

Report on the Audit of Local Authority Food Law Service Delivery and Food Business Compliance

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
9-10 September 2014



Foreword

Audits of local authorities' feed and 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 and feed 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 attached audit report examines the Authority's Food Law Enforcement Service. The assessment includes the local arrangements in place for database management, inspections of food businesses and internal monitoring. 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.

Agency audits assess local authorities' conformance against the Food Law Enforcement Standard "The Standard", which was published 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: www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/auditandmonitoring.

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 the devolved countries comprising the UK.

The report contains some statistical data, for example on the number of food premises inspections carried out annually. The Agency's website contains enforcement activity data for all UK local authorities and can be found at: www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/auditandmonitoring.

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 at Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils with regard to food hygiene enforcement, under relevant headings of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Enforcement Standard. The audit focused on the Authority's arrangements for the management of the food premises database, food premises interventions, and internal monitoring. The report has been made available on the Agency's website at: www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/auditandmonitoring/auditreports. Hard copies are available from the Food Standards Agency's Operations Assurance Division at Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6NH, Tel: 020 7276 8428.

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 the Food Standards Act 1999 and the Official Feed and Food Controls (England) Regulations 2009. This audit of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's was undertaken under section 12(4) of the Act as part of the Food Standards Agency's annual audit programme.
- 1.3 Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law includes a requirement for competent authorities to carry out internal audits or to have external audits carried out. The purpose of these audits is to verify whether official controls relating to feed and food law are effectively implemented. To fulfil this requirement, the Food Standards Agency, as the central competent authority for feed and food law in the UK has established external audit arrangements. In developing these, the Agency has taken account of the European Commission guidance on how such audits should be conducted.¹
- 1.4 For the purpose of this audit, 'The Authority' refers to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. The Authority was selected for inclusion in the Food Standards Agency's programme of audits of local authority food law enforcement services because Babergh District Council had not been previously audited.

¹ Commission Decision of 29 September 2006 setting out the guidelines laying down criteria for the conduct of audits under Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on official controls to verify compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules (2006/677/EC).

Scope of the Audit

- 1.5 The audit examined Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's arrangements for food premises database management, food premises interventions and internal monitoring, with regard to food hygiene law enforcement. This included a reality check at a food business to assess the effectiveness of official controls implemented by the Authority at the food business premises and, more specifically, the checks carried out by the Authority's officers, to verify food business operator (FBO) compliance with legislative requirements. The scope of the audit also included an assessment of the Authority's overall organisation and management and the internal monitoring of food hygiene law enforcement activities.
- 1.6 Assurance was sought that key food hygiene law enforcement systems and arrangements 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 offices at 131 High Street, Needham Market, Ipswich, Suffolk on 9-10 September 2014.

Background

- 1.7 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are situated in the county of Suffolk, covering an area of over 146,000 hectares with a population of approximately 178,000 living in 200 parishes. The principal towns are Stowmarket and Sudbury.
- 1.8 The Authority has many small to medium food retail and catering businesses, including a high number of home businesses and a small range of specialist food manufacturing businesses involved with products requiring approval under Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004. In addition there are a number of national and international food manufacturers including a sushi manufacturer and the local villages regularly host farmers markets throughout the year.
- 1.9 Food hygiene law enforcement was the responsibility of the Commercial Team in the Environment Service Group of the Place Directorate. The Team deliver a number of other regulatory functions besides food safety, including health and safety at work and infectious disease control.

- 1.10 The Authority reported the profile of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's food businesses at 1 April 2014 as follows:

Type of Food Premises	Number
Primary Producers	15
Manufacturers/Packers	265
Importers/Exporters	0
Distributors/Transporters	56
Retailers	355
Restaurant/Caterers	1,384
Total Number of Food Premises	2,075

2.0 Executive Summary

2.1 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils were selected for audit as Babergh District Council had not been previously audited. For the purpose of this audit, 'The Authority' refers to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. The Authority was able to demonstrate that it had developed a risk-based intervention strategy which included the assessment of unrated businesses.

2.2 **Strength:**

Interventions: It was clear from inspection records that officers were knowledgeable and experienced in identifying food safety hazards in businesses. Inspections were consistently focused on potential risks and the Authority was able to demonstrate a well-established emphasis on achieving business compliance, supporting and assisting local food businesses to meet legal standards.

