

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services

Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee: 20 April 2011

Subject: Food Standards Agency Audit of West Dunbartonshire Council 26-28 October 2010

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To report the results of a Food Standards Agency (FSA) audit and to ask the Committee to endorse the Action Plan agreed by the Environmental Health Section and the FSA.

2. Background

- 2.1 The FSA have a statutory power to set standards, monitor and audit local authority food law enforcement services. The main aim of the audit scheme is to maintain and improve consumer protection and confidence by ensuring that authorities are providing an effective food law enforcement service.
- 2.2 The most recent previous audit of West Dunbartonshire Councils Food Service took place in February 2007.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1 The audit focused on the Authorities arrangement for the management of food premises inspections, enforcement activities and internal monitoring.
- 3.2 The Executive Summary from the audit report highlighted the following;
 - (i) The Authority had developed and implemented a detailed Food Enforcement Service Plan for 2010-2011, which satisfies the Service Planning Guidance in the Framework Agreement. The plan was approved by the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee on 25 August 2010.
 - (ii) The Authority had developed documented policies and procedures relating to their food law enforcement responsibilities, including detailed inspection records. These documents were available to all Officers in electronic format on a central directory and those evaluated during the audit contained up to date references to legislation and official guidance.
 - (iii) Authorisation was provided across the food service; however there was no direct link between authorisation and Officer competence.

- (iv) Individual Officer training needs were not being identified as annual performance reviews had not taken place recently. Training records contained evidence that most Officers had completed a minimum 10 hours relevant training in the last year and that many Officers conducting inspections had received training in HACCP principles and methods for effectively auditing HACCP based food safety management systems.
- (v) File checks of six general food hygiene premises confirmed that in the majority of cases the Authority were completing detailed inspections, including the assessment of HACCP based food safety management systems. Food business operators were provided with clearly worded letters confirming the main findings from inspections. The information retained within the premises files provided sufficient evidence to support the basis for Officers enforcement decisions.
- (vi) It was evident from audit checks that Officers were taking a graduated approach to enforcement and actively worked with businesses to achieve compliance. The information reviewed relating to Hygiene Improvement Notices identified that the enforcement decisions reached were appropriate to the contraventions identified.
- (vii) Discussion and review of internal monitoring procedures and practices indicated that the Authority was regularly supervising the quantitative aspects of food law enforcement work. However some elements of internal monitoring had not been carried out in accordance with the Authorities procedure since the Team Leaders post became vacant.

3.3 One area of good practice was highlighted during the audit.

3.4 Three non-conformances were identified during the audit and an action plan (Appendix 1) was agreed between the FSA and the Environmental Health Section to address these.

3.5 The final audit report was placed on the FSA website at www.food.gov/enforcement.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no people implications

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the requirements of the audit in terms of the Food Standards Act 1999.

7. Equalities, Health & Humans Rights Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 7.1 No significant issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact of this report.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1 The Committee is asked to note the outcome of the FSA audit and endorse the action plan at Appendix 1.

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Date: 15 March 2011

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Appendices: Appendix 1: Action Plan For West Dunbartonshire Council

Background Papers: Food Standards Act 1999

Food Standards Agency in Scotland.
Report on the Audit of Local Authority Assessment of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs in Food Business Establishments. West Dunbartonshire Council 26-28 October 2010

Wards Affected: All

Appendix 1.

Action Plan for West Dunbartonshire Council

Audit date: 26-28 October 2010

TO ADDRESS (RECOMMENDATION INCLUDING STANDARD PARAGRAPH)	BY (DATE)	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	ACTION TAKEN TO DATE
The Authority should set up, maintain and implement a documented procedure for the authorisation of Officers based on their competence and in accordance with the relevant Code of Practice and any centrally issued guidance. [The Standard - 5.1]	30/09/11	Review and update current processes to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice.	Seeking approval to fill the vacant Team Leader Environmental Health post.
The Authority should ensure that specialist enforcement Officers and also Principal Officers receive the training needed to be competent to deliver the technical and administrative aspects of the work in which they will be involved. [The Standard - 5.4]	30/09/11	All Officers training needs to be assessed during the PDP process in 2011.	Two Officers attended the FSA Dairy courses on 11/11/10 and 25/11/10. One Officer booked on 7-11 February 2011 HACCP course. Seeking approval to fill the vacant Team Leader Environmental Health post.
The Authority should ensure that Internal Monitoring is carried out in accordance with its procedure. [The Standard - 19.1]	30/09/11	Current internal monitoring procedure to be reviewed.	Seeking approval to fill the vacant Team Leader Environmental Health post.