

The Highland Council

Transport, Environmental And Community Services Committee 7 November 2013

Agenda Item	7
Report No	TEC 79/13

Food Standards Agency Audit of Shellfish Sampling Activities - July 2013

Report by Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Summary

This report updates Member on the findings of the Food Standards Agency audit carried out in July 2013 of Shellfish Sampling Activities provided by the Environmental Health team.

1. Background

- 1.1 When providing statutory controls on shellfish activities the Council must have regard to the 'Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement' which sets out the standards agreed with the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The FSA has a duty to monitor the performance of Local Authorities' food enforcement sections to ensure they are complying with the agreed standard.
- 1.2 Environmental Health also provide a contracted service to the FSA to provide a Fully Managed Service for Shellfish Sampling. The Council made a successful bid for the contract in 2011 with the contract commencing on 1 April 2012. The contract runs for 3 years, with the possibility to extend for periods up to a maximum of 2 further years.
- 1.3 The FSA carried out an audit of the contract and associated official control work in July 2013. This included verification checks with Shellfish Sampling Officers to assess the effectiveness of official controls in relation to shellfish sampling implemented by the Authority. The scope of the audit also included an assessment of the Authority's overall organisation and management, and the delivery and internal monitoring of other related food law enforcement activities.
- 1.4 The audit was carried out over 3 days and included on-site verification checks with officers in Portree and Golspie and at various shellfish harvesting locations within the Highland Council area.

2. Audit findings

- 2.1 The full FSA audit report, including an executive summary, is provided in **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 In general, the FSA were satisfied with the operational plan and procedures put

in place by the Highland Council. These were found to be prepared in accordance with FSA guidelines and were being implemented.

- 2.3 From the on-site visits, the FSA were satisfied that the Authority was, in almost all cases, completing sampling in accordance with the protocol and contract.
- 2.4 The report specifically identified one area of good practice which was Environmental Health's Scheme of Authorisation. It was found to follow Agency Guidance and is well designed, comprehensive and applied appropriately.
- 2.5 The audit identified a number of minor areas that required action to ensure compliance with the contract and the framework agreement. These included:
 - 1. Training records not fully in accordance with FSA guidelines
 - 2. Update training required for some officers on shellfish enforcement procedures
 - 3. Temperature monitoring of storage refrigerators/freezers not recorded in accordance with internal procedure
 - 4. Further publicity suggested when enforcement action is taken regarding closure of shellfish harvesting areas.
- 2.6 Full details including our actions to address these matters are provided in the Action Plan within the FSA report.

3. Implications

- 3.1 There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.
- 3.2 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.
- 3.3 There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.
- 3.4 There are no climate change / carbon clever implications arising directly from this report.
- 3.5 There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 Members are invited to note the Food Standards Agency Audit report and the Action Plan.

Designation: Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Date: 25 October 2013

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Food Standards Agency in Scotland

**Report on the Audit of
Local Authority Shellfish Sampling Activities
in accordance with the contract between the
Food Standards Agency and Highland Council**

Highland Council

22 - 24 July 2013

Foreword

Audits of Local Authorities food law enforcement services are part of the Food Standards Agency's arrangements to improve consumer protection and confidence in relation to food and feed. These arrangements recognise that the enforcement of UK food law relating to food safety, hygiene, composition, labelling, imported food and feeding stuffs is largely the responsibility of Local Authorities. These Local Authority regulatory functions are principally delivered through Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services. The Agency's website contains enforcement activity data for all UK local authorities and can be found at:

www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/auditandmonitoring.

Agency audits assess Local Authorities' conformance against the Food Law Enforcement Standard ("The Standard"), the 5th revision of which was published in April 2010 by the Agency as part of the Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities and is available on the Agency's website at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/enforcement/frameworkagreementno5.pdf>

It should be acknowledged that there will be considerable diversity in the way and manner in which Local Authorities may provide their food enforcement services reflecting local needs and priorities.

The main aim of the audit scheme is to maintain and improve consumer protection and confidence by ensuring that Local Authorities are providing an effective food law enforcement service. The scheme also provides the opportunity to identify and disseminate good practice and provide information to inform Agency policy on food safety, standards and feeding stuffs. Parallel Local Authority audit schemes are implemented by the Agency's offices in all of the countries comprising the UK.