2.3 **Key areas for improvement:**

Enforcement and follow-up actions: Officers needed to provide further details of their decisions in relation to follow-up actions, including appropriate reference to the Authority's Enforcement Policy.

Internal Monitoring: The Authority needed to develop and implement a risk-based internal monitoring regime to check the quality of inspection records for general and approved establishments and follow-up actions.

Reviewing and updating documented policies and procedures: The Authority had not reviewed its documented procedures for some time. Given the findings of this audit, the Service would benefit from the review and further development of documented procedures covering all aspects of food law enforcement activity, to aid consistency of delivery.

3.0 Audit Findings

3.1 Organisation and Management

Strategic Framework, Policy and Service Planning

- 3.1.1 Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council had been through a complex process of merging their food safety teams over the last few years with the aim of developing a more cost effective and efficient Service for both the individual authorities. The new joint service had a single management team with officers from both authorities being authorised to carry out enforcement in both Districts.
- 3.1.2 The Authority had developed a joint Food and Safety Service Plan for 2014/15. The Plan was generally in line with the Service Planning Guidance in the Framework Agreement and provided useful information including details of all the demands placed upon the Service and liaison arrangements with other neighboring authorities and agencies.
- 3.1.3 The Plan provided details of the Authority's risk-based intervention strategy for food safety enforcement. It also provided an overview of the wider aims and objectives of the Service including the objective of increasing the percentage of broadly compliant businesses in both Districts.
- 3.1.4 Although the Plan was generally in line with the Service Planning Guidance in the Framework Agreement, it would benefit from the addition of further key information about the food service, including a more detailed breakdown of the resources required to deliver the Service in full accordance with statutory requirements compared to the resources currently available, to identify any potential shortfall. The absence of such information made it difficult for the Authority to demonstrate to Members and senior management that the Service had sufficient resources to deliver all its statutory functions in line with the Food Law Code of Practice (FLCoP).

Recommendations

3.1.5 The Authority should:

- (i) Ensure that future Food Service Plans provide an accurate and reasoned estimate of the staffing resources required to deliver the food law enforcement service compared with the staffing resources available to the Authority. [The Standard – 3.1]
- (ii) Ensure that a full documented performance review is carried out at least once a year based on the service delivery plan and submitted for approval to the relevant Member forum or senior officer/s if duties involving approval have been delegated to senior officers. [The Standard – 3.2]

Documented Policies and Procedures

3.1.6 The Authority provided a number of useful procedures linked to a range of service activities. However, given the audit findings and the additional complexities of merging two separate food teams each previously having their own policies, database and administration the Authority needs to review its policies and procedures to ensure that they cover all aspects of the Service, accurately reflecting the Authority's expectations of officers in delivering the Service. In addition the Authority needs to develop a suitable system for ensuring the regular review and updating of all these documents.

Recommendation

3.1.7 The Authority should:

Ensure that all documented policies and procedures for each of the enforcement activities are reviewed at regular intervals and whenever there are changes to legislation and centrally issued guidance. [The Standard – 4.1]

Officer Authorisations

- 3.1.8 Auditors were provided with a scheme of delegation which indicated that the Head of Planning and Environmental Services and line managers in his/her absence had delegated powers from the Council to authorise suitably qualified officers to enforce various public health statutes.
- 3.1.9 The Authority provided evidence of a scheme of delegation and copies of officer authorisation documents which confirmed that officers had been authorised to carry out food enforcement activities by the Head of Environment. However authorisations contained insufficient legal references to clearly define and where necessary, limit the powers delegated to officers under all relevant food hygiene legislation. The Authority needs to develop and document a suitable process for the authorisation of officers based upon their competencies and qualifications. This process should be linked to officer training and competency requirements.
- 3.1.10 Only a limited number of training records were available during the audit as the Authority did not routinely maintain copies of certificates and training records. However auditors were quickly provided with copies of appropriate records shortly after the audit. Checks confirmed that officers had received the required 10 hours training based on the principles of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), including training on the FSA's E.coli Guidance, approved establishments and training on relevant specialist processes such as vacuum-packing and sous vide processes.
- 3.1.11 Auditors were advised that individual officer training needs were discussed during the annual appraisal process between officers and managers. It was not always clear though how training needs were assessed and prioritised based on their individual duties and responsibilities.

