 1.1.2 To meet statutory responsibilities in a cost effective and responsible manner in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice for England and associated guidance.
- 1.1.3 To encourage best practice and publish advice on food hygiene regulations to business and voluntary groups.
- 1.1.4 To respond to concerns from members of the public on the basis of risk and in a proportionate way.
- 1.1.5 To carry out enforcement responsibilities as laid down in the Environmental Services Enforcement Policy.
- 1.1.6 To undertake discretionary duties in relation to food sampling.
- 1.1.7 Initiate a proactive food safety education programme and promote good business practices.
- 1.1.7 Liaise and cooperate with partner agencies and other stakeholders.

#### **1.2 Demands on the Food Service**

Since the challenges of 2020-2022, the team has been working on a quarterly programme of interventions that has provided a route to recovery by the end of the 2022-2023 period. The Food Standards Agency operated a Covid recovery plan; directing LA's to concentrate resources on high risk premises and new premises awaiting inspection. We operated our own plan much sooner putting us in a better position at the start of this year. We have also spent a great deal of time updating our registration database. Our position is now fully recovered.

- 1.2.2 The majority of food premises in the area are predominately small to medium sized catering or retail businesses. At the start of the 2023-24 period our scheduled inspection programme is as follows:

PREMISES TYPE	NUMBER
Primary Producers	4
Manufacturers & packers	3
Importers/Exporters	2
Distributors/Transporters	3
Supermarket/Hypermarket	11
Smaller retailers	114
Retailers - Other	49

Restaurant/Cafe/Canteen	167
Hotel/Guest House	10
Pub/Club	65
Take-away	54
Caring Establishments	34
School/College	47
Mobile food unit	43
Restaurants and caterers - Other	55
TOTAL	661

1.2.3 In addition there is always a range of other issues that require attention:

- an international golf tournament held each year at Wentworth requiring the inspection of several visiting food outlets
- a large activity centre at Thorpe Park within excess of 20 food outlets catering for up to 1½ million visitors a year
- several annual agricultural show/fairs e.g. Egham, Chertsey, and the Black Cherry Fair.
- A number of “home authority” referrals requiring investigation relating to poor hygiene or food poisonings and referrals from other local authorities or partner agencies relating to food e.g. imported food issues or hazard warnings.

1.2.4 Microbiological sampling activities had been stopped during Covid. Routine and reactive microbiological sampling resumed in 2022-23 with officers contributing to national sampling plans. This will continue into 2023-24 with sampling of poorly compliant premises and contributions to routine sampling through the UKHSA national microbiological laboratory system.

## 2. **Enforcement Policy**

2.1 Environmental Services works to the current Environmental Services Enforcement Policy and Food Law Code of Practice. All food safety enforcement decisions are made in consideration of the enforcement policy.

2.2. Copies of the Environmental Services Enforcement Policy are available on request and the Policy is made available on the Council's website.

## 3. **SERVICE DELIVERY**

### 3.1 **Food Premises Interventions (Inspections, audits, monitoring)**

3.1.1 It is the Council's policy to carry out programmed food hygiene interventions in accordance with the minimum inspection frequencies defined in the Food Law Code of Practice. Priority will be given to inspections of higher risk premises (categories A, B and non-compliant C) and any product specific approved premises. This will continue to be the case in 2023-2024, however, the inspection frequency and risk rating regime is currently being reviewed by the Food Standards Agency for 2024-2025. At this stage of the review, for 2024-2025, proposals include an increased inspection frequency in poorly performing businesses and reduced inspection frequency in low risk premises; meaning that the number of interventions are likely to be broadly similar.

3.1.2 The following interventions were completed within the 2022/23 period:

RISK CATEGORY	Number of interventions
A	7

B	27
C	90
D	170
E	96
TOTAL	390

- 3.1.4 As a consequence of the interventions carried out in 2022/23 the Division undertook the following enforcement actions:

ENFORCEMENT TYPE	Number
Prosecutions	0
Simple cautions	0
Enforcement notices issued	21
Closures/voluntary closures	2
Written warnings issued	111

The team were also involved in the detention and seizure of bulk imported foods received from third countries.

