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Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Food Service Plan 2022/2023
Date:	10 th January 2023
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Julie Banks, Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Food Service Plan 2022/232. Food Service Recovery Plan 2021-24
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	ECP - Environmental and Community Protection FSA - Food Standards Agency FHRS - Food Hygiene Rating System

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
Wards affected	ALL
Purpose of the report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To provide Members with sufficient information to approve the FSA: COVID 19 Local Authority Food Service Recovery Plan in place of the Food Service Plan 2022/2023.

Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. Approve the continuation of the use of the Food Standards Agency Covid 19 Recovery Plan to guide the work of the Food Safety Team as detailed in the Food Service Recovery Plan.
Period for post policy/project review:	None

1 Introduction/Background:

- 1.1. The Service Plan is dedicated to the food law enforcement functions undertaken by the Environmental Health Service, Environmental and Community Protection (ECP), Neighbourhood Delivery Directorate. The Service Plan includes details of works carried out under food safety legislation.
- 1.2. The scope of the service plan covers specific areas relating to:
 - Food safety and hygiene enforcement
 - Infectious disease investigations
- 1.3. The Food Service Plan expresses the Council's commitment to the development of the food service and the requirements set by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) who monitors and audits local authorities' activities on food law enforcement. The Service Plan helps to ensure that the national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally.
- 1.4. The FSA, in the Framework Agreement, requires that the Food Service Plan be suitably approved, whether this is by Senior Officers or by members. The format of the service plan is dictated by the Framework Agreement and must cover the following areas:
 - Service aims and objectives
 - Background
 - Service delivery
 - Resources
 - Quality Assessment
 - Review

2 Key Issues/proposals

2.1 Purpose of the Food Service Plan - Service Aims and Objectives

The service plan outlines the work the council will undertake to ensure they carry out their statutory obligations as the competent food authority within Dacorum. This involves intervention planning and implementation that is undertaken in line with the regulators code in a proportionate, accountable, consistent, transparent and targeted manner.

- 2.2 The Food Safety service plays a fundamental role in ensuring that the residents of Dacorum have an informed choice of where they can safely purchase food and drink. The Food Service also assist food businesses by providing advice on a range of food safety matters that can aid economic growth and prosperity.

2.3 The council aims to ensure that the food team is adequately resourced to deliver the food service within Dacorum despite increasing demands and difficulties recruiting permanent staff in recent years. All officers are appropriately trained and authorised to carry out a wide range of statutory functions.

2.4 The Food team, working together with other council departments and the public, ensure we have up to date information regarding the food businesses operating within our district. Ensuring this information is up to date enables us to focus on high risk premises and allocate our resources where they are needed most in order to protect the wider public health.

2.5 COVID 19 Pandemic - Impact on the Food Service Plan and the Recovery Plan.

The objectives and the implementation of the Food Service plan dated 2021/2022 have continued to be significantly affected by the COVID 19 Pandemic. The objectives have not been met fully due to the diversion of resources to help with the councils COVID 19 response. This has been the main priority of the Environmental and Community Protection Department as a whole since the pandemic began.

2.6 Resources from the food team had been deployed to carry out local contact tracing, workplace outbreak investigations, Covid 19 complaint investigations and a range of targeted campaigns outlined in section 8 of the Food Service Plan.

2.7 The Food Standards Agency issued the COVID-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan with associated guidance/advice at the time of writing the service plan for 2021/22. These documents outlined how the FSA expect food and feed enforcement authorities to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 on delivery of official food and feed controls. Dacorum have followed this guidance throughout the pandemic. The guidance and advice outlined in the FSA plan aim to ensure that during the period of recovery from the impact of COVID-19, local authority resources are targeted where they add greatest value in providing safeguards for public health and consumer protection in relation to food. It also aims to safeguard the credibility of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

2.8 We continue to follow the COVID 19 Local Authority Recovery Plan which covers the period from 1 July 2021 to 2023/24. Dacorum have followed this recovery plan instead of the usual requirements in full of the Food Safety Service Plan 2021/2022 this will be the same for the 2022/23 Service Plan period.

2.9 Whilst the team are working to return to business as usual we will continue reporting back to the FSA at regular intervals by completing the Temperature Check surveys to identify at the earliest opportunity any problems that we may have following this plan. Any deviation to the plan will be reported to the Portfolio Holder at regular meetings with the Service.

2.10 The team continue to meet or exceed the deadlines for recovery in the FSA Covid 19 Recovery Plan and complete each temperature check as requested by the FSA. Subject to the recovery continuing as outlined we aim to draft and complete a business as usual service plan for the 2024/25 period.

3 Options and alternatives considered

3.1 None – this is a continuation of the Food Standards Agency Covid Recovery Plan which covers the period 2021-2024 in line with FSA Guidance and requirement's to ensure we meet our statutory obligations.

4 Consultation

4.1 Resident Services Board and Julie Banks- Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services have been consulted.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

5.1 There are no financial or value for money implications associated with this, as the service plan sets out how the Council complies with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency

6 Legal Implications

6.1 The Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities, issued by the Food Standard Agency, provides a way to implement the Food Standards Agency powers under the Food Standards Act to influence and oversee local authority enforcement activity.

The Agreement details:

- Publicly available local service plans to increase transparency of local enforcement services
- agreed feed and food law enforcement standards for local authorities
- enhanced monitoring data with greater focus on inspection outcomes and which provides more detailed information on local authority performance
- An audit scheme aimed at securing improvements and sharing good practice

6.2 The Food Service plan is therefore required to meet these requirements, and set out as per the agreement the way the Council will conduct its duties around food safety enforcement, education and compliance.

7 Risk implications:

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? **No**

Separate risk register in place? **No**

The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below. **N/A**

The following key risks should be taken into account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
Failure to meet statutory duties under the Framework Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Food Service Plan is compliant with these requirements▪ The service plan also takes into account FSA requirements and guidance around covid-19 recovery	
Failure for the service plan to be approved through the correct means	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The SPAE OSC report is the first part to ensure compliance, with the report then going to Cabinet for final approval	

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

8.1 The Food Service Plan documents how legal requirements are to be met, and has no detrimental impact on the areas concerned in this section.

9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

9.1 The aspects seeking approval are expected to have a hugely positive impact on health and wellbeing, as well as community safety, by putting in place a proactive scheme that addresses matters evidenced within the area.

9.2 The Food Service Plan sets out a risk based approach, in line with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency, to ensure that food produced, manufactured, stored and sold within Dacorum Borough Council is safe for human consumption

10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

10.1 The resourcing necessary to carry out the service plan is detailed within it.

11 Conclusions:

- 11.1 If the Food Service Plan is not approved then it opens the risk of non-compliance to the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement, and the potential for the Council to be audited and / or action to be taken against it to increase.

Therefore, in conclusion, it is recommended that the draft Food Service Plan is approved to ensure compliance.