



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Mid Ulster District Council

Food Service Plan

April 2023 – March 2024

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Foreword

This Plan sets out Mid Ulster District Council's Food Service Delivery priorities for the coming twelve months. The plan is developed in order to meet the requirements of the "Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement" and covers in detail:

- The Food Service Aims and Objectives
- The profile of the Council, including the organisational structure and the scope of the services provided
- The ways in which the service will be delivered and the targets for its delivery
- The human and financial resources involved in providing the service
- The ways in which the quality of the service will be monitored and improved upon
- The ways in which the service will be reviewed and improved upon

The Food Service takes account of the principles of the Government's Better Regulation agenda when planning and delivering these services; these include:

- Targeting
- Proportionality
- Accountability
- Consistency
- Transparency

1.0 Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The Food Service delivered on behalf of the Council aims to:-

- Reduce the risk to consumers by striving to ensure that all food produced, manufactured, processed, imported or sold within the district is fit for human consumption, is of genuine quality and composition, correctly labelled and free from contamination.

The overarching objectives of the Food Service are:

- To achieve our aim through helping food businesses deliver products which are safe and are produced from premises, which are hygienic and properly controlled.
- To provide information to consumers to help them make informed choices about what and where to eat, through education and promotion.

1.2 Links to the Corporate Objectives and Plans

The objectives of the Food Service are in harmony with the goals and objectives of the Community and Place departmental service plan and Mid Ulster District Council's corporate plan. In the delivery of the Food Service, officers strive to take into account the Council's vision, values and corporate themes.

The Council's vision is:

'Mid Ulster District Council aspires to be at the heart of our community.'

The Council's values are at the core of what is done and these values guide how services are delivered. The Council values are:

- **Citizen and Customer-focused:** designing and delivering our services in response to and around the needs of our customers and within our resources
- **Respect:** Treating each other, our customers and our stakeholders in the same considerate way that we wish to be treated ourselves.
- **Excellence:** Striving to excel in every aspect of our work, being accountable for and delivering the best value for money services.
- **Trustworthy:** Working for our communities in a spirit of friendliness and openness by delivering fair, transparent, equitable and ethical service to all customers.
- **Innovative:** New and better ways of doing what we do.
- **Inclusive:** Creating a culture that values, supports and celebrates diversity to the benefit of the organisation and the people we serve.

The Council's Corporate Themes are:

- Delivering for Our People
- Creating Growth
- Sustaining our Environment
- Building Unity

Links are drawn with the Food Standards Agency 'Food you can trust' Strategic Plan 2022-2027. The FSA's vision is that:

'Food is safe. Food is what it says it is. Food is healthier and more sustainable.'

This Food Service Plan includes areas which demonstrate how the Food Service actively contributes to and assists in meeting the key aims of the Food Standards Agency's Strategic Plan.

The Food Service will engage, as appropriate, in the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) Strategic Framework for Public Health 2013-2023, 'Making Life Better', regarding input in respect of health and well-being issues.

2.0 Background

2.1 Profile of the District

Mid Ulster District Council straddles two counties, running from Swatragh in the north to Fivemiletown in the south and from the Sperrin Mountains in the west to the shores of Lough Neagh in the east. The area is represented by 40 councillors across 7 District Electoral Areas including Carntogher, Clogher Valley, Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Moyola and Torrent. Offices are located at Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt.

As the seventh largest of the eleven Council areas, Mid Ulster District Council covers a geographical area of 1714km² and serves a population of over 148,500, accounting for 7.6% of the Northern Ireland population. (*Source: NISRA Estimated Population 2020*)

One third of the residents live in urban areas, whilst two thirds inhabit rural areas. The main towns are Cookstown, Coalisland, Dungannon, Magherafelt and Maghera.

Outside of the public administration, education and health sectors, employment concentrates on manufacturing, engineering, construction and agri-food industries. A total of 75% of the population aged between 16 to 64 are economically active (*Source: NISRA Labour Force Survey 2019*). Mid Ulster District Council will seek to avail of every opportunity to positively contribute towards everyone's quality of life.

