

Official Feed and Food Control Service Plan 2025-26

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Service Plan has been prepared by the Regulatory Services team of Southend-on-Sea City Council. It is linked to [Southend-on-Sea City Council Corporate Plan 2024](#) for 2024 to 2028 which sets out the four main priorities for the organisation.
- 1.2 The Service Plan is structured in accordance with the service planning guidance contained in the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement. Powers to enable the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to monitor and audit local authorities are contained in the Food Standards Act 1999. In accordance with this guidance the plan will be submitted to the relevant member or senior officer forum for approval to ensure local transparency and accountability.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Service Plan is to ensure that national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally in accordance with the relevant codes of practice and guidance. It details the contribution that Regulatory Services makes to the ambition for the Council with respect to feed and food.
- 1.4 This years' Service Plan is produced to meet the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice inspection priorities and frequencies.

2.0 Service Aims and Objectives

2.1 Aims and Objectives

The delivery of this plan aims to:

- Ensure that the highest achievable levels of feed and food control (food safety, standards and feeding stuffs).

The objectives are to:

- Ensure hygienic conditions in the sale, preparation, manufacture, and storage of foodstuffs and feeding stuffs.
- Ensure the wholesomeness and appropriate labelling/composition of foodstuffs and feeding stuffs.
- Focus on a risk-based approach to inspections and enforcement activity in accordance with the Council's Environment and Regulatory Enforcement Policyv2.
- Administer the legislation in compliance with the approved codes of practice and related official guidance.
- Continue participation in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).
- Focus on the local enforcement of illegal harvesting of shellfish and linking to relevant agencies.
- Provide guidance and assistance to local businesses on regulatory compliance.
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2.2 The Aim of the Service is to support the Council's Corporate Plan for 2024 – 2028.

- 2.3 The feed and food control service plan aligns with the 2024-2028 corporate plan and is reviewed during staff conversations and assists in integrating the service across the organisation.
- 2.4 The delivery of the service supports economic regeneration and business development and enhances tourism, cultural and the leisure offer. This is achieved through the regulation and

supports businesses which boosts our local economy and ensures that safe food is available to those who work, live, and visit the City.

- 2.5 The plan also aims to have a safe city and clean city with a good quality of life for all through enabling a safe food environment and to the promotion of preventing waste. The aim of the team is to transform the service by designing efficient systems and managing resources.
- 2.6 Public Health (PH) are working on delivering a Healthy Southend approach, which will encompass both food and the environment to deliver the changes that are required to diets. This integrated approach is to meet existing government targets of reducing high fat, salt, and sugar consumption and to support people to make healthier choices.

3.0 Background

3.1 Profile of the Area

- 3.2 Southend-on-Sea City Council is a unitary authority. It is a seaside town which is a tourist destination with local shopping areas covering 6,785 hectares and is the closest seaside resort to London. It is located within the Thames Gateway region with the latest visitor numbers available for 2023 being reported as 7,340,700. This was a 5% increase over the previous year, but still slightly lower than pre-pandemic figures. There are seasonal businesses within the city, and the Council actively promotes events to support business prosperity across the Council area.
- 3.3 The total population estimate for 2021 was 180,700. The employment data provided on the ONS website is as follows (2023):

Employee jobs (2023)				
	Southend-On-Sea (Employee Jobs)	Southend-On-Sea (%)	East (%)	Great Britain (%)
Total Employee Jobs	63,000	-	-	-
Full-Time	40,000	63.5	66.0	68.8
Part-Time	23,000	36.5	34.0	31.2
Employee Jobs by Industry				
B: Mining and Quarrying	0	0.0	0.1	0.1
C: Manufacturing	3,500	5.6	7.3	7.5
D: Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply	50	0.1	0.2	0.4
E: Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities	125	0.2	0.8	0.7
F: Construction	2,500	4.0	6.1	4.8
G: Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	9,000	14.3	15.0	13.7
H: Transportation and Storage	1,750	2.8	6.0	5.0
I: Accommodation and Food Service Activities	6,000	9.5	7.4	8.0
J: Information and Communication	1,250	2.0	3.4	4.6
K: Financial and Insurance Activities	1,500	2.4	2.0	3.4
L: Real Estate Activities	1,750	2.8	2.1	1.9
M: Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	5,000	7.9	8.7	9.3
N: Administrative and Support Service Activities	6,000	9.5	11.2	8.7
O: Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security	2,250	3.6	3.5	4.7
P: Education	7,000	11.1	8.9	8.6
Q: Human Health and Social Work Activities	11,000	17.5	12.6	13.9
R: Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	2,250	3.6	2.4	2.6
S: Other Service Activities	1,250	2.0	2.1	1.9

- 3.4 The Economic Growth Strategy 2024-28 provides a clear approach for boosting and sustaining a robust economy in Southend-on-Sea that fosters prosperity for businesses and our communities.

