

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

28 January 2016

Report by Director of Environment

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – CORE AUDIT REPORT

BY FOOD STANDARDS SCOTLAND - MAY 2015

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report is to advise the Cabinet on the results of the recent audit by Food Standards Scotland (FSS) on the effectiveness of East Renfrewshire Council's official controls in relation to Hygiene of Foodstuffs in Food Business Establishments and the Application of the Food Hygiene Information Scheme. One of the requirements of any FSS audit is that Cabinet is notified of the results of such a report and any conclusions/changes required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that Members note and welcome the findings of the recent audit by Food Standards Scotland (FSS) and the remedial actions that have been taken to address the areas of concern highlighted within the Audit Report.

BACKGROUND

3. The enforcement of UK food law relating to food safety, hygiene, composition, labelling, imported food and feeding stuffs is largely the responsibility of Local Authorities. These Local Authority regulatory functions are principally delivered through the Environmental Health Service.

4. Food Standards Scotland (FSS) audits Local Authorities on their food law enforcement arrangements to improve consumer protection and confidence in relation to food and feed. These audits are carried out on a regular basis, approximately every three years, and the focus may be on different parts of the legislation, enforcement and advisory activities that the Local Authority has been carrying out.

REPORT

5. The FSS audit of East Renfrewshire Council took place between 19 & 21 May 2015. The audit focused on database accuracy, file accuracy and, most importantly, compliance with the current Code(s) of Practice. FSS carried out paper audit checks and actual re-visits to premises, using the last report to compare the hygiene reports against current conditions and activities. These are termed "reality check" visits by FSS.

6. The audit checks were overall very favourable. The FSS commented that the Council's interpretation of the Food Hygiene Information Scheme was good practice. However, there were two recommendations for action listed in the audit summary. These were:

The Authority should:

- (a) Maintain and implement the documented internal monitoring procedures in accordance with Article 8 of Regulation (EC) 882/2004 (Official Feed and Food Controls), the relevant Codes of Practice and centrally issued guidance.
- (b) Implement a documented procedure for the authorisation of officers in accordance with the relevant Code of Practice and any centrally issued guidance.

7. The first recommendation refers to a specific piece of legislation which was omitted from the list of legislation authorised under the Council's Scheme of Delegation. The second recommendation involved full implementation of internal regular audits of Food Officers' competence to carry out inspections and adherence to the FSS Code of Practice. Both these recommendations have been actioned and changes to the Council's Scheme of Delegation and policy in relation to internal audits were concluded by September 2015. FSS has been informed that these matters have been addressed and the audit process has now been completed and can now be published. A copy of the full audit report will be made available within the Members Lounge for elected members to look at in more detail.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

8. The results of the audit show that the Service is continuing to meet its statutory obligations. It also indicated that the recent restructuring of Prevention Services, and filling of vacant Environmental Health posts, has proven effective and strengthened the resilience of the Service.

CONSULTATION

9. There was no requirement for consultation in this process.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

10. Apart from working with Food Standards Scotland before, during and after the audit, there were no other organisations involved.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

11. There are no staffing, property, legal, IT, equalities or sustainability implications.

CONCLUSIONS

12. FSS audit checks were overall very favourable. FSS commented that the Council's interpretation of the Food Hygiene Information Scheme was good practice and areas of concern have now been addressed. FSS has been advised of the remedial actions taken and the audit process has been concluded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. It is recommended that Members note and welcome the findings of the recent audit by Food Standards Scotland (FSS) and the remedial actions that have been taken to address the areas of concern highlighted within the Audit Report.

Director of Environment

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KEY WORDS

Food Safety, Audit, Recommendations, Environmental Health