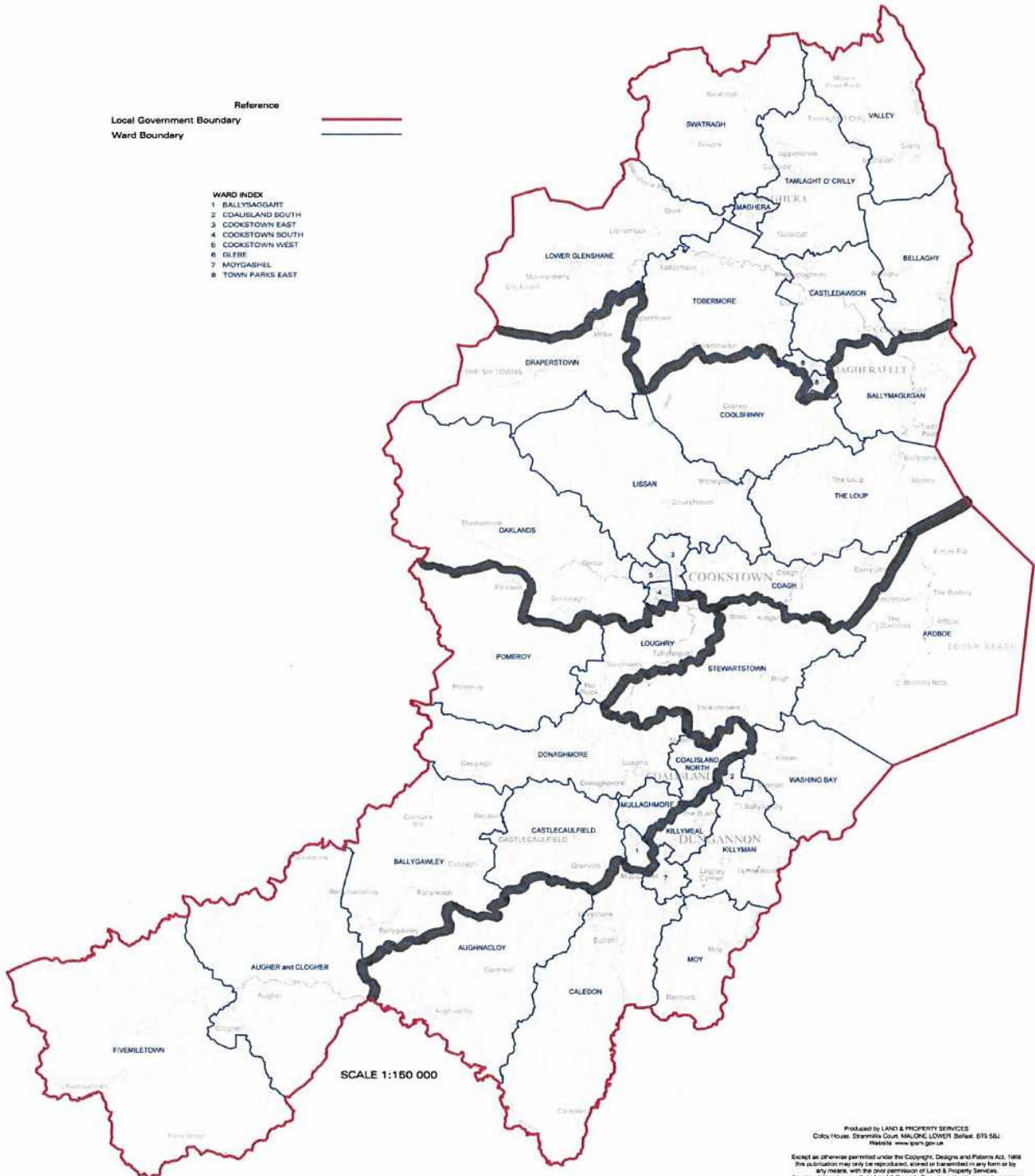
MID ULSTER

Local Government District and Wards



Reference
 Local Government Boundary
 Ward Boundary

- WARD INDEX**
- 1 BALLYSAQQART
 - 2 COALSISLAND SOUTH
 - 3 COOKSTOWN EAST
 - 4 COOKSTOWN SOUTH
 - 5 COOKSTOWN WEST
 - 6 ELBIE
 - 7 MOYGASHEL
 - 8 TOWN PARKS EAST



