



FOOD SERVICE

SERVICE PLAN

2013-2014



FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2013-14

INTRODUCTION

The Service Plan relates to the year commencing 1st April 2013 and ending 31st March 2014.

It covers the service provision for the Food Safety, Food Standards and Feedstuffs functions of Flintshire County Council.

The purpose of this Plan is to provide:

- Information about the scope of the Service.
- Information about the services provided.
- Information about the means of Service provision.
- Information about performance of the Food Service against Performance Targets set out in Plan as well as against national or locally defined Performance Indicators.
- Information relating to reviewing performance in order to address any variance from meeting the requirements of the Service Plan.

Service Plans will be produced annually to allow for meaningful review and progression, in accordance not only with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency “Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement” but also with the principles of the “Wales Programme for Improvement”.

This Service Plan also forms part of the Authority’s commitment to delivering the aspirations of the Local Service Board to provide citizen centred services and to work in collaboration and co-operation.

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2013-14

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1.0 SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the Food Service are to:

1. Promote, through education and enforcement, the sale and/or production of food which is fit and without risk to health.
2. Prevent and control the spread of food borne illness through education and enforcement.

These will be achieved by:

- (a) Providing a complete and holistic food law enforcement service covering the areas of food hygiene and safety, food standards and animal feeding stuffs in accordance with relevant food legislation and Codes of Practice, thereby fulfilling statutory obligations.
- (b) Providing a responsive service to demand driven elements such as food safety incidents, outbreaks of food related infectious disease, complaints and request for advice from both businesses and members of the public, in accordance with the National and locally defined performance indicators, relevant Codes of Practice, plans and protocols.
- (c) Assisting businesses to comply with all relevant legislation by using a balance of techniques and approaches in order to ensure the safety and well being of the Public and of the environment in line with the Public Protection Enforcement Policy 2010.
- (d) Maintaining an up-to-date database of all food establishments in the County so that resources can be effectively defined and utilised to meet statutory, national and locally defined targets of inspection, sampling, specific initiatives and tasks set by Food Standards Agency Wales (FSA), other agencies, or based on local need.
- (e) Providing an open and transparent Food Service with clear lines of communication for all service users.

1.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans

The Food Service links to the Community Strategy 2009-2019 and the Improvement Plan for the Council. There are five key priorities contained in the Community Strategy, these are:

1. Economic Prosperity
2. Health Improvement
3. Learning and Skills for Life
4. Living Sustainably
5. Safe and Supportive Communities

The Food Service has direct links with the Environment Directorate Plan 2013 Onwards and the Public Protection Service Plan 2013-2014. The Public Protection Service Plan contains annually revised Operational Action Plans, which have been informed by a range of external and internal drivers and through a greater focus on robust risk assessment, intelligence led intervention, targeting and performance management. All team members contribute to devising the Operational Action Plans for each Service Area.

The Food Service links with the Council's Community Strategy and with some of the key strategic priorities of Welsh Government such as the "Health, Social Care and Well-Being Strategy" and "Health Challenge Wales".

Food Safety is a statutory duty of the Council. Targets to be achieved are set in relation to both National Strategic Indicators and Service Improvement Data. A Corporate Performance Management System monitors performance of all services within the Council and these are reported quarterly. The areas reported on are the National Strategic Indicator, "the percentage of premises Broadly Compliant with Food Hygiene Legislation" and the following Service Improvement Data:

- (a) The percentage of High Risk Food Safety inspections carried out.
- (b) The percentage of High Risk Food Standards inspections carried out. This is reported in the Trading Standards figure, as are (d) and (e).
- (c) The percentage of new businesses inspected for Food Safety.
- (d) The percentage of new businesses inspected for Food Standards.

- (e) The percentage of significant breaches resolved in relation to Food Standards.

The Food Service will participate actively in strategies and programmes associated with the “Wales Programme for Improvement” and the “Making the Connections Agenda” and will continue to implement performance management systems to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in a meaningful way to the citizens of Flintshire.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Authority Profile

Flintshire is a Unitary Authority. The County has an area of 43,464 hectares and a population of approximately 152,700 as per the 2011 Census. The County is made up of a mixture of small towns and conurbations, particularly to the south and predominately rural and agricultural land located in the north. The population is subjected to small seasonal fluctuations due to influx of tourists to the area. It has a number of industrial estates on which many manufacturers including food manufacturers are located, as well as headquarters for several food manufacturers including one large national food retailer. The coastal edge of Flintshire County Council abuts the Dee Estuary upon which cockle and mussel beds are situated and there is a small port located at Mostyn.

2.2 Organisational Structure

The organisation structure of the Food Service which is located within the Public Protection Service of the Environment Directorate is illustrated on the Charts which also detail where the service fits in the Management and Cabinet structure of the Council. The Charts are detailed within Appendix 1.

Specialist services are provided by Public Health England (formally Health Protection Agency), Public Health Wales and Public Analyst Scientific Services (formally Eurofins) (See Section 3.5).

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

The Food Service is situated in the Environment Directorate as part of the Public Protection Service.

The Food Safety and Food Standards functions both fall under the responsibility of the Team Leader – Food Safety and Food Standards. Feedingstuffs is managed by the

Team Leader – Animal Health and Health Promotion. These functions sit within the Health Protection Service area of Public Protection, which is overseen by the Health Protection Manager.

The scope of the respective component parts of the service are detailed below:

Food Safety

The Food Safety component of the service has the following responsibilities and service provision:

- Enforcement of relevant food safety and food hygiene legislation, in all food establishments in Flintshire.
- Registration of food businesses and approval of premises subject to compliance with product specific legislation (meat products, fish, shellfish, fishery products and dairy products).
- Implementation of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
- Investigation of food complaints that relate to fitness of food for human consumption as well as food complaints that relate to the nature, substance or microbiological quality of the food, taking appropriate action as necessary. In addition, investigation of all complaints which relate to hygiene matters (premises, practices, personnel) in food businesses.
- Investigation of sporadic cases of food (including water) related notifiable diseases and suspected cases of food poisoning.
- Investigation and control of outbreaks of food poisoning and food related notifiable diseases.
- Response to Food Alerts and food related incidents taking appropriate action as necessary.
- Advice to new and existing business, responses to plans, licensing and land charges referrals.
- Providing Export Certificates to allow movement of food from the UK to countries outside the EU.
- Act as Primary Authority for Iceland Food Retail Stores and act as Home and/or Originating Authority for other companies where necessary.
- Undertake food sampling in accordance with the Sampling Programme.
- Educational and promotional initiatives

Food Standards

The Food Standards component of the service has the following responsibilities and service provision:

The Food Standards component of the service has the following responsibilities and service provision:

- Respond to requests for consumer advice in matters regarding food standards, labelling and composition.
- Undertake a pre-planned programme of visits to food premises within Flintshire.
- Investigation of complaints relating to the nature, quality or substance of food and complaints relating to mislabelling of food taking appropriate action as necessary.
- Provide advice, information and assistance to food businesses including promotion of the use of the Flintshire Trading Standards Information Pack.
- Undertake food sampling in accordance with the Sampling Programme and in response to incidents.
- Undertake promotional and educational initiatives.
- Undertake duties and responsibilities as Primary Authority, Home Authority and Originating Authority for food businesses within Flintshire.