- 3.1.5 The current profile of premises by risk rating in Runnymede and the anticipated number of routine primary inspections to be undertaken during the year 2022/2023 is as follows:

RISK CATEGORY	Interventions due
A	3
B	16
C	83
D	125
E	32
Unrated	21

In addition, it is estimated that:

- 50 premises will require revisiting to check compliance following adverse reports after initial inspection
- 30 new food premises will open and require inspection
- 30 outdoor/temporary mobile food traders at show/fairs will be visited
- 20 premises will request official re-visiting under the FHRS

- 3.1.6 The authority aims to carry out 95% of the inspections due for 2023-2024.

- 3.1.7 An Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) may be applied to some premises in the lower risk category E. However, this was not routinely applied during the 2022-2023 period and will be used sparingly during 2023-2024 in order to help maintain an accurate registration database.

## 3.2 **Complaints or Service Requests About Food or Food Premises**

- 3.2.1 The number of service requests relating to food or food premises investigated in 2022/23 was as follows. They include responses to both consumers and food businesses. It is estimated that a similar number of complaints will require investigation in 2023/2024:

COMPLAINT/REQUEST TYPE	Number
Food registration/business advice	153

Poor hygiene or structure	8
Suspected food poisoning	5
Other complaint/enquiry	48

### **3.3 Advice to Business and Education**

3.3.1 The authority will work with food businesses to help them comply with the law. It is the Council's policy to endeavour to provide advice to businesses including:

- providing on the spot advice during routine visits and inspections
- responding to queries
- advisory visits on request
- provision of advice relating to planning applications
- provision of free advisory leaflets and information sheets
- targeted mail shots arising from legislative and policy changes

3.3.2 The Service was involved in providing several face-to-face training sessions held at the Civic Centre during 2022-2023. We will continue to offer training during 2023-2024.

3.3.3 In addition to the above new food business operators and those who obtain lower food hygiene ratings may be invited to attend a short online seminar aimed at encouraging compliance and improving food safety culture.

### **3.4 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease**

3.4.1 In the event of an outbreak of food poisoning the Authority follows the procedures set out in the Surrey Outbreak Control Plan and the Environmental Health team will act in conjunction with our colleagues at UKHSA.

3.4.2 There were no major food poisoning outbreaks reported in the Borough during 2022/23. However the team undertook a number of investigations in relation to suspected cases and minor (routine) outbreak response.

3.4.3 Our officers also investigate notifications of food and non-food related infectious diseases in order to identify potential sources and to assist in the collection of national intelligence. We work very closely with UKHSA. In 2022/23 the division received the following food related infectious disease notifications:

ORGANISM	NUMBER
Salmonella Enteritidis	4
Salmonella Typhimurium	1
Other Salmonellas	5
E.Coli	4
Campylobacter	79
Giardia Lamblia	6
Cryptosporidium	1
E.coli O157	2
Shigella sonnei	6
Shigella Flexineri	2

## **4. RESOURCES**

#### 4.1 **Financial Allocation**

4.1.1 The actual costs of the service for the year ending 31 March 2022 were:

	NUMBER
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£168,304
TOTAL INCOME	£4,370

#### 4.2 **Staffing Allocation**

4.2.1 The 2023/2024 staffing allocation remained unchanged with the majority of the work being carried out by 2 full-time officers and one part-time officer (these officers also carry out other duties outside of the scope of this plan). Additionally, we have been able to attract a Master's student to fill our 0.4 FTE post.

### 5. **CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 The Service is in a good position coming into 2023-2024 having fully recovered from the inspection backlog caused by the Covid response.

5.2 RBC's Food Safety Plan for 2023/24 will primarily focus on tackling (on a priority risk basis), the programme of interventions for 2022/23; together with the continued investigation of food and hygiene complaints posing a risk to the public and infectious disease investigations.