

**Report on the Audit of Local Authority Food Law
Service Assessment of Food Businesses'
Food Safety Management System (FSMS)**

East Dorset District Council
23-24 February 2010



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. 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.

The attached audit report examines the Local Authority's Food Law Enforcement Service. The assessment includes the local arrangements in place for officer authorisation and training, inspections of food businesses and internal monitoring. The audit scope was developed specifically to address Recommendations 9 and 15 of the Public Inquiry Report¹ into the 2005 E. coli outbreak at Bridgend, Wales. The programme focused on the local authority's training provision to ensure that all officers who check Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) and HACCP based plans, including those responsible for overseeing the work of those officers, have the necessary knowledge and skills. Also, that existing inspection arrangements and processes to assess and enforce HACCP related food safety requirements in food businesses are adequate, risk based, and able to effect any changes necessary to secure improvements.

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 Local Authority Food Law Enforcement and is available on the Agency's website at: www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/auditandmonitoring. 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 the devolved countries comprising the UK.

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

¹ <http://wales.gov.uk/ecolidocs/3008707/reporten.pdf?skip=1&lang=en>

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report records the results of an audit at East Dorset District Council 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 food premises inspections, enforcement activities 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 Local Authority Audit and Liaison 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 East Dorset District Council was undertaken under section 12(4) of the Act as part of the Food Standards Agency's annual audit programme.
- 1.3 The Authority was included in the Food Standards Agency's programme of audits of local authority food law enforcement services, because it had not been audited in the past by the Agency and was representative of a geographical mix of 25 Councils selected across England.

Scope of the Audit

- 1.4 The audit examined East Dorset District Council's arrangements for food premises inspections and internal monitoring with regard to food hygiene law enforcement, with particular emphasis on officer competencies in assessing food safety management systems based on HACCP principles. 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 other related food hygiene law enforcement activities.
- 1.5 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 office at Furzehill, Wimbourne on 23-24 February 2010.

Background

- 1.6 East Dorset District Council is one of six District Councils within a two tier local government structure in Dorset County. East Dorset includes the towns of Wimbourne and Ferndown and has a mix of urban and rural areas with a population of approximately 85,000. The main economy of the area is agriculture and tourism with some industrial activities particularly in the Ferndown area.
- 1.7 There are approximately 760 food premises in the district. The majority of food businesses comprise small to medium catering and retail enterprises and there were 12 establishments in the Authority's area which required approval under Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004.
- 1.8 The Food and Safety Team was responsible for enforcing food hygiene legislation. The team was also responsible for health and safety enforcement and licensing.
- 1.9 The team was not responsible for food standards and feeding stuffs law enforcement which was carried out by Dorset County Council Trading Standards Department.
- 1.10 The profile of East Dorset District Council's food businesses as of 31 March 2009 reported to the Agency in its most recent official monitoring return was as follows:

Type of food premises	Number
Primary Producers	21
Importers/Exporters	1
Distributors/Transporters	16
Manufacturers/Packers	19
Retailers	110
Restaurant/Caterers	581
Total number of food premises	760

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 At the time of the audit, the Authority was undergoing a period of change whilst entering a shared service arrangement for public health with Christchurch District Council, due to commence from 1 April 2010, and the Authority was integrating its services as a whole from autumn/winter 2010.
- 2.2 The common format of a Service Plan set out in the Service Planning Guidance in the Framework Agreement had not been adopted by the Authority, however there was a broad commitment to the development of the food service included within a recently developed document entitled 'Public Health Food Safety Process Document'. There were no reporting arrangements to an appropriate Members' forum for approval of the proposals. The document would benefit from being expanded to include a breakdown of the food premises profile, including risk ratings and the proposed annual interventions and inspection programme, to show the scope of the Authority's food law enforcement work, and a comparison of the staff required to deliver the food enforcement service against the staff resources available to the Authority to confirm that the plan is deliverable. There was also a need for annual reviews of performance, including measures taken to address any variances in meeting Service Plans and any required areas for improvement.
- 2.3 The Food Safety Process Document was being developed with a view to assist the management of document control and the review and development of procedures. Supporting documents were hyperlinked to provide an easily accessible source of relevant reference information for staff.
- 2.4 Under the Authority's scheme of delegation, the Head of Public Health Services authorised officers to carry out food safety law enforcement functions. The Authority had not developed and implemented a documented procedure for the authorisation of officers based on their competence and needed to review the current authorisations to ensure that the authorisation documents contain references to specific and up to date legislation.
- 2.5 Officer training needs were determined at annual staff performance development reviews. Officers had achieved 10 hours Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training required by the Food Law Code of Practice (FLCoP) and several staff had recently attended training on the evaluation of food safety management systems (FSMS). In general, the team had up to date training but a training programme should be developed to establish and document individual officer and team training needs. Officer qualification and training records had not in all cases been maintained by the Authority.

