



FOOD SERVICE

SERVICE PLAN

2012-2013



FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2012-13

INTRODUCTION

The Service Plan relates to the year commencing 1st April 2012 and ending 31st March 2013.

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 "Making the Connections Agenda", to provide citizen centred services and to work in collaboration and co-operation.

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2012-13

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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 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 five corporate priorities contained therein which are:

1. Economic Prosperity.
2. Health Improvement
3. Learning and Skills for Life
4. Living Sustainably.
5. Safe and Supportive Communities as endorsed by Flintshire's Local Service.

The Food Service Plan also links in with the Council's Improvement Plan which aims to give guidance to Directorates when setting their Service Plans as well as setting improvement objectives as required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. This Plan particularly links in with regard to Improvement Priority 10 – "to protect, plan and develop sustainable natural and build environments"

The Food Service has direct links with the Environment Directorate Plan 2012 Onwards and the Public Protection Service Plan 2010-2013. 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.

The Food Service links with the Council's Community Strategy and with some of the key strategic priorities 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. 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 149,700 as per the 2001 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 The Health Protection Agency, Public Health Wales and by Eurofins for the purpose of the appointed Public Analyst. (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).
- 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 including the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

Food Standards

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 visits within Flintshire.
- 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 duties and responsibilities as Home Authority and Originating Authority for food businesses within Flintshire.

Feedstuffs

- 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.

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 1619 food businesses in Flintshire of which 1381 are registered food businesses. Not all food businesses are required to register with the Local Authority; hence it is acceptable that the two figures are not the same.

2.4 Demands of the Food Service

Of the total number of food premises in Flintshire approximately 1028 are caterers, with the remainder being made up predominantly by retailers. 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 41 food manufacturing 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 the 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.

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	13	High	A	6	6
				B	12	88
Medium	2 years	471		C	18	551
Low	5 years	828	Low	D	2 years	253
				E	3 years	410
TOTAL		1312		TOTAL		1308

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. The policy covers the following areas:

- The Guiding Principles of Enforcement which officers will adhere to whilst undertaking their duties.
- The approach we will adopt.
- Practical arrangements for putting the policy into effect.
- How we will endeavour to ensure the quality of the service consistency and effective targeting and proportionality of enforcement activity.

Regard is also given to the principles of the Better Regulation Development Office and the Primary Authority Scheme.

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

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 2012/2013 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 2011/2012 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 91% actually being achieved. This took considerable efforts from the Team. Food Standards also exceeded their target of 82%.

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 84.7% of food businesses within Flintshire fall into this category.

For Food Safety the total number of High Risk programmed inspections for the year 2012/2013 is 426. For Food Standards the total number is 46. For Food Standards, 13 of these premises are High Risk for Food Standards. The other 33 are High Risk for other Trading Standards legislation, but the inspections 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 Development Office.
- To inspect the lower risk premises identified by Project Work in 2011/2012 as most requiring a Food Safety inspection based on a risk assessment approach to best utilise resources. This includes the targeting of pubs who have extended the scope of their business to include catering, home caterers and childminders who are preparing high risk foods.
- 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 2012-2013 in relation to their Risk Rating is given in Appendix 2. This shows totals of 1020 for Food Hygiene and 831 for Food Standards.

For Feedstuffs there are 93 Medium Risk premises and no High Risk. A target of 30% has been set for Medium Risk inspections for both Food Standards and 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 2011/2012.
- Effective and professional liaison, communication and co-operation with Iceland Frozen Foods, other LA's and BRDO relating to 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.

3.1.2 Resources for Inspections and Additional Enforcement Activity

The programmed food hygiene inspections will be undertaken by 3.5 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 3.5 FTE EHOs.

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 0.2 FTE Team Leader – Animal Health and Health Promotion and 0.5 Enforcement Officer. For 2012-2013, 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 120 and 170. 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 who's Head Office is 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 is holding a Business and Regulators Forum this year in collaboration with Wrexham, funded by the Better Regulation Development Office.

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 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.

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, LACORS, 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:

Eurofins Laboratories Limited,
Woodthorne,
Wergs Road,
Wolverhampton.
WV6 8TQ

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:

HPA 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 Health Protection Agency in order to undertake Food Safety sampling.

