

**Report to:** Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 26<sup>th</sup> June 2014

**Lead Member/Officer:** Lead Member Public Realm

**Report Author:** Head of Planning and Public Protection/  
Public Protection Manager

**Title:** Food Review Task and Finish Group – Update Report

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**1. What is the report about?**

1.1 Following the national reports on horsemeat DNA discovered in meat products, the Council instigated an investigation into current food procurement and regulatory practices. A politically balanced Task & Finish Group was established, comprising of Officers and Members of the Council, to identify any key risks and to enable adequate procedures to be in place to protect residents, visitors and users of the Council's services. This includes schools and social services residential homes and other Council controlled outlets.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

2.1 The Task and Finish Group met several times and last reported to Communities Scrutiny Committee in May 2013. Members asked Officers to provide an update report in approximately 12 months to monitor progress against the recommendations agreed in that report.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

3.1 That Members comment on the content of the report and the progress made against each of the recommendations.

3.2 Members consider whether they require a further monitoring report.

**4. Report details.**

4.1 For ease of reading and reference an update will be provided against each of the recommendations made by Officers and agreed by Members in May 2013. These recommendations span across the range of Council services that participated in the review namely regulatory functions and corporate procurement of food across the council including school meals service and social services.

## Regulatory Functions:

- 4.2 A Trading Standards Officer was successfully appointed by Planning and Public Protection Service into a fixed term position until the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2015. He is fully qualified and competent and meets the requirements of the Food Standards Agency.
- 4.3 A full summary of the food standards work undertaken by the Planning and Public Protection and the Officer in particular can be seen in Appendix 1 of this report. The work undertaken is significant and includes the following:
- Full food standards inspections of all high risk premises due an inspection during 2013/14 (all high risk premises have traditionally been inspected for food hygiene issues)
  - Undertaking a range of food standards sampling surveys including meat species testing on behalf of our school meals service and social services, fish and cheese substitution, nut allergen testing in restaurant/take-away meals and testing of spirits to ensure that they are not substituting with cheaper/imitation brands
  - All butcher shops in the County inspected to ensure food labelling is satisfactory
  - 40 pub premises inspected to ensure that beer lines were cleaned thoroughly and no substitution was taking place
  - All supermarkets and food market traders inspected for a variety of food standards matters
- 4.4 Further work has also been undertaken on providing training to businesses within the County on food labelling. This resulted in a day course being provided to businesses in the Ruthin area. Training has also been provided to our Food Safety Officers (Public Protection) and Animal Health Officers (Public Protection) on food standards and feed enforcement to develop a more coordinated “food regulatory service”.
- 4.5 One of our existing Trading Standards Officers within the service was being supported by the Council to undertake a feed enforcement qualification. She subsequently passed this qualification. Our Trainee Trading Standards Officer was also supported and passed her written food standards examinations. She is due to undertake her oral examination later this year and if successful she would also meet the competency requirements of the Food Standards Agency. Having this experienced temporary fixed term position has greatly assisted the training/development of our permanent staff in this area of work.
- 4.6 The Council’s food service was also the subject of a full audit by the Food Standards Agency in July 2013. We have not received the final audit report yet, however have submitted some comments and feedback on the content of a draft report received in late 2013. An action plan will be developed and agreed to address any actions identified by the FSA.

- 4.7 A bid was successfully submitted and approved by the FSA for money to undertake sampling work across the County. This funding was used to fund sampling in our schools and care homes on meat speciation, cheese and fish substitution and nut allergens in food. A summary of the sampling work undertaken can be found at Appendix 2 of this report.
- 4.8 We have also very recently received confirmation from the FSA that we have been successful in obtaining further funding to do more sampling work with our schools and care homes on meat speciation and also nut allergens in take-away meals. Further work is also planned across North Wales as part of a wider public protection collaboration project on sampling of meats to check on PGI status of meat.

#### **Procurement Functions:**

- 4.9 Regular meetings have taken place between food standards officer, procurement officers, school catering officers and social services contracts officers to discuss sampling surveys, food procurement procedures and any results from the sampling undertaken.
- 4.10 Further work is planned during this year to undertake a procurement audit project, involving the food standards officers working with school meals service, social services and procurement to undertake on site audits of food being delivered to our premises.
- 4.11 The Corporate Procurement Unit are in ongoing discussions with The University Caterers Association (TUCO) to ensure that we get all of the required information to allow us to monitor the source of our food to schools and care homes. This will also involve including a 'right to audit' clause in the contract.
- 4.12 The creation of a central, single point of information for all food procurement contracts using the Proactis Contract Management System is in progress. The work planned involves designing a questionnaire that can be used by users and suppliers on the Proactis system. There is also a need to ensure that all suppliers are registered on the Proactis system.
- 4.13 The new M-Power reporting system which will be available late May/early June will allow expenditure analysis to be undertaken on a quarterly or more regular basis to ensure compliance with our Financial Regulations.
- 4.14 We are looking to utilise the TUCO agreement for the supply of fresh frozen meat into our care homes. This will involve the supply of meat from Hughes Meats in Bangor being supplied through Woodward's Foods. A meeting was held with Woodward's on 1st May to discuss the requirements for each home. If this is not possible we will then look at a separate tender for the supply of meat to our care homes.
- 4.15 Meat Framework exercise is now complete and there are 9 companies on the frame work, as a Catering service we have decided to remain with Hughes

Meats of Bangor. The Council have had no issues with this company in the past, they can provide us with Welsh Lamb and Beef and all product testing carried out by the food standards officer has come back clear and compliant.

**5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

5.1 Whilst the work of the Food Review Task & Finish Group does not directly relate to one or more of the 7 priorities within the Corporate Plan 2012-2017, it is a key responsibility of the Council to ensure that residents are provided with reliable and traceable meat and meat products, as well as other consumer goods.

**6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

6.1 There are no specific costs associated with the recommendations of this report. However the cost of the work that is currently and proposed to being undertaken during this year will be achieved within existing service budgets.

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

7.1 There are no equalities implications from the recommendations of this report.

**8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

8.1 Consultations have taken place between the Corporate Procurement Unit, School Catering Service, Social Services and Planning and Public Protection Service in producing this report.

**9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1 The costs should be contained within the existing resources and grant funding for specific projects.

**10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

10.1 The work undertaken by each service as part of this review and recommendations contained within this report are designed to minimise the risk of low quality food materials entering the food chain in Denbighshire.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

11.1 No formal decision required (see recommendations)

11.2 Article 6.3.4(b) sets out Scrutiny's powers with respect to scrutinising such matters.

**Contact Officer:**

Public Protection Manager

Tel: 01824 706350