

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 28TH MAY 2003

FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY AUDIT OF EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Director of Community Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the outcome of an audit of the Council's Food Law Enforcement Service by the Food Standards Agency.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Food Standards Agency Scotland is empowered to monitor the performance of enforcement authorities in enforcing relevant legislation in Scotland. The Food Standards Agency Scotland's function includes setting standards of performance and auditing local authorities' enforcement activities.
- 2.2 The second audit of the Council's performance was carried out on 18th and 19th February 2003 and was the second carried out so far. This most recent audit covered the Council's Food Law Enforcement Service.
- 2.3 The outcome of the audit was set out in a letter to the Director of Community Services dated 2nd May 2003.
- 2.4 The Food Standards Agency Scotland found that the authority's strengths can be summarised as follows:-
- *Food Standards Inspections:* food standards inspections have been carried out at the frequency set out in the Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice No.8;
 - *Food Safety Promotion:* the Council is actively implementing food safety promotional activities;
 - *Equipment:* The Council has made available all necessary equipment to permit all activities associated with the service to be carried out;
 - *Service Plan:* The Council has produced a Food Service Plan, which generally meets the requirements of The Standard.
- 2.5 The Food Standards Agency Scotland identified some key areas for improvement as follows:-

- *Food Premises Database:* Although a check on the accuracy of the database showed that 15 out of 15 businesses randomly selected had been entered on to the database, some information was inaccurate;
- *Facilities and Equipment:* The procedure should include all equipment in use by the service;
- *Records:* In general the premises files and other records lacked sufficient information regarding the operation of the business;
- *Reports:* Reports left with proprietors following routine inspections did not cover all aspects required by either annex 3 of Code of Practice No. 9 or annexes D & E of Code of Practice No.8;
- *Control and Investigation of Outbreaks & Food Related Infectious Diseases:* The Outbreak Control Plan dated June 1997 requires to be updated.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The Food Standards Agency Scotland findings on the authority's strengths reflect the considerable additional resources which have been made available to the service during the last five years.
- 3.2 The food premises database was recently upgraded following introduction of new IT and arrangements will now be put in place to ensure that there is a documented procedure to ensure that the database is accurate and up to date. The Principal Officer (Environmental Health & Waste Management) will arrange to ensure that all file records are complete and contain sufficient information regarding the operation of the business.
- 3.3 The measures identified to secure improvement have been incorporated in an Action Plan which has subsequently been agreed and noted by the Food Standards Agency Scotland. Agency staff will return in July to review the Council's progress against the Action Plan.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The additional costs of complying with the Action Plan can be met from existing resources.

5. LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Food Standards Act 1999, Section 12
- 5.2 Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Council's Food Law Enforcement Service has been the subject of a full audit by the Food Standards Agency Scotland.

7.2 The audit (which is the second carried out by the Food Standards Agency of the Council's work) is to maintain and improve consumer protection and confidence by ensuring that local authorities are providing an effective food law enforcement service. In this particular audit, the Council has been found to have considerable strengths and a number of key areas for improvement have been identified and are in the course of rectification.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Committee is invited to note the report in accordance with the provisions of the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement (the Standard).

William Stafford
Director of Community Services

WS/JFC/JS

12th May 2003

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Letter of 2 May 2003 from Food Standards Agency Scotland to the Director of Community Services.

Any person wishing to inspect the background paper above should telephone 01563 576111 and ask to speak to John Crawford, Head of Protective Services.

Implementation Officer – john.crawford@east-ayrshire.gov.uk