Food Safety samples may need to be submitted to the Public Analyst or the Health Protection Agency.

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 undertaking as part of an Infectious Disease Notification or Outbreak are sent to the laboratory at Ysbyty Gwynedd, Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor.

The Service took part in a successful bid for funding for Food Standards sampling from the Food Standards Agency Wales in 2011-2012. This was undertaken in collaboration with the North Wales Region and accounted for approximately £5,000 of further sampling work carried out by the Team. This work involved the use of the National Sampling Database, UK FSS-Net.

The Team Leader is Secretary of the Welsh Food Microbiological Forum 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.

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 2011-2012 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.

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 Development Office (BRDO).
- Professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute for Environmental Health and Trading Standards Institute.
- Local Government Regulation, Health Protection Agency (England), Public Health Wales, Environment Agency Wales, CEFAS, Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency and other relevant advisory/liason 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).

3.9 Food Safety & Food Standards Promotion

- 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.

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 Food Safety on a Budget. Work is planned with Mother and Toddler Groups and possible collaborative working with Recycling as part of Love Food Hate Waste.
- Public Protection is due to have a stand at the Flint and Denbigh Show in August. Both Food Safety and Food Standards are making significant contributions to this stand promoting effective handwashing, the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, common food safety hazards in the kitchen and awareness of counterfeit alcohol.
- The promotion of the Re-Visit for the Purpose of Re-scoring set out within the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. It is hoped that by actively promoting the opportunity to be re-scored will encourage businesses to comply with the legislation and will increase the percentage of Broadly Compliant businesses within Flintshire.
- The Team was successful in securing grant monies for coaching of food businesses on Food Safety Management Systems. This resulted in 31 food businesses receiving specialist one to one Coaching Visits at their convenience. A further visit was carried out a month after where their compliance on Food Safety Management was assessed. Due to the success of this intervention, a further bid is being

submitted this year. Again this should have the effect of achieving compliance in such businesses thereby resulting in a higher Hygiene Rating and increasing the percentage of Broadly Compliant businesses.

- Working with local groups to provide targeted seminars and training sessions e.g. training on a Nutrition Course for children’s nurseries. This year the Team Leader is attending Local Business Forums to advise on the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

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 for providing the Food Safety and Food Standards Service is detailed below in Table 1.

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	£10,140

* The equipment budget includes provision for maintenance of equipment, such as annual calibration for the Reference Thermometer and any repairs required for equipment in use. There is no budgetary provision for investment in I.T. made available directly to the Food Safety Service as I.T. requirements are currently provided centrally by Central Support I.T. Services and the Directorate’s own I.T. budget.

There is now no separate costs for I.T. within Trading Standards as I.T. requirements are provided centrally by Central Support I.T. Services.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

The staffing allocation to the Food Safety Service stands at 3.5 FTE at Environmental Health Officer level and 3 FTE at Food Safety Officer level. There is currently 1.4 FTE vacant posts. There is also a 0.6 FTE post which has been temporarily moved into Health and Safety Enforcement. The staffing allocation to the Food Standards Service is 1.0 FTE Food Standards Officer and 0.4 FTE Trading Standards Enforcement Officer. The 3.5 FTE EHOs also contribute to the Food Standards function. Administrative support is provided by 1.0 FTE Administration Officer.

The staff allocation for Feedstuffs is 0.2 FTE Team Leader – Animal Health & Health Promotion and 0.5 FTE Enforcement Officer. Animal Health Officers will provide the 0.5 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 most 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, one of the Environmental Health Officers 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.
- (iii) Training through North East Wales Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Branch.

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 2011-2012 include Practical Food Labelling, Food Information Regulations, FSA Food Hygiene Rating Consistency Training. Staff also attended legal process training on Advanced Investigative Interviews and Case Preparation and the Key Elements of Successful Prosecutions. With regard to Public Health and Communicable Disease Training all Environmental Health Officer and Food Safety Officers undertook training on the new Health Protection legislation with the Team Leader, or their deputy, attending Specialist Lead Officer for Communicable Disease Training.

It is anticipated the Team Leader – Animal Health and Health Promotion will attend Feedstuffs training to be held 2012-2013.

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.

These are updated and amended as and when necessary. In addition, external audits including focussed audits, are undertaken by the Food Standards Agency Wales on a periodical basis (every 3 years for full external audit).

