



ANNEX 1

*Environmental Health
& Housing Services*

Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2009 – 2012

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June 2009

FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT PLAN 2009-2012

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FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2009-2012

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Service Plan sets out how the Council intends to provide an effective food safety service that meets the requirements of the Food Standards (FSA) Framework Agreement. It covers the functions carried out by authorised officers of the Food & Safety Team under the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990, the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2007 and relevant regulations made under the European Communities Act 1992.
- 1.2 The stated aim of the FSA is to make food safety enforcement more effective and for various agencies, including local government to undertake their duties in a more effective, comprehensive and collaborative manner. This Service Plan describes how Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council intends to achieve these aims, within its statutory remit and in support of corporate aims and objectives.
- 1.3 This Service Plan will run for a three year period and be reviewed annually by Members. It includes information on the following:
 - service aims and objectives;
 - background information about Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council;
 - information on the service provided;
 - resourcing the food safety function;
 - performance targets and how they will be achieved;
 - a review of performance; and
 - quality assurance procedures.

2. Service Aims and Objectives

2.1 Service Aims

2.1.1 The overall aim of the Council's Food & Safety Team is to work with businesses and consumers to endeavour to ensure that food intended for sale for human consumption within Tonbridge & Malling, is produced, stored, distributed, handled and purchased without risk to public health or the safety of the consumer.

2.1.2 The objectives of the Council are to:

- fulfil the statutory duty imposed on the Council under the Food Safety Act 1990 as "The Food Authority" and ensure the effective implementation of Government strategy on food safety issues, having regard to the official Code of Practice issued by the FSA and guidance issued by the Local Authority Co-ordinating Body and Regulatory Services (LACORS) and the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO), and
- protect the public by delivering a complimentary programme of education and enforcement which endeavours to ensure that food businesses are conversant with the law, understand the principles of hygiene and are operated and maintained at a standard that complies with relevant legislation.

2.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

2.2.1 Identified in "Spotlight", the Council's Corporate Performance Plan 2009/10, is the key improvement priority to "promote, encourage and provide opportunities for healthy living". The Food and Safety function makes a significant contribution to the attainment of this priority through the routine inspection of food businesses, the containment of infectious diseases, working with partners to deliver food safety training and promoting smoking cessation. Achieving our aims requires that we work closely with partner organisations, which is illustrated further in paragraph 4.10 of this Plan.

2.2.2 The Council's Food Safety function is placed in the Food & Safety Team of Environmental Health & Housing Services. The Food & Safety Team's Performance Plan for 2009/10, **Appendix 1**, identifies the key tasks, aims and objectives, standards and targets to be achieved and proposed improvement actions. This Plan is reviewed annually and progress is monitored by the Service Management Team and the Local Environmental Management Advisory Board (LEMAB).

2.3 External Influences

2.3.1 The regulatory framework for food safety enforcement changed significantly in 2006, through the adoption of EC Directives. This was succeeded by the publication of a revised Food Law Code of Practice in June 2008 by the FSA.

2.3.2 The FSA "Changes in Local Government Enforcement" (CLAE) and "Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System" (LAEMS) have been introduced in the last 12 months and both have had an impact on the UNIFORM database and the work of administration staff.

2.3.3 The establishment of the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) to take forward the principles of “Better Regulation” that were identified in the Hampton Review (Reducing Administrative Burdens: effective inspections and enforcement, March 2005) and their introduction of the Primary Authority Scheme will have an impact on all work of a regulatory nature carried out by the Team.

2.3.4 Opportunities for further FSA funding to support additional work with businesses in helping them to implement “Safer Food Better Business” and improve their Scores on the Doors ratings is available. At the time of preparing this plan funding has been applied for in a joint bid with Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Dartford, West Kent and North West Kent Colleges, for this purpose.

2.3.5 In October 2007 the Council’s Food & Safety Team introduced a six tier Scores on the Doors pilot scheme. Following a detailed review by the FSA, the model is to be adopted as a national scheme. The pilot scheme involved the Team in a considerable amount of additional work, but the benefits of improved standards of hygiene in many premises has been demonstrated over the last 18 months.