The strategy sets out our vision and objectives for delivering economic growth in Southend-on-Sea, which is to:

- Support established businesses in Southend-on-Sea to achieve sustainable economic growth.
- Promote Southend-on-Sea as the home of micro, small and medium sized enterprises.
- Support employees, business owners, jobseekers, and students in Southend-on-Sea to achieve their career ambitions.

The strategy centres on fostering growth for both businesses and residents, with the aim of advancing economic inclusion.

- 3.5 Actions in the strategy will be taken forward in a delivery plan which Regulatory Services will contribute to through the provision of advice to businesses to assist them to achieve regulatory compliance.

3.6 Organisational Structure

- 3.7 The Council structure with respect to delivery of the feed and food services together with details of individual responsibilities is presented in Annex 1 of this plan.

3.8 Microbiological Examination and Public Analyst

- 3.9 The Council sends food for microbiological examination to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Laboratory at Colindale via a collection service.

Food Water and Environmental Microbiology Lab

- Address: 61 Colindale Avenue, London, NW9 5EQ
- Phone number(s): 0208 327 6548 /6550 / 6551
- Fax: 020 8327 6542
- Email: <mailto:fwem@phe.gov.uk>

Consultant of Communicable Disease Control (CCDC), East of England HPT

- Address: UK Health Security Agency, First Floor Nexus, Harlow Innovation Park, Maypole Boulevard, Harlow, CM17 9TX
- Phone number: 0300 303 8537
- Email: <mailto:EastofEnglandHPT@ukhsa.gov.uk>
- Secure email: <mailto:phe.eoehpt@nhs.net> (via egress)

Stool Samples

Pathology First Helpdesk

- Phone number: 01268-968300

Pathology First Main Reception

- Phone number: 01268 968227

Patient contact information from main lab

- Phone number: 01268 968285

Reports provide by David Marquez - Information Manager at Pathology First

- Email: <mailto:david.marquez@pathologyfirst.co.uk>
- Non-secure emails to: <mailto:david.marquez@synlab.co.uk>

Specimen Reception

- Address: Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Prittlewell Chase, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 0RY
- Phone number(s) 01702-385564/ 385411

3.10 The appointed Public Analysts for feed and foods are located at:

Feed:

Agricultural Analyst – Mr Jonathon David Griffin

Kent Scientific Services

8 Abbey Wood Road

Kings Hill

West Malling

ME19 4YT

Tel: 03000 41 51 00

kss@kent.gov.uk

Food:

Public Analyst – Duncan Arthur

154 Business Park

Valiant Way

Wolverhampton

WV9 5GB

Tel: +44 (0) 7734 383707 (Direct)

+44 (0) 1902 627200 (General)duncanarthur@ftuki.eurofins.com PassInfo@ftuki.eurofins.com

<http://publicanalystservices.co.uk>

3.11 Scope of Regulatory Services

3.12 Regulatory Services is part of Regeneration, Housing and Regulatory Services which sits within the Environment and Place Directorate. The team aligns the delivery of its services to the corporate plan. This is achieved through supporting businesses and regulating to ensure that those living, working, and visiting the city to stay safe and well when using the services of businesses throughout the city. Additional resources to businesses to prosper is through targeting resources to the less compliant businesses.

3.13 With respect to feed and food the responsibilities of Regulatory Services are to:

- Undertake proactive food safety and standards inspections.
- Undertake proactive feed inspections.
- Deal with imported food and feed matters.
- Investigate complaints about food and feed.
- Investigate complaints about food and feed premises.
- Investigate food poisoning and infectious disease referrals/complaints.
- Deal with health and safety and PH matters at food premises related to drainage, industrial noise, /and rubbish.
- Assess businesses against single use plastic use, including the use of straws contributing to preventing waste and protecting the natural environment.
- Assist businesses with compliance with new legislation with respect to recycling waste and how to contribute to the civic pride agenda.
- Trading standards issues.
- Animal health.
- Respond to emerging public health issues.
- Respond to reports of illegal shellfish harvesting.
- Provide consultation recommendations on planning, licensing, and event applications.
- Regulate businesses to ensure that those who are purchasing foods based on price alone are not adversely affected by poor quality foods.
- Advice to be given to those providing Community fridges and Food Banks.
- Participate with the delivery of the public health integrated approach for healthy Southend; and
- Provide business advice.

3.14 Demands on Regulatory Services

3.15 The Service uses the Uniform database, which is an ICT supported application, linked to the property gazetteer. Table 1 below highlights the food premises profile as of 31st March 2025.

Table 1: Food Premises profile as of 31st March 2025.

FSA Category	Food Hygiene	Food Standards
A	5	2
B	50	119
C	304	1394
D	708	n/a

E	460	n/a
Awaiting intervention	36	46
Outside the programme+	28	28
Total	1591	1591

The intervention ratings for food hygiene are A-E and currently for food standards A-C.

+Those outside the programme are being reviewed to be in line with the reporting guidance.