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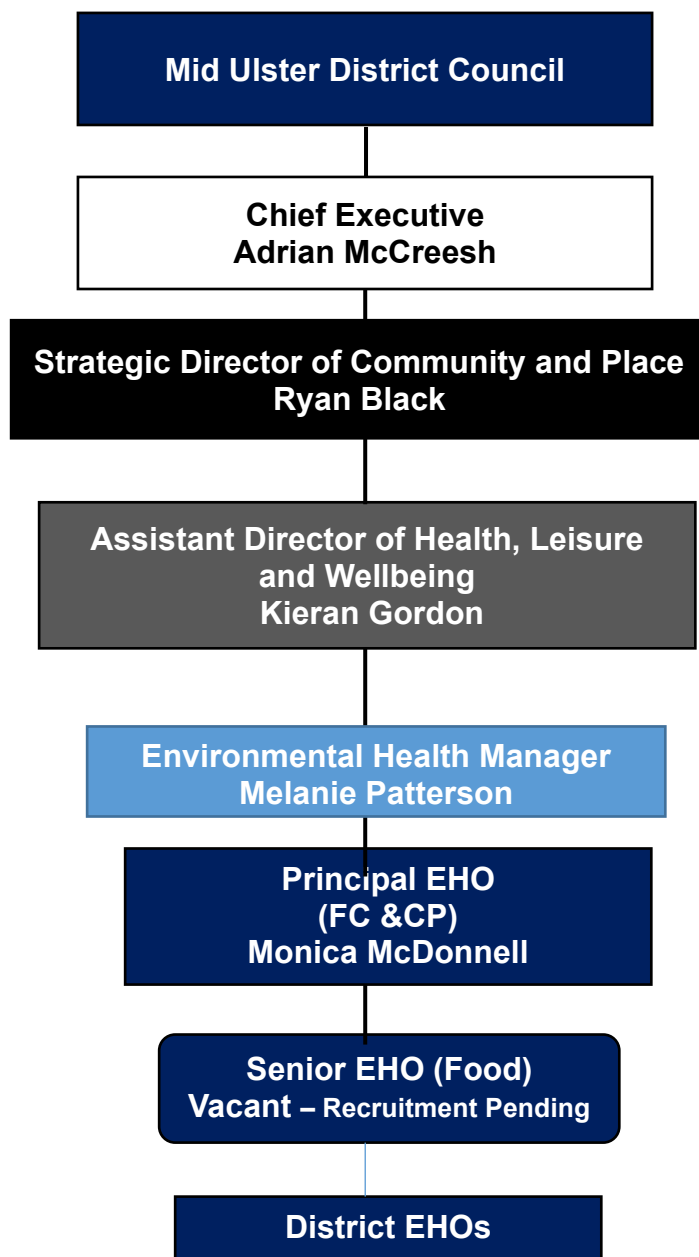
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2.2 Organisational Structure



The Strategic Director of Communities and Place has delegated authority on behalf of the Council for a range of functions, as per the Mid Ulster District Council's approved Scheme of Delegation.

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing reports relevant food service issues to the Council via the Development Committee.

2.3 Scope of the Food Service

The Food Service covers a range of legislative and advisory functions all of which are undertaken by staff employed directly by Mid Ulster District Council. Our duties are carried out in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice, Food Law Practice Guidance and Council Policies and Procedures. Food Service activities are either planned or reactive.

Planned	Reactive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Food Hygiene Interventions ◆ Food Standards Interventions ◆ Food sampling (microbiological, compositional and labelling) ◆ Water sampling on behalf of DWI ◆ Health Promotion activities ◆ Partnerships ◆ Student training ◆ Alternative Enforcement Strategy ◆ Service management ◆ Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Food/Water borne illness ◆ Food Complaints ◆ Requests for service/advice ◆ Food Alerts/Incidents ◆ Consultations ◆ Liaison with other organisations ◆ Service requests ◆ Reactive Health Promotion ◆ Reactive revisit requests/appeals under the FHRS ◆ Comments on building control applications ◆ Advice on Proposed New Premises

Food Hygiene interventions are generally carried out on their own, but low risk premises may be inspected in conjunction with Food Standards and targeted promotional initiatives. Food inspections also encompass checks in relation to premises remaining smoke free (under smoke free legislation introduced in 2007). In line with Environmental Health Northern Ireland (EHNI) vision, food officers should embrace health, well-being and sustainability. New premises are registered for Health & Safety as well as food.

