



**Report to:** Council      Community Protection Panel      Cabinet  
**Date:** 11 July 2007      4 June 2007      14 June 2007  
**Subject:** Food Service Plan 2007/08  
**Report of:** Director of Environmental Services  
**Contact officer:** Alan Blundell 5027

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**Purpose/summary:** To seek approval for the Food Service Plan 2007/08.

**Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended:** None. The Food Service Plan must be produced and approved on an annual basis.

**Recommendation/decision:** That Council approves and adopts the Food Service Plan 2007/08 as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

**Key Decision:** This report does not involve a key decision.

**Risks / Implications:**

Financial:	Within existing resources
Staffing:	Within existing resources
Policy:	Council Policy framework
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	Yes as part of the Service Needs Assessment in 2006
Wards affected:	All
Special Interest Members – Which have been consulted	None

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Has the Director of Legal and Property Services confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the **Yes**

Council's Constitution?

Has the Director of Finance and IT confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?

**Yes**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

**No**

\* delete which applicable

**For Cabinet reports only :**

Categorisation of the report:	<b>x</b>		<b>x</b>
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	<b>x</b>

**Tracking/Process:**

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
Community Protection Panel 4.6.07		14.6.07	11.7.07

There are no Background Papers to this Report within the meaning of Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Proper Officer K. Wardale

Date 22nd May 2007



# **FOOD SERVICE PLAN**

**2007/2008**

**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FOOD, HEALTH AND SAFETY SECTION**

**'To ensure that food produced, consumed and sold in the Borough is wholesome and safe to eat'**

We hope to achieve this objective by -

- ◆ Carrying out planned risk based inspections during the year
- ◆ Providing advice, information and support to local businesses, residents and other client groups.
- ◆ Responding to requests for service such as complaints, food safety incidents and food related illness
- ◆ Sampling and testing food particularly food which is produced locally.

We try to ensure that the processes and practices which deliver these objectives are applied fairly and consistently.<sup>1</sup>

### **1.3 Links to Corporate Objectives and Plans**

Our Food Service Plan links into and compliments the Council's corporate objectives, corporate frameworks and political principles. -

#### **◆ Service Planning and Performance Management**

We are committed to performance management and service planning. We monitor our performance and produce quarterly reports which mark our progress towards the annual targets.

We use tools such as Charter Mark and ISO 9000 to evaluate and continuously improve the services we provide.

We consult with our stake-holders<sup>2</sup> and use those results to shape the services we provide.

#### **◆ Partnership Working**

We support the idea and the philosophies of partnership working. We work with the other Greater Manchester Food Authorities and work with other Local Authorities, local businesses<sup>3</sup> and local communities.

#### **◆ Places**

With a healthier environment and with safe food we believe Wigan will be a more attractive place to live and work in. A safer and a revitalised environment should attract inward investment, new businesses and new employment and should also encourage our existing businesses to develop and grow.

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<sup>1</sup> We follow Codes of Practice and Practice Guidance and comply with the Council's Enforcement Policy

<sup>2</sup> Random samples of service users are routinely surveyed about the services provided. The Food Health and Safety Section along with other providers in the Department was awarded ISO 9000 in January 2005 and has maintained that accreditation to date

<sup>3</sup> We act as Originating Authority for H J Heinz Company Limited

## ◆ **People**

We do not discriminate and we want all our stakeholders to develop their potential whatever their background.

We make educational, advisory and promotional visits to schools, businesses and local communities to enable these and other groups to make informed choices and informed decisions.

We think 'Prevention is better than Cure' and so we have provided Guidance Notes which cover a wide range of food safety and food related issues<sup>4</sup>.

We provide Guidance in several languages and can use oral translation services when necessary<sup>5</sup>.

Guidance and client information is also available in braille, large print and audio-tape.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Profile of the Authority**

- ◆ An estimated 305,000 people live in the Borough making it the 12th largest Council in England and, at an estimated 73 square miles, the 9th biggest.
- ◆ The Borough lies between Liverpool and Manchester, combines several smaller townships and the major communities of Wigan and Leigh.
- ◆ The Borough is the most westerly part of Greater Manchester and has good access to national road and rail networks.
- ◆ The coal and cotton industries have long since disappeared and printing, processing and food manufacturing have taken their place.
- ◆ There are an estimated 2600 premises in the Borough where the Council is responsible for enforcing food safety.