- 2.6 The Authority had developed procedures for the inspection of food premises and approved establishments. The inspection procedures, including those for approved establishments, would benefit from the provision of clear guidance for officers on the validation and verification of FSMS.
- 2.7 Auditors noted that, except for butchers and approved establishments, there was no appropriate aide-memoire in use for officers to record detailed findings during inspections. Reporting was broadly by exception i.e. officers generally included details of legislative non-compliances rather than a broader compliance history of the business.
- 2.8 The Authority had recently introduced a paperless system for the recording of inspection details and enforcement activities across the Service. Documents and evidence were often difficult to retrieve from this system and in many cases historical documents had been shredded, making it difficult for auditors to fully assess the compliance history of the individual premises. From the limited information available, there was evidence that the Authority was generally implementing an effective food premises inspection programme, but inspections were not always carried out at the minimum frequencies specified within the FLCoP.
- 2.9 The Authority's records showed that some approved establishments were currently still undergoing re-approval under Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004. Approved establishments inspections were carried out in a timely manner and generally file records were well organised, easily retrievable, and specific aides-memoire were being used to record detailed findings by officers. However, in the case of one approved establishments file examined, the Authority should consider a more graduated enforcement approach to issues of non-compliance.
- 2.10 Food and food premises complaints were investigated effectively, including the implementation of appropriate follow-up action. Complaint records were generally found to be complete and accurate.
- 2.11 There was clear evidence that the Authority was actively participating in both local and national sampling programmes. File checks showed that appropriate follow-up actions had been taken in all cases of unsatisfactory samples and food business operators had been informed of outcomes.
- 2.12 The Authority had developed an enforcement policy which was generally in accordance with centrally issued guidance. Due to incomplete or illegible records, where food safety contraventions had been identified, it could not always be confirmed that a graduated approach to enforcement had been implemented in accordance with the Authority's enforcement policy.

- 2.13 File checks of hygiene improvement notices showed that generally the Authority had issued the notices in appropriate circumstances, timely revisits had taken place and there was some evidence of internal monitoring. Follow-up actions had not always been taken in accordance with the FLCoP.
- 2.14 The Process Document included quantitative and qualitative monitoring procedures across the food law enforcement service but they had not been fully implemented. The Authority should ensure that an internal monitoring procedure is developed and fully implemented across the full range of enforcement activities and that appropriate documentation of monitoring arrangements is maintained.
- 2.15 Dorset Local Authorities had previously carried out an Inter-Authority Audit scheme. Recommencement of the scheme was being considered by the Food Liaison Group in consultation with Chief Officers.
- 2.16 Auditors noted good practice undertaken by the Authority in response to the recommendations from the Public Inquiry into the 2005 E. coli 0157 Outbreak in South Wales including the development of a HACCP guidance pack for retail butchers, the provision of coaching, and training seminars planned for the butchers.