The Trading Standards Service has a Food Standards Enforcement Quality Manual which is subject to both internal audits and the external inter authority audit. Procedures within the manual are updated and amended as and when necessary. Procedures relating to Food Standards, Labelling and Composition will be reviewed further and incorporated into the Food Safety Procedure Manuals during this year.

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 2011-2012 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 78.6% with a target of 97%.

Appendix 3 provides full analysis of service delivery during 2011-2012.

Particular achievements and points to be considered are:

- As reported in last year's Food Service Plan, the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme was introduced on 1st December 2010. This involved a considerable amount of preparatory work and has significantly

impacted on work procedures within the service. The actual implementation of the scheme has brought about increased public and media awareness of food hygiene levels in premises within Flintshire. As predicted, 2011/2012 showed an increase in the level of public awareness which it is anticipated will continue this year.

- There has been continued progress in implementing the recommendation within the Public Inquiry Report into the South Wales *E.coli* 0157 Outbreak in 2005. This progress has been monitored against the Action Plan and Audit Checklist which had been taken to Executive for approval and progress reporting in May and November 2009 respectively, detailing Flintshire's response to the Public Inquiry Report. The Food Standards Agency have published their guidance document "*E.coli* O157 – Control of Cross-Contamination" which has had a significant impact on the time spend on inspections and on effectively communicating the content to food businesses. It has also amended the scoring of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. It is predicted this may affect the proportion of 0, 1 and 2 rated premises within Flintshire. Work will continue into 2012-2013 to ensure continued implementation of the recommendations within the Public Enquiry Report.
- As identified in last year's Food Service Plan, the up-skilling of all Team members was required to improve resilience to future demands and to increase expertise within the Team. This up-skilling has progressed well over 2011-2012, with all the Team showing full commitment with a noticeable improvement in officer's competency in inspecting the full range of food premises.
- Considerable work was undertaken in the improvement of cross-agency enforcement on the Dee Estuary during 2011-2012. This has included significant preparatory work in planning for 2012-2013. There has been a high degree of collaborative working with Wirral Council and the Environment Agency Wales, as well as Food Standards Agency Wales and Welsh Government, Gangmasters Licensing Authority and North West Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities.
- The Team successfully prosecuted a takeaway for the selling of Panga as cod. Panga costs approximately 50% that of cod and substitution of cod for Panga has been found to be a Food Standards issue nationally. It is hoped to conduct follow-up sampling this year in similar types of premises.

6.3 Areas of Improvement 2012-2013

Consideration of work not achieved in 2011-2012 and areas of improvement required is as follows:

- (a) An Alternative Enforcement Strategy was not introduced for E rated premises. Further project work is to be carried out in this area.
- (b) The merging and integration of the Food Safety and Food Standards functions has made progress. However, the EHOs within the Team need further experience in inspecting and enforcing Food Labeling Legislation.
- (c) The Flintshire County Council Website pages relating to Food Safety and Food Standards were only partially reviewed and updated. Pages which have been updated relate to the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme only. Further work is required to bring the rest of the web pages up to this standard. This should greatly improve the level of information service users are able to obtain via this contact route.
- (d) To improve enforcement on feedstuffs, Animal Health Officers are to take on the role of inspections in Feedstuffs premises by way of a Check List when visiting farms for example, this in line with the BRDO.
- (e) Work is to be undertaken to improve the percentage of significant breaches resolved for Food Standards issues.

6.4 Points of Special Note

Points for particular consider which may have influence over service delivery for 2012-13 are as follows:-

- Food Hygiene legislation has been amended to allow the service of Remedial Action Notices in all types of food premises. This will allow Inspecting Officers to prohibit certain activities which previously could not be done.
- Food Standards legislation is being overhauled with the introduction of the Food Information Regulations. There is a transition period for these Regulations. It is anticipated requests for advice from businesses will increase throughout 2012-2013 in this regard.
- The Food Standards Agency Wales are resuming their three year rolling programme of audits of Local Authorities in line with the Local Authority Rating Scheme. Work will be undertaken to ensure all processes and procedures within the Food Team are of the required standard.

