APPENDIX

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SECTION

FOOD HYGIENE INTERVENTION PLAN 2013/14

May 2013

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1.0 Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aims and Objectives

Departmental Aims

- To respond promptly and courteously.
- Be accessible, open and fair.
- Provide quality services.

Service Objectives

- Ensure the safe and hygienic production, storage, distribution and sale of food and drink through the enforcement of legislation, the provision of advice and information to consumers and the operators of food businesses and the co-ordination of training to food businesses and other employees by:

- undertaking an annual programme of food hygiene inspections and enforcement in accordance with statutory requirements, relevant Codes of Practice and guidance;
- supporting the annual inspection programme with an annual microbiological food sampling programme;
- to investigating complaints within service standards and to take appropriate action in accordance with relevant Codes of Practice and Guidance;
- acting as "home authority" to any food businesses originating with the borough of Ribble Valley and to carry out home authority enquiries referred by other agencies;
- supporting the annual inspection programme with targeted promotional advice and educational initiatives together with providing information and advice on food safety to food businesses and consumers, and co-ordinating training.

1.2 Context - The Council's Vision

Council's vision developed with the Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership states that: **"Ribble Valley will be an area with an exceptional environment and quality of life for all; sustained by vital and vibrant market towns and villages acting as thriving service centres meeting the needs of residents, business and visitors."**

The Council's overarching corporate priority is '**to ensure a well-managed Council providing efficient services based on identified customer needs'**.

Environmental Health activity is driven by 3 of the 4 Council's ambitions, namely:

- To ensure a well-managed Council providing efficient services based on identified customer needs'.
- To help make peoples lives safer and healthier;
- To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area.

From these ambitions, the Council's Corporate Strategy has identified a number of objectives to be delivered through the Council's supporting Action Plan.

There are also other corporate documents that influence service delivery including the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Community Safety Plan, Data Quality Policy, Equality Framework for Local Govt., Customer Care Policy, Consultation Strategy and Citizens Charter.

Along with these key corporate documents, it is important that the services are delivered in a manner that provides satisfaction to the public. Therefore it is an integral element of all the services delivered that they are done so efficiently and effectively by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

As a frontline Council service environmental health services commit to treat all customers fairly, with respect and professionalism regardless of gender, race, nationality or ethnicity, age, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation.

KEY OBJECTIVES AND POLICY STATEMENTS

Links to Sustainable Community Strategy	Specific Food Safety Ambitions	Service Committee Policies – Health & Housing Committee:
• To improve the health of people living and working in our area	"to focus resources to achieve Food Standards Agency inspection targets	➢ To protect and where possible improve the environment and the general public health of the community, by taking all reasonable measures available; ➢ To ensure that all premises where food is manufactured or sold comply with the public health legal requirements; and ➢ To ensure that all other eligible organisations and establishments comply with the relevant public health requirements.
• To encourage economic activity to increase business and employment opportunities • To support the regeneration of Market Towns as sustainable service centres • Promote local produce and local employment opportunities and promote and support the development of the Ribble Valley Food Trail	" Support & complement the National Food Standards Agency reduction targets to reduce gastroenteritis in the community	➢ the Council is committed to education and training towards sustainable development and creation of a more sustainable and inclusive society. ➢ Contains commitment to provision of food hygiene training.
• To support the priority outcomes of the Strategic Health Improvement Group within the Ribble Valley Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)	To encourage the adoption of healthy lifestyles in the local community	• Health Prevention Strategy: ➢ To promote public awareness and understanding of the importance of good food hygiene through appropriate media channels. ➢ To promote and provide food hygiene courses for local businesses. ➢ To develop a 'hygiene award' scheme for food businesses and restaurants.
• To seek continuous improvement • To treat everyone equally and ensure access to services is available to all		• e.Government: ➢ to develop greater provision of information and service through this media in line with Corporate Policy.

1.3 Links to annual 'Corporate Strategy'	The Council produces an annual Corporate Strategy. This strategy contains key summary service information, performance information and includes key actions for the forthcoming year. It is anticipated that this year's Corporate Strategy will not contain anything specific in relation to Food Safety.
1.3.1 Service development history	As part of the recommended food enforcement 'quality control' measures and as part of an adopted Lancashire authority initiative, two inter authority audit were undertaken of our food enforcement systems recently by food officers from two neighbouring Council's. In addition, the Food Standards Agency also undertook an audit of an 'Approved Dairy Premise' with regard to approval for export to Russia. I am pleased to report that these audits were generally successful and reassuring with only relatively minor issues being identified. These issues have subsequently been addressed Detailed individual Service Plans for Food Safety and Health and Safety are normally prepared on an annual basis. This plan complements the corporate vision, values and objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy.