Recommendations

3.1.12 The Authority should:

- (i) Review and amend current officer authorisations and develop and implement an appropriate authorisation procedure to include a suitable method of assessing officer competencies based on their level of authorization. [The Standard - 5.1]
- (ii) Maintain records of relevant academic or other qualifications, training and experience of each authorised officer and appropriate support staff in accordance with the relevant Codes of Practice. [The Standard - 5.5]

3.2 Food Premises Database

- 3.2.1 A decision had been made to migrate all premises records from the two authorities onto Babergh District Council's existing system. The audit confirmed that some historic premises enforcement records for Mid Suffolk District Council could not be retrieved, although auditors were provided with assurances that the Authority still had access to the previous database used by Mid Suffolk District Council if needed.
- 3.2.2 The combined Service operated a computer database system that was capable of providing an accurate combined single data return for the FSA's Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS).
- 3.2.3 In general, officers had responsibility for entering data on to the system including records of enforcement activity, inspection details and risk ratings. Various database checks carried out as part of the audit, including internet searches confirmed that the data was generally accurate. The Service was able to demonstrate its ability to provide useful data reports from the database which are required for the effective management of its intervention programme.
- 3.2.4 Auditors discussed the benefits of developing a documented procedure to promote consistent data entry and to ensure that the food premises database was accurate.

3.3 Food Premises Interventions

3.3.1 The Authority's Food Safety Service Plan 2014/15 provided details of targets for the food premises intervention programme including details of the full premises risk profiles. LAEMS data provided by the Authority indicated the following breakdown of premises by risk category:

Premises Risk Category	Number of Premises
A	11
B	72
C	532
D	313
E	1,118
Unrated	8
Outside programme	21
TOTAL	2,075

3.3.2 Auditors were advised that the inspection programme was organised and allocated quarterly.

3.3.3 Database checks confirmed a small number of food businesses were overdue some form of intervention. These were generally lower risk or compliant establishments with no higher risk businesses overdue an inspection. Auditors discussed the use of the full range of possible interventions and flexibilities described in the Food Law Code of Practice (FLCoP) if needed to help address any backlog of interventions.

3.3.4 In addition to the small backlog of overdue interventions there were a number of unrated newly registered businesses that still required an initial inspection. The Authority assured auditors that these overdue and unrated establishments would be prioritised on a risk basis and integrated into the coming year's intervention programme.

3.3.5 After assessing the Authority's database, auditors were able to confirm that the Authority had generally adopted a risk-based approach to its intervention programme, targeting resources at the higher risk and non-compliant businesses.

Recommendation

3.3.6 The Authority should:

Ensure that food hygiene interventions at food premises in their area are carried out at a frequency which is not less than that determined under the intervention rating scheme set out in the Food Law Code of Practice.

[The Standard – 7.1]

- 3.3.7 At the time of the audit the Authority had a policy of conducting full inspections for all of its higher risk and non-compliant businesses and a range of other official controls and an alternative enforcement strategy for its lower risk businesses. The Authority's procedures relating to food hygiene interventions required review and expansion to ensure they were current, comprehensive and included guidance for officers on the inspection of approved establishments. In addition the inspection procedure could usefully contain clearer guidance for officers on important risks and hazards including assessments of imported foods and the application of Agency guidance on avoiding cross-contamination risks from E.coli O157.
- 3.3.8 The Authority had developed and implemented an appropriate inspection aide-memoire for higher risk inspections which officers were expected to complete at the time of the intervention, along with a report of inspection form. Key findings and risk rating details were subsequently entered onto the electronic database. The aide-memoire included a detailed assessment of businesses food safety management systems based on HACCP and the implementation and operation of Safe food, better business (SFBB) allowing officers to demonstrate that businesses had been inspected in accordance with current legislation and centrally issued guidance.
- 3.3.9 Audit checks on aides-memoire indicated that generally detailed inspection notes were being recorded on file with evidence of detailed and thorough traceability assessments being carried out. There was evidence that a supplementary form had also been completed at relevant higher risk establishments to provide more detailed assessments of cross contamination risks. Officers provided details of business activities and clearly identified any breaches of relevant legislation. There was some historic variation however in the level of detail recorded by officers making it difficult in several cases to justify the risk scores allocated, based on the officers inspection records.
- 3.3.10 Where letters to businesses had been sent following inspections they were comprehensive and provided businesses with useful advice and detailed findings clearly differentiating between legal contraventions and recommendations.