For assistance, a glossary of technical terms used within this audit report can be found at Annexe C.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report records the results of an audit of Highland Council with regard to compliance with the Shellfish Contract, under relevant headings of The Standard in The Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities (Amendment Five, April 2010). The audit focused on the Authority's arrangements for organising and delivering the management of sampling, enforcement activities and internal monitoring. The report has been made available on the Agency's website at:
www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/auditandmonitoring/auditreports

Reason for the Audit

- 1.2 The power to set standards, monitor and audit Local Authority food law enforcement services was conferred on the Food Standards Agency by Section 12 the Food Standards Act 1999 and Regulation 7 of The Official Feed and Food Controls (Scotland) Regulations 2009. This audit of Highland Council was undertaken under section 12(4) of the Act, and Regulation 7(4) of the Regulations as part of the Food Standards Agency in Scotland audit programme.
- 1.3 Previous FSA audits of Highland Council took place in May 2012 (Feed) and 2009 and 2011 (Approved Establishments Audits).

Scope of the Audit

- 1.4 The audit covered the Local Authority services for the delivery of official controls, and in particular:
- to help compliant businesses to thrive by focussing interventions on non-compliant businesses, ensuring that the non-compliant do not benefit at the expense of the compliant"
- 1.5 The Audit brief was sent to the Authority in advance of the audit programme beginning and is available at <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/enforcement/enfs13005.pdf>
- 1.6 The audit examined Highland Council's local systems and procedures for the official controls on shellfish sampling and specifically the ability to meet and fulfil the Contract for the Provision of a Fully Managed Service for Shellfish Sampling. This included verification checks with Shellfish Sampling Officers to assess the effectiveness of official controls in relation to shellfish sampling implemented by the Authority. The scope of the audit also included an assessment of the Authority's overall organisation and management, and the delivery and internal monitoring of other related food law enforcement activities.
- 1.7 The audit examined key food law enforcement systems and arrangements to determine that they were effective in supporting business compliance, and that local enforcement was managed and delivered effectively. The on-site element of the audit took place at the Authority's Environmental Services offices in Inverness, Portree and Golspie and at various shellfish harvesting locations within the Highland Council area.

Background

- 1.8 The FSA and Local Authorities are required to verify that official controls of bivalve molluscs, echinoderms, tunicates and marine gastropods are organised and carried out in accordance with the relevant provisions of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and welfare rules.
- 1.9 The Contract, between The Food Standards Agency and Highland Council, for the provision of a fully managed service for Shellfish Sampling is effective from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2015.
- 1.10 The Environmental Health Service of Transport, Environmental & Community Services (TEC Services) is responsible for delivery of Shellfish enforcement on behalf of the Food Standards Agency Scotland together with other regulatory enforcement within the Highland Council area.
- 1.11 The staffing allocation available to undertake shellfish sampling is 4.5 full time equivalent (FTE) Officers as advised in the pre-visit questionnaire.

2.0 Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Authority had developed and implemented a Food Team Service Plan for 2013-2014, which satisfies the Service Planning Guidance in the Framework Agreement. It had been presented to, and formally approved by, the Transport, Environment and Community Services Committee on 25 April 2013.
- 2.2 The Authority had developed documented procedures relating to their shellfish sampling responsibilities, including a Food Safety Enforcement Policy. These documents were available to all Officers in electronic format on a central directory. Procedures evaluated during the audit contained up to date references to legislation and official guidance.
- 2.3 The authorisation scheme for enforcement officers was particularly detailed and can be regarded as “Best Practice”, and officers are subject to regular reviews of performance.
- 2.4 Individual Officer training needs were identified as part of their annual Personal review and development meeting. However, training records contained evidence that Officers were not receiving the minimum 10 hours relevant training in the last year.
- 2.5 The procedures and documentation provided for sampling were generally being followed.
- 2.6 Reality checks at two locations confirmed that the Authority was, in almost all cases, completing sampling in accordance with the protocol and contract. However, it was noted that the recommended level of bio-security was not always being followed.
- 2.7 Discussion and review of internal monitoring procedures and practices indicated that the Authority was not able to demonstrate active monitoring of many aspects of the work undertaken by Shellfish Sampling Officers.