2.4 Demands on the Food Service

2.4.1 Establishment Profile

Mid Ulster District Council has food enforcement responsibility for 1841 food premises.

The food premises fall into the following categories: -

Category Breakdown	Number of Premises	Percentage of Total Premises
Primary Producers	62	3.3
Manufacturers/Packers	140	7.6
Importers/Exporters	2	0.1
Distributors/Transporters	57	3
Retailers	318	17
Restaurants and Caterers	1262	69
Total	1841	100

2.4.2 Approved and Registered Premises

Of the 1841 food premises in the Council area, 1817 are registered with the department as required under Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, whilst the remaining 24 premises are approved, as required under Regulation (EC) No 853/2004.

2.4.2.1 Approved Premises

Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004 requires that food business establishments handling food of animal origin, with some limited exceptions, be approved by the Competent Authority. Depending on the type of activity undertaken at the establishment, responsibility for monitoring and verifying compliance with the Regulations, and enforcement of them, will fall to either DAERA (on behalf of the FSA) or to District Councils.

The following table provides a breakdown of the number of each approved product specific establishment within Mid Ulster District Council area. These premises, due to the nature of the processes and activities, require additional time spend compared to other non-approved premises. This is outlined in the following table:

	Total No of premises	Task time	Total hours
Meat Products	8	25	200
Meat Preparations	1	25	25

Dairy Products	2	25	50
Egg Products	1	25	25
Fishery Products	3	25	75
Edible Co-Products	2	25	50
Cold Stores	6	25	150
Sprouted Seeds	1	25	25

Where premises are approved for more than one product; the above figures relate to the product with the largest percentage of output from the premises. There are currently two pending approvals being processed by the Environmental Health department.

2.4.2.2 Home Authority Premises (excluding EC)

As well as Approved Premises, the Council has a number of manufacturers and packers for which they act as Home Authority, providing additional advice and guidance on legislative requirements.

	Total	Task time	Total hours
Non Approved Medium to Large Manufacturers	51	10	510

2.4.2.3 Local Specialist/Complex Processes

A number of large scale manufacturing premises are located within the District, exporting product worldwide.

Where necessary, queries on specialist or complex processes are directed to the Northern Ireland Food Managers Group (NIFMG) or the Northern Ireland Approvals Forum for opinion to ensure competent and consistent enforcement of legislation. Advice may also be sought from other external agencies as necessary.

2.4.2.4 Imported Foods

The Mid Ulster District Council area does not have a point of entry (PoE) or Border Control Post (BCP). However, as an inland authority, the Environmental Health department has responsibility for checking imported food, where it is found inland, to verify that the required official controls have taken place at the point of import. When discovered inland, (e.g.) at retail premises, catering premises or market stalls, illegally imported product of animal origin (POAO) and high risk food not of animal origin (HRFNAO) is the responsibility of the inland authority. Therefore, the required verification and investigation steps, as well as any enforcement action, will be taken by the Environmental Health department. Such circumstances may include where:

- Imported food not of animal origin (FNAO) does not comply with food law or fails to meet food safety requirements.
- Products of Animal Origin (POAO) have been brought into Northern Ireland other than through a Border Control Post (BCP).
- POAO have been removed from border inspection post without a Common Health Entry Document (CHED) or the authority of the official veterinary surgeon.
- POAO have been transported from the border inspection post to a destination other than that specified on the Common Health Entry Document.

2.4.3 Service Delivery Points

The service is available from Monday to Friday inclusive from 0900hrs to 1700hrs at the three offices of Mid Ulster District Council. The addresses of these offices are:

Cookstown Office - Burn Road, Cookstown, BT80 8DT
 Dungannon Office - Circular Road, Dungannon, BT71 6DT
 Magherafelt Office - Ballyronan Rd, Magherafelt, BT45 6EN

During the hours outlined above, officers can be accessed by telephoning **03000 132 132** or by direct access e-mail. The Environmental Health email address is environmentalhealth@midulstercouncil.org.

Planned out of hours work is carried out as agreed by the Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing. The Department currently does not operate an out of hours service.