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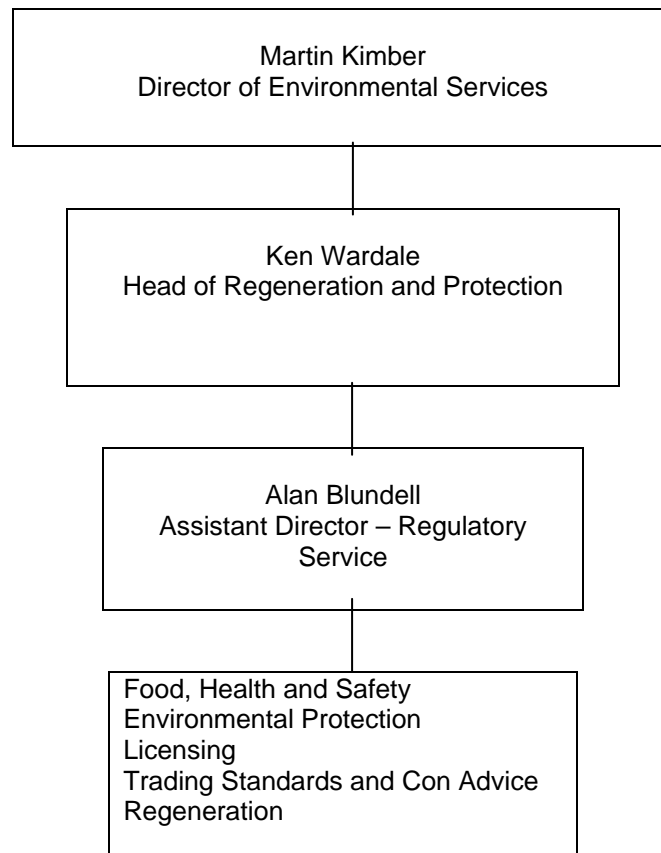
<sup>4</sup> Visit our website at [www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp](http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp)

<sup>5</sup> Envok Language Services

## 2.2 Organisational Structure

Significant change has taken place since the previous Service Plan 2006-2007 was produced. The Community Protection Department ceased to exist on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 and a new Environmental Services Department incorporating the former Community Protection, Planning and Engineering Departments came into being on 1<sup>st</sup> April. The new Department will be organised in such a way as to be better suited and better able to respond to local needs. The organisation and structuring of the Department is on-going at the time of writing.

**The Officer with particular responsibility for food safety and food hygiene is the Service Manager - Food Health and Safety Section**



## 2.3 Scope of the Food Safety Service

The Food Health and Safety Section within the Regeneration and Protection Division of the Environmental Services Department is responsible for delivering the food safety and food hygiene regulatory and enforcement functions.

Service responsibilities include<sup>6</sup> –

- ◆ Completing an annual programme of planned, risk based food safety inspections.
- ◆ Investigating incidents of food poisoning and food borne illness.
- ◆ Responding to food safety and food hygiene service requests<sup>7</sup>
- ◆ Responding to requests for information from other enforcing authorities concerning food manufactured and/or produced in the Borough.
- ◆ Providing information and advice about food safety, food hygiene and other food related matters to our customers and partner organisations.
- ◆ Completing a programme of local food sampling and taking part in local, national and regionally co-ordinated food sampling programmes.
- ◆ Responding to 'consultations', contributing and providing expert opinion at local, regional and national level.
- ◆ Delivering food hygiene training and promoting food safety and food hygiene as circumstances and capacity permit.
- ◆ Approval and inspection of product specific premises under EC Regulations 853/2004 and 854/2004
- ◆ Responding to FSA Food Alerts and advising FSA of any serious local food problem or food related incident
- ◆ Maintaining the ISO 9000 Quality Assured Systems as they relate to food related functions and processes
- ◆ Maintaining the Food Register

## 3.0 DEMANDS ON THE FOOD SAFETY SERVICE

### 3.1 General Summary

There are currently an estimated 2600 premises on our food safety database. Restaurants and caterers represent 62% of all food premises, retailers 31%, food processors, distributors and manufacturers mainly selling by retail make up the remaining balances.