Feedstuffs

- Provide advice, information and support to feed businesses.
- Undertake a pre-planned programme of visits to feed premises within Flintshire.
- Investigation of complaints relating to feedstuffs and sampling of feed as when required.

2.4 Demands of the Food Service

The Service Delivery Point for both the Food Safety and Food Standards is County Hall, Mold. Both Service Delivery Points are open during normal office hours of 8.30 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. There is no official “out of hours” provision. However, there are systems in place to contact relevant staff should an emergency situation arise via the Care Connect Service.

There are 1536 food premises in Flintshire. Of the total number of food premises in Flintshire approximately 1009 are caterers, with the remainder being made up predominantly by retailers (approximately 353). The catering establishment cover a wide range of types of premises

varying from restaurants, cafes, schools, hotels, pubs, residential care homes, hospitals to mobile food vehicles. There are currently 42 food manufacturing and packing businesses within Flintshire. The types of food manufacturers within Flintshire vary greatly in the types of processes they use to produce food. These range from a cooked meat manufacturer with national distribution, several ready meal manufacturers with national distribution through to an on-farm milk pasteuriser supplying milk locally. The diversity in the types of manufacturers operating within the County places a significant demand on the breadth and depth of knowledge required by officers within the Team.

The Dee Estuary has a thriving cockle industry with three cockle beds falling within Flintshire's jurisdiction. There is also a new mussel bed. These beds place significant demands on the Team, particularly during the six month cockle opening season. The management of the Dee accounts for a large portion of the Sampling Budget due to the statutory sampling of the water and shellfish. Enforcement on the Dee involves a considerable amount of cross-agency partnership working with National Resources Wales (formally Environment Agency Wales), Wirral Council, the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), other neighbouring Local Authorities, the North West Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities and the Food Standards Agency Wales.

Port Health

There is a small port at Mostyn for which the Food Team has responsibility in relation to the ships coming into port requiring a Ship Sanitation Certificate or a food hygiene inspection.

National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

Flintshire County Council implemented the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in December 2010. The administration of this Scheme in both the setting up and in its maintenance, accounts for a considerable volume of work for the Team.

This demand is set to increase greatly through 2013/14 due to the introduction of the mandatory display of Food Hygiene Rating Stickers within Wales as of November 2013. This is discussed in detail in Section 6.4.

The premises profile, as defined in the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) September 2008, is as follows:

FOOD STANDARDS			FOOD SAFETY			
Risk	Min.	No. of		Risk	Min.	No. of
High	1 year	10	High	A	6 months	4
				B	12 months	65
Medium	2 years	472		C	18 months	589
Low	5 years	819	Low	D	2 years	255
				E	3 years	499
TOTAL		1301		TOTAL		1412

The vast majority of food business owners are English speaking with a minor requirement for written reports in Welsh. All advisory literature is produced bilingually in accordance with the Welsh Policy of the Council. Approximately 14% of residents in Flintshire are recorded as Welsh speaking. Approximately 4% of food businesses are of ethnic origin (Asian, Chinese, Turkish and Greek) and once again advisory literature is available in a range of ethnic languages to assist in understanding.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Food Service undertakes enforcement in accordance with the Public Protection Enforcement Policy which has been updated and approved by Members in 2010. This policy has been based upon the principles of the Enforcement Concordat adopted by Members in September 2000 and the Regulators Compliance Code.

There is also an Enforcement Policy for residents entitled "Regulation and Enforcement – Involving Local Residents", which was approved by Council in September 2011.

A consultation on amendments to the Regulators Compliance Code closed on 3rd May 2013. The Enforcement Policy will have to be reviewed in accordance with any changes that are brought about following this consultation process.

3.0 SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1. Food Premises Inspections

Flintshire County Council has one National Strategic Indicator and a number of Internal Performance Indicators relating to Food Safety and Food Standards for 2013/2014 which are detailed in 1.2.

The Food Service will carry out inspections in relation to the Performance Indicator, in accordance with pre-planned programmes drawn up annually and commencing on 1st April each year, to coincide with the reporting requirements for the Service to the Food Standards Agency Wales, as part of the Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS). These inspection programmes are based on the risk rating of the premises/trader so that there is a targeting of resources to ensure that those premises/traders with a high or medium risk are prioritised for inspection.

The performance of the Food Team in 2012/2013 was excellent with the Team achieving 100% of High Risk inspections for both Food Safety and Food Standards. The target of 87% of new businesses to be inspected for Food Hygiene was exceeded with 89% actually being achieved. This took considerable efforts from the Team. Food Standards also exceeded their target of 70% to achieve 71%.

There is a National Strategic Indicator in place, namely the percentage of businesses which are Broadly Compliant with Food Hygiene legislation. It is pleasing that 83% of food businesses within Flintshire fall into this category.

For Food Safety the total number of High Risk programmed inspections for the year 2013/2014 is 403 and for Food Standards, the total number is 10. Food premises which are High Risk for the rest of Trading Standards legislation are inspected by this team. This equates to approximately 40 additional inspections which will be carried out by the Trading Standards Officer and the Trading Standards Enforcement Officer within the Food Team.

The key objectives for the coming year in relation to programmed inspection and enforcement work are as follows:

- Inspect 100% of High Risk (A-C) rated food premises for Food Safety.
- Inspect 100% of all High Risk (A) rated food premises for Food Standards.
- To inspect 30% of Medium Risk (B) rated premises for Food Standards. To be achieved by combining Food

Safety and Food Standards inspections to maximise utilisation of resources and in line with the Better Regulation Delivery Office to reduce the burden on business.

- 30% of D and E Rated premises for Food Hygiene to receive a full food hygiene inspection. This is as part of a 3 year programme to ensure all D and E rated premises will receive a Food Hygiene Rating. Priority is being given to those which are most overdue a food hygiene inspection.
- To revisit all premises receiving a National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme score of 2 or lower, in line with the All Wales Revisit Policy written by the All Wales Food Safety Technical Panel.
- Prioritisation of the inspection of new food businesses for Food Safety and Food Standards by using a questionnaire on all new food businesses to identify those which should be prioritised for inspection thereby allowing better targeting of resources.

A full breakdown of premises programmed for inspection 2013-2014 in relation to their Risk Rating is given in Appendix 2. This shows totals of 996 for Food Hygiene and 839 for Food Standards.

For Feedstuffs there is one High Risk premises and 238 Medium Risk premises. A target of 10% (24) premises has been set for Medium Risk inspections for Feedstuffs.

3.1.1 Additional Targeted Inspection/ Enforcement Activity

Additional targeted inspection and enforcement activity due to be undertaken is as follows:

- A further increase in cross-agency working to target enforcement activity in relation to shellfish activity on the Dee Estuary. This is building on cross-agency working undertaken in 2012/2013.
- An increase in proactive sampling work on Food Standards Authenticity.
- Effective and professional liaison, communication and co-operation with Iceland Frozen Foods, other LA's and BRDO relating to Primary Authority (PA) matters.
- Continued implementation of all relevant recommendations as identified by Professor Pennington in the Public Inquiry Report using the comprehensive Audit Checklist.
- Investigation of notified food safety related fraud incidents, such as illegal slaughter of meat, including referrals made anonymously.
- Issue of Sanitary Certificates as appropriate for

incoming vessels to the Port of Mostyn.