3.0 Audit Findings

3.1 Organisation and Management

Strategic Framework, Policy and Service Planning

- 3.1.1 From 1 April 2010, the Authority was entering into a shared service arrangement for Public Health with Christchurch District Council, and the Authority as a whole was entering this arrangement from Autumn/Winter 2010.
- 3.1.2 The Authority did not have a Service Plan as described in the Service Planning Guidance of The Standard. However, there was a broad commitment to the development of the food service included within the recently developed '*Public Health Food Safety Process Document*' (hereafter known as the 'Process Document'). The Process Document included information about the services the Authority was providing as well as some procedural 'mapping' documents.
- 3.1.3 As an alternative or adjunct to a Service Plan, the Process Document would benefit from being expanded to include an annual review of performance, including variances and improvements identified from the previous plan. It should also include a breakdown of food premises profiles with details of the proposed inspection and intervention programme for the year and a clear comparison of the staff resources required to deliver the food law enforcement service against the staff resources available to the Authority.
- 3.1.4 The Process Document had not been approved by the appropriate Member(s)/Portfolio Holder.

Recommendation

3.1.5 The Authority should:

Ensure that future Food Service Plans or equivalent, are developed in line with the Service Planning Guidance in the Framework Agreement and are submitted for appropriate Member approval. [The Standard – 3.1]

- 3.1.6 The Process Document contained a food safety statement of intent; '*The Council will strive to ensure that the food and drink intended for sale and for consumption, which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or consumed within the district is without risk to the health and safety of the consumer.*'

- 3.1.7 The annual budget for the Public Health Team to deliver food law enforcement work in 2008/2009 was stated as £167,150.
- 3.1.8 The returns made to the Agency under the Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS) for 2008/2009 declared that there were 2.75 full time equivalent posts (FTE) allocated to food law enforcement.

Documented Policies and Procedures

- 3.1.9 The Process Document had been developed with a view to implement document control and to review and produce up to date procedures which were stored on the shared computer drive. Supporting documents stored on the database were hyperlinked to the '*process maps*' within the Process Document so providing an easily accessible source of relevant reference information for staff.
- 3.1.10 The Process Document had been introduced by a business analyst and was being developed by two staff members. It was designed to encourage greater understanding, awareness and ownership of the information contained therein. Development of the document was overseen by the Food and Safety Manager and access was permission restricted.

Officer Authorisations

- 3.1.11 The Head of Public Health had delegated powers to authorise officers to carry out functions relating to food safety. However, the Authority did not have a documented procedure for the authorisation of officers based on their competence and in accordance with the FLCoP.
- 3.1.12 Auditors noted that the current authorisations needed to be reviewed with particular regard to the requirement for specific and up to date legislation and to ensure that authorisations accurately reflect the extent and limitations of officers' duties.

Recommendations

The Authority should:

- 3.1.13(i) Set up, maintain, and implement a documented procedure on the authorisation of officers to detail the competency assessment process by which authorisations are conferred based on officer's individual qualifications, training and experience. [The Standard – 5.1]
- 3.1.13(ii) Review and revise officers' schedules of authorisation to ensure they include reference to all relevant and up to date legislative provisions, and the extent and limitations of each officer's duties based on an assessment of their individual levels of qualification, training and experience. [The Standard – 5.3]

3.1.14 Individual training needs were determined at annual staff performance development reviews. Officers were responsible for ensuring that their own training requirements were in compliance with the FLCoP and maintaining evidence of that training. In the last year all officers had achieved 10 hours CPD training required by the FLCoP and it was also noted that several staff had recently attended training on the evaluation of FSMS. In general, the team had up to date training but a training programme should be developed to establish and document individual officer and team training needs.

3.1.15 File checks showed that the Authority had not in all cases maintained copies of authorised officer's qualifications and training certificates as required by the FLCoP.

Recommendations

The Authority should:

- 3.1.16(i) Set up, implement and maintain a documented training programme to include individual officer and team training needs. [The Standard – 5.4]
- 3.1.16(ii) Maintain records of relevant qualifications and training of each authorised officer in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice [The Standard – 5.5]

3.2 Food Premises Inspections

- 3.2.1 A section in the Process Document entitled 'Proactive Monitoring Process Description' described the methodology for programmed interventions. Inspection procedures for both general premises and approved establishments had also been developed as supporting documents. Both documents would benefit from the inclusion of clear guidance for officers on the validation and verification of FSMS. In addition, the approved establishments inspection procedure needed to be updated in line with the current FLCoP requirements on risk rated inspection frequencies.