2.3.6 As a consequence of these external influences a Team Improvement Plan is in place to implement the following:

- review of all premises requiring approval;
- review of inspections and contacts with businesses to ensure they meet LBRO requirements for “Better Regulation”;
- review of team procedures relating to enforcement activities;
- identification of opportunities for cross-boundary working;
- re-evaluation of communication methods with businesses;
- development of a system to evaluate the impact of Scores on the Doors, and
- drafting procedures relating to Primary Authority.

3. Background Information

3.1 Profile of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

3.1.1 Tonbridge & Malling stretches from Snodland and Wouldham in the north to Tonbridge in the south, from Walderslade and Aylesford in the east to Borough Green and Ightham in the west. The Borough covers an area of 92 square miles and has a population of **108,600**. The Borough is mainly of a rural nature with the major areas of population being found at Tonbridge and in the conurbation surrounding the A20 in the Malling area.

3.1.2 The main Council offices are situated centrally at the Gibson Building, Kings Hill, West Malling where Environmental Health & Housing Services are based. Service users may contact the office in one of the following ways:

- by telephone or in person between 08.30 and 17.00 hours Monday to Friday
(telephone number 01732 876299);
- by email on foodandsafety@tmbc.gov.uk;
- by fax on 01732 841421;
- for out-of-hours emergencies, a telephone service is available for contact with a duty officer (telephone number 01732 844522).

3.2 Organisational Structure

3.2.1 Environmental Health & Housing, Waste and Street Scene Services have a wide range of duties and functions covering the spectrum of public health, environmental and housing functions. Through the Council's constitution and delegated functions the Team has delegated responsibility for food safety enforcement. The Director of Health & Housing has the authority to authorise legal proceedings in consultation with the Acting Chief Solicitor. The day to day management of the Team is the responsibility of the Food & Safety Team Manager, under the direction of the Chief Environmental Health Officer.

3.2.2 The Team is responsible for a number of functions detailed in the Team's Performance Plan. These functions are:

- the Food Safety function;
- the Health & Safety function;
- the Council's corporate Health & Safety Service; and
- the investigation and control of infectious disease.

3.2.4 Officers are required to work across all of the Team's work areas at a level appropriate to their competence and qualifications. The structure of the Food & Safety Team is detailed in **Appendix 2** and brief information on the roles played by officers working in the Food & Safety Team is provided in the table at **Appendix 3**.

3.2.5 The Environmental Health & Housing Services operate an emergency out-of-hours service. The service is undertaken by Environmental Health Officers who are supported by Service Managers, on a duty rota system. Arrangements are in place to mobilise professional and technical staff as required to respond to food safety emergencies, such as an outbreak of food poisoning.

3.2.6 Kent Scientific Services, the Health Protection Agency and Kent Environmental Microbiology Service at Ashford support the work of the Food & Safety Team through the provision of analytical and microbiological services.

3.3 Scope of the Food Safety Service

3.3.1 The Team is responsible for undertaking the following work activities associated with the Food Safety service:

- programmed food hygiene inspection and revisits;
- food sampling as required by the annual programme prepared by the Kent Environmental Health Managers Food Sampling Group and local needs;
- investigation of food complaints;
- investigation of cases of food poisoning and any associated outbreak control;
- responding to Food Standard Agency Food Alerts;
- provision of export food certificates;
- inspection of food;
- monitoring licensed/approved premises;
- facilitation of advisory and training services for businesses;
- developing educational campaigns; and
- health promotion initiatives with partners such as West Kent College.

3.3.2 While engaged in the above activities the Team uses a variety of means to ensure that individuals and organisations meet their legal responsibilities including education, negotiation, advice, guidance, warning letters, formal notices and prosecution. The Council believes in firm but fair regulation consistent with the Better Regulation Principles. Overall the Team seeks to work in collaboration with businesses while avoiding bureaucracy in the way it works.