- 3.3.11 The Authority's Service Plan indicated that there were sixteen establishments that required approval under Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004. Files were examined relating to three of these businesses including a meat products establishment and two dairy establishments. Inspections had generally been carried out at the frequency prescribed by the FLCoP and had been approved under the relevant food hygiene legislation.
- 3.3.12 Approved establishments inspection files varied in the quality of information held within them and were generally disorganised. It was difficult to retrieve important key business information in some cases such as up to date copies of business HACCP, food safety management plans and correspondence with businesses, including that relating to the original approval. Files would therefore benefit from review and further assessment to ensure that they contain easily retrievable business information in accordance with the FLCoP and Practice Guidance.
- 3.3.13 Although the Authority had developed a suitable specific inspection aide-memoire for approved establishments to provide useful prompts for officers, these had not always been used for all approved establishment inspections. This made it difficult for officers to demonstrate that businesses had been inspected fully against all relevant hygiene legislation on every occasion. However officers had recorded inspection findings on the general inspections aide memoire and had occasionally used supplementary file notes to explain inspection findings and the outcomes of inspections.
- 3.3.14 The Authority would benefit from reviewing and further developing its intervention procedures given the audit findings to provide officers with suitable operational guidance covering all intervention types, follow-up actions, approval and re-approval, risk scoring, and the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

Recommendations

3.3.15 The Authority should:

- (i) Assess the compliance of establishments and systems in their area to the legally prescribed standards.
[The Standard - 7.3 and 15.4]
- (ii) Further develop and implement documented procedures for the inspection of general food premises and approved establishments to provide operational guidance to officers that is in line with the Food Law Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance.
[The Standard – 7.4]

Verification Visit to a Food Premises

- 3.3.16 During the audit, a verification visit was undertaken to a local care home with an experienced officer from the Authority. The main objective of the visit was to assess the effectiveness of the Authority's assessment of food business compliance with food law requirements. The specific assessments included the conduct of the preliminary interview with the FBO by the officer, general hygiene checks to verify compliance with structure and hygiene practice requirements and checks carried out by the officer to verify compliance with HACCP based procedures.
- 3.3.17 The officer was able to demonstrate general familiarity with the premises and the key operations carried out at the business including the adequacy of the operator's food safety management system. Auditors were able to confirm and verify the findings from the last inspection and the range of business operations being carried out.

3.4 Enforcement

- 3.4.1 The Authority had developed an enforcement policy which set out the Authority's commitment to a graduated and proportionate approach to enforcement. The document contained general guidance on enforcement actions in accordance with the FLCoP. The Authority had also developed a set of procedures relating to specific enforcement actions. These included procedures for taking prosecutions, hygiene emergency prohibition notices (HEPNs), hygiene improvement notices (HINs) and simple cautions. These would benefit from review to ensure that they covered all possible enforcement actions, contain up to date references to relevant hygiene regulations and centrally issued guidance and reflect actual operational practices since the merging of the two Services.
- 3.4.2 The Authority was able to demonstrate its willingness and ability to use a full range of enforcement actions to achieve business compliance. Records of three HINs, three simple cautions and two prosecution files were assessed. Generally notices had been drafted and served appropriately and seemed justified given the inspection findings. There was evidence available that the notices had been properly served and a timely check on compliance had in most cases been made following expiry of the notices.
- 3.4.3 The Authority had developed and implemented a useful checklist to record the decision making process in relation to prosecutions and simple cautions. Evidence of detailed and comprehensive prosecution files was also noted. However auditors recommended that in all higher risk cases, officers should provide a more detailed record of their reasons for their choice of follow-up action, particularly where inspection histories would allow for a range of enforcement actions to be taken to achieve timely compliance.

Recommendation

3.4.4 The Authority should:

Set up maintain and implement documented procedures for follow up and enforcement actions in accordance with the relevant Codes of Practice and official guidance.

[The Standard - 15.2]

3.5 Internal Monitoring, Third Party or Peer Review

Internal Monitoring

- 3.5.1 File checks and discussions during the audit confirmed that whilst there was evidence of effective quantitative monitoring, there was only limited documentary evidence of any qualitative monitoring relating to officer inspection records and follow-up actions.
- 3.5.2 The Authority needed to further develop, implement and document its internal monitoring activities to cover follow-up actions and inspection records, as well as other aspects of the Service such as approved establishment records, enforcement action, sampling and complaints. More targeted risk-based internal monitoring would help ensure consistency amongst officers generally and more specifically to help to ensure the consistent and appropriate record keeping of any enforcement decisions.