2.0 Background

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

Ribble Valley Borough is situated in North East Lancashire, and with an area of 226 sq miles is the largest geographical district in the County. The Borough Council is one of 12 District Councils, 1 County Council and 2 Unitary Authorities within the County of Lancashire. Within the borough, some functions relating to food safety are the responsibility of Lancashire County Council eg Trading Standards and Food Standards Inspections.

Over 70% of the borough is in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a clear reflection of the landscape quality of the area.

The borough has a population of approx. 57,300 (2011), with Clitheroe, the main administrative centre having 15,000 inhabitants. Clitheroe lies at the heart of the borough, whilst Longridge, the other main town, lies in the West. Longridge has a population of approximately 7,724. The remainder of the area is mainly rural with a number of villages ranging in size from large villages such as Whalley, Sabden and Chatburn through to small hamlets such as Great Mitton and Paythorne.

The borough has a mixed economy, with good employment opportunities and a consistently low rate of unemployment. Given the rural nature of the area it is not surprising that agriculture is a primary employer through the District. Large manufacturing activity is represented by major national and multi-national companies such as Hanson Cement, Tarmac, Johnson Matthey, Ultraframe, 3M, and British Aerospace Systems.

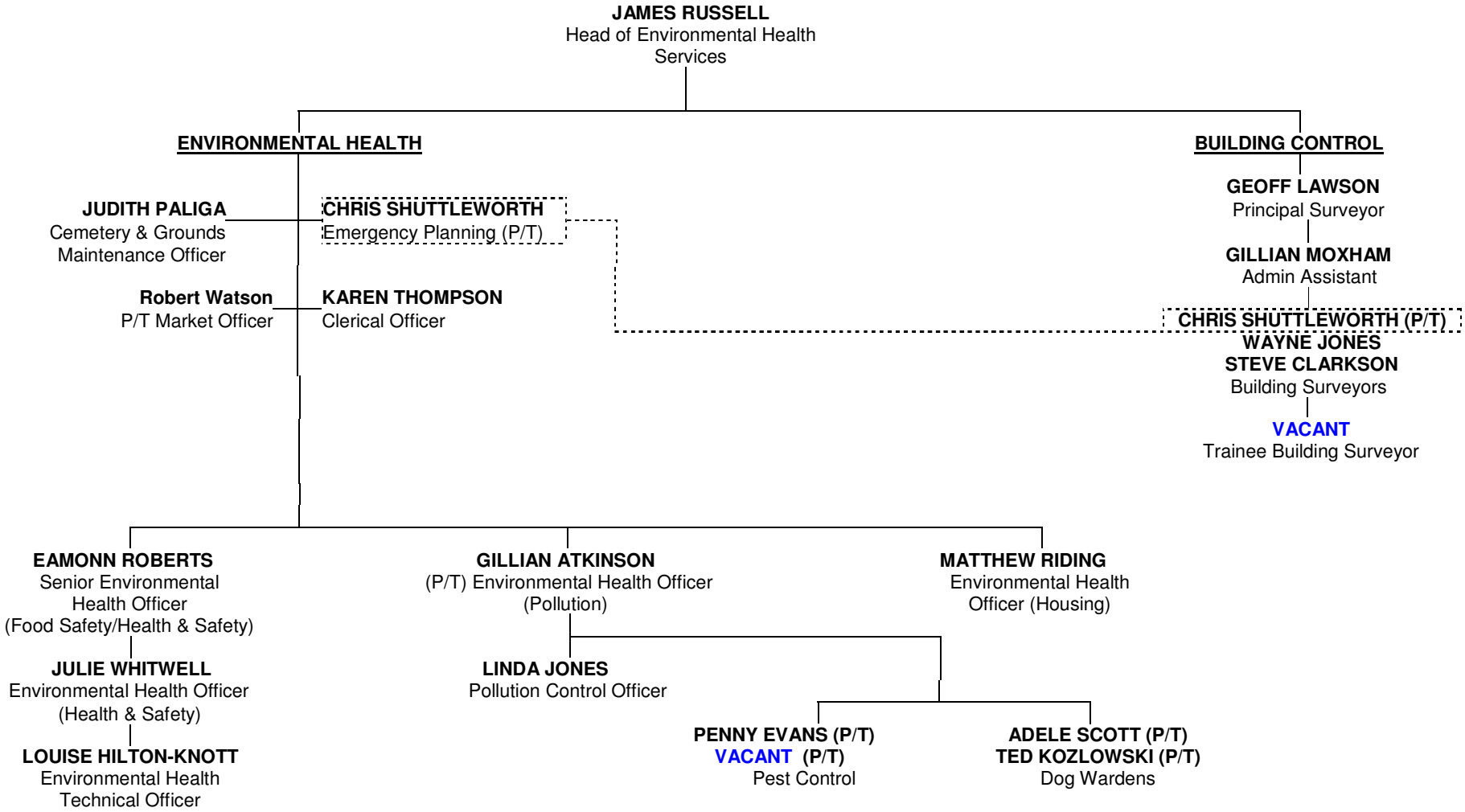
The Ribble Valley has excellent communications which open up the area to the rest of the country. The A59 trunk road, a main artery from the west coast through to the east, dissects the borough, and links to the M6. Main line rail services are available from Preston, which is only 30 minutes from Clitheroe. In addition, Manchester Airport is only 60 minutes away from Clitheroe and provides links to over 200 destinations worldwide.