3.3.3 The Environmental Health & Housing Enforcement Policy adopts the Regulators Compliance Code's five principles of good regulation, namely transparency, accountability, proportionality, consistency and targeting. This means that a graduated approach to food safety enforcement is adopted in all but the most serious of cases.

The policy was reviewed in May 2008, to reflect the findings of the Hampton Review (see paragraph 2.3.3) and reduce the administrative burdens on our businesses.

- 3.3.4 The Environmental Health & Housing Services is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities in all of our activities in accordance with the Council's Equality Policy. Every effort is made to ensure that we treat everyone equitably and fairly regardless of race and nationality, gender, sexuality, marital status, colour religion, disability or age.

SUSTAINABLE COMMS STRAT

3.4. Demands on the Food Enforcement Service

- 3.4.1 As of 1 April 2009 a total of 1024 Food premises are subject to programmed food safety interventions. The number and type of food premises within the Borough are detailed in the table below.

TYPE OF PREMISES	No.
Distributors/Transporters	33
Manufacturers/Retailers	1
Manufacturers/Packers/Processors	19
Primary Producers	12
Retailers	280
Restaurants and other caterers	675
Slaughterhouses	4
TOTAL	1024

- 3.4.2 Included in the above table are premises handling products of animal origin, these are designated approved premises under EC Regulations and include six egg packers; one milk producer and one fishery premises.
- 3.4.3 All food premises are rated according to their level of risk, as defined by the FSA Code of Practice. The risk rating determines the frequency and nature of the interventions that are classed as official controls. The table below provides a summary:

Category	Intervention Type	Frequency
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A and B	Inspection/partial Inspection or audit	A - 6 months B - 12 months
C not broadly compliant	Inspection/partial Inspection or audit	C - 18 months
C broadly compliant	Alternate between inspections/partial inspections or audit and other official controls	C - 18 months
D	Alternate between official controls and non-official controls	D - 24 months
E	Alternate enforcement strategy	E - 36 months

4. Service Delivery

4.1 Delivery mechanisms

To deliver the service as identified in section 2 of this plan we have adopted a balance of techniques and approaches, which can be summarised by considering the four main elements of our “enforcement mix”:

- **Intervention driven** – to carry out official controls at all known food premises in the borough at a frequency and intervention type determined by their risk rating. To carry out appropriate corrective action, including where necessary a range of enforcement options, such as the service of notices, simple cautions or prosecutions.
- **Demand driven** – to respond to all complaints relating to food and food premises and investigate them thoroughly; investigate cases of food related illness, food alerts and any other relevant matters in response to requests from stakeholders and the public.
- **Intelligence driven** – to gather appropriate information and intelligence, to address any threats to the health of consumers and target resources to areas of highest risk and where they can be most effective.
- **Education driven** – to provide advice and education to businesses and consumers within the Borough, to promote voluntary compliance and assist food business operators develop an understanding of their responsibilities. This is achieved by providing access to food hygiene training, delivering low cost seminars and providing advice and coaching during visits. It is believed that supporting legal compliance in this way is as important as detecting non-compliance.

4.2 Food Premises Interventions

4.2.1 The interventions programme of food premises forms the core activity of the Food Safety function. The programme of interventions is based on the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice Chapter 4. In addition to the programmed inspections other visits may be made to food premises following complaints from the public or requests from businesses for information and guidance.

The range of interventions includes:

- inspections
- monitoring
- surveillance

- verification
- audit; and
- sampling where the analysis/examination is to be carried out by an official laboratory, for example the HPA laboratory at Ashford.

Other interventions which are not official controls include:

Advice, education, coaching or information and intelligence gathering.