- Appropriate response and liaison with other agencies as necessary for Civil Contingency matters.
- Submit a bid to the FSA Food Safety Management System Grant Funding to provide Food Safety Management/Food Hygiene Training to Chinese Takeaways in the medium of Chinese. This bid is being submitted jointly with Wrexham County Borough Council as part of our collaborative working.

3.1.2 Resources for Inspections and Additional Enforcement Activity

The programmed food hygiene inspections will be undertaken by 5.5 FTE Environmental Health Officers (EHO), and 3.0 FTE Food Safety Officers (FSO). A full breakdown of resources is given in 4.2 – Staffing Allocation.

Food Standards work will be carried by 1.0 FTE Trading Standards Officer, 0.4 FTE Trading Standards Enforcement Officer and 0.6 FTE EHOs. The other EHOs who are present in the team have not undertaken recent Food Standards training.

Other areas of Trading Standards work within food premises such as Weights and Measures will be carried out by the Trading Standards Officer within the Food Team. This places an absolute requirement for a fully competent Trading Standards Officer to be within the Team.

It is anticipated that the resource implications of any additional targeted inspection or enforcement activity will be met out of the resource provision outlined above.

Feedingstuffs

Feedingstuffs work will be carried by 0.1 FTE Team Leader – Animal Health and Health Promotion and 0.2 Enforcement Officer. For 2013-2014, a Check List on Feedstuffs is to be devised for completion by Animal Health Officers, when they visit farms. This will allow these visits to be included as Feedstuffs inspections.

3.2 Food Complaints

Food complaints cover the full range relating to fitness for human consumption, presence of extraneous matter in foods, microbial contamination and Food Standards issues such as: food labelling, chemical adulteration and spoilage of food.

It is the policy of the Food Service to investigate all food complaints reported including those made anonymously.

All food complaints are dealt with in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) September 2008, having regard to the documented Public Protection Enforcement Policy 2010.

Based on statistics for previous years, the estimated number of Food Safety and Food Standards complaints is between 80 and 150. This equates to 1 FTE (EHO or FSO) and 0.25 FTE of a TSO involved in such investigations.

Feedingstuffs complaints will be dealt with by the qualified TSO within the Animal Health Team. The estimated number of feedingstuffs complaints for the forthcoming year is 0-5.

Please note the above figures do not indicate dealing with food complaints referred by other Local Authorities when acting as Home or Originating Authority.

3.3 Primary Authority Principle

Flintshire County Council subscribes to both the Primary and the Home Authority Principle. The Food Service acts as both Home Authority and/or Originating Authority for 41 food businesses and has entered into a Primary Authority relationship with Iceland Foods Ltd, the National Supermarket chain based in Deeside. The resource implications are equivalent to 0.5 FTE of one EHO/TSO post to deal with this function.

The maintenance of the Primary Authority relationship with Iceland Foods Ltd places a pressure on maintaining a level of expertise in Food Safety, Food Standards, Labelling and Composition.

Flintshire is also committed to improving relationships with business and will continue to develop relationships with business by further promotion of Primary Authority, where applicable, and effective business engagement at all times.

3.4 Advice to Business

The policy of the Food Service is to provide a balanced approach between the provision of advice and enforcement activity. The Service is committed to providing an effective and responsive advice and assistance service, both on the spot during inspections or upon request, for all Flintshire businesses, including a service in accordance with the BRDO Primary Authority Principle and the LACORS (now LGR) Home Authority Principle. In addition, the Service provides advisory literature, (either produced nationally or in-house) free of charge to businesses to assist them with compliance with relevant legislation. Training

courses/seminars will be run subject to demand, for which there is usually a fee, to also assist businesses in compliance. In order to maximise the use of limited resources, advice is targeted as follows:

- During inspections and as part of follow up documentation.
- Start up advice on request.
- Through guidance information available on the Food Safety Teams fully revised website pages.
- Distribution of relevant food safety material to food businesses.
- Advice and information is given to businesses requesting guidance either by telephone, email or post.

Based on last year's trends, the estimated number of requests for advice, including those proposing to start up a food business for the forthcoming year is anticipated to be approximately 200. Advice to businesses is provided by all members of the Team. The Health Promotion Officer is currently working on a revised, user-friendly, comprehensive Business Advisory Pack.

3.5 Food Inspection and Sampling

Sampling will be carried out in accordance with the documented Sampling Policy for the Food Service which was referred for Member Approval in July 2001. The sampling programme is devised so that the procurement of samples will follow a risk based approach. Flintshire belongs to the North West Food Liaison Group which devises a programme of Quarterly Sampling Surveys. The programme will also take in to account statutory requirements as well as the requirements of the Food Standards Agency, the Welsh Food Microbiological Forum and local need.

Samples taken for Food Standards issues are submitted for analysis by the formally appointed and NAMAS accredited Public Analyst for the Council:

PUBLIC ANALYST SCIENTIFIC SERVICES
WOODTHORNE
WERGS ROAD
WOLVERHAMPTON
WV68TQ

Samples taken as part of the Sampling Programme for Food Safety issues are submitted for microbiological examination by the designated and NAMAS accredited laboratory of: Public Health England, Food Water and Environmental

Microbiology Network (Preston Laboratory),
Royal Preston Hospital,
Sharoe Green Lane,
Preston. PR2 9HT

Each Local Authority is allocated sampling accreditation by the Public Health England in order to undertake Food Safety sampling. Public Health Wales also allocates a limited resource to Flintshire for Food Safety Sampling. This is sent to Ysbyty Gwynedd.

Food Safety samples may need to be submitted to the Public Analyst, Public Health England or Public Health Wales, dependent on the type of examination or analysis required.

The Food Sampling Programme does not preclude the need to undertake reactive sampling i.e. as a result of a food complaint or during food poisoning investigations. Sampling undertaken as part of an Infectious Disease Notification or Outbreak are sent to the laboratory at Ysbyty Gwynedd, Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor.

The Service took part in several successful bids for funding for Food Standards sampling from FSA Wales in 2012-2013. These were undertaken in collaboration with the North Wales Region and as solo bids from Flintshire. These accounted for approximately £10,000 of further sampling work carried out by the Team and involved the use of the National Sampling Database, UK FSS-Net.

The Team Leader is Secretary of the Welsh Food Microbiological Forum (WFMF) which is responsible for devising Food Safety Sampling Surveys across Wales, based on risk assessment and intelligence to better target resources at particular foods or food poisoning organisms of concern within the UK. As part of the WFMF the Team took part in a Liver/Pate Survey in caterers which was grant funded by the FSA in addition to Sampling Surveys as part of the North West Food Liaison Group.

This year focus will be given to the full introduction and implementation of the UK-Food Surveillance System (UK-FSS Net) to better target resources in respect of the Food Sampling for both Food Safety and Food Standards.