3.0 Audit Findings

3.1 Organisation and Management

Strategic Framework, Policy and Service Planning

- 3.1.1 The Authority has a Food Safety Team Plan for 2013-14 that follows the Service Planning Guidance in the Framework Agreement and was approved by the Transport, Environment and Community Services Committee on 25 April 2013. The Service Plan includes the review of the plan for 2012-13. Variances and areas for improvement were identified.
- 3.1.2 In both the TEC Services Environmental Health Operational Plan 2013-14 and the Food Safety Team Plan 2013-14, the Council's roles and responsibilities and Service Aims and Objectives are identical and include the following:
- To provide customer orientated and responsive high quality, cost effective and efficient services
 - To develop and implement strategies that promote and enhance social inclusion, public safety, public health, protect the environment, and encourage public and community and economic well-being
 - To undertake our statutory duties and discretionary powers working in partnership with statutory and voluntary bodies where appropriate
 - To encourage and develop staff to deliver a high quality, safe and efficient service.

Documented Policies and Procedures

- 3.1.3 A suite of documents for sample collection of shellfish and water covering service management (responsibilities and key performance indicators), sampling plan and recording sample collection data (records and database) were examined and found to be satisfactory.
- 3.1.4 Procedures and model forms were in place; however these were not being applied consistently across the authority. Letters accompanying Temporary Closure Notices followed different templates, particularly when expressing results and limits which were not in the format of centrally issued guidance.
- 3.1.5 The Temporary Closure Notice Procedure form was not always completed, shore notices were used inconsistently and obsolete maps were used internally.

Officer Authorisation

- 3.1.6 The Authority has a documented Scheme of Delegation and a Scheme of Authorisation. The level of authorisations is well detailed and applied appropriately. Copies of qualifications and training certificates were on file. There was, however, no evidence that the original qualification certificates had been seen by the Authority. Auditors discussed the benefits of annotating file copies of original documents.

- 3.1.7 Individual training needs are discussed at the annual Personal Review and Development meetings. Records of three officers were checked and these were found to be sufficiently detailed. Shellfish Sampling Officers were, however, not always able to ensure compliance with the Food Law Code of Practice requirements regarding the minimum 10 hours CPD. Regular team meetings were being used to contribute to the CPD but were allocated a standard time of 3 hours for meetings which may not always be appropriate to each Officer. Team meetings are not always documented so justification for CPD is difficult to establish and may not be consistent.

Good Practice

The Scheme of Authorisation follows Agency Guidance and is well designed, comprehensive and applied appropriately.

Recommendation

- 3.1.8 The Authority should:

Ensure that Shellfish Sampling Officers receive the training needed to be competent to deliver the technical and administrative aspects of the work in which they will be involved.

[The Standard – 5.4]

3.2 Facilities and Equipment

Calibration of Equipment

- 3.2.1 In two of the area offices, there were no checks of the freezer temperatures, although there were recorded checks carried out on the refrigerator in one office.
- 3.2.2 Temperature probes being used specifically for shellfish sampling had not been checked and calibrated. In one office, alcohol in glass thermometers are in use and it is recommended that these are replaced with electronic probe thermometers.

Recommendation

3.2.3 The Authority should:

Ensure that equipment is properly maintained and calibrated and is removed from service when found to be defective.

[The Standard – 6.2]

3.3 Interventions

Verification Visits with Shellfish Sampling Officers

- 3.3.1 During the audit, verification visits were undertaken with two Officers to five different sites and sampling was observed on seven occasions. A further unverified sample was provided by the food business operator. The main objective of the visits was to assess the effectiveness of the Authority's delivery of the Shellfish Sampling Programme in accordance with the Sampling Protocols.
- 3.3.2 The specific assessments included the preparation for the sampling visit, the conduct of the sampling event and the adherence to the sampling protocols.
- 3.3.3 The Shellfish Sampling Officers were interviewed before the verification visits took place to explain the format and objectives of the visit. It also gave the Officers the opportunity to explain the sampling process, i.e. the preparatory work carried out prior to sampling and the general processes while on site, which included the adherence to the authority's health and safety requirements.
- 3.3.4 The verification visits satisfied the auditors that the Officers had generally followed the sampling protocols. However there were a number of operational issues noted during and after the sampling process. These included
- An outer sample bag was not sealed as per the protocol
 - Disinfectant was not available throughout one of the sampling routes to disinfect equipment between sites.
 - Not all equipment was disinfected on a regular basis e.g. water barrel
 - A sampling form did not contain the Ordnance Survey Grid Numbers
- 3.3.5 Checks of the sample collection forms confirmed that, in all but one case where the Ordnance Survey location was not recorded but had been established as correct, the Officer was recording the required information from the sampling process.
- 3.3.6 It was evident from audit checks that Officers were following the authority's approach to sampling and were providing verification to businesses to achieve compliance with food safety requirements.