4.2.2 The work activity in respect of food safety inspections over the past two years and an estimate of the inspections required to be undertaken during 2009/10 are shown below:

Table B

Premises Risk Rating & Frequency	No of Inspections 2007/08	No of Interventions 2008/09	Estimated Interventions 2009/10
A – 6 mths	8	11	3
B – 1 year	91	66	42
C – 18 mths	201	290	159
D – 2 years	49	56	47
E – 3 years	50	103	57
TOTAL	399	526	308

4.2.3 Details of formal action taken by the Food & Safety Team are given in below:

Table C

Type of formal action taken	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Improvement Notices	13	21	16
Simple Cautions	1	3	0
Prosecutions under Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006	1	0	1*

*the prosecution case is currently being prepared.

4.3 Food Complaints

4.3.1 Investigations by officers following a complaint about a food product is an important function of the Team's food safety work. Authorised officers assess all food complaints upon receipt and, in circumstances where a need has been identified, commence investigations to determine the cause of the complaint. Officers' investigations identify whether an offence under the EC Regulation 178/2004 and Food Safety Act 1990 has been committed and if there is a need for formal action. Where appropriate, food complaints are referred to the originating authority – that is the local authority in whose area the food was manufactured - for further investigation. Consultation with the Primary Authority also takes place when appropriate.

4.3.2 The numbers of food complaints received over the past three years are given in the table below and remain low in number, the most common source of complaints being supermarkets.

Type of Premises	Number of Food Complaints		
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09

Bakers Shops	3	1	-
Chemists – with Food	-	-	-
Confectioners	1	-	1
Dairy	-	-	1
Fish & Chip Shops	3	-	1
Food Manufacturers	-	1	1
Greengrocers	-	-	-
Grocers (No open food)	2	-	-
Office Canteen	-	-	1
Public House (full catering)	2	-	-
Restaurant/Café	2	1	4
Retail	-	2	1
Supermarket	22	22	17
Takeaway	4	3	3
Wholesale Food	1	1	-
Other	-	4	-
TOTALS	40	35	30

4.4 Primary Authority Principle

4.4.1 Effective support for businesses on food safety matters depends on reliable and accessible advice from local authorities. Businesses trading across a number of local authority areas should be confident that advice is consistent. The Primary Authority scheme established under the provision of Office (LBRO) aims to support national progress towards this outcome, and was formally introduced on 1 April 2008.

4.4.2 Businesses will be able to form a statutory partnership with a single local authority. The guidance and advice the local authority provides must be taken into consideration by officers carrying out inspections and dealing with instances of non-compliance.

4.4.3 The requirements of the Primary Authority Scheme are that officers:

- consult with the LBRO website for details of Primary Authority partnerships;
- follow guidance issued by LBRO;
- adopt any inspections plans established between a Primary Authority and a business, and
- review requests for local partnerships as a case by case basis and adopt a Primary Authority status if directed to by the LBRO.

To date there have not been any requests from local businesses for a Primary Authority partnership.

4.5 Advice to Businesses and the Public

4.5.1 The Service is committed to ensuring that advice and support is available to all food businesses in the Borough when requested. Last year the Team were involved in:

- a “Reach for the Stars” seminar intended to help businesses improve their “Scores on the Doors” ratings which was attended by approximately 60 local businesses;
- in the current academic year the delivery of 24 level two award in food safety in catering, with a 95% pass rate; two level three awards in supervising food safety in catering and one level four award in managing food safety in catering, through the West Kent College Partnership;
- working with schools during Food Safety Week 2008;
- organising two south east trainers forums in conjunction with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health;
- providing advice to businesses during programmed interventions;
- carrying out visits in response to requests from business’s for advice and information; and
- continuing to support businesses by providing free copies of the “Safer Food Better business” pack, to approximately 120 businesses; and continuing to develop the Team’s web pages to provide current information to both businesses and the public.

We will continue to offer a wide range of support to businesses and the local community in the current year, including working with Nursing and Residential Homes and promoting food safety with the elderly as part of Food Safety Week 2009.