Recommendation

- 3.2.2 The Authority should:

Review and expand documented inspection procedures in both general and approved establishments in accordance with the FLCoP to include the full assessment of the compliance of premises and systems, particularly in relation to HACCP based food safety management systems.
[The Standard – 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4]

- 3.2.3 The Authority had recently introduced a 'paperless office' system where inspection documentation was scanned and saved for electronic retrieval. Documents and evidence were often difficult to retrieve from this system and in many cases historical documents had been shredded. In addition, officers' handwritten notes made at the time of inspection were not always easy to read and once scanned were frequently illegible. In some cases auditors were unable to fully assess the business compliance history from the records available.

Recommendation

- 3.2.4 The Authority should:

Ensure that officers' contemporaneous records of inspections are legible and stored in such a way that they are readily retrievable. [The Standard – 7.5]

- 3.2.5 Due to the difficulty in retrieving records and missing documentation, auditors were unable to establish that inspections had been correctly risk assessed and therefore whether they had been inspected at the required frequency over the last three inspections. In recent months, the Authority appeared to be generally implementing an effective food premises inspection programme but inspections had not always been

carried out within the minimum frequencies specified within the FLCoP.

Recommendation

3.2.6 The Authority should:

Carry out food hygiene inspections in their area at a frequency which is not less than that determined by the inspection rating system set out in the Food Law Code of Practice. [The Standard – 7.1]

3.2.7 From the food premises files and database records examined, auditors noted that record keeping by officers was generally reported by exception i.e. only details of non-compliances were recorded. The Authority would benefit from producing appropriate aides-memoire to assist officers in more detailed recordings of findings during inspections including assessment of HACCP based food safety management systems, and to ensure that a full business compliance history had been recorded. This would provide the essential basis necessary to inform subsequent inspections, a graduated approach to enforcement, and permit effective internal monitoring.

3.2.8 Auditors noted that there was little room on the butcher's proforma for officers to record their detailed findings of *structural* compliance of the food premises. The Authority would benefit from a further review of the prescribed butchers form to facilitate officers in the recording of all significant details.

Recommendation

3.2.9 The Authority should:

Ensure that records, observations and data obtained during the course of inspections, particularly in relation to the verification of structural compliance and HACCP based food safety management systems include sufficient detail to demonstrate whether the compliance history of the premises and systems has been comprehensively assessed to legally prescribed standards. All records shall be kept for at least six years. [The Standard 16.1 and 16.2]

3.2.10 The procedure for the approval of product specific establishments was detailed in the Process Document section entitled 'Approvals Process Description'. The Authority stated that premises had recently

been re-approved or were currently undergoing the re-approval process in line with current legislation. Auditors expressed concern about the delay in the re-approval process for premises which were originally approved before January 2006.

- 3.2.11 Files for three approved establishments in the Authority's area were examined during the audit. In all cases, there was sufficient evidence that the premises required approval. The files were well structured and contained the majority of relevant records and information as recommended in Annexe 12 of the Food Law Code of Practice Guidance and auditors noted that officers were effectively evaluating the HACCP systems in these premises.
- 3.2.12 In one of the files examined, where a food business had not yet been re-approved, auditors felt that a more formal graduated enforcement approach should have been considered by the Authority in accordance with their enforcement policy as there were a number of key issues of continuing historic non-compliance of food legislation detailed by the officer. The use of hygiene improvement notices and/or remedial action notices were discussed by the auditors with the Authority as potential graduated approaches to more formal courses of action.

