

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT – 20 April 2011

FOOD HYGIENE INFORMATION SCHEME

Report by Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the implementation of the Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS). This is presently a voluntary scheme which is sponsored by the Food Standards Agency Scotland (FSA) and will result in the display and publication of the food hygiene compliance levels for food businesses within East Ayrshire.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The FHIS is a means of providing information to consumers about the standards of hygiene in food businesses at point of sale and on the internet. The demand for such a scheme was first recognised in Scotland by Consumer Focus Scotland in its paper 'Food Law Enforcement – A Study of the Views of Environmental Health and Food Safety Officers in Scotland' (February 2004) as an important mechanism for informing consumer choice.
- 2.2 The FHIS was established in 2006 as a pilot 'Scores on the Doors' project in Scotland in partnership with five volunteer local authorities and was overseen by a Steering Group that incorporated consumer, industry and enforcement representation.
- 2.3 In December 2008 the Food Standards Agency Board recommended continuation of the FHIS as the appropriate format for a national 'Scores on the Doors' scheme in Scotland. This recommendation acknowledged the prevailing views of stakeholders in Scotland received during the public consultation process.
- 2.4 The scheme is designed to provide 'at a glance' information about the outcome of food hygiene inspections and businesses are provided with a certificate for display at the premises following their inspection. A 'pass' certificate confirms that the business has been inspected and has met the required legal standards. An 'awaiting inspection' certificate is provided for new businesses that have not yet been inspected and an 'improvement

required' certificate is issued to those businesses that fall short of the legal standard.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The launch of the FHIS requires all food businesses to be inspected and classified in accordance with the scheme criteria. The display of the certificate by a business is voluntary but information about all businesses will be provided on the East Ayrshire and Food Standards Agency websites. To encourage participation within East Ayrshire it is hoped that all food businesses, within the scope of the scheme, will agree to display these certificates.
- 3.2 Safeguards aimed at being fair to all businesses exist within the scheme for those that are classified as 'improvement required' and a mandatory 7 day revisit and re-classification is provided for, as is the right to a review of any decision by a senior officer.
- 3.3 It is proposed to publish the compliance level score in the first instance, then as the scheme develops for the corresponding inspection report to also be published. The use of an electronic document management system is currently being investigated to assist with the administrative burden of publishing the inspection reports.
- 3.4 It is anticipated that the introduction of the FHIS will result in a significant increase in visits by officers to the food premises within East Ayrshire, in the period leading up to the launch of the scheme. The majority of the visits required during the implementation stage however, will be undertaken as part of the officers' routine inspection work.
- 3.5 It is proposed to launch the FHIS in East Ayrshire on 1st December 2012. Please refer to **Appendix I** "The Implementation of the FHIS in East Ayrshire Council" for further details on the proposed implementation of the scheme.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The publication of Food Hygiene Inspection Reports requires to be in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A grant of £5,500 is being provided by the Food Standards Agency as part of the service level agreement, to assist with the implementation of the scheme. It is anticipated this grant will be used in relation to start up IT costs, advertising costs and any staff overtime that may be required during the implementation of the scheme.

6. RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 There is a possibility that some food establishments operated by East Ayrshire Council may not meet the standards required to obtain a Pass certificate.

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Food Hygiene Information Scheme is commensurate with the Community Plan vision *“East Ayrshire will be a place with strong, vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people’s needs”*.
- 7.2 In addition the scheme is commensurate with the Community Plan themes of Improving Health and Community Safety.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The implementation of FHIS will result in an overall increase in food hygiene compliance levels, whilst providing a greater degree of choice to the residents of East Ayrshire on where they decide to eat or buy food.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet is invited to:-
- (i) Consider the approval of the Food Hygiene Information Scheme; and
 - (ii) Consider approval of the proposed implementation of the scheme as detailed in **Appendix I** of this report.
 - (iii) Otherwise note the report.

Alex McPhee
Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support

1 April 2011

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1. Appendix I - The Implementation of the Food Hygiene Information Scheme in East Ayrshire Council.**

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers should contact David Mitchell, Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services on 01563 576161 or by E-mail to David.Mitchell@EastAyrshire.gov.uk.