4.6 Food Inspection and Sampling

4.6.1 Food sampling to ensure the safety of food is an important public health function. Each year a food sampling programme is produced which outlines the Council’s sampling strategy and approach to specific local and national demands. Compliance with all legislation and statutory Codes of Practice is ensured when undertaking sampling of food.

4.6.2 The Kent Food Sampling Group co-ordinate the county sampling programme. Each year a plan is developed by the Group incorporating priorities identified by LACORS and the Food Standards Agency. Microbiological examinations are undertaken by the Health Protection Agency - Kent Environmental Microbiological Service at Ashford. In 2008/09 the Food & Safety Team took 105 food samples, 13 of which were reported as unsatisfactory and the appropriate feedback given to businesses and follow up action taken.

4.6 During 2009/10 food sampling and microbiological activities will include the following activities:

- routine sampling of food;
- sampling following receipt of a food complaint;

- environmental swabbing of food premises;
- investigations undertaken following a food poisoning; and
- sampling following food hygiene inspections where problems were noted.

Formal samples are taken in line with the Food Law Code of Practice Chapter 6 and current guidance issued by HPA, LACORS or the Kent Food Sampling Sub Group.

Informal samples reflect the numbers of reactive samples taken as a result of complaints or where officers take samples from food businesses as part of routine surveillance activity.

4.7 Imported Foods

4.7.1 The Service is committed to ensuring that any illegally imported food found during a food inspection is properly dealt with. The Team will be working towards:

- developing procedures to deal with any illegally imported foods;
- ensuring all relevant officers are fully authorised under the appropriate legislation to deal with illegally imported food.

4.8 Control and Investigation of Food Poisoning Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

4.8.1 Officers investigate food related infectious disease notifications in accordance with its documented procedures. The primary objective of every investigation is to identify the cause of infection and prevent any further spread. Response times are based on a risk assessment approach and will vary from within 24 hours for high risk infections such as E.coli to 48 hours for other medium to low risk infections. Officers will liaise with its Consultants in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC), which it has appointed as Proper Officers under the provisions of the Public Health Act 1984 and Section 47 of the National Assistance Act 1948. The CCDC's are employed by the Health Protection Agency. These arrangements enhance the linkage between organisations dealing with this aspect of infectious disease control. Maidstone Borough Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council jointly fund a post which deals with the administrative functions of the Infectious Disease Notifications system including the preparation of statistical information. Key policies in respect of food related infectious diseases are that:

- outbreaks will be responded to in accordance with the approved "Outbreak Control Plan" and in full liaison with CCDC who will lead the "Outbreak Control Team";
- serious infectious disease notifications e.g. VTEC or Clostridium botulinum, will be dealt with in consultation with the CCDC and Food Standards Agency; and
- other infectious disease investigations will be undertaken in consultation with the CCDC, and in accordance with Team Procedures.

4.8.2 The incidence of confirmed cases of food-borne disease in the Borough over the past three years is detailed in the table below. Based on the activity over the last three years it is estimated that approximately 150 infectious disease investigations will be carried out, requiring a resource of 30 days per year. Typically there are only one or two outbreaks a year involving small numbers of cases.

Incidence of food related infectious diseases 2006-2008

Communicable Disease	2006	2007	2008
Salmonella	44	47	18
Campylobacter	186	154	139
Dysentery	5	4	5
Hepatitis A	0	Figures not available*	0
E.coli - 0157	3	Figures not available*	0
Totals	238	205	162

*Less Hepatitis A & E. coli figures

4.9 Food Alerts

4.9.1 Food alerts are issued by the FSA, they relate to national food scares or information about food being withdrawn from supply or sale and being recalled by the manufacturer or retailer. The majority of food alerts are for information only (63 in 2008/09).

4.9.2 Food alerts for action are not significant in number (11 in 2008/09) but have the potential to impact on programmed work, because they relate to serious public health risks requiring rapid follow-up by officers to prevent affected food from entering the food chain.