We are responsible for 15 businesses in the Borough which fall within the scope of EC Regulation 853/2004 and EC Regulation 854/2004. These businesses are inspected at least twice every year to ensure compliance with their approval status.

In 2005-2006, we inspected 100% of our high risk rated<sup>8</sup> food premises and 50% of Category C risk rated premises. We applied alternative interventions, focussed enforcement initiatives and contact strategies at our lower risk rated premises and successfully implemented Safer Food Better Business systems at 150 premises.

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<sup>6</sup> The Service Manager is principally responsible for delivering these services and is also the nominated Food Safety Officer

<sup>7</sup> Including national Food Alerts

<sup>8</sup> Category A and B

We also continued our 'Out of Hours' inspections of take-aways and snack providers to ensure the safety of food served late at night

Our inspection priorities are consistent with the national agreed risk based assessment standard and during 2006-2007 we inspected 1107 of the food premises due in the year and re-scored a further 57 as new businesses coming into the Borough or in the case of an existing business as a consequence of a complaint.

Our services are provided by three teams, two are pro-active (concentrating on planned risk based inspections) with the remaining reactive team - generally speaking - dealing with and responding to everything else - licensing applications, service requests, infectious diseases, health safety and welfare issues and contributing to the pro-active effort if and when capacity allows.

Services are generally available between 08.30 am and 05.30 p.m. (Monday to Friday) but information and advice can also be obtained from alternative Council sources<sup>9</sup> at other times for example evenings and weekends.

An 'Out of Hours' contact is available for food emergencies via the Council's Central Watch Service<sup>10</sup>.

**We have systems in place to ensure the continuity of service on a prioritised basis in the event of a serious emergency or disablement.**

### **3.2 Enforcement Action**

The Food Safety Team subscribes to and supports the Enforcement Concordat principles and takes great care to ensure that any enforcement action or regulatory function is carried out and is consistent with the Council's Enforcement Policy<sup>11</sup> and with our own Legal Procedures Manual<sup>12</sup>.

In brief -

- ◆ Enforcement actions are linked to the scale, seriousness and criminal intent of the offence
- ◆ Apart from the most serious cases where previous advice or warning's have been ignored we try to resolve problems by providing help and support, advice and assistance.
- ◆ We always refer to and have regard to all relevant legislation, codes of practice and codes of guidance which protect the rights of a corporation and the individual and provide guidance for enforcement action and regulatory activity.

### **4.0 SERVICE DELIVERY**

We have, in previous years, prepared an annual service plan which reviews our performance against targets and sets out our priorities and performance targets for the coming year. Given the changes taking place at this time activities planned for 2007-2008 are not set out in any great detail here but can be found in the Environmental Services Departmental Business Plan 2007-2008. Senior staff within the Food Health and Safety Section have had input into the Business Plan which will be agreed by elected members in due course and will be published on our web site<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Local Halls and libraries provide hard copy and internet access.

<sup>10</sup> A 24 hour service 365 days of the year.

<sup>11</sup> Produced April 2001

<sup>12</sup> Produced November 1998, update and review in progress

<sup>13</sup> [www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp](http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp)

## **4.1 Food Safety Inspections**

We operate a programme of risk-based inspections as set out in the Code and Practice Guidance<sup>14</sup>. Our Quality Procedures ensure that following 'primary inspection', 'secondary inspections' are made to check progress against any improvement measures identified as necessary and specified at the time of the 'primary inspection'.

Currently there are an estimated 2600 premises on our food database and this year we plan to complete 100% of the high risk rated food premises due and 50% of the Category C risk rated premises due. Whilst we will continue to inspect high risk rated premises during 2007-2008 we will also carry out a series of planned interventions and projects aimed at specific locations and specific work activities. Enforcing Authorities have been reminded by the Government and Government Agencies that regulation is more than just inspection and that regulatory services should engage a range of innovative interventions that can be tailored to and focussed on areas where resources have greatest impact.