POLITICAL MAKE-UP OF THE BOROUGH

40 Local District Councillors
33 Parish Councils (and 7 Parish Meetings)
2 Town Councils
1 Member of Parliament

2. SERVICE STRUCTURE

2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE STRUCTURE



Political Arrangements	Food Safety falls under the terms of reference of the Health & Housing Committee. The Food Service Plan is presented to the Council's Health & Housing Committee for approval and adoption.	
Provision for Specialist Services	Food Analytical Services	Lancashire County Council Public Analyst plus specialist service providers as necessary
	Food Examiner	Food & Environmental Microbiology Services (PMS), Preston
	Health Authority	East Lancashire Primary Care Trust CHP/DPH – Consultant in Health Protection, Director of Public Health, Health Protection Agency
	LA Sector Enforcement Guidance	Local Authorities Coordinator of Regulatory Services (LACORS)

2.3 The Scope of the Environmental Health Section's Food Service

As a Borough Council the Authority is responsible for the full range of food hygiene duties under the Food Safety Act 1990.

Food Standards and Animal Feed Products are the responsibility of the Lancashire County Council Trading Standards Division.

Within the Department of Development Services the Environmental Health Section also deliver the following services along side food safety.

- Health & Safety/Smokefree Workplace
- Local Authority Air Pollution Control (LAAPC/IPPC)
- Air Quality Review
- Nuisance Complaints
- Management of Clitheroe Market
- Clitheroe Cemetery
- Infectious Disease
- Pest Control & Dog Warden Service
- Health Education
- Animal Welfare Licensing
- Emergency Planning
- Building Control

2.4 Service Delivery Points

Chief Executive's Department
Council Offices
Church Walk
CLITHEROE
Lancashire
BB7 2RA
E-mail
environmental.health@ribblevalley.gov.uk

☏ (01200) 425111 (switchboard)
☏ (01200) 414464 (direct)
Fax: (01200) 414489

Web Site: www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

Opening Hours:
08.45 – 17.00 Monday – Friday

Out of Hours: Emergency Service available by contacting 01200 444448

2.5 Demands on the Environmental Health Section

There are ever increasing service demands on the environmental health teams in relation to the issue of delivering the cleaner environment agenda, animal welfare, nuisance complaints, industrial air quality regulation, public health, emergency planning, safe & green building construction and generally protecting the public health of the local community.

In relation to Food Safety, the area contains a mix of manufacturing, retail and catering premises. Catering and retail are the dominant sectors within this mix. The businesses are predominantly small to medium sized establishments.

The borough has a normal cross-section of food businesses but has a significant and much higher than average number of 'approved' premises, the majority being on-farm dairies, which are by their nature relatively high risk, complex and resource intensive.

	Number of Premises (as at 01/04/2013)	
Total number of Food Premises (Total)	**768**	
Categories A-C (High Risk & Approved premises)	302	(39%)
Categories D-E (Others)	456	(59%)
Non Rated (excluding approved premises)	11	(2%)
Producers	7	
Slaughterhouses (seasonal)	5	
Manufacturers/Packers	30	
Importers/Exporters	0	
Distributors	13	
Retailers	220	
Restaurants and other caterers	462	
Manufacturing Non Food	0	
*'Approved' Premises **	23	
Premises where the Section acts as "Home Authority"	0	
External factors impacting on service delivery:	None	
*(* included in the figures above)*		

2.6 Enforcement Policies

Corporate adoption of the Enforcement Concordat – 2000
Food Safety Enforcement Policy (Revised January 2011)
General Environmental Health Enforcement Policy (Revised June 2005)

3.0 Service Delivery

3.1 Food Premises Inspections

It is Ribble Valley Borough Council's policy to carry out programmed inspections in accordance with both the minimum inspection frequencies specified in the Food Standards Agency 'Food Law' Code of Practice (England) [April 2012] and as stipulated in Food Law Practice Guidance (England) [April 2012] .