4.10 Liaison with other Organisations

4.10.1 It is the Council's policy to involve stakeholders in the supply and review of its food safety services. The Team works increasingly in partnership to deliver services, examples of which are given below:

- participation in the Kent Environmental Health Managers/Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's (CIEH) Food Technical Group. This Group acts as a county-wide liaison group for all food safety issues and includes representatives from the Health Protection Agency and Trading Standards as well as all local authorities;
- partnership with Kent local authorities in working to develop a countywide Healthy Eating Award;
- partnership with West Kent College Tonbridge, Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to deliver food hygiene training courses; and

- liaison with the Health Protection Agency and Kent Scientific Services in connection with food sampling.

4.11 **Food Safety Promotion**

4.11.1 The Food & Safety Team continues to adopt a proactive approach to enforcement via a number of food safety promotional initiatives, which include:

- participation in the Food Safety Week awareness campaign;
- Reach for the Stars Seminars to support businesses with improving their food hygiene standards;
- Scores on the Doors;
- continuing support for businesses in implementing the Safer Food Better Business Pack; and
- publication of *Wise-Up* twice a year for all our businesses.

4.11.2 The Environmental Projects Co-ordinator post created in May 2002 has assisted the Team to develop the its educational and proactive campaigns, for example Food Safety Week and the Reach for the Stars Seminar.

5. Resources

5.1 Financial Allocation

- 5.1.1 The Council's budget for 2009/10 identifies a budget heading dealing specifically with costs relating to the Food Safety function **Appendix 4**. The separation of costs associated with Food Safety functions allows managers to monitor spending and income trends in this area.

5.2 Staffing Resources

- 5.2.1 The structure of the Food & Safety Team and information on officers' roles was detailed in Section 3.2.4 of this Plan. Detailed below is a statement showing staff resources working on food law enforcement and related matters expressed in Full Time Equivalents (FTE's).

Food safety function staffing resources, expressed as Full Time Equivalents (FTE)

Role	FTE 2008/09
Manager – responsible for the day to day management of the food safety function and monitoring performance.	0.5
Environmental Health Officers – responsible for interventions, enforcement in all food premises and other related activities.	1.3
Food & Safety Officer – responsible for interventions and enforcement in medium and low risk food premises and other related activities.	1.5
Food & Safety Officer (Student EHO) – responsible for low risk food premises and other related activities.	0.4
Admin Support – functional support to the Team.	1.0
Environmental Projects Co-ordinator – responsible for promotional activities and events.	0.30
Total FTE	5.0

5.2.2 Estimation of Staff Resources Required for 2009/10

The following estimation of resources allocated to specific work activities has been based on time recording results, experience, projected inspection figures for 2009/10 and the Team performance Plan for the year. All calculations assume 1FTE = 220 working days. Estimates include revisits and travelling:

Food Hygiene Inspections	2.0 FTE
Complaints and service requests	0.2 FTE

Formal action	0.2 FTE
Advice and enquiries	0.2 FTE
Sampling	0.2 FTE
Infectious Disease	0.1 FTE
Food Safety Incidents/Hazard Warnings	0.1 FTE
Health Promotion/Campaigns	1.0 FTE
Delivering Training	0.2 FTE
Primary Authority	0.05 FTE
Officer Training	0.15 FTE
Team management	0.5 FTE
Other	0.20 FTE
Total	5.1 FTE

5.2.3 A comparison of the estimated staff resources required for 2009/10 and the actual staffing allocation shows that there is a slight discrepancy (0.1 FTE) in the available resource and planned resource to deliver the team objectives for 2009/10. Should it be necessary the temporary and overtime budget would be drawn upon to employ a contractor.

5.2.4 During 2008/09 two officers were on maternity leave necessitating the employment of a contractor to support the inspection programme. We have continued to maintain our record of achieving all inspection targets over the last three years.

