

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 23 September 2025

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FOOD LAW AND HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2025-26

The Executive received the report which sought approval to adopt the statutory Food Law and Health and Safety Service Plan 2025-26, which set out the Council's regulatory function in respect of food safety and health and safety over the forthcoming year.

Particular reference was made to:

- the work was being delivered by the existing Environmental Health team, with no request for additional financial or staffing resources;
- there had been a substantial intervention process, with 11 funeral directors inspected following a national intervention;
- Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work Act required that the Council intervene in cases of health and safety contravention;
- local authorities were responsible for 65% of work premises nationally, which equated to 48% of workers;
- of 625 food premises inspected, 99% had been judged to be good; and
- 185 new food premises had been registered with 77 proactive health and safety inspections were undertaken, alongside 259 other related visits.

During the debate, the following points were made:

- the detailed report was welcomed and highlighted the impressive work from officers;
- there were some very impressive statistics in the report, and highlighted the essential function being carried out by the Council;
- it was reassuring to know that all food poisoning cases and other infectious diseases were investigated;
- the report reference of the corporate plan required updating and the link appeared to be broken;
- the reference to the apprenticeship and giving an opportunity to develop younger people in the role was welcomed;
- the additional workload required for funeral directors inspections, at short notice was commended; and
- the total number of food businesses due or overdue for inspection had been reduced to 6 between March 2024 and April 2025, which was commended.

An opposition group leader raised the following points and questions:

- how did the Council apply the policy to its own work and how was it monitored?
and
- should the Devon Health and Wellbeing Board also be included as a reference?

In response to questions raised, the Strategic Director for Operations advised that:

- the number of eating establishments in the city was 1,070;

- the benchmarking of 99% 'good' vs 56 food poisoning cases was against other authorities and benchmarking data would be shared outside the meeting;
- the links in the report would be checked and updated to ensure they reference the right corporate plan objectives;
- the comparison with previous years for service requests for noise, nuisance, light pollution, business-related antisocial behaviour would be incorporated;
- Heads of Service had working on producing service plans within their service and some of that data had been captured in the report;
- a link to Devon Health and Wellbeing Board could be incorporated; and
- details of interventions across the corporate premises would be provided outside of the meeting.

The Leader moved, and Councillor Wright seconded, the recommendations which were voted upon and CARRIED unanimously.

RESOLVED that the Executive supported the Food Law and Health and Safety Service Plan 2025-26.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve:

- (1) the Food Law and Health and Safety Service Plan 2025/26; and
- (2) that Head of Environment and Waste is authorised to change the plan in the light of national guidance and/or to meet operational needs.

Extract from Minute No. 71 Food Law and Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan 2025-26

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Responses to Questions raised for responding outside of the meeting:

the benchmarking of 99% 'good' vs 56 food poisoning cases was against other authorities and benchmarking data would be shared outside the meeting;

- 99% does compare very highly to other authorities, especially in a city setting. It is difficult to benchmark food poisoning data as the majority of food poisoning cases occur in the domestic setting or as a result of poor hand hygiene as opposed to being linked to a register food establishment.

The links in the report would be checked and updated to ensure they reference the right corporate plan objectives;

- The plan was drafted before the new objectives were adopted but will be updated.

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Details of interventions across the corporate premises would be provided outside of the meeting.

- The service is responsible for the regulation of food establishments run by the Council. Health and Safety at Council premises is regulated by the Health and Safety Executive, although the team's expertise is drawn upon by corporate premises for advice and support.

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