

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	COMMUNITES
DATE OF MEETING	21st MAY 2015
TITLE	Food Standards Agency Focused Audit of Gwynedd Council's arrangements for the enforcement of the Food Safety Act 1990: 6th and 7th of March 2014-2nd Update Report.
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CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Dafydd Meurig
PURPOSE	To update the Committee on progress made by the Public Protection Service in addressing the findings of the Food Standards Agency focussed audit

1. Background

- 1.1 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) undertook a focused audit of Gwynedd Council's arrangements for the enforcement of the Food Safety Act 1990 on the 6th and 7th of March 2014.
- 1.2 The audit focused on two areas;
 - a) How the Council had implemented the recommendations of the Public Enquiry into the September 2005 outbreak of E. Coli 0157 in South Wales and,
 - b) The management of interventions at new food businesses.
- 1.3 A report was subsequently received from the FSA which included severe criticism of the Council in respect of identified non-conformances with the Public Enquiry recommendations and the Council's arrangements for managing interventions in new food businesses.
- 1.4 Subsequently an Action Plan was prepared detailing how the Service was to correct the non-conformances. The plan was accepted by the FSA and during the autumn of 2014 a Task and Finish Group proceeded to complete the majority of the work required.
- 1.5 A report was submitted to the Communities Scrutiny Committee on the 1st of October 2014 which detailed the progress made up to that time in meeting the Action Plan objectives.

1.6 During the meeting the Committee requested a further update during 2015.

2. Corrective Actions

2.1 The Action Plan detailed 13 areas for improvement. These improvements can be grouped into 6 categories.

- a) A fundamental review of all food procedure notes bar approved premises which have their own specific arrangements.
- b) A fundamental review of the format and content of food inspection forms used by officers inspecting food businesses.
- c) A review of all internal monitoring procedures and determine adequate levels of monitoring.
- d) Provision of training and detailed guidance to the food Unit staff in relation to any changes made to the food procedure notes and inspection forms following completion of the work listed in categories a) and b) above.
- e) Refresher training to officers on the recording of identified breaches in legislation and the provisions detailed in annex 5 of the Food Law Code of Practice.
- f) Review (adequacy) of training received by all staff delivering official food hygiene controls.

2.2 In the previous report to the Scrutiny Committee (1/10/14) it was explained that the work listed in categories a), b) and c) above would be completed by the 26th of September 2014 and category d) by the end of October.

2.3 Category e) had been completed in July 2014. Reference category f), at the time of the original report to committee it was recognised that the food unit staff had received training which complied with the Food Law Code of Practice requirements.

3. Progress since 2014.

3.1 The Task and Finish Group's work ended in November 2014. The responsibility for continuous performance monitoring and review reverted back to the Public Protection Manager (Food Hygiene).

3.2 At the end of December 2014 the manager who had overseen the work of the Task and Finish Group took responsibility for the Public Protection Service's Food Unit on a permanent basis.

3.3 Since October 2014 the following progress, as detailed under the 6 improvement categories listed above, have been made.

- a) The food procedure notes have been substantially revised and are in use. Staff have been involved in this process with a number of their suggested revisions incorporated in the documents. The FSA offered to scrutinize the notes and provide feedback. We have as yet not received any comments. The service has also invested in document management software called RIAMS. The procedure notes have been transferred to the programme but some review / amendment work remains.
- b) The revised inspection forms are in use and have been amended several times following feedback from staff. The forms will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis and changes made as required.
- c) The internal monitoring arrangements have been revised with new performance monitoring programmes introduced and an amended monitoring timetable adopted for both new and established reports.
- d) All members of the food unit have received training in relation to the revised food procedure notes. The training was prioritized in terms of the use of notes which incorporated the most changes to former working practices. Members of the Service support team are to receive training on the new business procedure. This will have been done by the end of May.
- e) Refresher training in relation to recording breaches in legislation and annex 5 requirements has been undertaken. In addition, a peer review exercise whereby officers of the service shadow others whilst undertaking inspections and provide feedback has been implemented as is nearing completion.
- f) The training which the food unit staff had received was found to be adequate in October 2014. All members of staff have since received and continue to receive specialist training.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 It is considered that the Food Unit have now addressed the non-conformances identified by the FSA during their targeted audit in March 2014.
- 4.2 There is a duty on the Council to meet the requirements in relation to the Public Enquiry recommendations and the enforcement of food legislation in new businesses and our recent efforts in this respect should continue. The FSA have reported their intention to undertake a full audit of the Council's Food Unit in the near future.