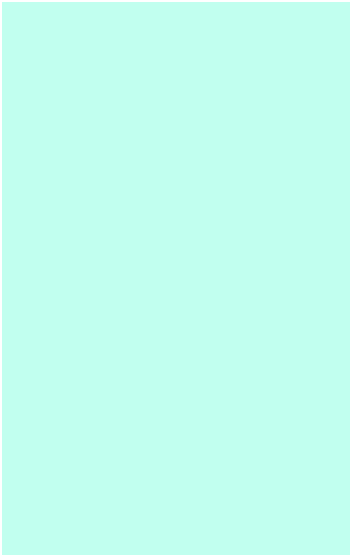
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- Following a consultation from Welsh Government on the Draft Food Hygiene Rating Bill, the Bill is due to go before Welsh Government early into this financial year, with The Bill becoming legislation late 2013. This will require food businesses to display their Food Hygiene Rating at their premises and will extend the scope of the Scheme to all food businesses within the food chain. It is anticipated the number of businesses formally requesting a Rescore Visit will increase over 2012-2013 prior to this legislation being introduced, particularly as the Bill will introduce the Local Authority being able to charge the food business for rescore visits. These visits are currently free of charge.

Chart 1

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

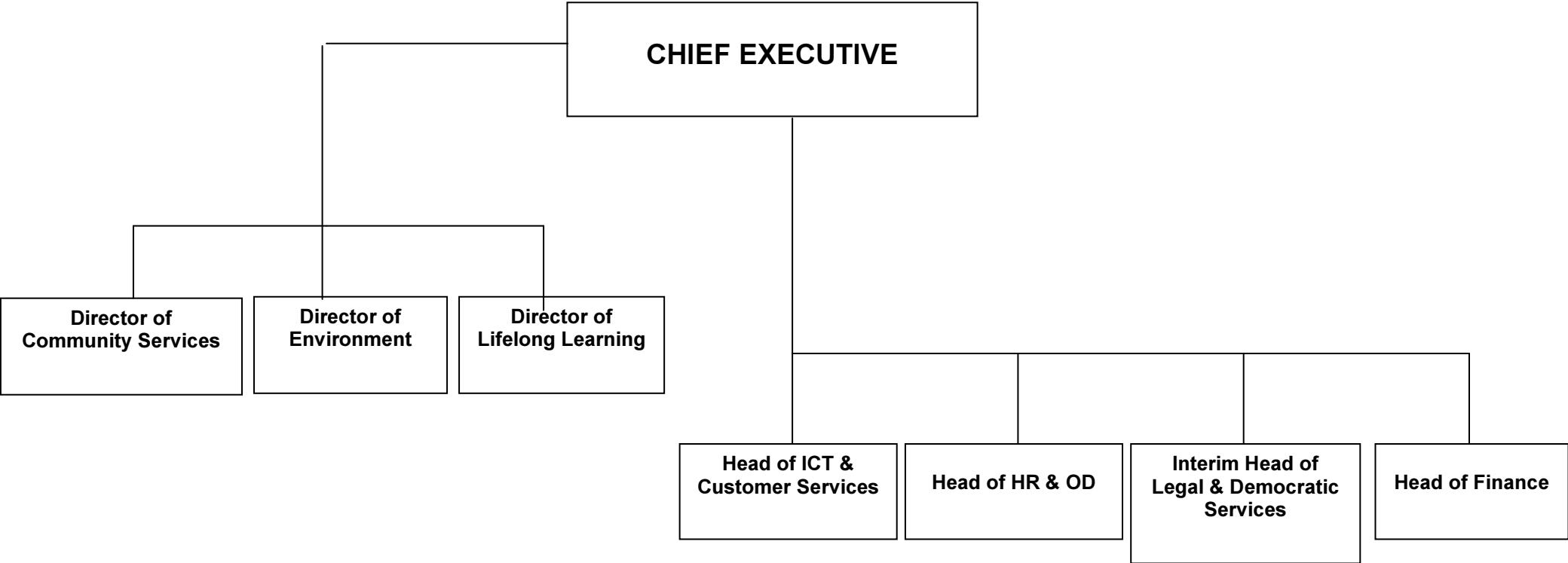
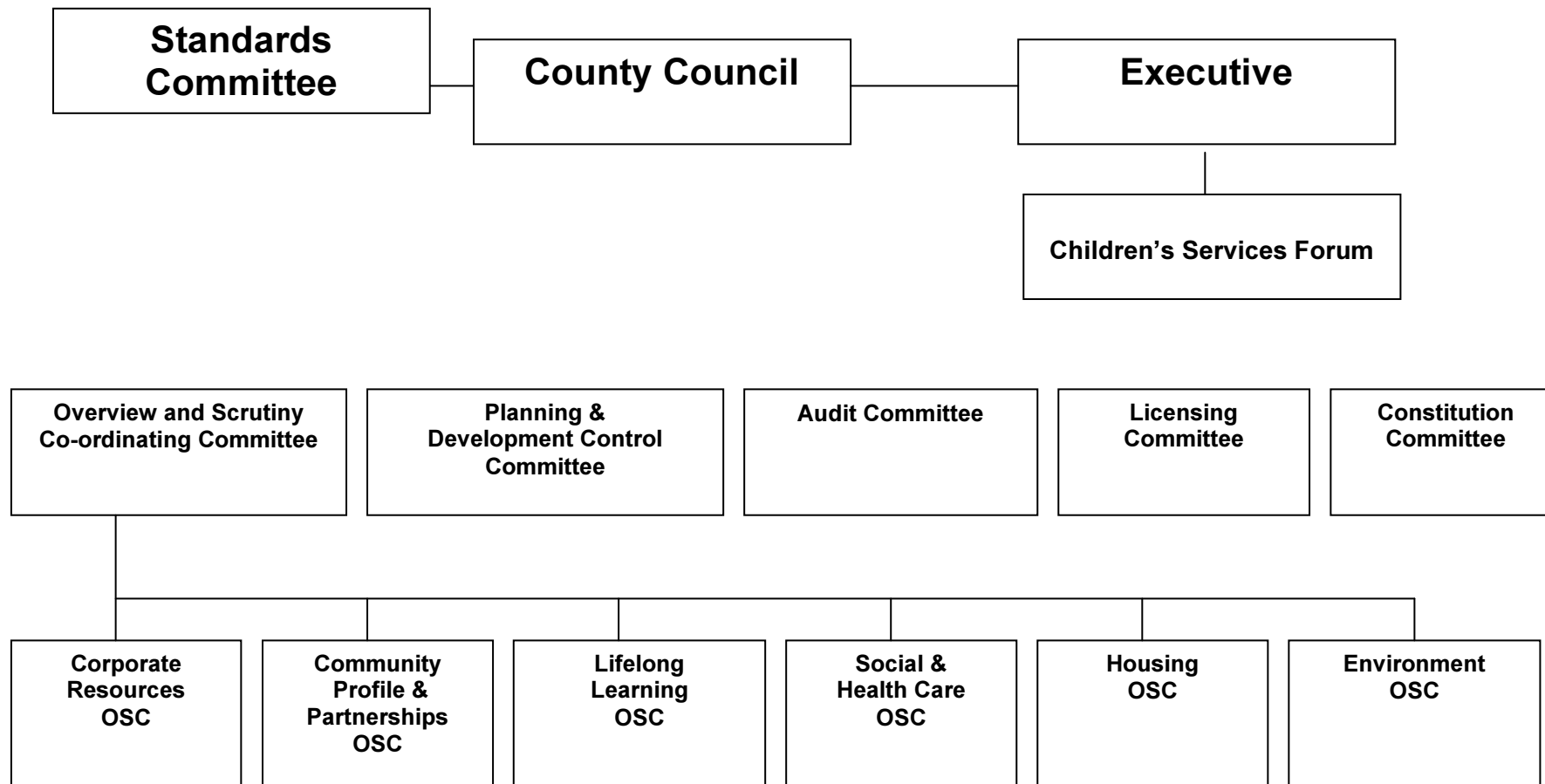