2.4.4 Specialist Services

Mid Ulster District Council avails of the following external services:

- Public Health laboratory Services (PHLS)
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
- Eurofins Food Ireland Testing Ltd Public Health Agency (PHA)
- Food Standards Agency (FSA)
- Northern Ireland Water (NIW)
- *safefood*
- Education Authority
- NIFMG and associated subgroups
- NIEA – Drinking Water Inspectorate

2.4.5 Factors likely to impact on Food Service Delivery

Current issues that may impact on the demands of the service in the forthcoming year are:

- Continued work on allergen management within businesses following the introduction of legislation, in October 2021, relating to foods sold as prepacked for direct sale (PPDS).

- The FSA's ongoing review on the modernisation of the Food Hygiene and Food Standards delivery models, which are focused on how food businesses are regulated as part of their Achieving Business Compliance (ABC) programme.
- The anticipated implementation of the new Food Standards Delivery Model.
- Meet ongoing training and competency demands particularly in relation to review or introduction of legislation, the Food Law Code of Practice, the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and FSA Competency Framework.
- Adoption and implementation of the Food Hygiene Rating (Online Display) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 (dependent on timing and a functioning NI Executive).

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Council has adopted a Generic Regulatory and Enforcement Policy, which has an appendix specific to Food Law enforcement issues. Food businesses and the general public can access the Enforcement Policy on request to the environmental health department.

3.0 Service Delivery

3.1 Programmed Interventions

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the food service followed the approach set out in the FSA's Covid-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan as required by the FSA.

This year's food service delivery plan sets out priorities for the food team in line with the Food Standards Agency's intention for Local Authorities to stop following the Covid-19 Local Authority Recovery Plan, from the 31st of March 2023, and to return to delivery of the service back to pre-pandemic levels.

From 1st April 2023, the FSA's advice is that local authorities should be planning to:

- Carry out due interventions for establishments that are back in the routine programme of interventions in accordance with the frequencies set out in the Food Law Code of Practice (the Code).
- Work towards realigning with the provisions set out in the Code from 1 April 2023 using the full range of flexibilities already offered by the Code.
- Continue to exercise a risk-based approach to the requirements set out in the Code based on available resource. Please note, services should be resourced to ensure they can meet the requirements of the Code.

Due to the pandemic, there is a backlog of inspections. This backlog has, and continues to be, prioritised and allocated in line with available resource within the food team.

Additionally, all food hygiene and food standards interventions carried out will assess compliance with the Food Hygiene Regulations (NI) 2006, The Official Feed and Food Controls Regulations (NI) 2009, The Food Safety (NI) Order 1991, and EC Regulations as appropriate.

New premises that open within the district throughout the year will be registered or, where necessary, approved under Regulation (EC) No 853.

All food interventions will be conducted according to the following policies:

- Mid Ulster District Council Regulatory and Enforcement Policy
- Enforcement Concordat
- Home Authority Principle/Primary Authority
- The Statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Guidance for District Councils

Interventions are defined as *activities that are designed to monitor, support and increase food law compliance within a food establishment*. Interventions can be divided into two categories - 'official controls' and 'other interventions'.

Official Controls include:

Inspections – full or partial; audits; sampling visits; monitoring visits; surveillance visits; verification visits.

Other interventions (unofficial controls) include:

Education; advice; coaching; information and intelligence gathering.

3.1.1 Food Hygiene

The following inspections are *planned* for the period of 1st April 2023- 31st March 2024:

Risk Category	Planned Interventions	Task Time (hrs)	Total Hours
A	0	7	0
B	36	6	216
C	123	5	615
D	137	4	548
E	44	2	88

The following planned inspections are *outstanding* up to 1st April 2023:

Risk Category	Planned Interventions	Task Time (hrs)	Total Hours
A	0	7	0
B	0	6	0
C	3	5	15
D	186	4	744
E	306	2	612
Unrated	5	4	20

The majority of due and overdue interventions above will be carried out as inspections as these are businesses which would be included within the scope of the statutory FHRS. However, due to the flexibility provided in the COP, lower risk establishments may receive an intervention other than inspection. These visits may be any of the official controls listed in the above table, and may take the form of an alternative enforcement strategy e.g. information gathering via questionnaires. This approach would be taken with lower risk establishments which are not included in the statutory FHRS e.g. childminders, pharmacies etc.