Routine sampling of Feedstuffs will not be undertaken. However, samples may be taken as part of a complaint investigation.

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

Investigation and control of outbreaks of food related infectious disease will be carried out in accordance with the Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales was approved by Members in 2011. It has been developed from the amalgamation of several Plans relating to water borne incidents, food poisoning and communicable disease outbreaks.

Investigations of sporadic notifications of food related infections disease shall follow the existing documented procedure within the Section. Based on previous year's trends, it is estimated that there will be approximately between 200 and 300 cases of sporadic notifications and between 0 and 10 outbreaks.

Campylobacter was the highest incidence of food-borne illness for 2012-2013 in Flintshire, which follows a National Trend. The reduction of the incidence of *Campylobacter* is identified as a priority within the Food Standard Agency's Strategy to 2015.

Outbreaks are characteristically resource intensive but do not follow an annual trend, therefore the anticipated burden on staffing cannot be predicted. However, should they occur the impact on resources cannot be over estimated and would require rapid contingency planning for maintaining the delivery of the rest of the Service. They also involve close liaison and cross-agency working between Public Health Wales and other Local Authorities. Sporadic notifications are expected to account for between 0.2 and 0.5 FTE post throughout the year.

3.7 Food Safety Incidents

Food Alerts will be initiated and responded to in accordance the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) September 2008.

Responses to Food Alerts will be kept in a centralised documented format and the contact details for the Team and relevant Agencies (including out of hour's contacts) will be kept up to date. It is difficult to quantify the resource implication of this function as it depends upon the category of Food Alert and the extent of food or businesses affected within Flintshire.

There were several incidents within 2012/2013 which required considerable investigation work and enforcement action by the Team. These are detailed in Section 6.2.

3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations

The Food Service as a whole is committed to ensuring effective liaison with other relevant organisations to enforce consistency of approach. This includes liaison with:

- Food Standards Agency Wales (FSA Wales).
- Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO).
- Professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute for Environmental Health and Trading Standards Institute.
- Local Government Regulation, Public Health England, Public Health Wales, National Resources Wales, CEFAS, Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency and other relevant advisory/liaison bodies.
- Other Local Authorities in Wales as a whole. Additionally, representatives from the Team attend and actively participate on the All Wales Technical Panels, for Food Safety this relates to the Food Safety Technical Panel and Communicable Disease Technical Panel, and for Food Standards Quality Panel. These Panels act as a means of optimizing regional and countrywide consistency in enforcement and guidance given.
- Neighbouring LA's. Additionally, representatives from the Team sit on the North Wales Regional Technical Groups namely for Quality and Metrology for Trading Standards and combined Food Safety and Communicable Disease for Food Safety. (Refer to Section 5.1).
- Liaison with other relevant local bodies, e.g. Magistrates Courts, the Licensing Committee as well as liaison with local fishermen by way of the North Wales and Deeside Shellfish Liaison Group.
- Liaison with other Departments within Flintshire County Council, such as the Planning Department. A system of formal consultation with relevant sections of the Public Protection Service has been set up, so that prompt, appropriate advice may be given to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

In terms of staff resources, this equates to approximately 0.25 FTE EHO post.

In addition to all of the above, liaison is also maintained between members of the Food Team by monthly Team Meetings and weekly Team Briefings. There is also a weekly Team Leader meeting for Team Leaders within Health Protection to keep up to date with any pertinent matters.

3.9 Food Safety & Food Standards Promotion

Educational and promotional activities are important components of a comprehensive Food Service. These are achieved in the following ways:

- This year's Food Safety Week theme is Kitchen Check. Food Safety Week runs from 10th to 16th June and is supported by the FSA. The core message for this year is for consumers to reassess their own food safety behaviours at home.
- Food Team due to have stall at Mold Food Fair. We are hoping to run with two main themes: promotion of the mandatory display of Food Hygiene Ratings and continuing the message from Food Safety Week on Kitchen Check.
- Setting up a display in Reception at County Hall on both the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and Kitchen Check.
- Sending out Kitchen Check checklists to all interactions with the Public.
- Setting up Kitchen Check checklists at all local libraries
- Devising a new Business Advisory Pack
- Continuation of the handwashing project in Flintshire schools, as part of the E. coli O157 Action Plan.

4.0 RESOURCES

4.1 Financial Allocation

The financial allocation for the Food Service is split between budgets provided for the Animal Health and budgets provided for the Food Safety and Food Standards Service.

The overall level of expenditure providing the Food Safety and Food Standards Service for 2012/2013 is detailed below in Table 1. The budget allocation for 2013/2014 will be set in the coming few weeks and it is anticipated that it will be comparable to the figure given below:

Table 1

COST ITEM	FINANCIAL ALLOCATION
(a) Staffing (total staff costs)	£421,991
(b) Travel (lump sum and mileage) and Subsistence	£13,951
(c) Equipment (including investment in I.T.*)	£2,684
(d) Sampling	£3,539
(e) Shellfish Sampling	£10,001
(f) Training	£907

There is now no separate costs for I.T. as I.T. requirements are provided centrally by Central Support I.T. Services. The exception to this is for the cost of RSA Tags for Mobile and Agile Working which are borne by the Food Safety and Food Standards Budget and the Animal Health Budget.

The allocation for Food Sampling work covers both Food Safety and Food Standards. This is in addition to the allocations provided by Public Health England and Public Health Wales. Additional funding can and will be made available should there be an incident which requires it e.g. the recent horsemeat incident.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

The team is made up of 5.5 FTE EHOs, 3.0 FTE Food Safety Officers, 1.0 FTE Trading Standards Officer and 0.4 FTE Trading Standards Enforcement Officer.

4 permanent members of the team have taken up temporary positions elsewhere within Public Protection, as secondments, which may, following the completion of the Service Review of Public Protection, become permanent. The back-filling of these posts has led to the team having 3.9 FTE Fixed Term Contract EHOs. There is also an additional 1.0 FTE Fixed Term Contract EHO vacant post, which we are currently advertising to fill. All the 6 month Fixed Term Contracts are due to expire at end of September 2013, when it is hoped the posts can be filled as permanent EHO posts.

One of the Food Safety Officers is back-filling as Health Promotion Development Officer as a 0.6 FTE post. We are

currently recruiting to back fill this 0.6 FTE vacancy. Again this should run until the end of September 2013.

A limited amount of Food Standards inspection and sampling work is also carried out by Trading Standards Enforcement officers within other teams, up to the level of their qualification.

Administrative support is provided by 1.0 FTE Administration Officer.

The staff allocation for Feedstuffs is 0.1 FTE Team Leader – Animal Health & Health Promotion and 0.2 FTE Animal Health Enforcement Officer. Animal Health Officers will provide the 0.2 FTE Enforcement Officer component.

In accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) September 2008, all Environmental Health Officers in post are qualified Environmental Health Officers, registered with the Environmental Health Registration Board (E.H.R.B.). All three FSOs are qualified to the Higher Certificate in Food Premises Inspection and all officers are qualified in HACCP Principles (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points).

All staff are authorised appropriately for the duties they perform. In addition to the above, the Team Leader for Food Safety and Food Standards is also a qualified Lead Assessor having successfully completed the five-day Lead Auditor Training Course.