Recommendation

3.2.13 The Authority should:

Inspect general food premises and approved establishments in accordance with the relevant legislation and assess the compliance of premises to the legally prescribed standards, taking appropriate action on any non-compliance found in accordance with the Authority's enforcement policy.
[The Standard – 7.2 and 7.3]

Verification Visit to a Food Premises

- 3.2.14 During the audit, a verification visit was undertaken to a local butcher with an officer from the Authority, who had carried out the last food hygiene intervention of the premises. This had been an advisory visit to butchers in accordance with the Authority's HACCP guidance for butchers project. The main objective of the verification 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 of the FBO by the officer, the general hygiene checks to verify compliance with the structure and hygiene practice requirements and checks

carried out by the officer to verify compliance with HACCP based procedures.

- 3.2.15 The auditor's visit confirmed that the officer had been able to adequately assess HACCP compliance, including the identification and appraisal of critical control points, the FBO's ability to verify and monitor the system and the maintenance of HACCP related documents and records. Although the visit had been regarding HACCP compliance, the officer had also recorded a serious prerequisite issue of non compliance which had been brought to the attention of the Food Business Operator (FBO). Work to correct the contravention had duly been carried out by the FBO.

Good Practice – HACCP Implementation

Following the Public Inquiry Report into the 2005 E. coli outbreak in Wales (The Pennington Report), the Authority had been proactive in providing food safety advice to food business operators, including:

- Development and dissemination of HACCP guidance packs for butchers, which were intended as an educational tool to promote business compliance. The pack contained useful HACCP related document templates and an officer visited all butchers premises to offer assistance in identifying any gaps in the business's food safety management systems.
- In addition, the Authority was planning to introduce training seminars specifically for butchers.
- The programme is being considered for roll-out to other business types e.g. sandwich makers.

3.3 Enforcement

- 3.3.1 The Authority had developed a Food and Safety Enforcement Policy which was generally in accordance with centrally issued guidance. The policy would benefit from being reviewed and updated including reference to the statutory Regulators' Compliance Code.
- 3.3.2 The Service had also developed procedural guidance for a full range of formal food law enforcement actions in support of the Enforcement Policy.
- 3.3.3 Checks on file records for three hygiene improvement notices (HIN) served confirmed that in all cases this had been the appropriate course of action. The notices had been drafted in accordance with centrally issued guidance and signed by correctly authorised officers. Auditors noted that there was no single method of recording HIN references by officers. Officers had carried out timely checks to confirm compliance with the notices and there was some evidence of internal monitoring of the HINs on the files.
- 3.3.4 Follow-up actions to check compliance of the HINs was not in accordance with the FLCoP and centrally issued guidance and in some cases, where there was evidence of non-compliance with notices, it was not clear if the Authority had granted extensions to the timescales for compliance. In one file a 'Notice of Withdrawal of Remedial Action Notice/Detention Notice' had been used to withdraw a hygiene improvement notice. In another it was not possible to verify how the notice had been served.

Recommendation

3.3.5 The Authority should:

Ensure that hygiene improvement notices are appropriately served, and follow up actions are taken in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice, centrally issued guidance and the Authority's own enforcement policy.

[The Standard – 15.3]

3.4 Internal Monitoring and Third Party or Peer Review

Internal Monitoring

- 3.4.1 There were limited documented references to internal monitoring within the Process Document. Procedures relating to quantitative monitoring had not been implemented.
- 3.4.2 File checks across all food law enforcement activities showed that there was limited documented evidence that qualitative monitoring of the Service's activities was taking place on a routine basis. Auditors were informed of the following informal internal qualitative monitoring arrangements which were carried out at the Authority:
- For approximately the last year, the Food and Safety Manager had checked the majority of Reports of Visit which were left after every visit to a food business. If these forms were not initialled by him they were not scanned for electronic storage
 - All unsatisfactory sampling results were discussed with and delegated to the relevant officer by the Food and Safety Manager
 - Issues for discussion about food law activities were raised by the Food and Safety Manager or by officers on an ad hoc basis. These discussions may be recorded by the officer on their file notes
 - Regular team meetings were held and views were presented and discussed on an ad hoc basis. Minutes of meetings were recorded
 - The Food and Safety Manager accompanied officers on inspections when they required a further opinion or advice though this was not formally recorded.
- 3.4.3 Officers occasionally accompanied each other on inspections, especially to approved establishments, to share knowledge and maintain consistency of inspection approach and risk ratings. However, file checks showed, in both general and approved establishments, a wide variation in follow-up actions and risk ratings by officers.
- 3.4.4 The Authority would benefit from developing an expanded, detailed, documented internal monitoring procedure for all food law enforcement activities which should be maintained and implemented in accordance with the FLCoP.