5.3 Staff Development Plan

5.3.1 The Council has achieved Investors in People status and places significant importance on the development and training of its staff to meet its business needs. During annual appraisals, training and development needs are identified for all employees. An annual training plan is prepared for the Team and delivered throughout the year. Importance is given to the need to ensure continuing professional competence in technical and professional areas of work. The Service will ensure that officers receive regular training to maintain and improve their competency. During 2009/10 all officers involved in food interventions will receive a minimum of 10 hours continuing professional development as required by the FSA Code of Practice, which will include refresher training in enforcement procedures and Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) is being arranged during the year.

5.3.2 The Food & Safety Team has a programme of in-house staff training sessions delivered bi-monthly on areas of current concern to the team. In addition monthly Team Briefings disseminate information to ensure team awareness of issues relating to enforcement, progress with team targets and customer related issues e.g. results of NI 182 surveys and a short technical briefing is usually delivered at these briefings.

5.3.3 The Kent Environmental Health Managers Food Group provides useful low-cost training in association with LACORS and the Food Standards Agency. This Group is reviewing the County wide implementation of the new Competence Framework for Practitioners in Food Inspection, Safety and Standards.

5.3.4 Enforcement officers are encouraged to join a relevant professional body, the fees of which are reimbursed by the Council.

5.4 **Quality Assessment**

5.4.1 The Food & Safety Team has reviewed its Quality Assurance system covering its enforcement activities in Food Safety. The Quality Assurance system defines what work the team will undertake, how the work will be done and the nature and timing of management monitoring. The documented system covers critical areas of work and has regard to LACORS and FSA guidance and Statutory Codes of Practice.

5.4.2 The specific areas covered by the quality assurance system are:

- food safety inspections;
- institution of formal enforcement action;
- food poisoning investigations;
- food sampling;
- food hazard warnings/incidents;
- food complaints; and
- administration of Scores on the Doors and the Health Eating Award.

5.4.3 The Food & Safety Team Manager is responsible for maintaining the quality assurance system and monitoring compliance with procedures. This role aims to ensure that uniformity of approach to enforcement work is adopted in the team. The Chief Environmental Health Officer and the Food & Safety Team Manager have monthly focus meetings to review systems and team performance, the results of which are fed into monthly team briefings. The Environmental Health & Housing Service Management Team reviews attainment of targets set in the Team Briefings on a quarterly basis. Additionally an annual report is presented to the LEMAB.

5.4.4 Performance monitoring is supported by the use of the Services computer software system "Uniform". This database contains details of all commercial premises and records actions taken during visits. Management reports showing progress towards meeting team targets are an essential part of the team's quality assurance system and are generated on a monthly or ad hoc basis. The maintenance of an accurate database is key to the efficient operation of the Service. The Food & Safety Team's Quality Monitoring Procedure includes details of how the database is updated, which includes:

- information from programmed inspections;
- officer knowledge of changes in their district;

- collecting information from lists of planning applications;
- checking the “closed” premises database;
- an annual random selection and audit of a specified number of premises from the database;
- information from the registering and licensing of new premises;
- liaison with other statutory agencies; and
- undertaking premises surveys.

5.4.5 It is intended to participate as appropriate in bench marking, peer review and inter-authority auditing with the Kent Food Technical Group.

6. Review

6.1 Review against the Service Plan

6.1.2 A review of this Plan and the Food & Safety Team’s Performance Plan will be undertaken in April 2010. Details of the Team’s performance against the targets set in the Food & Safety Team’s 2008/09 Performance Plan can be found at **Appendix 5**.

6.1.2 **Appendix 5** indicates that two improvements actions were not accomplished during 2008/09. This was as a result of considerable operational pressures due to a major music event being staged at a sizeable licensed venue, in which officers were engaged over a period of some months with the organisers, in ensuring that suitable measures were in place to protect public health and safety.

6.2 Areas for Improvement

6.2.1 A number of improvement actions have been identified in the Food & Safety Team’s 2009/10 Performance Plan (**Appendix 1**) and section 2.3.6 above, which will be carried out during the year. Achievement of these improvements will be monitored by Service Managers and where there are significant deviations from targets; reports will be made to the Cabinet on the relevant subject.