The Trading Standards Officer holds the Diploma in Trading Standards and has also successfully completed the five day QMS Auditor/Lead Auditor training course. The Trading Standards Enforcement Officer holds the Diploma in Consumer Affairs including the Food and Agriculture paper.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

During the forthcoming year the following training is planned:-

- (i) Support of national and regional seminars on relevant subject matters.
- (ii) In-house training sessions on relevant subject matters.

Each individual's training requirements are set out in the Public Protection Learning and Development Plan 2010-2013

Each member of the Team will receive the required ten hours Continuing Professional Development as required by the

Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) September 2008. Staff will be subject to annual individual Staff Appraisals in line with the Corporate H.R. Policy with a mid-year review which identifies and tracks training and development needs. All staff also have monthly One to Ones with the Team Leader to identify and monitor areas requiring development.

Some of the specific Food Training Courses attended by staff during 2012-2013 include:

- E. coli O157 Guidance Training provided by FSA
- Vacuum Packing provided by FSA
- Imported Foods provided by FSA
- Food Sampling provided by Health Protection England
- HACCP training for new starters provided by FSA
- Witness Statement Training

Attendance at the Lead Officer for Communicable Disease Training including:

- Lessons Learnt on Outbreaks
- New Typhoid and Paratyphoid Guidance

Feedstuffs

The Team Leader – Animal Health and Health Promotion attended specialist training on Feedstuffs during 2012-2013.

Training Planned for 2013-2014 includes:

- Courtroom Skills
- North Wales Consistency Training for Food Safety
- National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
- Remedial Action Notices

A full list of training required has been submitted to the All Wales Food Technical Panel as they provide the FSA with guidance on training programmes to be delivered on an All Wales basis.

5.0 QUALITY ASSESSMENT

5.1 Quality Assessment

Within the Food Service, quality systems are in place to ensure that work is completed and checked by a competent person in line with the fully documented Quality Monitoring Procedures. Documented procedures and work instructions exist to ensure consistency of approach with various computer report mechanisms to check accuracy on the APP Database. Work Instruction is provided on Key Areas of

work retained within Formal Procedure Manuals. These are currently under review. It is hoped this review will be completed by the end of July 2013.

Food Standards Procedures are also being written and reviewed to bring into line with Food Safety Procedures within the Team.

In addition, external audits including focused audits, are undertaken by the Food Standards Agency Wales on a periodical basis (every 3 years for full external audit).

As previously stated, the Team Leader attends the North Wales Food Technical Panel, the All Wales Food Technical Panel and the All Wales Communicable Disease Technical Panel. Currently, the Trading Standards Officer attends the Food Standards Quality and Metrology Panel. These forums offer the opportunity to discuss in detail a wide range of quality and consistency issues relevant to Food Law Enforcement.

The Service is required to submit via Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS) an Annual Return to the FSA Wales. This details the inspections achieved, enforcement and educational activities undertaken.

6.0 REVIEW PROCESS

6.1 Review against Service Plan

The Service Plan shall be subject to annual review. Performance against this Service Plan is monitored by several means:

- (a) Quarterly Performance Reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee detailing performance against National and Local Indicators and any key issues arising in each quarter. A final yearly Performance Review Report is also submitted.
- (b) Monthly minuted Team Meetings with actions and relevant timescales detailed.
- (c) Monthly One to Ones with individual Team Members.
- (d) Weekly informal Team Briefings which set the focus and priorities for that coming week.

6.2 Review of Performance Against 2012-2013 Service Plan

As detailed in 3.0 the Food Service Team have performed to a very high standard achieving the target for all performance indicators. This was a notable achievement in a year where the new structure has not been fully implemented. The only exception to this was in the percentage of significant breaches resolved for Trading Standards which includes an element of Food Standards work. The figure achieved was 84% with a target of 97%. This is an improvement on the previous year's performance.

Appendix 3 provides full analysis of service delivery during 2012/13.

Achievements

- Achieved 100% of High Risk Food Safety and Food Standards inspections.
- The horsemeat in food incident had a major impact on the team in the last quarter of 2012/13 resulting in both increased food sampling and auditing activity. Furthermore, both a manufacturer in Flintshire and our Primary Authority business, namely Iceland Foods Ltd, had levels of horsemeat detected in their product, which increased our involvement and resulted in some weekend working. The Team lead on the investigations in these incidents and had to liaise on a daily basis with the Food Standards Agency Wales to communicate all findings of the investigations. Traceability audits have had to be completed at all Approved meat premises and Coldstores and additional sampling at various types of premises for meat authenticity have been conducted.
- There were several food incidents affecting the Food Team including in-depth investigations between Wirral Council and the Food Standards Agency Wales in relation to cooked meats and the serving of Remedial Action Notice on a premises that was producing dairy ice-cream but was not legally Approved to do so. There were also 2 sewage incidents in the Dee Estuary, one of which lead to the Temporary Closure of the shellfish beds by the Food Team.
- All food businesses handling raw and cooked meats have received an in-depth letter from us as a mailshot detailing the *E.coli* O157 guidance document and Food Hygiene Rating considerations. Additionally, all team members have received the *E.coli* O157 guidance

training funded by the Food Standards Agency Wales.

- Mailshots were sent to food businesses in relation to Counterfeit Alcohol and Allergen Awareness, with follow-up surveys carried out from December 2012 onwards.
- The Team has successfully built on cross-agency working with regards to the Dee Estuary including the use of a joint Registration Document/Catch Return between Flintshire County Council, Wirral Council and Environment Agency Wales, which is being issued by the EA on behalf of the two Local Authorities. Flintshire and the EA have carried out joint audits of these documents also involving Swansea Council. Flintshire now attends the All Wales Shellfish Liaison Group which has significantly improved communication and intelligence sharing between all Local Authorities and Agencies involved in Shellfish Enforcement within Wales.
- The Team were successful in bidding for approximately £9000 from both Food Standards Agency Wales and Food Standards Agency England for Food Standards Survey work. This proactive Food Standards sampling has led to several in-depth investigations being conducted by the team, particularly in relation to mis-declared nut allergens and meat substitution in takeaway premises. Investigations are still on-going in relation to these cases, which has had an effect on the number of significant breaches identified during the year which are still to be concluded. We also received a further £1250 of funding from the FSA for the initial burger survey we carried out at the start of the horsemeat food alert.
- We successfully bid for £2000 for purchase of and installation of software which enables our APP database to interact with the National Food Sampling database, UK FSS Net. This grant funding was awarded by Food Standards Agency England.
- A very successful Business and Regulators Forum, facilitated by Better Regulation Delivery Office was held in August 2012 as a collaborative project between ourselves and Wrexham County Borough Council. Greater links have also been established with our own Economic Regeneration Unit. Work in this regard is to continue in 2013/14.
- There has been a large increase in Requests for

Rescore under the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. 85 requests were received in 2012/13 in comparison to 17 requests the previous year. The number of appeals on the ratings given has remained low at only 6 being received in 2012/13.