Premise Profile:

5

	Number of Premises as at 01/04/13	Programmed Number of Inspections Required During the Year (01/04/13 – 31/03/14)
Category A	2 (0.6%)	4
Category B	24 (6.3%)	24
Category C	274 (43%)	220
Category D	161 (15.2%)	85
Category E	297 (31.3%)	78 #
Non Rated/Overdue	10 (16.6 %)	0
'Approved' Premises *(* included in above)*	*22	
		409
TOTAL	**768**	
		# 77 Cat 'E' premises to be dealt with by Alternative Inspection strategy

Estimated number of revisits: 100
Estimated number of officer hours for these visits
(including contract monitoring/administration): **1300**

Local areas of targeted inspection:

Approved Premises - On-Farm Dairies and Milk Products Plants	(20) }	Included in
Approved Premises - Meat and Fish Product Plants	(2) }	the above
Estimated number of Officer hours for these targeted visits:	(150)}	

	Local Performance Indicator: **100% High Risk food premises inspection carried out** **100% Other food premises inspections carried out**
3.2 Food Complaints/Service requests	It is the policy of Ribble Valley Borough Council to give a first response within 2 working days to all food and food premises complaints/service requests. The 2012/13 performance target was to respond to 90% within 48 hours. *In 2012/13, we actually responded to 97% of 322/332 of food related service requests within 48 hours.* Estimated number of food complaints/service requests: 300 *Estimated number of Officer hours:* **450**
3.3 Home Authority Principle	Ribble Valley Borough Council subscribes to the current Local Authorities Co-ordinating Body on Food & Trading Standards (LACOTS) Home Authority Principal (HAP). The Authority has not been approached by or is aware of any local company likely to be within the remit of HAP currently entered into a formal agreement with any local company. *Estimated resources spent on Home Authority Work:* **0**
3.4 Advice to Business	The Authority has a policy of offering advice to any business which has trading premises within our area unless the trader has a Home Authority arrangement with another Local Authority. Planning/Building Control consultation responses, licensing enquiries and property searches: 100 (ave.) *Approximate officer hours:* 125 Estimated number of advisory visits: 10 *Approximate number of Officer hours:* 15 Approximate number of food related enquiries involving significant work: 25 *Approximated number of Officer hours on general customer advice:* 50 Total: **190**

3.5	**Food Sampling and Inspection**	The general policy of Ribble Valley Borough Council is to sample food and drink, supplied, produced and sold within the Borough, in accordance with a planned sampling programme to assess its safety and quality and where necessary, in response to food complaints/investigations. The Council will also participate in Lancashire-wide, national and European sampling programmes. A copy of the Food Sampling Policy and 2013/2014 proposed sampling programme is attached at Appendix A.	
		Estimated number of Officer hours to be devoted to food sampling and inspection:	**175**
		Estimated number of complaint samples which will be submitted for examination/analysis:	3
		Estimated number of surrender visits:	2
		Estimated number of hours on surrender visits:	**4**
		All formal food samples are submitted to The Lancashire County Public Analyst for compositional analysis or to Food and Environmental Microbiology Service, Preston for microbiological examination.	
3.6	**Control of the Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease**	Average number of notifications of gastrointestinal disease:	100
		Average number of outbreaks:	5
		Estimated number of Officer hours to be devoted to food related infectious disease investigation and control: (total outbreak investigation estimated 200 Hours)	**300**
3.7	**Food Safety Incidents**	It is the policy of Ribble Valley Borough Council to comply with Food Standards Agency 'Food Law Code of Practice (England) ' (issued April 2012) in relation to the handling of Food Hazard Warnings and Food Safety Incidents.	
		The number of notifications has significantly increased since the inauguration of the Food Standards Agency on 1 April 2001.	
		Estimated number of Food Hazard Warnings:	50
		Estimated number of Officer hours to be devoted to the handling of Food Hazard Warnings:	**20**