Recommendations

3.5.3 The Authority should:

- (i) Develop, maintain and implement documented internal monitoring procedures in accordance with Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 (Official Feed and Food Controls), the Food Law Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance. This should include all aspects of the Service, including the work of contractors where appropriate. [The Standard – 19.1]
- (ii) Verify its conformance with the Standard, relevant legislation, the Food Law Code of Practice, centrally issued guidance and the Authority's own documented policies and procedure across all the Authority's food law enforcement activities. [The Standard – 19.2]
- (iii) Ensure that records of monitoring activities are maintained. [The Standard – 19.3]

Food and Food Premises Complaints

- 3.5.4 The Authority had developed a documented procedure for dealing with food and food premises complaints. Brief details of the Authority's policy on food complaints were set out in its Service Plan.
- 3.5.5 Checks made on records for five recent complaints indicated that these were generally subject to adequate investigation and follow-up

and that all relevant parties were informed of the results of complaint investigations. Auditors did however advise officers to keep more detailed notes of their choice of follow-up actions in higher risk complaint investigations to explain their actions.

Food Inspection and Sampling

- 3.5.6 The Authority was able to demonstrate its commitment to the use of risk-based and proportionate sampling as part of its delivery of official controls. A detailed sampling procedure and sampling programme for 2013/14 had been developed and implemented which included plans to sample and test the microbiological safety of a range of ready to eat foods and higher risk food products.
- 3.5.7 A number of sampling records assessed were generally found to contain all the relevant sample details and appropriate follow-up actions and communications with businesses in accordance with the FLCoP.

Records

- 3.5.8 Records of food law enforcement activities were maintained both electronically and on hard copy paper records. Audit checks confirmed that in general, records across all food law enforcement activities were legible and easily retrievable. Auditors did advise the Authority to consider developing a more effective method of labelling and identifying scanned documents on premises files.

Third Party or Peer Review

- 3.5.9 The Authority had not taken part in any inter-authority audits in recent years. Auditors discussed the benefits to the Service of continuing to undertake such activities in the future and ensuring that all recommendations are considered and acted upon. The Authority had however recently taken part in consistency exercises amongst officers within the Service and with neighboring authorities.

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ANNEX A Action Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

Audit date: 9-10 September 2014

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
3.1.5(i) Ensure that future Food Service Plans provide an accurate and reasoned estimate of the staffing resources required to deliver the food law enforcement service compared with the staffing resources available to the Authority. [The Standard – 3.1]	30/04/15	Calculations relating to staffing resources will be included in the 2015/16 Service Plan. This plan will be considered by council committees in the March 2015 cycle.	When the services of Babergh and Mid Suffolk district councils were approaching integration in 2012, necessary staffing levels were calculated but this work hasn't been fully re-done since that time.
3.1.5(ii) Ensure that a full documented performance review is carried out at least once a year based on the service delivery plan and submitted for approval to the relevant Member forum or senior officer/s if duties involving approval have been delegated to senior officers. [The Standard – 3.2]	30/04/15	A fuller review of the food safety elements of the Food and Safety service will be included in the 2015/16 Service Plan. This plan will be considered by council committees in the March 2015 cycle.	Reports of issues of significance are regularly provided to the portfolio councillor for Mid Suffolk and copied to the lead councillor for Babergh.
3.1.7 Ensure that all documented policies and procedures for each of the enforcement activities are reviewed at regular intervals and whenever there are changes to legislation and centrally issued guidance. [The Standard – 4.1]	31/12/14	A schedule of review dates to include all relevant policies and procedures to be created by the Suffolk Food Liaison Group at the December 2014 meeting.	Leading up to the FSA audit, key procedures were reviewed by the Food and Safety team. Suffolk Food Liaison Group have begun work on shared procedures for the county based on the structure of the Food Law CoP.