Recommendation

3.4.5 The Authority should:

Develop, maintain and implement the internal monitoring procedure and implement to ensure it covers quantitative and qualitative internal monitoring of all aspects of the food law enforcement service's activities in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance [The Standard – 19.1]

Food and Food Premises Complaints

- 3.4.6 The Authority had developed and implemented a policy and procedure within the Process Document for the investigation of food and food premises complaints. The records for complaint investigations examined generally confirmed that complaints were appropriately investigated, follow-up action had been taken as necessary and records were found to be complete and accurate. There was no evidence of internal monitoring of the complaints examined.

Food Sampling

- 3.4.7 The Authority stated in the Process Document that it was '*committed to taking part in sampling programmes co-ordinated by LACORS and similar activities promoted by other agencies*'. There was an '*in-house programme of sampling undertaken at approved premises and those manufacturing high risk products*'. Sampling may also occur as a result of concern raised by an officer when visiting premises'. The Process Document also contained a food sampling procedure. A programme had been developed for regular sampling of high risk premises during the current period June 2009-June 2010.
- 3.4.8 Audit checks of unsatisfactory sample results were carried out, which included food and surface swabs of equipment taken as part of a national sampling survey in butchers' shop premises. File checks showed that in all cases appropriate follow up actions had been taken and food business operators had been informed of the results. However, there was no evidence of internal monitoring of sampling activities on the files.

Third Party or Peer Review

- 3.4.9 Auditors were informed that Dorset Local Authorities had previously carried out an Inter-Authority Audit scheme during 2001-2004. Re commencement of the scheme was being considered by the Food

Liaison Group and officers were seeking guidance from the Chief Officers about the reintroduction of the scheme.

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Food Standards Agency

Local Authority Audit and Liaison Division

Action Plan for East Dorset District Council

Audit date: 23-24 February 2010

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
3.1.5 Ensure that future Food Service Plans or equivalent, are developed in line with the Service Planning Guidance in the Framework Agreement and are submitted for appropriate Member approval. [The Standard – 3.1]	30/04/11	The intention is to recombine the information currently located in different documents into one. Currently the Council's governance do not require Member approval of the Service Plan but will now be reported to Members.	Work has begun to revise and combine information.
3.1.13(i) Set up, maintain, and implement a documented procedure on the authorisation of officers to detail the competency assessment process by which authorisations are conferred based on officer's individual qualifications, training and experience. [The Standard – 5.1]	31/01/11	A detailed procedure is to be developed in consultation with legal department.	Authorisation procedure being developed in conjunction with training matrix.
3.1.13(ii) Review and revise officers' schedules of authorisation to ensure they include reference to all relevant and up to date legislative provisions, and the extent and limitations of each officer's duties based on an assessment of their individual levels of qualification, training and experience. [The Standard – 5.3]	31/01/11	To be reviewed in conjunction with 3.1.13(i) above.	
3.1.16(ii) Maintain records of relevant qualifications and training of each authorised officer in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice. [The Standard – 5.5]	Completed	The existing training matrixes which include relevant qualifications have been reviewed and updated. Records of qualifications and training being maintained by the Authority.	