3.16 Table 2 highlights the inspections due in line with the Food Law Code of Practice:

Table 2: Food Hygiene Inspections Due:

FSA Category	Frequency Required	Due 2025-26
A	Every 6 months	10
B	Every 12 months	50
C	Every 18 months	223
D	Every 2 years but can alternate	371
E	Every 3 years or alternative enforcement strategy	145
Awaiting Inspection, includes overdue*		36
Not in programme+		28
Total Inspections due as at 01/04/25		835

*Fluctuation in year as new premises register and are inspected and premises close, this will affect the number of premises due for inspection in year when compared to the start of the year. Last year there were 213 new food registrations throughout the year. We continue to triage new inspections through a risk-based assessment and have been allocated for immediate inspection where needed.

+Includes premises undertaking very low risk activities e.g., selling pre-packed bars and providing teas and coffees, the requirement of which to continue to be registered is currently being assessed in line with current guidance.

- 3.17 With regards to business' included on the database, child-minders are not currently included as they are registered with the Council's Early Years team, and a risk-based approach is taken. The team disseminates information to Childminders and the Early Years Team works with Regulatory Services so that interventions are undertaken where required. The majority of child-minders are not preparing meals; these being supplied by parents / guardians.
- 3.18 The Food Law Code of Practice (FLCoP) requires that Category A, B and C food hygiene rated premises be subject to an inspection, partial inspection, or audit at the required interval.
- 3.19 Those rated as Category D risk for food hygiene premises can alternate between an intervention which is an Official Control, and an intervention that is not an Official Control, if the potential hazard element at risk assessment is less than 30 and they are broadly compliant.
- 3.20 Premises rated E for food hygiene can be subject to an alternative enforcement strategy.

- 3.21 Table 3 below indicates the required number of food standard inspections in line with the Food Law Code of Practice.

Table 3 Food Standards Inspections Due:

FSA Category	Frequency Required	Due 2025-26
A	Every 12 months	2
B	Every 24 months	58
C	Alternative intervention or every 5 years	45
Awaiting Inspection* includes overdue		48
Not in programme+		28
Total Inspections due as at 01/04/25		153

*As for FH above there is fluctuation in year as new premises register and are inspected which will affect the number of premises due for inspection in year compared to the start of the year. Last year there were 203 new food registrations throughout the year.

+ Includes premises undertaking very low risk activities e.g., selling pre-packed bars and providing teas and coffees, the requirement of which to continue to be registered is being assessed in line with current guidance.

- 3.22 The new inspection regime for food standards inspections will be implemented in-year and currently is detailed in accordance with the existing regime, which will change once the database has been modified to accept and display this regime. It is estimated that the new system will go live in mid-May 2025.
- 3.23 Interventions outside the inspection programme for food hygiene and food standards are intelligence led. The status of their registration is being reassessed this year in line with the current FSA guidance.
- 3.24 There is data available on the ethnicity of those living in Southend, this does not however reflect the number of people whose first language is not English. There is no information held on business owners, whose first language is not English. There is a translation service available which is available to inspectors to assist where business have difficulties in communicating in English.
- 3.25 Table 4 below details the number of approved food premises within the city.

Table 4: Approved Food Premises:

Types	No. of each Type
Cockle and / or Whelk Processing	4
Meat Products	2
Fishery Products / Cold Stores	3

3.26 There are no registered feed importers in Southend. The food importers in Southend are mostly:

- registered offices, operating as brokers
- small retailers importing a small range of low-risk foods.

Southend has responsibilities as an inland authority as there are no border inspection posts in Southend, or inland transit sheds subject to customs controls.

3.27 The food and feed service will continue to support businesses to export product into the EU, through ensuring that all inspections are completed thereby enabling business compliance with the manufacturing and storage requirements of EU legislation.

3.28 The approach that the team has taken with respect to illegal harvesting is to disrupt the activity and support the commercial harvesting of legal pickers.

3.29 Regulatory Services continues to respond to incidents of food fraud, with respect to counterfeit products, and to emerging public health issues.

3.30 Regulatory Services undertake sampling around the National Priorities identified in the FSA's Guidance on the food sampling programme. The programme also considers the sampling priorities for the Council and for the priorities identified through the Regional Strategic Assessment and the East of England Trading Standards Association (EETSA). There is some funding available for imported foods and no identified sampling programmes for feed this year. Where grants are available Regulatory Services will bid for funding.

3.31 Seasonal Activities

3.32 Being a seaside location the service:

- Assists cockle and whelk producers during the harvesting season, which includes advisory visits and sampling and contributes to intelligence into the classification of production beds monitoring system.
- Monitors and disrupts the illegal harvesting of shellfish which supports legal harvesting and protects public health.
- Supports the increased demand from higher visitor numbers from day trippers and those taking city breaks.
- Supports the City with reviewing and advising on food activities associated with events organised across the city. There were 136 events last year that would have required an evaluation of the food hygiene element.
- Assist those businesses exporting to the EU with advice to ensure compliance with manufacturing and storage requirements.