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
3.1.12(i) Review and amend current officer authorisations and develop and implement an appropriate authorisation procedure to include a suitable method of assessing officer competencies based on their level of authorization. [The Standard - 5.1]	Completed	A matrix of qualifications and training, for all officers in the Food and Safety team, has been produced which cross references to the specific details of what each officer can be authorised to do.	Authorisations have been re-drafted and issued (as of the first of October 2014) to specify what elements of food law each officer is competent to enforce.
3.1.12(ii) Maintain records of relevant academic or other qualifications, training and experience of each authorised officer and appropriate support staff in accordance with the relevant Codes of Practice. [The Standard - 5.5]	Completed	The matrix referred to above. This will be periodically reviewed by the service manager and used to identify and schedule training needs.	A record matrix has been created to summarise qualifications, training and experience.
3.3.6 Ensure that food hygiene interventions at food premises in their area are carried out at a frequency which is not less than that determined under the intervention rating scheme set out in the Food Law Code of Practice. [The Standard – 7.1]	Ongoing	As resources for this will be reviewed during the Service Plan drafting as in 3.1.5(i) both the number of interventions needed and the level of staffing resource required to carry out those interventions will be more fully known.	The annual food safety Service Plan identifies the number of interventions due in the forthcoming year in each of the risk categories. On a monthly basis the food premises database is used to identify and allocate to individual officers. An alternative enforcement strategy is in place for dealing with a backlog of E rated premises.

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
3.3.15(i) Assess the compliance of establishments and systems in their area to the legally prescribed standards. [The Standard - 7.3 and 15.4]	30/04/15 and ongoing	Approved establishment files are to be reviewed and the type of information held on them made consistent.	Files for approved establishments are under review to ensure copies of all necessary documentation are held and can be retrieved. Officers have been requested to use the specific aide-memoire for approved establishments. Lead officer to explore use of sector specific aides-memoire.
3.3.15(ii) Further develop and implement documented procedures for the inspection of general food premises and approved establishments to provide operational guidance to officers that is in line with the Food Law Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance. [The Standard – 7.4]	31/12/14 and ongoing	Procedures, particularly in relation to approved establishments will be reviewed and reissued to the Food and Safety team.	Suffolk Food Liaison Group have begun work on shared procedures for the county based on the structure of the Food Law CoP.
3.4.4 Set up maintain and implement documented procedures for follow up and enforcement actions in accordance with the relevant Codes of Practice and official guidance. [The Standard - 15.2]	31/12/14 and ongoing	Procedures relating to the decision making process will be reviewed and revised before reissuing them to the Food and Safety Team.	Suffolk Food Liaison Group have begun work on shared procedures for the county based on the structure of the Food Law CoP.

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
3.5.3(i) Develop, maintain and implement documented internal monitoring procedures in accordance with Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 (Official Feed and Food Controls), the Food Law Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance. This should include all aspects of the Service, including the work of contractors where appropriate. [The Standard – 19.1]	31/01/15	Documented internal monitoring procedures will be developed and implemented.	First draft of internal monitoring procedure produced.
3.5.3(ii) Verify its conformance with the Standard, relevant legislation, the Food Law Code of Practice, centrally issued guidance and the Authority’s own documented policies and procedure across all the Authority’s food law enforcement activities. [The Standard – 19.2]	31/01/15 onwards	A range of measures to enable verification will be put in place including: i. Peer review ii. Internal monitoring of food law enforcement iii. Review of the use of centrally issued guidance.	First draft of internal monitoring procedure produced.
3.5.3(iii) Ensure that records of monitoring activities are maintained. [The Standard – 19.3]	31/03/15	Methodology for the recording of monitoring will be developed and implemented alongside the measures themselves.	The internal monitoring procedure draft includes elements of recording what has been monitored.

ANNEX 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:

- Food and Safety Service Plan for 2014/15
- Relevant Cabinet meeting minutes
- Service policies and procedures
- Food premises inspection procedure and aide-memoire
- Supplementary Cross-contamination Inspection Checklist
- Officer authorisation, training and qualification records.

(2) File reviews – the following LA file records were reviewed during the audit:

- General food premises inspection records
- Approved establishment records
- Food complaint records
- Food sampling records
- Formal enforcement records.

(3) Review of database records:

- To review and assess the completeness of database records of food hygiene inspections, food and food premises complaint investigations, samples taken by the authority, formal enforcement and other activities and to verify consistency with file records.
- To assess the completeness and accuracy of the food premises database.
- To assess the capability of the system to generate food law enforcement activity reports and the monitoring information required by the Food Standards Agency.

