For circulation to Licensing and Protection Committee – July 2026

Report by: Kate Penn
Public Protection Manager – Environmental Health
Andrea Longford
Principal Environmental Health Officer
Head of Service: Clara Kerr

Lead Cllr: Councillor Nathan Hunt
Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance

Monitoring Report on the delivery of the Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement

The Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement 2026-27 was approved by the Licensing and Protection Committee on 18 June 2026. The committee requested to be kept informed of progress against the service plan by receiving quarterly monitoring reports via email. These reports will also be published alongside the Service Plan on the council's website.

This report provides information about the delivery of the Service Plan for Quarter 2, 2026-27.

Background

The overall aim of the Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement is to ensure that food placed or intended to be placed on the market for human consumption which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or purchased within Huntingdonshire is without risk to public health or the safety of the consumer. This is fulfilling our statutory duty under the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Food Hygiene and Safety (England) Regulations 2013. There are several key objectives which contribute to the delivery of the overall aim.

- The delivery of a programme of inspections and other interventions in accordance with the FSA's Code of Practice
- To respond to complaints and requests for service in accordance with any internal service standards
- To respond to any FSA Food Alerts for Action (FAFA) subject to available resources

Progress Against the Approved Plan

The main focus of this service plan is the planned routine inspections of food businesses. All food businesses are risk rated category A to E with A being the highest risk. The risk rating mechanism is provided in the Food Law Code of Practice (England) and considers the consumers at risk; the level of current compliance with statutory obligations and any relevant industry codes of recommended practice in relation to the hygiene and structure of the premises; and the confidence in management/control processes in place. For example,

a care home or nursery may be Category A due to their consumers being in a vulnerable group and inspected every six months. Most restaurants, pubs and catering businesses are Category C or D and will be inspected every 18 or 24 months. Category E are the lowest risk premises and will include small retailers selling pre-packed food and home caterers making cakes only.

The table below shows the categorisation of food businesses in Huntingdonshire on 31 March 2026, with the data from 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2025 as a comparison:

Table 1 Categorisation of food businesses in Huntingdonshire

Category	No. of Premises 31 March 2024	No. of Premises 31 March 2025	No. of Premises 31 March 2026
A	3	1	4
B	79	70	61
C	340	362	342
D	460	474	516
E	645	745	569
Unrated	58	115	62

The table below shows activity in a number of areas against the level of activity predicted.

Table 2 Food Activity 2026-2027

Activity	Predicted Activity 2026-2027	Recorded Activity Q2 2026-27	Total Activity 2026-27	RAG Status
Programmed food hygiene inspections A breakdown will be reported for: 1) Programmed inspections 2) Initial inspection (new business or new FBO) 3) Aborted/no access or closed premises inspections (aim to minimise)	721	Total: 205 1) 116 2) 66 3) 23	Total: 420 1) 237 2) 149 3) 34	Green
Alternative Enforcement Strategy (AES) (e.g. cake makers and childminders)	82	16	25	Amber
Revisits to check compliance following a food hygiene inspection	30	29	40	Green
Mentoring / business support visits	10	5	7	Green
Sampling visits	18	5	10	Green

Food, water and environmental samples taken	50	26	36	Green
Prosecutions and cautions	2	1	1	Green
Formal action (service of notices, closures)	5	0	2	Green
Complaints and service requests about food and about/from food businesses	250	49	110	Green
Requests for export certificates	70	17	32	Green
FHRS re-score requests (low is good)	30	9	18	Green
Infectious disease control - notifications of food-borne/food poisoning illnesses (low is good)	30	15	21	Green
FSA food alerts for action	10	0	2	Green

In Quarter 2 there were 205 food hygiene inspections carried out which shows the level of predicted activity is due to be met and potentially exceed again.

In Quarter 2 there were 82 new food business registrations received, this shows the continuing flux of food businesses, 82 new food business registrations were also received in Quarter 1. A new business registration can occur when an existing business changes hands and a new food business operator takes over or an entirely new business starts up.

The Alternative Enforcement Strategy relates to sending out questionnaires to our lowest risk business to complete instead of a physical food hygiene inspection. Out of the 16 sent out in Quarter 2 only 8 have been returned which is why the level of activity is showing as amber. The figure in Table 1 is higher as it will account for questionnaires that were sent out in previous quarters but not received until Quarter 2. Follow ups in the form of reminder letters and/or visits continue to be made to businesses who have not returned their questionnaires. If a business has closed, this would not be recorded

In Quarter 2 there were 29 compliance checks undertaken, these are revisits to check compliance where the food hygiene inspection has uncovered issues that need attention. This is significantly higher than the level of activity expected and it is noted were multiple visits to three premises where serious non-compliance was found.

Officers have continued to take part in UK Health Security Agency's sampling programme. The Study in Quarter 2 focused on 'Ready to Eat Raw fish and Shellfish'. Sampling has also been carried out as an alternative official control in line with the Food Law Code of Practice (England). Following sampling businesses were advised of sample results and support and advice given where results proved 'unsatisfactory'.

There was one simple caution accepted by a food business operator in Quarter 2 where a 7cm long piece of wire from a fryer basket was served in a customer's takeaway. This was offered to the food business operator as a proportionate response to an offence and an alternative to prosecution.

Table 2 also shows the numbers of requests for export certificates remained consistent in Quarter 2 and continues to be slightly lower than previous years.

Nine rescore requests were received in Quarter 2 which continues to be slightly above the predicted activity. We are finding if businesses receive a low food hygiene rating (e.g. 0,1 or 2) they are becoming increasingly quick to request a rescore to improve their rating. This is largely driven by the minimum rating required to stay on online food platforms such as well as the business' reputation.

Infectious disease notifications were higher in Quarter 2 than Quarter 1 and can be associated with increased travel in summer periods rather than any concerns locally.