3.33 Feed Premises Inspections:

3.34 There are national enforcement priorities for animal feed, with the inspections being co-ordinated through the National Trading Standards Board (NTSB) and the FSA. This approach is to ensure that regionally animal feed enforcement is effective, and there are risk-based controls in place across the Region.

3.35 From 1 April 2019, delivery of the NTSB Feed inspection programme, including the role of the lead Feed Officer role has been contracted out to Essex Trading Standards to deliver the current NTSB funded programme.

3.36 The Council had 21 businesses registered under the Feed (Hygiene and Enforcement) Regulations 2005, for feed inspections as of the 1 April 2025. These are retail premises,

which distribute food on for feed purposes, and one manufacturer of animal feedstuffs and one feed storage premises. Table 5 below highlights the Feed Premises Profile for 2025/26.

Table 5: Feed Premises Profile as at 2025/26

Category of Premises	No.	Due 2025-26
Pet Food Manufacturers R06	1	0
Supplier of Surplus Food R07	19	2
Feed Storage Premises R09	1	1
Total	21	3

3.37 A Desktop Exercise for 2025-26 identified that there are 3 feed inspections to be completed this year.

3.38 The feed service will support businesses to export production into the EU should they wish to do so.

3.39 Service Requests:

3.40 Regulatory Services will continue to respond to requests for service, including business advice, investigation and management of complaints, management of food incidents and hazards, including outbreaks of foodborne illness. The service will also prioritise requests from businesses to assist them with export requirements for food and feed.

3.41 Officers are located both in the main Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue and work remotely. The service responds to inspections and incidents outside of normal hours, and the 24-hour contact centre receives emergency calls.

3.42 Demand on the service can vary according to both the season, and the weather, with high seasons or hot weather usually resulting in increased service requests.

3.43 Enforcement Policy

3.44 The Council's Environment and Regulatory Enforcement Policyv2 was updated in 2024. This policy was developed and consulted on meeting the requirements of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 and the Regulator's Code.

4.0 Service Delivery

4.1 Interventions by Regulatory Services Officers for Food and Feeding stuffs.

4.2 Details of inspections due in each food category are in section 3.16 and 3.21, and for feed in 3.36. Regulatory Services Officers will prioritise premises for food hygiene inspection in line with the Food Law Code of Practice and those assessed as being required for feed by NTSB.

4.3 A food sampling programme Annex 2 will be delivered to supplement and inform the service. Delivery of the sampling programme will be reviewed in line with the priorities detailed above.

4.4 Regulatory Services Officers for food and feed are authorised in line with qualification and competency requirements detailed in the respective Codes of Practice. Co-ordination of food and feed is through the Lead Food and Feed Officers and the Regulatory Services Officer for Trading Standards.

4.5 Officers have access to expertise and peer support through attending local liaison group meetings, detailed in section 4.39, and suitably qualified and competent Enforcement Officers will support the service where the Code of Practice allows.

- 4.6 As detailed above, all high-risk food standards will continue to be prioritised for inspection each year. All other food standards inspections will be inspected in line with the date that the food hygiene inspection is due.
- 4.7 All new premises be inspected, where this is not possible within 28 days of registration and opening, those undertaking high risk activities will be prioritised over low-risk inspections.
- 4.8 With regards to home caterers, questionnaires continue to be used to determine the activities being undertaken, and subsequent inspections are prioritised where high risk activities are being undertaken. Many of this category of caterer register to enable them to benefit from the use the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), rather than a legal requirement to do so. Inspections at premises undertaking lower risk activities will be carried out where resource is available.
- 4.9 Enforcement Officers will assist for any alternative interventions and sampling.
- 4.10. Regulatory Services supports the Safety Advisory Group process for events to ensure that compliant caterers operate at these events. Caterers at these events will normally be required to be rated 3, 4 and 5 under the FHRS.
- 4.11 Where mobile traders are inspected at events or markets, the outcomes will be reported to their registered local authority in line with the FLCoP. Similarly reports from other local authorities regarding mobile traders registered with Southend-on-Sea City Council will be used to inform the rating displayed for these traders on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
- 4.12 Regulatory Services Officers for food safety, standards and health and safety, will determine whether additional pro-active inspections need to be carried out at events based on intelligence.
- 4.13 The Council will continue to participate in the FHRS to promote transparency and enable individuals to make informed choices about where they eat. The team will continue to use and develop the Uniform database to improve reporting capability.
- 4.14 Regulatory Services Group Food and Feed Complaints**
- 4.15 Details of the demand on the service for food complaints in 2024-25 is in Section 9.1. It is anticipated that the number of complaints received in 2025/26 will be similar to those received in previous years.
- 4.16 There are very few complaints regarding feed, and the action required will be assessed by the lead for animal feed.
- 4.17 All food complaints will be allocated to officers with appropriate feed and food competencies. Investigations of service requests/complaints will be based on intelligence and will be proportionate to the risk.
- 4.18 Primary Authority Partnership and Home Authority Scheme**
- 4.19 The Council does not have any formal arrangements in place for food hygiene, standards or feeding stuffs. The Regulatory and Environment Enforcement Policyv2 requires all Officers to consider any partnerships and formal intervention strategies prior to taking enforcement action. As part of an informal Home Authority arrangement this authority will continue to undertake sampling for examination of the cockle processing establishments in liaison with the City of London Corporation Port Health Authority.
- 4.20 All Officers have access to the Primary Authority Scheme website and will adhere to inspection plans or priorities identified through this scheme.
- 4.21 Advice to Business**