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
3.2.2 Review and expand documented inspection procedures in both general and approved establishments in accordance with the FLCoP to include the full assessment of the compliance of premises and systems, particularly in relation to HACCP based food safety management systems. [The Standard – 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4]	31/10/10	Inspection procedure documentation to be revised in accordance with the FLCoP to include guidance on FSMS and also update risk ratings for approved establishments.	Inspection document currently being reviewed.
3.2.4 Ensure that officers' contemporaneous records of inspections are legible and stored in such a way that they are readily retrievable. [The Standard – 7.5]	Completed	Officers have been told to ensure that written notes are legible.	More quality checks are being made and officers advised where improvements are required. The scanning quality has been improved.
3.2.6 Carry out food hygiene inspections in their area at a frequency which is not less than that determined by the inspection rating system set out in the Food Law Code of Practice. [The Standard – 7.1]	31/12/11	Shared service development with neighbouring authority will improve capacity to carry out inspections. Staffing issues over the last few years including maternity and long term illness within the team will be resolved during 2011. Consideration is being given to implementation of alternative enforcement strategy for low risk food premises.	
3.2.9 Ensure that records, observations and data obtained during the course of inspections, particularly in relation to the verification of structural compliance and HACCP based food safety management systems include sufficient detail to demonstrate whether the compliance history of the premises and systems has been comprehensively assessed to legally prescribed standards. All records shall be kept for at least six years. [The Standard 16.1 and 16.2]	31/03/11	Approved establishment records will be maintained as all hard copy files and our electronic data management will be cross referenced as necessary. It is intended to introduce an expanded inspection form that does not solely rely on exception reporting. There will be a training programme to support the introduction of the new document.	60% of approved establishments files have been now been reviewed and converted to hard copy files.

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
3.2.13 Inspect general food premises and approved establishments in accordance with the relevant legislation and assess the compliance of premises to the legally prescribed standards, taking appropriate action on any non-compliance found in accordance with the Authority's enforcement policy. [The Standard – 7.2 and 7.3]	31/12/10	Review current departmental guidance and implement changes.	
3.3.5 Ensure that hygiene improvement notices are appropriately served, and follow up actions are taken in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice, centrally issued guidance and the Authority's own enforcement policy. [The Standard – 15.3]	31/12/10	Revise Checklist to include requirement to issue withdrawal of notice and letters confirming compliance to go to FBOs. Additional monitoring of follow up actions. Discuss with staff.	
3.4.6 Develop, maintain and implement the internal monitoring procedure and implement to ensure it covers quantitative and qualitative internal monitoring of all aspects of the food law enforcement service's activities in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice and centrally issued guidance. [The Standard – 19.1]	31/01/11	Develop, maintain and implement the internal monitoring procedure as per recommendation. Introduce automated reports from database to supplement the qualitative checks currently being undertaken by management.	Trial reports are being generated and tested.

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:

- Public Health Food Safety Process Document
- Food Safety Enforcement Policy and associated enforcement procedures
- Food Premises and Approved premises Inspection procedures
- Butchers inspection checklist/.aide-memoire. July 2009
- LACORS inspection forms
- Food Sampling programme and Procedure.
- Food Safety Team Meeting Minutes 25/11/2009, 9/12/2009, 20/01/2010
- Dorset Heads of Regulatory Services Food group Meeting Minutes 24/06/2009, 16/09/2009, 16/12/2009

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

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

(3) Officer interviews – the following officers were interviewed:

- Audit Liaison Officer
- Public Health Officer

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

(4) 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 specific regard to LA checks on FBO compliance with HACCP based food management systems.

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.
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 geographic area and situated within a County Council whose responsibilities include food hygiene enforcement.
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.
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 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 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 law enforcement.</p> <p>The Monitoring Scheme requires local authorities to submit quarterly returns 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 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 enforcement.

HACCP		Hazard Analysis 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.
OCD returns		Returns on local food law enforcement activities required to be made to the European Union under the Official Control of Foodstuffs Directive.
Regulators' Code	Compliance	Statutory Code to promote efficient and effective approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement which improve regulatory outcomes without imposing unnecessary burdens on businesses.
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.
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 (TSO)	Officer	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.