3.8	**Liaison with other Organisations**	The Authority participates in the following liaison groups related to food safety issues in order to ensure that enforcement action taken within the Borough of Ribble Valley is consistent with those of neighbouring local authorities: • Lancashire Chief Environmental Health Officers – Food Officer Sub-Group (FOG) } 20 • FOG/Public Health Laboratory Service Liaison Group } • East Lancashire HA District Infection Committee 10 • United Utilities (North West Water) Liaison Meeting 5 • FOG/Trading Standards Sub-Group -- • FOG/Social Services Sub-Group -- • FOG/Lancashire County Council Education Sub-Group -- *Estimated number of Officer hours devoted to liaison activities:* **35**	
3.9	**Food Safety Promotion**	The Authority will seek to be involved in the following promotional/training activities in relation to food safety: Training Courses: 'Safer Food Better Business' awareness and implementation by food businesses Initiatives: Food Safety Week – Basic Food Hygiene Courses – intention to provide 2 per year *Estimated number of Officer hours devoted to Health Promotion (including course administration support)*	**12**
3.10	**Food Safety Training for Officers**	The general aim is to achieve a minimum of 10 hours per Officer each year. Training is provided to address needs identified within the Officer annual appraisal system and subject to course availability and within available resources. *Estimated number of Officer hours devoted to Food Safety Training*	**30**
3.11	**Food Safety Management**	*Estimated number of hours on Food Safety Management and administration*	**300**
3.12		Total estimated officer hours required to deliver Food Safety function:	**2816 (1.76 FTE)**

4.0 Resources

4.1 Financial Allocation

The Food Safety Service financial costs are contained within the main "Environmental Health Services" cost centre. This cost also contains the majority of costs relating to the provision of the Environmental Health Service eg Health & Safety, LAAPC, Complaint Service requests, animal welfare etc.

The individual service costs have been partially disaggregated. This has been established by the periodic use of time allocation exercise to determine average Officer time spent undertaking each function.

A breakdown of the Officer time estimated and used to calculate the service costs is contained within the Best Value 'Year One' Review which were based on calculated service costs used for CIPFA purposes.

The overall expenditure for the Environmental Health Service cost centre over the present year and forward budget for 2013/14 is as follows. These figures also include income and expenditure related to Enforcement and capital finance costs.

Environmental Health	2012/13	2013/14
Employee Expenditure	0	0
Premises Expenditure	18,820	19,810
Transport Related	3,270	4,310
Supplies & Services	18,020	17,110
Third Party Payments	3,480	5,460
Support Services	344,310	380,670
Capital Financing	2,020	2,020
Other grants and reimbursement	-1,650	-2,960
Customer and client receipts	-23,920	-30,170
	364,350	423,410
Net Service Expenditure		

Estimated food safety costs within the Environmental Health Service cost centre are as follows:

Food Safety /ID costs	2012/13	2013/14
Supplies & Services	760	1,890
Support Services	51,8580	54,994
Capital financing	0	0
Total Expenditure	52,618	56,884
Total Income	-0	0
Net Service Cost	52,618	56,884

4.2 Staffing Allocation

The Environmental Health Section is responsible for the delivery of a range of services in addition to food safety, namely:

- Nuisance Complaint Investigation (commercial & residential);
- Local Authority Air Pollution Control (LAAPC);
- Air Quality Assessment and Monitoring;
- Health and Safety Regulation;
- Infectious Disease Control;
- Animal Welfare Licensing;
- Pest Control and Dog Warden Service.
- Housing standards
- Caravan Sites * Private Water Supplies * Environmental – litter, fly tipping

The total resources currently available within the section for the above is: 7.8 (FTE)
This is made up of:

- Enforcement Officers 6.8 (FTE)
- Administrative Support 1 (FTE)

of the above, the resource to deliver the food safety service is: 1.76 (FTE)

of which:

- Qualified to inspect Cat. A – B premises: 1.76 (FTE)
- Qualified to inspect Cat C – E: as above

For the year 2013/14, the food service should be deliverable within existing resource. As in previous years, there is significant ongoing work in relation to the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. **In line with national guidance, priority will be given to food premises not achieving a 'generally compliant' rating of 3 with the aim of achieving a 100% with a rating of 3 and above.**

If during the year it becomes apparent that the service is unable to complete the intended inspection programme, priorities in all areas of work will be reassessed and resources will be allocated to the food service on 'risk based' principles with priority being given to the regulation and inspection of "high risk" (Category A - C) premises**.**

Members will be informed of any such re-allocation.