- 4.22 The level of demand from businesses last year is included in section 6.1 but does not take account of advice given during inspection. Advice to businesses will be available to businesses under both the FHRS and the Regulators' Code to assist businesses to grow, and for those within the FHRS to achieve a higher rating.
- 4.23 Ad-hoc advice will be given on request and where necessary businesses will be advised of specialist support that they can obtain for themselves. Businesses have identified that information were to be produced in bite-size. Specific tailored advice is delivered as part of the inspection programme and businesses can now sign up to receive an electronic newsletter which provides up to date information and invites businesses to identify topics that they would like to receive guidance on.
- 4.24 Regulatory Services continues to support the objectives of the Economic Inclusion and Business Engagement and Culture and Tourism teams by providing advice at events and to businesses. Where available the team will support businesses through bringing attention to grants that may be available to them.
- 4.25 Details of what to expect during an inspection are included on the reverse of the inspection report, which is either left on site or emailed to the business, following an inspection, together with the officer's contact details. Advice is given to businesses on how to improve their food hygiene rating is also given on any further correspondence and includes the officer's contact details.
- 4.26 Those premises rated as 5,4 and 3 under the Brand Standard continue to be given out at the time of inspection, this has resulted in an 80% reduction in postage, and provides businesses with immediate feedback on their inspection, allowing them to ask about what improvements they can make at that time.
- 4.27 **Feed and Food Sampling**
- 4.28 The food sampling policy prioritisation is detailed in Section 3.30 and the food sampling programme for this year attached as Annex 2. Regulatory Services will continue to participate in the Essex Food Group programme as well as take samples to support local work. It is planned that sampling will be undertaken in accordance with the sampling plan (Annex 2). Enforcement Officers support this work.
- 4.29 There is no funding available for sampling of animal feed, bids have not yet been invited by the FSA to support imported foods, (which is a national priority). Where funding has been available the team has bid for this and has usually been successful when bidding for additional funding. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) continues to provide a free allocation for microbiological sampling. Where resources allow, the team will participate in the East of England Trading Standards Association (EETSA) programme undertaking compositional food sampling and standards as well as taking samples in support of local work. Where there is no funding identified for feed or food sampling, where sampling is required, resources would be found.
- 4.30 Samples for food examination, will be submitted to UKHSA Laboratory at Colindale; samples for food will be submitted to the Public Analyst Scientific Services Limited. The nominated Agricultural Analyst for feed is the same as Essex Trading Standards (ETS). This is to reduce the cost of transport of samples to the laboratory. The details for the returns of any sampling information will be provided to the Food Standards Agency, as required.
- 4.31 **Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease**
- 4.32 The team responds to notifications of infectious disease associated with gastrointestinal infections from UKHSA and from the local pathology laboratory. The goal is to identify

potential sources of infection and to stop further communicable transmission within the community.

- 4.33 There are procedures that detail the range of interventions that can be taken, and the team have a range of responses such as guidance, exclusion criteria and microbiological clearance. Where necessary the team offer advice and regularly liaise with the Essex Health Protection Group involving Consultants in Communication Disease Control (CCDC), epidemiologists and other Environmental Health teams across the region.

4.34 Incidents

- 4.35 The team will review all food alerts and will respond where relevant or directed by the FSA or DEFRA. The demand for responses will usually be included within the resource allocated to the food service, but dependent on the demand may result in a reduction in the pro-active service.
- 4.36 Resource may be necessary to support the Council's emergency control plan. All additional resource requirements will be requested through the relevant Gold and Silver Command Groups.
- 4.37 Regulatory Services continues to respond to incidents of illegal harvesting of shellfish from the foreshore. These products are removed from the food chain where commercial harvesters have been unable to demonstrate that the shellfish will be subject to the correct controls.

4.38 Liaison with Other Organisations

- 4.39 The Council will continue to participate locally in liaison arrangements with:
- The Essex Food Liaison Group (including microbiological sampling).
 - East of England Trading Standards Association (EETSA) Food Group.
 - EETSA Feed Group.
 - Southeast Shellfish Liaison Group.
 - Food Hygiene Focus Group.
 - Essex Environmental Health Managers Group.
 - EETSA Heads of Service.
 - UKHSA.
 - NTSB.
 - Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.
 - City of London Port Health Authority.
 - Town Centre and Marine Units of Essex Police; and
 - Planning.
- 4.40 The Council will work with national bodies as appropriate, including the FSA, Chartered Trading Standards Institute, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Department for Business and Trade (BTS) Local Government Association and Justice and Care Organisation.
- 4.41 **Promotional Work and other non-official controls interventions for food and feed**
- 4.42 Participation will be as part of a larger exercise organised nationally or through Essex County Council and will be prioritised in line with corporate objectives.