Appendix I

East Ayrshire Council–FHIS Implementation Plan

Key Implementation Summary

- March 2011. Officer training completed and food businesses within the scope of the scheme identified.
- April 2011. Cabinet approval. Commence data capture.
- January 2012. Introductory letters sent to all food businesses, within the scope of the scheme.
- September 2012. All food businesses within East Ayrshire will have been assessed.
- October/November 2012. Letters sent and revisits undertaken to businesses that are Improvement Required.
- December 2012 launch of the FHIS. Certificates issued to all relevant food businesses and all compliance categories published on East Ayrshire Council and Food Standards Agency websites.

Detailed Implementation Plan

	Action Required	Completion Date
1.	Service Level Agreement approved, signed and returned to the Food Standards Agency by Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services.	February 2011 Completed
2.	Meeting with Northgate M3 consultant. Matrix for FHIS written to facilitate data recording and capture. Initial meeting with web team. IT parameters and requirements discussed and agreed. Officer training provided on the FHIS via presentation and workshop. Report of inspections for 2011/12/13 prepared and food businesses within scope of the scheme identified. In terms of their statutory risk rating category as detailed in the Food Law Code of Practice, the food businesses within the scope of the scheme breakdown as follows: Category A inspections (6 months inspection frequency) = 6 Category B inspections (12 months inspection frequency) =79 Category C inspections(18 months inspection frequency) =538	March 2011 Completed

	<p>Category D inspections(24 months inspection frequency) =131</p> <p><i>(Within this category 43 inspections identified as requiring to be brought forwarded into 18 month inspection frequency. To be allocated by Team Leader)</i></p> <p>Category E inspections (Exempt, no inspection required, however still within scope of the FHIS) =176.</p> <p>Total number of food businesses within scope of the FHIS = 930.</p> <p>Total number of food hygiene inspections required= 754.</p>	
3.	<p>Start of data capture by officers' assessing premises, determining FHIS status and inputting information onto M3.</p> <p>FHIS data to be entered on a monthly basis by officers in conjunction with statutory programmed inspections.</p> <p>Team Leader to commence undertaking monthly reviews of data capture.</p> <p>Team Leader or depute to attend FHIS subgroup. Thereafter to attend subgroup meetings bimonthly. This group consists of representatives from all participating Local Authorities in which officer training, consistency and other issues relating to FHIS are discussed.</p> <p>Cabinet report and Implementation Plan prepared and submitted for approval.</p>	April 2011
4.	<p>Team Leader to provide update report to Regulatory Services Manager and Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services on monthly reviews and progress of Implementation Plan.</p>	July 2011
5.	<p>Team Leader to provide update report to Regulatory Services Manager and Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services on monthly reviews and progress of Implementation Plan.</p>	November 2011
6.	<p>Introductory letter sent to all food businesses within the scope of the FHIS.</p> <p>Separate letter sent to premises out with scope of the FHIS.</p> <p>Separate letter sent to premises exempt from FHIS.</p>	January 2012
7.	<p>Team Leader to undertake review of all data capture for the year 2011/12.</p> <p>Interim meeting with web team. Test run of collected data on East Ayrshire Council website.</p> <p>Team Leader to provide update report to Regulatory Services</p>	April 2012

	Manager and Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services on yearly review and progress of Implementation plan.	
8.	<p>Full data capture for all food businesses (within the scope of the FHIS) in East Ayrshire to be achieved.</p> <p>Team Leader to review all data and identify number of Pass, Improvement Required and Exempt premises.</p> <p>Team Leader to provide final report to Regulatory Services Manager and Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services on the implementation of the scheme.</p> <p>Notification letters issued to all Improvement Required food businesses informing them of their right to revisit.</p>	September 2012
9.	Officers to undertake revisits to identified Improvement Required premises if requested by the food business.	October 2012
10.	<p>Post out all relevant certificates to food businesses within East Ayrshire.</p> <p>Final meeting with web team and final test run of data on East Ayrshire Council web site.</p>	November 2012
11.	<p>Launch of FHIS in East Ayrshire.</p> <p>Full publication of food businesses compliance categories on East Ayrshire Council and Food Standards Agency web sites.</p>	December 2012