3.4 Enforcement

- 3.4.1 The Authority has a Food Safety Enforcement Policy which was approved by the Transport, Environmental and Community Services Committee on 20 January 2011. A link to the Enforcement Policy is available on the Council's website. The Policy indicated that a review was due in July 2012. This review is currently ongoing. The Policy refers to both a General Enforcement Policy and a Food sampling policy. These documents were available electronically to Officers.

Notices

- 3.4.2 A sample of Temporary Closure Notices (TCN) was reviewed. Procedures and model forms were in place; however these were applied inconsistently across the different area offices and had not always been fully completed leaving doubt about their proper use or signatory.
- 3.4.3 In one area office, TCNs had been issued by the Shellfish Sampling Officer, which was not in accordance with the Authorisation Procedure. There was no evidence of other enforcement action being taken in relation to voluntary surrenders, seizures, detentions or other notices.

Recommendation

- 3.4.4 The Authority should ensure that:

The level of authorisation and duties of officers should be consistent with their qualifications, training, experience and the relevant Code of Practice

[The Standard – 5.3]

- 3.4.5 On occasions where the testing laboratories provided results late in the week indicating that action is required for a remote site, the Authority had taken immediate action to close sites and notify the harvesters; however there was evidence of local notification (shore notices etc.) not being carried out until the following week. Delegated action was unclear and not specific.

Recommendation

- 3.4.6 The Authority should:

Carry out food law enforcement in accordance with the relevant legislation, Codes of Practice and centrally issued guidance.

[The Standard – 15.3]

Sampling

- 3.4.7 The Shellfish Sampling Officers were aware of the sampling programme, plan and procedure for effective sampling. Each officer had a schedule which allowed them to sample, as required, within a designated geographic area. The role allowed them limited flexibility to determine the times and quantities of shellfish to sample.
- 3.4.8 Each sampling officer had been provided with all necessary equipment detailed in the contract to allow them to perform their role. In each of the verification visits the Officer demonstrated a variety of sampling techniques for differing shellfish and water collection.

3.5 Monitoring

Internal Monitoring

- 3.5.1 There is a generic Food Safety Internal Monitoring Procedure for the performance and quality of food premises inspections. The Procedure does not include any direct reference to the work carried out on the official controls for Shellfish Sampling for example, water sampling, Temporary Closure Notices, sanitary surveys and unverified samples.
- 3.5.2 There was evidence that quantitative monitoring takes place (through team meeting agendas) to demonstrate that issues and concerns are discussed; however there were no records of internal monitoring as notes or minutes of these meetings were not always made. Qualitative monitoring of Performance against the Shellfish Sampling Contract Key Performance Indicators are monitored and reported monthly to the FSA.
- 3.5.3 In one area office there was evidence of direct monitoring of the outcomes of the Shellfish Sampling Officer, although the quality of the sampling (outputs) was not monitored. However, the Food Safety Internal Monitoring procedure does require that Area Environmental Health Managers monitor 2% of food samples on an annual basis. The Auditors were informed that occasional file checks and accompanied inspections take place.

Recommendation

3.5.4 The Authority should, in relation to shellfish sampling,:

Verify its conformance with relevant legislation, relevant centrally issued guidance and the Authority's own documented procedures.

[The Standard – 19.2]

A record shall be made of all internal monitoring. This shall be kept for at least 2 years.

[The Standard – 19.3]

3.6 Health and Safety

The Agency requires the Authority to take all measures necessary to comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and any other acts, orders, regulations and codes of practice relating to health and safety

The Authority has in place policies and procedures which includes a buddy system for lone workers. They are also required to ensure that issued equipment for shellfish sampling is fit for purpose and adequately maintained. It was found that, in one case, a lifejacket provided to the auditors had not been serviced since 2004. There was a lack of clarity, at an operational level, about the requirements to service and check lifejackets; however there was a management system in place to control the risk.