- 4.43 The team has worked alongside Public Health going into secondary schools to provide guidance on healthier options for school meals and snacks and will look to expand this work into other schools as well as in food premises located close to schools. The Essex Tuck-In programme has been updated and will be offered to fast food premises as part of the approach to improving health outcomes.
- 4.44 The Southend Supports Breastfeeding campaign was launched in 2024, and Regulatory Services officers continue to assist in the delivery of this by raising awareness and encouraging businesses to sign up when food inspections are carried out.
- 4.45 Information is provided to the Intelligence Database (IDB) and directly to the National Food Crime Unit and the Gangmasters Labour Abuse Agency.
- 4.46 Regulatory Services will also participate in:
- Health Promotion Events organised by SCC.
 - Targeted events.
 - Southend Action Days, targeted activity in specific areas
 - Social media messaging through Facebook and X.
- 4.47 The Council has continued to use social media through a Facebook page to inform business of emerging issues, including reinforcing the FHRS; publicising campaigns and informing members of where a business achieves a five under that scheme.
- 4.48 The team uses resources to support leisure events across the town, though participating on the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and inspecting at events previously identified as higher risk.
- 4.49 The team has responded to requests by businesses for bite-sized information to be provided which is provided via an electronic newsletter to those who have signed up for this service. Businesses are invited to identify any topics they would like covered.

5.0 Resources

5.1 Financial Allocation

- 5.2 Table 6 below highlights the financial allocation associated with the plan.

Table 6 financial allocation

	£ Budget 2025-26
Travel and Subsistence	£1,100
Equipment	0 (there would be budget available if required)
IT & Legal (included below)	£0 (no separate budget but IT and legal could form part of overheads and would therefore have additional budget supplied.
¹ Sampling Budget	£0 (funding stream from grants where available and would be available if required)
Staffing Costs (includes overheads)	£329,500.00

**Contracted food hygiene and standards inspections	£11,750.00
Contracted animal feed inspections	£900.00
Total	£343,250.00

- ⁽¹⁾Microbiological samples are included as part of our free allocation with UKHSA.)
- **Underspend on vacant posts to be used to complete food hygiene and standards interventions.

5.3 Staffing Allocation

5.4 Table 7 highlights the staffing allocation over time, and Table 8 in section 5.8 highlights the staffing allocation necessary to deliver this plan.

Table 7 Staffing Allocation

Staff	FTE 2025-26
Management Food and Feed	0.5
Regulatory Services Officers Food (*vacancy factor used for Contracted inspections)	3.2
Enforcement Officers Food	0.8
Contracted food inspections. Where there are vacancies, this figure rises to provide the inspection service	0.25
Total Officers	4.75
Administration	0.5
Regulatory Services Officers Feed	0.1 Contracted out service
Total FTE	5.35

5.5 Staff Development Plan

5.6 Training is identified as part of the annual conversations with staff members to meet the needs of the service to be delivered. Registered Environmental Health Practitioners are responsible for managing their own CPD training which is usually funded by the Council.

- 5.7 Continued assessment of competencies in line with the Code of Practice are undertaken as part of the Council's appraisal system, Officers who support areas of food, feed, infectious disease, and legal processes will receive appropriate training which will be provided both in-house and externally as appropriate, and Officers working to complete their registration as food practitioners will be supported.
- 5.8 Table 8 shows the projected resource required to deliver programme.

Table 8 projected resource required to deliver programme.

Activity (does not include Business Support time)	FTE
Food Hygiene & Standards Inspections	2.4
Approved Premises	0.04
Revisits to check compliance / FHRS	0.07
Service Requests	0.6
Events applications	0.24
HA / Primary Authority	0.02
Advice to premises	0.09
Formal action	0.12
Co-ordination liaison	0.12
Promotional / Facebook / FHRS	0.09
Sampling activities	0.19
Food poisoning (does not consider outbreak)	0.03
Incidents (including illegal harvesting of shellfish)	0.4
Training for competency (Code of Practice requirement) & internal	0.3
Auditing	0.15
Management of activities (service and improvements)	0.5
Administration	0.5
Total Food (including dedicated administration)	5.88
All Feed Activities	0.1
Total FTE	5.98

- 5.9 There is a contract in place to undertake food inspections to assist with meeting the Food Law Code of Practice requirements, to ensure that high risk interventions are completed in year. However, Table 7 and 8 demonstrate that there is a (0.63 FTE) deficit between current resources and the number required to deliver the programme. This deficit is covered by utilising underspend in salaries across Regulatory Services to bring in additional contractors to meet the inspection programme.