## **4.2 Food Safety Complaints**

We have documented Quality Procedures for dealing with food and food related complaints. Our Procedures, we believe, are compliant with FSA and LACORS Codes of Practice<sup>15</sup> and the Council's Enforcement Policy. Complaint response priority is determined by risk, that is the ability or the likelihood of the condition, circumstances or complaint adversely affecting food safety and/or public health generally. In 2006-2007 our reactive team dealt with 273 service requests that were food related.

## **4.3 The Home Authority Principle**

We support LACORS Guidance in respect of the Home Authority Principle and in particular LACORS 'Guidelines for Home Authorities' (March 1997). The benefits we see are: -

- ◆ Greater enforcement consistency, increased efficiency and reduced duplication
- ◆ Preventative enforcement through advice
- ◆ Resolution of conflict between authorities and between authorities and businesses
- ◆ Better understanding and awareness of commercial issues
- ◆ Enhanced technical and audit expertise.

### **4.3.1 The Home Authority Principle - Food Safety**

We have no formalised agreement to act as 'Home Authority' for any local business but we do act as the 'Originating Authority' for a large canning company and, as such, we receive and respond to a significant number of requests for information, advice and assistance from other Enforcing and Regulating Authorities. Currently complaint levels are low<sup>16</sup> but the scale and size of the plant ensures that, on occasion, workload will have significant resource implications for the Food Health and Safety Section.

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<sup>14</sup> Made under Food Safety Act 1990

<sup>15</sup> LACORS 'Guidance for Food Complaints. The Food Standards Agency Codes of Practice and Guidance (October 2004)

<sup>16</sup> 32 Complaints during 2006-2007

## **5.0 ADVICE TO BUSINESS**

Providing guidance, advice and promoting food safety and food hygiene to individuals and businesses is an important part of our service activity. We engage and interact with businesses on an almost daily basis and we speak at breakfast clubs, luncheons and business forums on a variety of food related topics. During 2007-2008 we intend to introduce nutritional and allergen advice into the advisory and promotional arenas.

## **6.0 INSPECTION AND SAMPLING**

### **6.1 Routine Food Safety Sampling**

We routinely sample to ensure the microbiological, radiological and chemical safety of food. Sampling may take place as a result of

- ◆ A complaint
- ◆ As part of an investigation into food poisoning or food borne illness'
- ◆ As part of an inspection to establish the effectiveness of process management.
- ◆ For routine local, regional or national monitoring purposes.

We operate a prioritised sampling programme which should guarantee that food on sale or produced in the Wigan Borough is safe to eat. In 2006-2007 we took part in regionally co-ordinated surveys exploring the microbiology of crispy duck, raw chicken and sliced cooked meats at the point of sale. In total we submitted 246 food samples for microbiological analysis in the year.

Our microbiological services are provided by –

Food, Environmental and Microbiological Services (FEMS)  
North West Regional Partnership  
Royal Preston Hospital

Whilst chemical and compositional analysis is provided by –

Cassella GMSS Limited.  
Broad Oak Business Park  
Ashburton Road West  
Trafford Park  
Manchester

## **7.0 CONTROL AND INVESTIGATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND FOOD BORNE ILLNESS**

The Health Protection Agency (HPA)<sup>17</sup>, the Ashton, Wigan and Leigh Primary Care Trust (PCT), the Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust and ourselves have shared responsibilities for outbreak control, infectious disease and food borne illness in the Borough

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<sup>17</sup> Since April 2003 the Health Protection Agency (The Greater Manchester Health Protection Unit) has been the source provider of infection control services and support

## **8.0 FOOD SAFETY ALERTS**

We are the Council's contact point for all Food Alerts (formerly Food Hazard Warnings). Our Quality Procedures ensure that we comply with national guidance and that our response is both timely and appropriate. Food Alerts are notified to us by 'Pager', EHC Net and/or email. Whilst we cannot predict the number of alerts likely in any given year we try to provide a response appropriate to the alert classification together with all the necessary contact, media engagement, follow up and related works

## **9.0 LIAISON WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

We participate in joint working with other local authorities, agencies and organisations in an effort to achieve greater enforcement consistency, to facilitate the exchange and sharing information, to maximise resources and to improve our own understanding and knowledge. Some examples are