Chart 2

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – DEMOCRACTIC STRUCTURE



ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE STRUCTURE

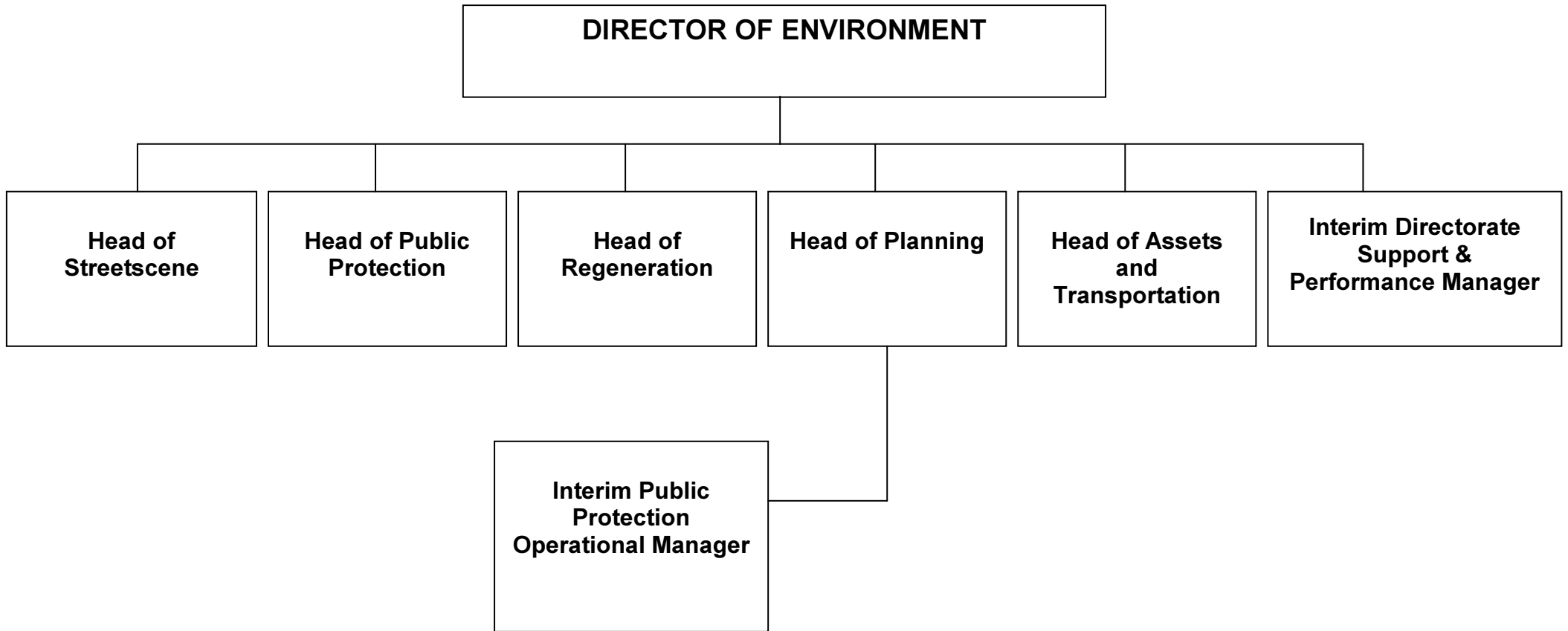
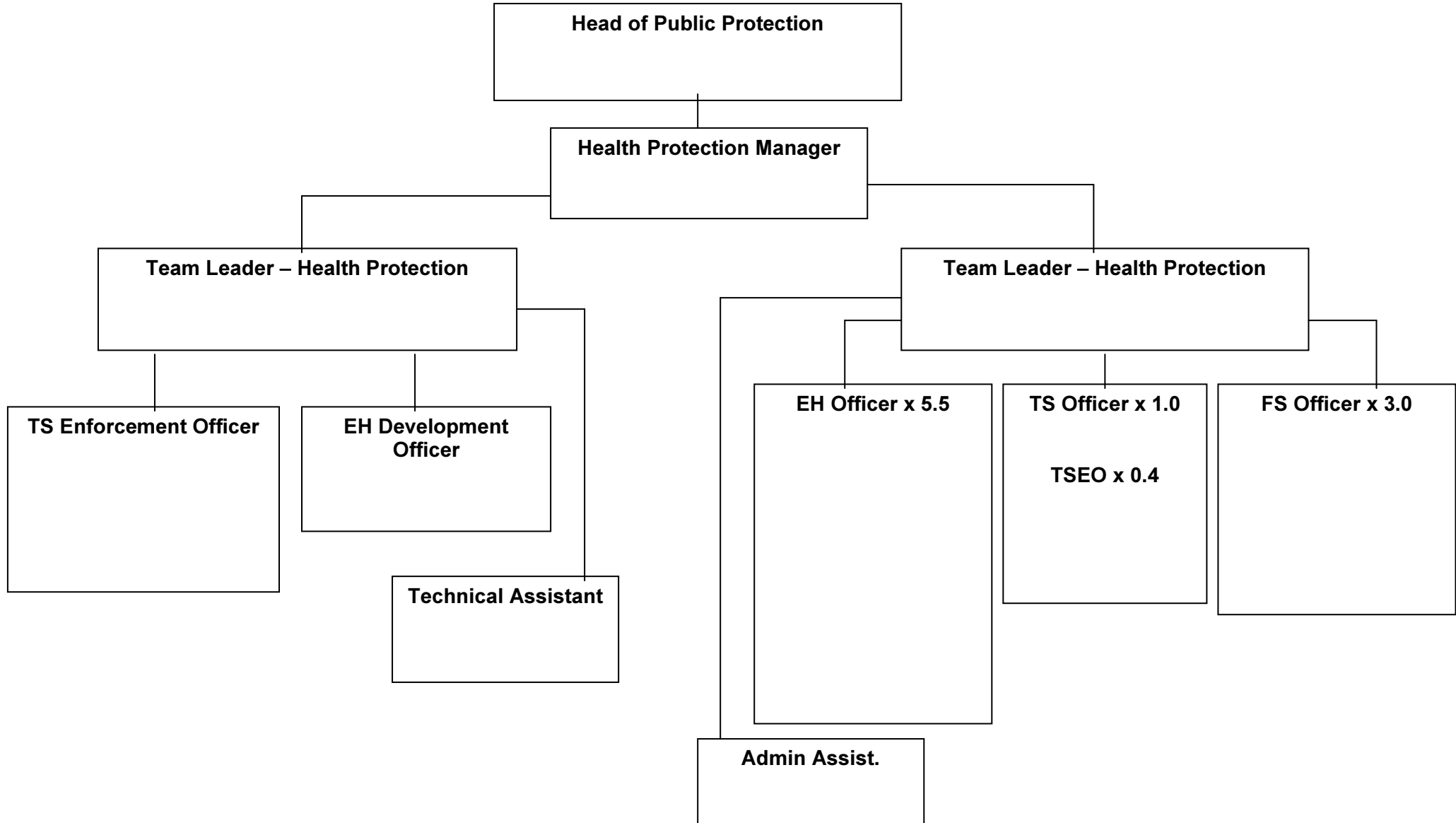