6.0 Quality Assessment

6.1 Quality Assessment and Internal Monitoring

- 6.2 Monthly reviews of the database are undertaken to ensure the accuracy of the information held. Those premises that have registered and have not opened are reviewed each month so that the initial inspection can be carried within 28 days of opening, as required by the Code of Practice.
- 6.3 The number of inspections is reviewed monthly so that resource can be diverted, and all inspection targets are met in line with the Code of Practice.
- 6.4 The team participate in the consistency exercises that are organised by the FSA, and to improve consistency further share these results at the Essex Food Liaison Group.

7.0 Review

7.1 Review against the Service Plan 2024-25

- 7.2 There is continued support for report writing and there are a range of performance reports available.
- 7.3. Table 9 shows the inspections completed under the Code of Practice for 2024-25

Table 9 Inspections completed 2024-25.

FSA Category	% Food Hygiene Inspections of those due Completed	% Food Standards Inspections of those due Completed
A	100	100
B	100	73
C*	99	81
D	98	n/a
E	99	n/a
Unrated as at 1/4/25	83	78

- 7.4 The service focused on completing high risk inspection and unrated premises to comply with the FSA priorities for food hygiene inspections, and this included the additional responsibility of inspecting fishing vessels that registered to the Council.
- 7.5 There was one C rated premises that was seasonal, and therefore unable to inspect, and one premises identified during audit.
- 7.6 There were 213 new premises registered within the year all of which were triaged for inspection and prioritised for inspection.
- 7.7 In line with our service plan food standards inspections were completed at the time where a food hygiene inspection was due.
- 7.8 Table 10 presents the Feed Premises Profile for the 2024-25 inspection programme, in line with the desk-top study.

Table 10 Feed Premises Profile Inspection Programme

Category	No. In category	Due 2024-25	Completed	% Achieved
R7	19	2	2	100
R6	1	0	0	n/a
R9	1	1	1	100

7.9 To reduce the cost to the authority of the time element of the training and enforcement for feed, this part of the service has been contracted out to Essex Trading Standards.

8.0 Enforcement

8.1 Table 11 below highlights the enforcement undertaken in Food Premises.

Table 11 Enforcement undertaken in Food Premises

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
<i>Prosecutions</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Simple Cautions</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Improvement Notices</i>	2	0	9	2	0
<i>Prohibitions & Voluntary Closures</i>	5	1	2	1	1
<i>Seizure and Detentions (including voluntary surrender)</i>	13	7	4	18	51
<i>Remedial Action and detention notices</i>	0	0	3	0	0
Total	20	8	18	21	52

At 31 March 2025, 94% of those premises within the food hygiene rating scheme were rated as 3 and above. There were less than 1% of premises rated as requiring urgent improvement. (2.2 major improvement, 3.4 improvement required) and officers are working with those businesses to achieve compliance.

8.2 Enforcement relating to Illegal shellfish harvesting.

8.3 Overt and high visibility surveillance was undertaken, and advice provided to shellfish foragers. The team continues to disrupt illegal shellfish gathering along the foreshore.

8.4 The practice of disruption continues to result in a reduction in the number of harvesters on the production beds on our foreshore. It is believed this is due to the due to high levels of enforcement undertaken by the team, including collegial input from other teams such as the resort officers and CCTV.

- 8.5 A Day-of-Action was organised on 18 August 2024 which was very successful with interagency collaboration between us the Essex Marine Unit and Community Safety. The team engaged with 19 individuals resulting in 3 voluntary surrenders and the service of 3 detention notice. A total of 42.5kg of product was removed from the market.

9.0 Service Requests

- 9.1 Table 13 highlights the service requests for food safety and standards and infectious disease investigations over the last 5 years.

Table 13 Service Requests for Food Safety and Standards, and Infectious Disease Investigations

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
<i>Food Safety and Standards</i>	235	171	158	423	596
<i>Infectious Disease</i>	216	215	187	196	137
Total	451	386	345	619	733

- 9.2 The number of service requests increased by 37% over the previous year, having seen a fall from 2021-22 with the closure of the Food Standards Agency referral service.

- 9.3 Table 14 highlights the numbers of samples taken.

Table 14: Sampling

Samples taken	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
<i>Microbiological Samples Taken</i>	103	207	199	192	111
<i>Analytical Samples Taken</i>	28	21	12	30	25

- 9.4 The team carried out sampling every 2 weeks, in line with the 2024-25 plan which had been prepared in line with intelligence and national priorities communicated by the FSA and Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology laboratory (FWEM). All samples were taken informally and satisfactory sampling results kept on the premises file to provide intelligence about the business. All unsatisfactory results received were notified to the business with recommendations for the business to action. All required follow sampling was carried out. There were no samples required for feed analysis in 2024-25.

10.0 Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan 2024-25

- 10.1 The team had a vacancy which it had not been able to fill, but have worked hard with the aid of a contracted service to complete such that only a small number of C and Ds remained outstanding
- 10.2 There was also long-term absence of one of the officers nevertheless the planned alternative inspection strategy was implemented in respect of category E premises.
- 10.3 The team continue to issue food hygiene rating stickers at the time of inspection, where it is appropriate to do so. This has reduced the time taken for producing and sending letters.

