

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

**2 September 2014**

**Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Information**

**1 FOOD AND SAFETY TEAM UPDATE**

**Summary**

**This report provides an update on the work of the Food and Safety Team and changes in Food Standards Agency policy.**

**1.1 Free coaching for takeaway businesses with a hygiene rating of between zero and two.**

1.1.1 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) made available over 100 hundred free coaching sessions available in Kent to help improve hygiene standards in takeaway premises with a hygiene rating of between zero and two. The Food and Safety Team nominated eleven businesses that met the criteria, ten of which accepted the offer of help.

1.1.2 The FSA appointed NSF, a national food safety consultancy, to deliver the coaching sessions to food business operators (FBOs), which took place in June in the form of a one-to-one food safety coaching session, held at the business premises. The session was aimed at the FBO, head chef, or person in charge of food safety at the business. Translated sessions were provided for two local businesses.

1.1.3 The coaching was based on the 4C's; Cross-contamination, Cleaning, Chilling and Cooking and included a series of practical videos and a hand washing and cleaning demonstration. The session also focused on the businesses' food safety management system. Feedback reports were provided for each business.

1.1.4 In due course, officers will re-visit a number of these businesses to provide feedback to the FSA on the impact of the coaching sessions in improving hygiene standards. This will take place when all coaching visits are completed across Kent.

1.1.5 I see this initiative as a modest but helpful contribution to aligning our core regulatory role with objectives of assisting local business contributing to economic vitality.

## **1.2 Food Sampling Update**

- 1.2.1 The practice of serving food on surfaces other than plates, such as wooden boards and slates, is an increasing trend in restaurants and public houses. The platters are not always suitable for washing in a dishwasher and therefore have to be washed by hand. It is recognised that wooden surfaces will gradually become scored as they are used, making them more difficult to clean effectively. Moreover, if platters are stacked on top of each other after washing, they may not dry sufficiently quickly, leading to opportunities for any remaining bacteria to multiply.
- 1.2.2 As a result of these concerns, a national sampling campaign started in April, specifically looking at the effectiveness of cleaning and storing these platters and to ensure that the risks around them have been properly managed.
- 1.2.3 Officers have, to date, submitted 30 swabs and half of the results have been unsatisfactory. Officers have been advising the businesses involved regarding cleaning and disinfection of the boards and re-sampling.

## **1.3 Changes to the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme**

- 1.3.1 The FSA have made some minor changes to the operation of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme to bring it in line with the statutory scheme operating in Wales.
- 1.3.2 Previously, businesses would be sent a certificate and window sticker showing their rating but businesses will now only be sent a window sticker. Display of this remains discretionary at the current time.
- 1.3.3 'Low-risk' establishments which are not generally recognised by consumers as being food businesses and certain establishments operating from private addresses (e.g. child-minders) will no longer be able to 'opt in' to the scheme.

## **1.4 Changes to the Food Law Code of Practice**

- 1.4.1 In April the FSA updated the Food Law Code of Practice. The Code is made under Section 40 of the Food Safety Act 1990 and concerns the enforcement of legislation by Food Authorities. Food Authorities are required to have regard to this Code when discharging their duties.
- 1.4.2 The primary revisions to the Code of Practice are intended to:
- 1) clarify and update the risk descriptors used to assign intervention frequencies at food establishments, which is intended to enhance consistency of approach by local authority officers;
  - 2) improve the focus and effectiveness of enforcement by redistributing the minimum intervention frequency in businesses compliant with food law and

with good management controls in place, which will allow local authorities to focus on those establishments that are persistently non-compliant; and

- 3) enable a single competent authority to take on all enforcement and control activities at certain establishments, where possible, thereby reducing the need for dual enforcement and burdens on both the regulator and relevant food businesses, for example, meat plants where the Food Standards Agency and local authorities may have an enforcement role.

## **1.5 Legal Implications**

- 1.5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to monitor food safety and health and safety of commercial premises within the Borough.
- 1.5.2 Regard to the FSA Food Law Code of Practice is a requirement of the Food Safety Act 1990 and associated regulations.

## **1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.6.1 The costs of sampling are met from existing budgets and the Public Health (England) sampling allowance.

## **1.7 Risk Assessment**

- 1.7.1 The work of the Food and Safety Team is conducted in accordance with the Service Enforcement Policy, FSA Food Law Code of Practice and associated guidance.

Background papers:

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Nil

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