5.0 Analysis of Present Position

5.1 Set out below is the standard SWOT analysis of the Environmental Health Food Safety service:

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Well developed strategies and policies for the service in line with national guidance. • Service well aligned with corporate strategy/policy. • Well established performance monitoring procedures. • Experienced, professional and dedicated staff. • Low staff turnover. • Clear commitment to quality service delivery. • General achievement of Food Safety Act Code of Practice inspection annually. • Introduced National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in 2011	• Minimal resources (always fire fighting). • Proactive work at risk in event of public health emergency/reactive work demands. • Potential remuneration problem in event of vacancies. • Increasing complexity of regulation and enforcement - requirement to specialise to achieve competency. • Diminishing pool of officers nationally. • Lack of capacity to contribute meaningfully to wider public health agenda – Public Health England.
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Multi-skilled public health professionals. • Need to develop proactive public health agenda with other partners – eg No smoking in the workplace and by catering premises, healthy eating. • Facilitate local food safety training needs. • Develop new targeted 'intervention' approach to enforcement • Work with other agencies to develop multi-agency lead inspector approach.	• Increasing complexity of issues – greater need for research/documented procedures. • Food safety service audit by Food Standards Agency if fail to meet targets and deliver mandatory duties. • Increased information gathering and recording – increasing inspection costs. • Projected shortage of EHO's entering profession. • Pressures to PCT/Public Health Network to concentrate resources on health care service delivery rather than prevention partnerships. • Increased duties and demands in relation to smoke-free workplace, clean environment, industrial air pollution regulation and animal welfare and capacity to achieve. • Introduction of formal hazard analysis requirements under new regulations and associated resources requirements.

6.0 Quality Systems

It is our policy to carry out all areas of food service delivery in accordance with our Food Safety documented procedures and to fulfil any inter authority audit requirements as required with neighbouring authorities.

7.0 Review

7.1 Review Against the previous Plan

This Food Hygiene Intervention Plan will be reviewed annually and reported to members. The review will link into the annual budgetary process and the review of associated plans. Performance monitored on monthly basis and quarterly by management review of progress.

7.2 Annual Performance

In 2012/13:

- 374 (of 274) food premises were audited, of which 374 food premises received a full inspection and 41 'low risk' premises were dealt with under an Alternative Inspection Programme.
- 332 service requests were recorded of which 322 (97%) were actioned within the target response time of 2 working days.
- 125 confirmed cases of infectious diseases were investigated in relation to food-born organisms (100% of notified cases).
- 215 'milk products' and 'other' food samples were submitted for analysis.

7.3 Compliance with Local Performance Indicator

In addition to the service performance statistics listed in paragraph 7.3 above:

- Enforcement of food safety legislation has been implemented in accordance with the Ribble Valley 'Food Safety' Enforcement Policy (Rev. January 2011) and associated standard procedures.

- In the year 2012/13, there have been no complaints received about the Food Safety enforcement activity.

7.4 Identification of significant variance from Service Plan

- To be monitored quarterly and any significant variation from the plan to be reported promptly to the Health & Housing Committee.

7.5 Service Improvement

7.5 (i) The following areas of service development were identified for 2012/13 :

Corporate Objective	Action	Standard	Method of Measurement	Target	Responsible Officer	Resources	Links	Achieved
To focus EH resources to achieve FSA inspection targets	To undertake 100% of programmed audit/inspection of food premises in accordance with Food Standards Agency 'Food Law' Code of Practice (issued June 2008).	Food Standards Agency 'Food Law' Code of Practice (issued June 2008).	No of inspections/audits completed	315	Senior EHO (Food/Health and Safety) and EHT's	Within existing	LPI	100% (374)
To meet mandatory government guidance	To review Food Safety procedures and update to comply with Food Standards Agency 'Food Law' Code of Practice' (revised June 2008).	Food Standards Agency 'Statutory Food Law Code of Practice' (revised June 2008).	Standard Procedures reviewed and standard documents updated	Review by 31.3.13	Senior EHO (Food/Health and Safety)	Within existing	FSA	Ongoing
Legend:	FSA – Food Standards Agency LPI – Local Performance indicator							

7.5 (ii) Action Plan for the next 12 months:

Corporate Objective	Action	Standard	Method of Measurement	Target	Responsible Officer	Resources	Links	Achieved
To focus EH resources to achieve FSA inspection targets	To undertake 100% of programmed audit/inspection of food premises	Food Standards Agency 'Statutory Food Law Code of Practice' (April 2012).	No of inspections/audits completed	409	Senior EHO (Food/Health and Safety) and EHT's	Employ consultants if necessary	LPI	31/3/13
To meet mandatory government guidance	To review Food Safety procedures and update to comply with Food Standards Agency 'Food Law' Code of Practice (April 2012)	Food Standards Agency ' Food Law' Code of Practice (April 2012).	Standard Procedures reviewed and standard documents updated	Review by 31.3.14	Senior EHO (Food/Health and Safety)	Within existing	FSA	Ongoing

Sampling Policy 2013/ 2014

1. Introduction

1.1 Ribble Valley Borough Council recognises the important contribution that food sampling makes to the protection of Public Health and the Food Law Enforcement functions of the Authority.