- The Trading Standards Officer within the Food Team has carried out Weights and Measures inspections for the Compliance Team in Community Protection as the cover for a vacant post for a TSO in the Compliance Team.
- Good headway has been made with inspecting childminders identified the previous year as trading and supplying food to children in their care. This is to continue into the early part of 2013, when it is hoped all childminders will have received a full food hygiene inspection.
- The Team had a stall at the Denbigh and Flint Show as part of the Public Protection Tent. The key messages were on hand-washing techniques, promotion of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and on Food Hygiene on a Budget.
- Two members of the team have been heavily involved in the reviewing and rewriting of the Food Safety Management System in place within Flintshire schools. This has taken a large amount of liaison between the Food Team and Client Catering. The new system is due to be rolled out early in 2013/14 with members of the Food Team attending Cooks Meetings to introduce the new system.

6.3 Areas of Improvement 2013-2014

Areas requiring further development include:

- Increasing the number of Food Hygiene inspections carried out on D and E rated premises to achieve 30% in 2013/14.
- Increasing the number of Medium Risk Food Standards inspection to achieve 30% in 2013/14.
- The Health Promotion Officer has designed a handbook on Food Safety on a Budget. This now needs to be delivered to Parent and Toddler groups early in 2013.
- It is hoped to build on the collaboration in place in relation to the Dee Estuary to gain further improvements in the enforcement activity in regards to shellfish

6.4 Forthcoming Considerations

gathering activity.

- To fully implement the risk assessment of new businesses prior to their initial inspections to maximise the prioritising of inspections of all new businesses.

There are several considerations which may influence or impact on Service Delivery for 2013/14. These are detailed below:

- Work is ongoing to move to the delivery of Trading Standards on a Regional basis across Wales. The North Wales region has opted for a model called Collaboration Plus, the detail of which is still being developed. Therefore the effect of this on the level of service currently delivered by Flintshire County Council for Food Standards and Feedstuffs is not yet known. However, there will be a requirement from the Food Standards Agency Wales that the level of service is maintained in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice and Framework Agreement, to which Flintshire County Council will be accountable.
- Flintshire has been running the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (NFHRS) since December 2010. The rating is generated by the Inspecting Officer at the time of the unannounced routine food hygiene inspection. The rating is uploaded to the NFHRS website at www.food.gov.uk/ratings. A sticker is also sent to the food business showing their rating. At present, there is no legal requirement to display this sticker at the food premises.

Businesses are able to request revisits for the purpose of re-scoring their premises, which involves submitting an application to us with evidence of work undertaken. The Inspecting Officer must revisit the premises unannounced and re-rate the premises.

This year, the scheme is to change considerably as in March 2013, Royal Assent was given to the Food Hygiene Rating (Wales) Act 2013, which makes the display of the Food Hygiene Rating Sticker mandatory as of November 2013 and the non-display of a sticker a legal offence. It also places a legal requirement on LA's to inspect and produce food hygiene ratings for food business establishments.

The punishment is a Fixed Penalty Notice of £200.

Prosecutions can also be taken through the Courts with a maximum fine of £1000.

In addition to the mandatory display of rating stickers, Local Authorities are also going to be able to charge for the Rescore Visits. The amount is not stipulated in the Act but recovery of reasonable costs is allowed. It is hoped that the charges will be agreed on a National level by the All Wales Food Technical Panel so there is consistency across all Local Authorities. The Regulations to be made under the Act are out for consultation. This closes on 21st June 2013.

The transition period between the current scheme and the mandatory display has not been fully planned as yet. Food Standards Agency Wales and Welsh Government have held meetings with the Lead Officers for Food Safety from all LA's in Wales, which will continue until the Act is in force. Dependent on how the transition is planned, there may be a considerable number of businesses that have a rating under the current scheme that will want to apply for a rescore prior to it being chargeable. This could equate to between 350-450 requests for rescoring prior to November 2013.

- The Food Sampling Budget is set at £3539. The budget currently allocated for Food Sampling was enhanced last year by successful bids for around £10,000 of grant funding. Consideration of the budget provision for Food Sampling is required as there is a greater emphasis on Food Sampling as a consequence of concerns raised on Food Adulteration and Authenticity raised by the Horsemeat incident and other Food Alerts. It is fully anticipated our Food Standards Authenticity Sampling will increase in 2013/14, for which the success of grant funding applications to the FSA is not yet known.
- The number of Infectious Disease Notifications has increased in 2012/13. This follows a National trend where both Campylobacter and Cryptosporidium levels increased. The reason for this rise has not been confirmed but it may be due to increased submission of samples and reporting bias for Campylobacter.

The Service Plan relies on the current level of staffing to be maintained and the 1.6 FTE vacancies being filled. Several posts within the Service are currently filled as Fixed Term contracts, pending Job Evaluation being completed. These posts will need to remain filled for the whole of 2013/14 for the commitments made for Service Delivery in to 2014 and beyond in order for the Service Plan to be delivered.