Chart 4

PUBLIC PROTECTION - FOOD SERVICE



APPENDIX 2

Please find below a breakdown of the profile of programmed Food Safety and Food Standards inspections for 2012/2013 by Risk Rating:

Table A

PROGRAMMED INSPECTIONS - FOOD SAFETY	
Risk	Number Due
A	6
B	88
C	330
D	227
E	369
TOTAL	1020

Table B

PROGRAMMED INSPECTIONS - FOOD STANDARDS	
Risk	Number Due
A	13
B	339
C	479
TOTAL	831

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 2011-12

Food Safety

Risk	Programmed	Achieved
A) High Risk	2	2
B) High Risk	81	81
C) High Risk	385	385
D Low Risk	188	13
E Low Risk	142	11
Unrated/Unclassified	55	51
TOTAL		543

TOTAL Number of Interventions Undertaken (including Revisits)	905
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Food Standards

Risk	Programmed	Achieved
High	17	17
Medium	284	67
TOTAL		84

Food and Feeding Stuffs Complaints

Food Safety number of complaints	-	103
Food Standards number of complaints	-	20

Advice to Business

Food Safety	-	190 requests for advice 98.9% responded to within 10 working days
Food Standards	-	22 requests for advice 77.3% responded to within 10 working days

Food and Feeding Stuffs Inspection and Sampling

Food Safety	-	126 samples – statutory and monitoring
Food Standards	-	57 samples – monitoring

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

Sporadic Notifications	-	226	
Outbreaks	-	9	none found to be food-related

Other Types of Service Requests (Food Safety only)

<u>Water Disconnections</u>	-	41
<u>Shellfish Requests for Registration Documents</u>	-	34
<u>Ship Sanitation</u>	-	1
<u>Export Certificates</u>	-	14