(4) Officer interview– the following officer was interviewed:

- 1 Environmental Health Officer

Opinions and views raised during officer interviews remain confidential and are not referred to directly within the report.

(5) On-site verification check:

A verification visit was made with the Authority's officers to a local food business. The purpose of the visit was to verify the outcome of the last inspection carried out by the Local Authority and to assess the extent to which enforcement activities and decisions met the requirements of relevant legislation, the Food Law Code of Practice and official guidance, having particular regard to LA checks on FBO compliance with HACCP based food management systems.

ANNEX C Glossary

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.
Broadly Compliant	An outcome measure which the Food Standard Agency has developed with local authorities to monitor the effectiveness of the regulatory service relating to food law. It is based on the risk rating scheme in the Food Law Code of Practice which is currently used by food law enforcement officers to assess premises which pose the greatest risk to consumers failing to comply with food law.
Codes of Practice	Government Codes of Practice issued under Section 40 of the Food Safety Act 1990 as guidance to local authorities on the enforcement of food legislation.
County Council	A local authority whose geographical area corresponds to the county and whose responsibilities include food standards and feeding stuffs enforcement.
District Council	A local authority of a smaller geographical area and situated within a County Council whose responsibilities include food hygiene enforcement.
E.coli O157	E.coli O157 belongs to the group of verotoxigenic E.coli (VTEC) bacteria which are a toxin-producing strain of Escherichia coli that occur naturally in the gastrointestinal tract of animals such as cattle and sheep, and are pathogenic to humans. E.coli O157 is the VTEC strain that has been most commonly implicated in human infection in the UK.
External Temporary Storage Facility (ETSF)	A warehouse (formerly known as an enhanced remote transit shed or ERTS) designated by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), where goods are temporarily stored pending clearance by HMRC, and prior to release into free circulation.
Environmental Health Officer (EHO)	Officer employed by the local authority to enforce food safety legislation.
Feeding stuffs	Term used in legislation on feed mixes for farm animals and pet food.

Food hygiene	The legal requirements covering the safety and wholesomeness of food.
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)	The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme provides information to the public about hygiene standards in catering and retail food establishments. It is run by local authorities in partnership with the Food Standards Agency. Businesses that fall within the scope of the scheme are given a ‘hygiene rating’ which shows how closely the business was meeting the requirements of food hygiene law at the time of inspection. The scheme also encourages businesses to improve hygiene standards.
Food Safety Management System	A written permanent procedure, or procedures, based on HACCP principles. It is structured so that this requirement can be applied flexibly and proportionately according to the size and nature of the food business.
Food standards	The legal requirements covering the quality, composition, labelling, presentation and advertising of food, and materials in contact with food.
Framework Agreement	<p>The Framework Agreement consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Feed Law Enforcement Standard • Service Planning Guidance • Monitoring Scheme • Audit Scheme <p>The Standard and the Service Planning Guidance set out the Agency’s expectations on the planning and delivery of food and feed law enforcement.</p> <p>The Monitoring Scheme requires local authorities to submit yearly returns via LAEMS to the Agency on their food enforcement activities i.e. numbers of inspections, samples and prosecutions.</p> <p>Under the Audit Scheme the Food Standards Agency will be conducting audits of the food and feed law enforcement services of local authorities against the criteria set out in the Standard.</p>
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 and feed

enforcement.

HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point – a food safety management system 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.
Metropolitan Authority	A local authority normally associated with a large urban conurbation in which the County and District Council functions are combined.
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.
Safer food, better business (SFBB)	A food safety management system, developed by the Food Standards Agency to help small catering and retail businesses put in place food safety management procedures and comply with food hygiene regulations.
Service Plan	A document produced by a local authority setting out their plans on providing and delivering a food service to the local community.
Trading Standards	The Department within a local authority which carries out, amongst other responsibilities, the enforcement of food standards and feeding stuffs legislation.
Trading Standards Officer (TSO)	Officer employed by the local authority who, amongst other responsibilities, may enforce food standards and feeding stuffs legislation.
Unitary Authority	A local authority in which the County and District Council functions are combined, examples being Metropolitan District/Borough Councils, and London

Boroughs. A Unitary Authority's responsibilities will include food hygiene, food standards and feeding stuffs enforcement.