Chart 1

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

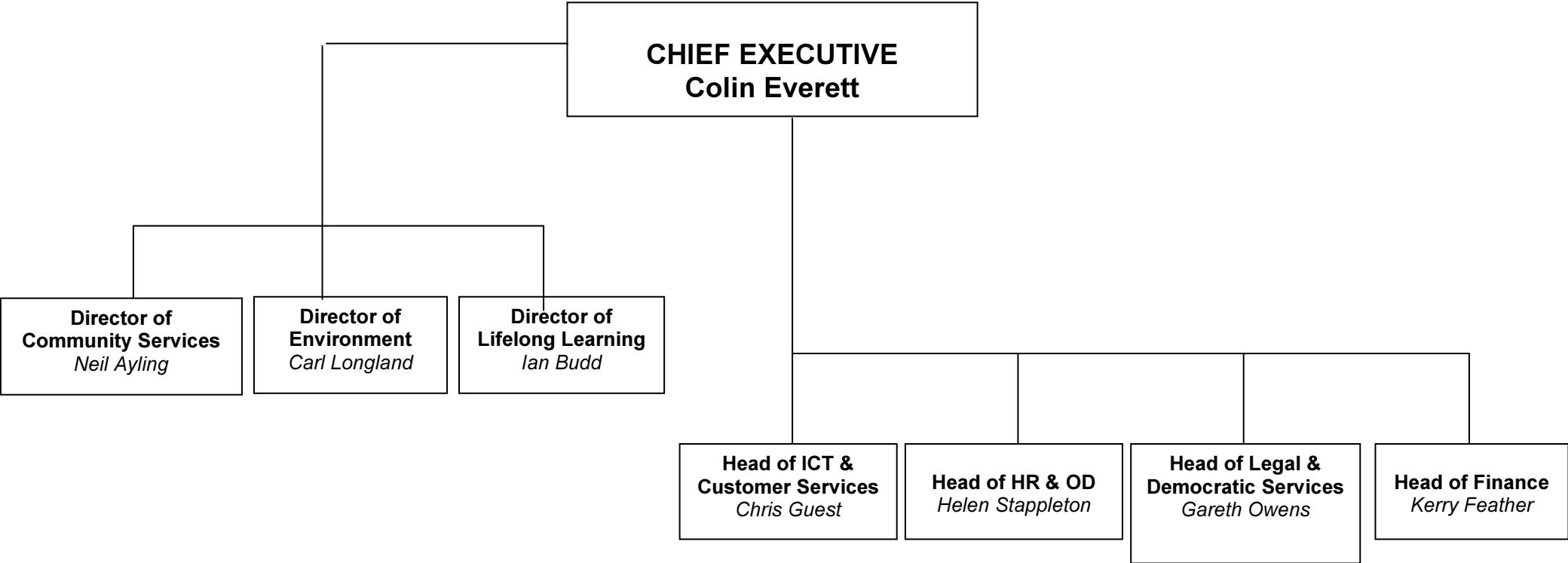
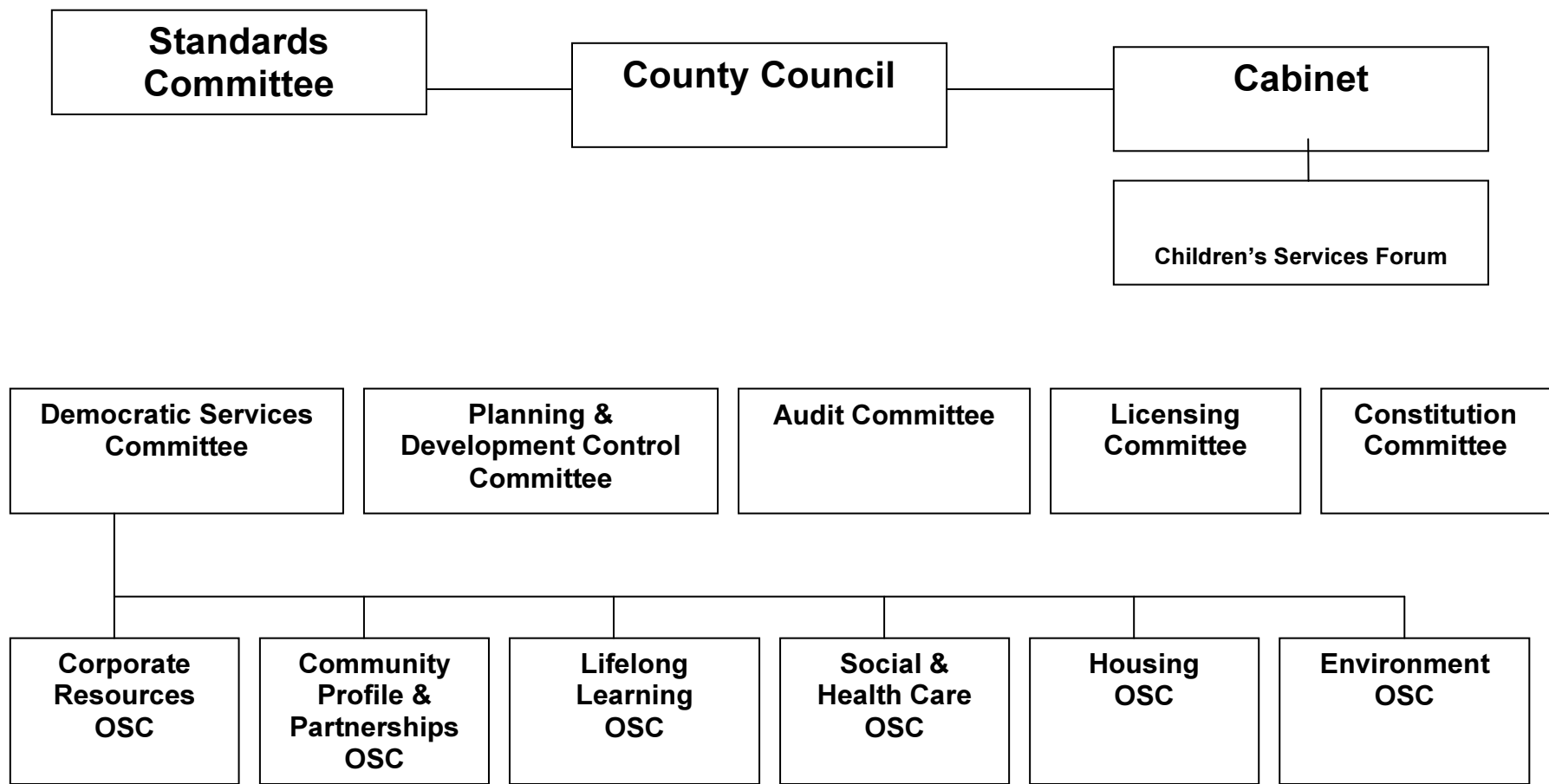