1.2 Food Safety Officers from the Environmental Health Section will be responsible for undertaking the food sampling functions of the Council.

1.3 Consideration will be given to food sampling in the following specific situations:

- National, Regional and Locally co-ordinated surveys/programmes;
- complaints;
- process monitoring;
- inspections;
- Home Authority Principal activities;
- special investigations;
- imported foods.

2. Food Sampling Surveys/Programmes

2.1 Ribble Valley Borough Council will make provision to co-operate and, where possible, participate in all food sampling surveys. However, some surveys may involve foods or food premises which are either in short supply or not available in the Ribble Valley, in which case a reduced number of samples or no samples will be submitted to the laboratory.

2.2 **National Surveys**

2.2.1 National surveys may be organised through the Food Standards Agency as part of the EC co-ordinated sampling programme.

2.2.2 The Local Authority Co-ordinating Body on Regulatory Services (LACORS) and the Food and Environmental Microbiology Services (PMS) Preston, also arrange National Surveys each year.

2.3 **Regional Sampling Programme**

2.3.1 A Survey Sub-Committee comprising of officers from the PMS Laboratory Preston, the Lancashire Food Officer Group and the Greater Manchester Food Liaison Group are responsible for drawing up and distributing a sampling programme every four months. This programme determines the number of samples required and the sampling frequency.

2.4 **Local Sampling Programmes**

2.4.1 A local survey may be generated following a food poisoning incident or as a follow-up survey following a local sampling initiative.

3. Food Complaints

3.1 Samples of food received as a food complaint may require microbiological examination or chemical analysis. The PMS Laboratory Preston will undertake all microbiological examinations and the County Analyst at the County Laboratory in Preston, is used for any samples which require chemical analysis.

3.2 All food complaints are taken seriously and the results of an examination or analysis may generate the need for more controlled sampling of the food product or from the food premises.

3.3 Consideration will be given to the sampling of locally produced products, in particular ice cream, cooked meats and high risk confectionary such as vanilla slices and cream based products.

4. Process Monitoring

4.1 Process monitoring will not normally be undertaken by this Authority as a matter of routine. However, one exception to this policy relates to on-farm dairies. In the light of knowledge and experience it has been decided, after consultation with food safety colleagues in other authorities in Lancashire and the PMS Laboratory Preston, to undertake process monitoring of milk from on-farm processing (heat treatment) dairies to confirm that food safety is being maintained.

4.2 Sampling will comprise of one formal paired sample every year from each processing dairy to test for compliance with the Regulation (EC) No. 852/53/2004 to comply with Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005 . These will generally be taken between December and March.

4.3 All samples shall comprise one bottle/container of milk (preferably semi-skimmed if available) from each pasteuriser at the on-farm dairy premises. The annual statutory sample shall also contain a sample of cream where separation of milk takes place on the premises.

5. Inspections

5.1 Food sampling will not normally be undertaken as a constituent part of food safety inspections. However, it will be left to the inspecting officer's discretion whether to recommend to the Environmental Health Manager that food samples should be taken for monitoring purposes following any inspection.

6. Home/Originating Authority Responsibilities

6.1 There have been no requests from any food businesses within the Borough for 'Home Authority' agreements. The Authority does, however, act as Originating Authority for some food businesses.

6.2 There is no intention to take routine food samples from any food businesses for which this Authority acts as Originating Authority.

7. Special Investigations

7.1 Special circumstances may arise during a year which will require samples to be taken. These samples will most likely be generated during the investigation of food poisoning incidents. Samples may include environmental samples in addition to food samples.

8. Imported Foods

8.1 At present there are no companies or businesses in the Ribble Valley Borough area, which regularly receive imported foods directly upon importation into the UK. Therefore, no routine sampling of imported foods at wholesalers will be undertaken. However, consideration will be given to the directed sampling of imported foods wherever possible, with the targeting of 'high risk' animal and non-animal origin imported foods noted during routine inspections or found on display by major retailers.

If, however, circumstances change this Policy will be reviewed in the light of future developments.

Sampling Programme 2013/ 2014

1. Introduction

1.1 Ribble Valley Borough Council recognises the important contribution that food sampling makes to the protection of Public Health and the Food Law Enforcement functions of the Authority.