- ◆ Association of Greater Manchester Authorities Public Protection Managers' Group
- ◆ The Greater Manchester Chief Officers' Food Liaison Group
- ◆ The Health Protection Agency
- ◆ The Ashton, Wigan and Leigh Primary Care Trust
- ◆ The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
- ◆ Local Authority Co-ordinating for Regulatory Services
- ◆ The Food Standards Agency

We also have formal consultation arrangements with internal service providers in the Council concerning

- ◆ Applications for Planning and Building Regulations approval, Public Entertainment Licences, Justices' Licences etc.
- ◆ Land Charges enquires, applications for a variety of other licences and consents ranging from Late Night Refreshment Houses to Club Registration Certificates

## **10.0 FOOD SAFETY RESOURCES**

### **10.1 Financial**

Financial management cannot be entirely precise since much of the work we do is not food safety related. The Food, Health & Safety Section is multifunctional and besides having food safety responsibilities we undertake occupational health safety and welfare enforcement at 6500 premises across the Borough and deal with miscellaneous service requests. Nevertheless we spent approximately £210k across food service activities during 2006-2007.

### **10.2 Staffing**

The total establishment within the Section is 21 fte. We have 13 professional and technical officers deployed on operational duties, a service manager, 4 principal officers and 4 staff providing administration and support services<sup>18</sup>. The Section is divided into 3 teams. Two of these are proactive and concentrate on the risk based inspection programmes for both food and health and safety visits whilst a third team deals with all reactive matters such as complaints, accidents at work, outbreaks and infectious disease control etc.

## **11.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

In-house training and development<sup>19</sup> ensures that all professional, technical and support staff are competent and trained to a level commensurate with their duties. All staff, with the

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<sup>18</sup> 2 Full time and 2 Job Share = 3FTE

<sup>19</sup> The Department is an accredited Investor in People

exception of support and administrative personnel, are qualified Environmental Health Officers, Scientific or Technical Officers holding the Higher Certificate in Food Premises Inspection. All our professional, scientific and technical staff have considerable experience of food safety and food hygiene enforcement and are encouraged to meet the requirement of ten hours CPD<sup>20</sup> update training each year. We allocate a nominal 3 training days per officer per year but this is reviewed subject to changing circumstances and legislation. The Department is IIP accredited and annual appraisal interviews with staff identify training needs. Training is provided in a number of ways:

- ◆ Courses via the Council's Central Training Unit, Greater Manchester Food Liaison Group etc.
- ◆ External or Internal training courses and seminars.
- ◆ 'On-the-Job' training.
- ◆ Courses provided by CIEH, The Food Standards Agency or third party provider

On their return from course or seminar attendance Officers cascade the information gained to others within Section. This can vary from a simple overview of the event to a more formal presentation with overheads and handouts etc.

## **12 QUALITY SYSTEM**

The Quality System went 'live' in April 2004 and part audits by ISOQAR are undertaken every six months. Internal self audits are undertaken annually.

Requirements of our Quality System include verification of work, identification and rectification of non-conformances and customer satisfaction surveys. Officer work quality is assessed via review meetings, accompanied visits and reality checks in tandem with client feedback from our 'Customers'.

## **13 REPORTING PROGRESS**

Key activities are continuously reviewed by the Principal Officers and by the Service Manager. A

Quarterly Report is presented to the Departmental Management Team and to the Elected Members which measures progress and highlights any variance from the targets set out in the Departmental Plan. Review of the previous year's performance and planning performance and setting targets for the following year always take place at the end of each financial year. The Plan is posted on our web site<sup>21</sup>.

## **14 AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

### **14.1 Sickness Absence**

A very difficult year for the Section with performance once again affected by significant staff absences due to surgery and illness and the loss of a senior officer to another Local Authority. Inevitably planned inspection targets and year end out turns have suffered but 'damage' has been kept to an absolute minimum by extraordinary commitment from staff despite capacity and workload pressures.

### **14.2 e- Government**

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<sup>20</sup> Continuous Professional Development

<sup>21</sup> [www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp](http://www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/ehcp)

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Work to improve the presentation and content of our web-site commenced during 2006-2007 and whilst much of the web-site information is sound changes in legislation and technology dictated that review and update was overdue.

We intend to activate a 'Scores on the Doors' database at some point during the coming year but we are currently awaiting guidance from the Food Standards Agency before making a firm commitment.