Chart 2

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – POLITICAL STRUCTURE



ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE STRUCTURE

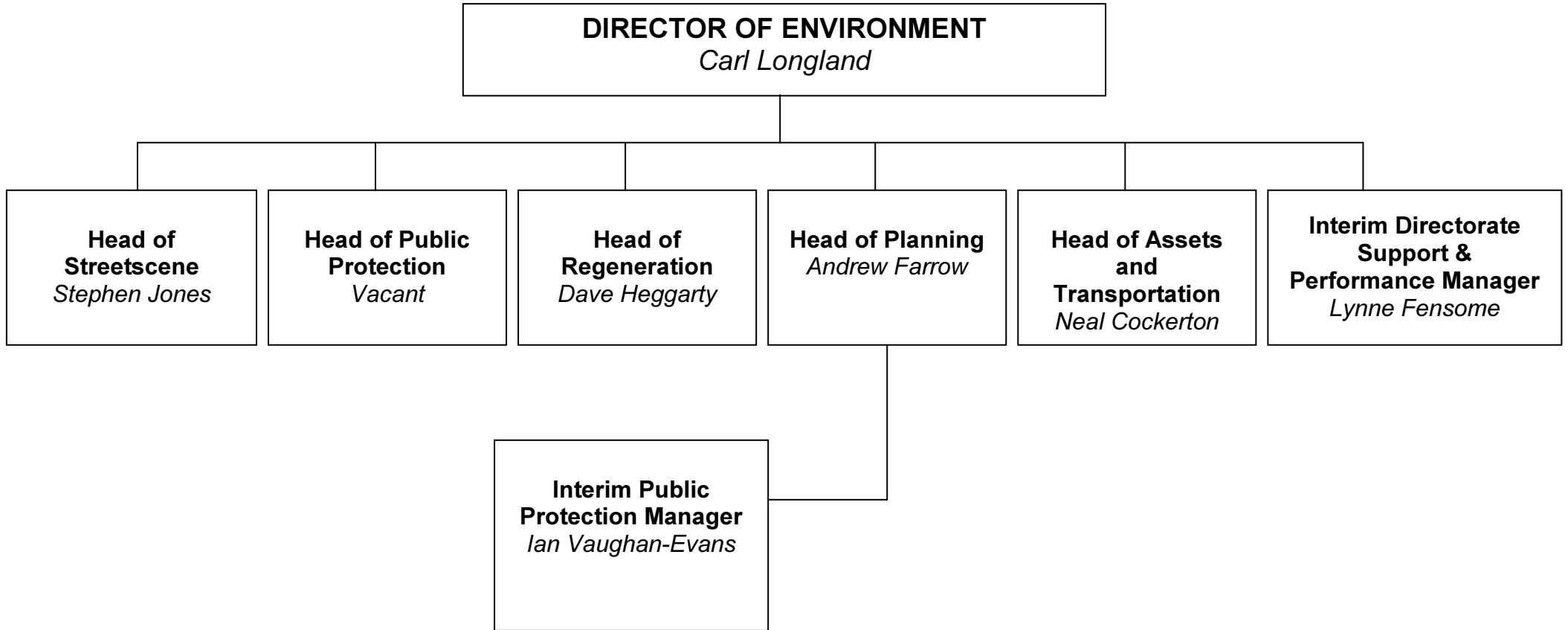
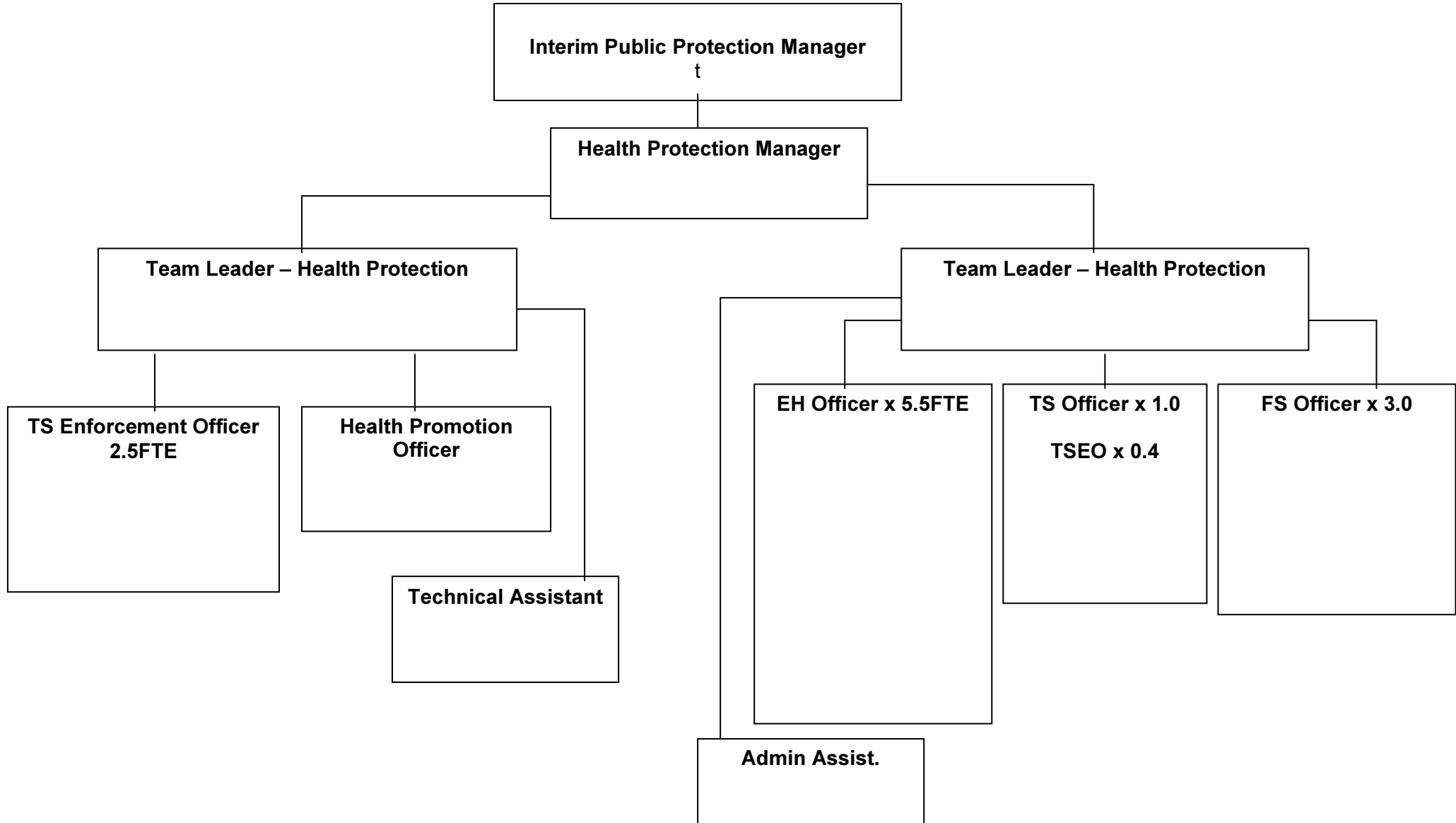


Chart 4

PUBLIC PROTECTION - FOOD SERVICE



APPENDIX 2

Please find below a breakdown of the profile of programmed Food Safety and Food Standards inspections for 2013/2014 by Risk Rating:

Table A

PROGRAMMED INSPECTIONS - FOOD SAFETY	
Risk	Number Due
A	4
B	64
C	335
D	210
E	383
TOTAL	996

Table B

PROGRAMMED INSPECTIONS - FOOD STANDARDS	
Risk	Number Due
A	10
B	334
C	495
TOTAL	839

The Risk Rating is determined in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice. It dictates the frequency of which the food premises must receive a full food hygiene or food standards inspection.

For Food Safety High Risk premises are those with a Risk Rating of A, B and C. For Food Standards High Risk premises are those with a Risk Rating of A.

APPENDIX 3 – PERFORMANCE 2012-13

Food Safety

Risk	Programmed	Achieved
A) High Risk	6	6
B) High Risk	88	88
C) High Risk	330	329
D Low Risk	227	46
E Low Risk	369	23
TOTAL	1020	492

TOTAL Number of Interventions Undertaken (including Revisits)	990
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Food Standards

Risk	Programmed	Achieved
High	13	13
Medium	339	92
TOTAL	479	105

National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

Profile of Ratings within Flintshire: May 2013

	5 Very Good	4 Good	3 Generally Satisfactory	2 Improvement Necessary	1 Major Improvement Necessary	0 Urgent Improvement Necessary
% of Premises	49.2	22.9	13.4	9.7	4.7	-

Number of Requests for Rescore Visit to be Undertaken - 85

Number of Appeals on Rating - 6

Other data in relation to Demands on Food Service

Food and Feeding Stuffs Complaints

Food Safety number of complaints - 86

Food Standards number of complaints - 20

Advice to Business

Food Safety - 212 requests for advice
99% responded to within 10 working days

Food Standards - 80 requests for advice
81% responded to within 10 working days

Food and Feeding Stuffs Inspection and Sampling

Food Safety - 93 samples – statutory and monitoring

Food Standards - 80 samples – monitoring

Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease (Food Safety only)

Sporadic Notifications	-	238	
Outbreaks	-	6	none found to be food-related

Other Types of Service Requests (Food Safety only)

<u>Water Disconnections</u>	-	17	
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<u>Shellfish Requests for Registration Documents</u>	-		these are now administered by Natural Resources Wales on our behalf
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<u>Ship Sanitation</u>	-	3	
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<u>Export Certificates</u>	-	14	
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