1.2 In developing a sampling programme consideration is given to:

- protecting the consumer through the enforcement of food legislation;
- identifying foods that pose a hazard to the consumer because they contain significant levels of pathogenic bacteria;
- increased emphasis being given to the surveillance and sampling of imported foods of animal and non-animal origin, particular attention will be given to products of non-animal origin due to lower sampling levels at point of import;
- assessing the microbiological quality of food manufactured, distributed or retailed in the area.
- identifying any contraventions of food safety legislation, eg Food Safety Act 1990 Section 8 (food which is unfit or food which is so contaminated) or Section 14 (food not of the quality);
- helping determine whether advice or enforcement action would be appropriate where it is suspected that poor practices and procedures exist;
- offering advice and guidance, if appropriate, on food hygiene matters.

2. Scope of Sampling

2.1 Ribble Valley Borough Council is a Shire District Council and, therefore, does not have any responsibility for Food Standards issues such as food composition or labelling, (which usually require analysis of the samples). These matters are the responsibility of the County Council through the Trading Standards Department. Therefore, this Sampling Programme will relate solely to food sampling for microbiological examination.

2.2 In accordance with the revised Food Standards Agency 'Food Law' Code of Practice (revised April 2012), the Sampling Programme has been prepared in consultation with colleagues from the Lancashire Food Officer Group and the Greater Manchester Food Liaison Group along with the Food Examiner from the Food and Environmental Microbiology Services (PMS) Preston.

2.3 The Council engages the services of the PMS Laboratory Preston, based at the Royal Preston Hospital, to undertake all microbiological examinations.

2.4 The County Analyst, based at the County Laboratory in Preston, is used for any foods or water which require analysis. These samples are usually related to the investigation of food complaints and, therefore, they will not form part of the annual sampling programme.

2.5 Advice will be sought from the PMS Laboratory Preston regarding the size/quantity of the food sample required for examination.

3. Funding

3.1 At present, funding for the examination of routine food samples is borne by the PMS Laboratory, Preston based on a 'credit allocation system' which is calculated on the size of each Authority. However, as the Sampling Programme is agreed jointly by two Food Officer Groups, there is the flexibility to share out unused/surplus credits, by agreement, between Authorities if insufficient credits are available for a particular survey.

3.2 Sampling credits are levied for each type of food or examination undertaken. The PMS Laboratory, Preston maintains the register of credits and a report is issued to each Authority on a quarterly basis.

3.3 Some examinations are classed by the PMS Laboratory Preston as 'New Work' and do not have a credit value allocated to them. Payment for the examination of these samples, along with any fees for analysis of complaint samples, will be made by Ribble Valley Borough Council from the Environmental Health Service sampling budget.

4. Development of the Sampling Programme

4.1 The Sampling Programme is developed and published on a four-monthly cycle following discussion/consideration by the Survey Sub-Committee. This usually comprises two officers from each of the Lancashire Food Officer Group and the Greater Manchester Food Liaison Group along with microbiologists from the PMS Laboratory, Preston.

4.2 The Survey Sub-Committee usually recommends three surveys for each survey cycle. The number of samples to be obtained by each Authority is determined by various factors including:

- the ability of the PMS Laboratory Preston to undertake the examination of the samples;
- the number of premises from which the samples can be obtained; and
- the number of results necessary to enable meaningful data to be obtained and evaluated.

4.3 Recommendations for the surveys to be undertaken in the next survey cycle are agreed by the Survey Sub-Committee and presented to the next meeting of the Food Officer Group for acceptance. Suggestions/justifications for future surveys are made either by food officers through the food liaison meetings or as a result of outbreaks/incidents involving certain foods, where an extended survey could establish whether there could be a more widespread problem.

4.4 Where possible, one survey in each cycle shall, in addition to the food product sampled, include a questionnaire where additional information is gathered which may indicate reasons for poor sample results and assist in determining whether advice or enforcement action would be appropriate. A Protocol for the survey shall be drawn up and piloted by two authorities to test and, if necessary, refine the questionnaire/sampling technique before the survey is extended throughout the food liaison groups.

5. Sampling Programme

5.1 The Sampling Programme shall consist of the food sample surveys recommended by the Survey Sub-Committee and agreed by the Lancashire Food Office Group.

5.2 One formal sample, comprising one pair of bottles/containers of milk from farm processing (heat treatment) dairies shall be obtained every year to test for compliance with the Dairy Products (Hygiene) Regulations. The annual statutory sample shall also contain a sample of cream where separation of milk takes place on the premises.

5.3 At the end of each sample survey the PMS Laboratory, Preston shall collate the results and produce a summary of the survey. This summary shall be presented to the next meeting of the Food Liaison Group.