- 10.4 The team continues to have the dedicated contractor to assist with inspections. We have recently procured a new 5-year contract through the tender process which has been in place since 3 March 2025.
- 10.7 To assist work with public health we have been working with the intelligence team to map our premises in City View which is an online resource to enable public health to better understand our premises profile.
- 10.8 There was an increase in the number of event applications that the team responded to from 107 in 2023-24 to 136 in 2024-25.

10.8 Areas for Improvement

- 10.9 The following areas of improvement have been identified:
- Continue to enhance and develop the functionality of the Uniform database.
 - Continued improvement of remote working facilities to integrate paperwork for inspections.
 - Improved reporting tools for performance management purposes.
 - Standardising work where possible and process improvements.
 - Continue to review and prioritise for inspection new premises where risk identified.
 - Training of Officers to support work areas and identified competency requirements.
 - Change in function from Regulatory Services Officer to Compliance and Performance officer, to undertake the contract management role undertaken by Officers to enable additional front-line engagement
 - Continue to improve process compliance of administration functions.

Annex 1

Leader and Cabinet Portfolio for Regulatory Services:

Leader Cllr Daniel Cowan

Regulatory Services Cllr Kevin Robinson

Food Service – Officers undertaking food work only:

Direct reports to the Executive Director of Environment and Place - Alan Richards

- Director of Regeneration, Housing and Regulatory Services - Glyn Halksworth

Direct reports to the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Regulatory Services - Glyn Halksworth

- Head of Regulatory Services- Vacant Post

Direct reports to the Head of Regulatory Services

- Regulatory Services Manager- Sheira Fox (Food Hygiene, Standards) Lead Food
- Regulatory Services Manager- Adam Penn (Trading Standards)

Direct reports to Regulatory Services Manager- Sheira Fox (Food Hygiene, Standards) Lead Food

Food RSO's:

- Louise McDermott
- Ollie Nawrat
- Rahel Zaman

Enforcement Officers:

- Sarah Thompson

Direct Reports to Regulatory Services Manager- Adam Penn

Trading Standards (Feed) RSO's:

- Alison Rust

Essex Trading Standards

- Jenny Wiehahn

Annex 2

Sampling Plan 2025-26

Sampling is also undertaken on a monthly basis between June and October (depending on start and end of cockle season) from the cockle sheds.

Date of sampling	Sampling type	Type of sample	No. to take	Notes for sampling	Sampling type (Micro/Bacterial)
30/04/2025	Study 83	Nuts and seeds	6	100g per sample	Micro
14/05/2025	In house	Tahini in jars or from deli that uses Tahini	6	Salmonella in Tahini	Micro
28/05/2025	In house	Sandwiches/wraps RTE or from Deli	6	Listeria	Micro
11/06/2025	In house	RTE sandwiches/sandwiches made at a deli	4	Listeria	Micro
25/06/2025	In house	RTE cooked foods from hot hold/ bain marie	4	bacteria growth in hold held due to poor temp. Food sold to be consumed from hot hold, not reheated onsite	Micro
09/07/2025	Study 83	Nuts and seeds		100g per sample	Micro
23/07/2025	In house	Ice cream	6	Pasteurisation/ Listeria	Micro
06/08/2025	In house	Ice cream vans	4	soft scope ice cream - 100g to check for contamination from machine to ice cream cone	micro

20/08/2025	Study 84	Root vegetables	6-8	STEC and Yersinia outbreaks, cross contamination in the kitchens.	Micro soil contamination
03/09/2025	Emerging risks	TBC	6	TBC	TBC
17/09/2025	In house	curries, lasagne slow cooked foods	4	cook chill- foods cooked and chilled within a timeframe to check bacteria levels	Micro
01/10/2025	In house	sushi/sashimi	6-10	PH of sushi rice,	Micro
15/10/2025	In house	Swabs	6	Surface swabs to check bacteria - Focus on door handles, fridges, work surfaces	Micro
29/10/2025	In house	Slushi	6	colours in slush mix	Micro and in-house labelling
12/11/2025	Study 84	Root vegetables	6-8	STEC and Yersinia outbreaks, cross contamination in the kitchens.	Micro
26/11/2025	In house	cured meats	6	RTE cured meats from deli counters	Micro
10/12/2025	Emerging risks	TBC	6	TBC	TBC
24/12/2025	No sampling due to Christmas				
07/01/2026	No sampling due to New year				

21/01/2026	Study 83	Nuts and seeds	6	100g per sample	Micro
04/02/2026	In house	Raw meats from butchers	6	100g per sample - Authenticity of meat from butchers	Micro
18/02/2026	In house	Swabs	6	Surface swabs to check bacteria - Focus on door handles, fridges, work surfaces	Micro contamination
04/03/2026	In house	dried meats RTE	6	Dried RTE meats imported into the UK	Micro
18/03/2026	Emerging risks	TBC	6	TBC	TBC