Training certificates demonstrating that Officers had completed a Basic Sea Survival course were provided and examined. The certificating body recommends on the document that the training is provided every three years; however there was no evidence that this had occurred or been included in either training programmes or risk assessments.

The Authority is currently reviewing a risk assessment for the food service which includes shellfish sampling.

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ANNEXE A

Action Plan for Highland Council

Audit date: 22-24 July 2013

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
<p>The Authority should ensure that Shellfish Sampling Officers receive the training needed to be competent to deliver the technical and administrative aspects of the work in which they will be involved.</p> <p>[The Standard – 5.4]</p>	31/12/13	<p>The training requirements of the Shellfish Sampling Officers will be reviewed by 30/11/13 to ensure suitable training is provided. Any required training will be arranged for the first quarter of 2014.</p>	

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
<p>The Authority should ensure that equipment is properly maintained and calibrated and is removed from service when found to be defective.</p> <p>[The Standard – 6.2]</p>	31/10/13	<p>All officers will be reminded of the monitoring requirements for refrigerators and freezers. Area managers will be asked to check that the procedures are being followed. Temperature records for November and December 2013 will be provided to the FSA by 20/1/14 to show improvements have been instigated.</p> <p>Basic electronic thermometers will be provided for Shellfish Sampling Officers. Evidence of purchase of these thermometers will be supplied to the FSA by 20/11/13.</p>	

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
<p>The Authority should ensure that the level of authorisation and duties of officers should be consistent with their qualifications, training, experience and the relevant Code of Practice</p> <p>[The Standard – 5.3]</p>	30/11/13	<p>The TCN procedure will be reviewed and updated where required. This will include review of recent notices issued and reminder being issued on authorisation levels. The updated TCN procedure will be forwarded to the FSA by 30/11/13.</p> <p>EH Manager and Area managers will ensure arrangements are implemented. Monitoring sheets will be forwarded to the FSA to allow sign off on this issue.</p>	<p>Teleconference held with relevant staff on 1/8/13 which discussed current procedures and identified improvement areas.</p>
<p>The Authority should carry out food law enforcement in accordance with the relevant legislation, Codes of Practice and centrally issued guidance.</p> <p>[The Standard – 15.3]</p>	30/11/13	<p>As part of the TCN review, a further review of shore notices will be done. For further publicity use of the Council's website to publicise results will be investigated, along with press releases and email circulation lists.</p>	<p>Teleconference held with relevant staff on 1/8/13 which discussed current procedures and identified improvement areas.</p>

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
<p>The Authority should, in relation to shellfish sampling, verify its conformance with relevant legislation, relevant centrally issued guidance and the Authority's own documented procedures.</p> <p>[The Standard – 19.2]</p> <p>A record shall be made of all internal monitoring. This shall be kept for at least 2 years.</p> <p>[The Standard – 19.3]</p>	31/12/13	<p>Meeting organisers to ensure minutes are produced of all meetings. Minutes of the next 3 meetings will be forwarded to the FSA.</p> <p>Internal audit work on shellfish sampling to be reviewed by Area Managers and agree with EH Manager appropriate level of monitoring. Records of all internal monitoring to be maintained via Civica APP system. For verification purposes evidence of management monitoring will be forwarded to the FSA for the first half of 2014.</p>	

ANNEXE B

Audit Approach/Methodology

The audit was conducted using a variety of approaches and methodologies as follows:

(1) Examination of LA policies and procedures.

The following LA policies, procedures and linked documents were examined before and during the audit:

- Operational Plan 2013/14 (14-3-13)
- Food Safety Team Plan 2013-14 (14-3-13)
- Committee approval for above
- Food Safety Service Plan 2011/12 Review report (20 September 2012)
- Food Safety Service Plan 2011/12 Review (10-09-12)
- Committee approval of 2011/12 Food Safety Service Plan
- Committee approval for amendment to 2011/12 Food Safety Service Plan
- Committee report on Food Safety update of 15 November 2012
- Scheme of Delegation (6 September 2012)
- Scheme of Authorisation (22-10-08)
- Food Safety Enforcement Policy (20-1-11)
- Food Safety Enforcement Policy (26-11-10)
- Food Safety Enforcement Policy report of 20 January 2011
- Committee approval of revised Food Safety Enforcement Policy (20 January 2011)
- Food Safety Internal Monitoring Procedure (7/12/12)
- Shellfish Sampling Officers team meeting Agendas (28 February 2013, 13 December 2012)
- Lot 3.1 Sample Collection - shellfish & water (Proposals for service management)
- Lot 3.1 Sample Collection - shellfish & water (Proposed Sampling Plan)
- Lot 3.1 Sample Collection - shellfish & water (Recording Sample Collection)
- Temporary Closure Notice Procedure (For Pod 42)
- Temporary Closure Notice – Map and Photos (For Pod 42)
- Job Specification (Shellfish Sampling Officer)
- Code of Conduct for Employees (03 December 2010)
- Procedure for Food Safety Enforcement in Highland Council Operated premises

(2) File reviews

The following file records were reviewed during the audit:

- Training files & Qualifications
- Enforcement Action

(3) Officer interviews

The following Officers were interviewed:

- Audit Liaison Officer
- Authorised Officers who carried out the most recent sampling visits at the sites selected for a verification visit.

Opinions, comments and views raised during Officer Interviews remain confidential and are not referred to directly within the report.

(4) Verification visits:

Verification visits were made with two Officers from the Authority to shellfish harvesting sites. The purpose of the verification visits was to assess the shellfish and water sampling methodology in accordance with the “Contract for the Provision of a Fully Managed Service for Shellfish Sampling”, and to verify that the terms of the contract were being fulfilled.

ANNEXE C

Glossary

Audit	Audit means a systematic and independent examination to determine whether activities and related results comply with planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve objectives.
Authorised Officer	A suitably qualified Officer who is authorised by the Local Authority to act on its behalf in, for example, the enforcement of legislation.
E. coli	<i>Escherichia coli</i> microorganism, the presence of which is used as an indicator of faecal contamination of food or water. <i>E. coli</i> 0157:H7 is a serious food borne pathogen.
Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland)	Government Codes of Practice issued under Section 40 of the Food Safety Act 1990, Regulation 24 of the Food Hygiene (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and Regulation 6 of the Official Feed and Food Controls (Scotland) Regulations 2009, as guidance to Local Authorities on the enforcement of food legislation.
Food hygiene	The legal requirements covering the safety and wholesomeness of food.
Food Standards	Food standards interventions are part of the system for ensuring that food meets the requirements of food standards law, including proper presentation, labelling and advertising so as not to confuse or mislead; compliance with compositional standards; and the absence of non-permitted or excessive levels of additives, contaminants and residues.
Food Standards Agency	The Food Standards Agency is an independent Government department set up by an Act of parliament in 2000 to protect the public's health and consumer interests in relation to food. Everything we do reflects our vision of Safe food and healthy eating for all.
Framework Agreement	The Framework Agreement consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter One Service Planning Guidance • Chapter Two The Standard • Chapter Three Monitoring of Local Authorities • Chapter Four Audit Scheme for Local Authorities

The **Standard** sets out the Agency's expectations on the planning and delivery of food law enforcement.

The **Monitoring Scheme** requires Local Authorities to submit an annual return to the Agency on their food enforcement activities i.e. numbers of inspections, samples and prosecutions.

Under the **Audit Scheme** the Food Standards Agency will be conducting audits of the food law enforcement services of Local Authorities against the criteria set out in The Standard.

Full Time Equivalents (FTE)	A figure which represents that part of an individual Officer's time available to a particular role or set of duties. It reflects the fact that individuals may work part-time, or may have other responsibilities within the organisation not related to food enforcement.
HACCP / FSMS	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point – a food safety management system (FSMS) used within food businesses to identify points in the production process where it is critical for food safety that the control measure is carried out correctly, thereby eliminating or reducing the hazard to a safe level.
LAEMS	Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System is an electronic system used by local authorities to report their food law enforcement activities to the Food Standards Agency.
Member forum	A local authority forum at which Council Members discuss and make decisions on food law enforcement services.
Risk rating	A system that rates food premises according to risk and determines how frequently those premises should be inspected. For example, high risk premises should be inspected at least every 6 months.
Service Plan	A document produced by a Local Authority setting out their plans on providing and delivering a food service to the local community.