3.1.2 Food Standards

The following FS inspections are *planned* from 1st April 2023- 31st March 2024:

Risk Category	Planned Interventions	Task Time (hrs)	Total Hours
A	7	7	49
B	63	5	315
C	202	2	404
Unrated	10	2	20

The following FS planned inspections are *outstanding* up to 1st April 2023:

Risk Category	Planned Interventions	Task Time (hrs)	Total Hours
A	0	7	0
B	38	5	190
C	257	2	514
Unrated	10	2	20

There is a category of businesses considered to be 'outside the programme'. This includes businesses where the risk is considered to be so low that there is effectively no inspectable risk, or where a mobile food unit is registered in the district but trades in other Council area(s) and where the Council is responsible for managing the Food Hygiene Rating for the business. Businesses such as primary producers which are outside the programme for food hygiene but included for food standards are also included in this category.

The number of inspections for premises outside the programme (based on 2022/2023 figures) is as outlined below:

Risk Category	Planned Interventions	Task Time (hrs)	Total Hours
Outside the programme	3	1	3

3.1.3 Revisits

Revisits may be required for a number of reasons:

- Compliance monitoring following a programmed intervention,
- Revisit following submission of a Request for Revisit form under Food Hygiene Rating Scheme,
- Other revisit not related to the above.

The number of planned revisits under each category for food hygiene and food standards (based on figures from 2022/2023) are outlined in the table below:

	Planned Interventions	Task Time	Total Hours
FHRV	28	2	56
FHRSRV	7	2	14
FSRV	34	2	68
FHO (including complaint and advisory visits)	30	2	60

3.1.4 Sampling

The Council undertakes routine sampling in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland) and the Council's Chemical and Microbiological Sampling Programmes. Follow up action in response to unsatisfactory sample results are contained within the sampling programmes.

The Public Health Laboratory at Belfast City Hospital will complete microbiological examination of food samples. The Public Analyst appointed by the Council to carry out chemical analysis of food samples is Eurofins Food Ireland Testing Ltd, with a registered address of Clogherane, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, X35 T628.

The Council also undertakes water sampling on behalf of the Drinking Water Inspectorate. This programme of sampling includes food businesses using private water supplies.

The estimated number of samples is outlined in the following table:

	Planned Interventions	Task Time (hrs)	Total Hours
Microbiological Sampling	408	1.0	408
DWI	25	4.0	100
Chemical Sampling	203	2.5	507.5

It may be necessary to submit additional samples or swabs as part of complaint investigations or in the investigation of foodborne illness. The chemical sampling undertaken will include contaminants in food sampling, as required from 1st January 2023 under Regulation (EU) 2022/931.

3.2 Reactive Work

Reactive work includes:

- Responding to requests for service from members of the public, businesses, other council departments and other government agencies.
- Enforcement in the case of non-compliance, managing food incidents and food hazards, and investigating and managing complaints.
- Any follow-up sampling required in relation to our sampling programme, and in relation to the FSA Surveillance Sampling Programme.
- Ongoing proactive surveillance to obtain an accurate picture of the local business landscape and identify open/closed/recently re-opened/new businesses; as well as businesses where there has been a change of operation, activities or Food Business Operator (FBO).
- New businesses registration and follow up prioritised and undertaken in accordance with the Codes of Practice.

- Investigation of confirmed and alleged infectious diseases on behalf of the PHA.

3.2.1 New Businesses

Throughout the year a number of businesses change ownership and new businesses open. This requires a new premises inspection to be completed within 28 days of opening. The number of new premises registrations, based on those for 2022/2023, is outlined in the table below:

	New and Advisory Visits	Task Time (hrs)	Total Hours
New Premises Inspections	153	3	459

3.2.2 Food Complaints

Food complaints will be investigated according to the food complaints procedure. The estimated number of complaints for the 2023/2024 year is outlined below (based on figures for 2022/2023). On occasion, requests will be received from another Council area for a Home Authority report to assist with a food complaint investigation. This is considered under Section 2.4.2.2 on Home Authority premises.

	Complaints	Task Time	Total Hours
Food hygiene & Food standards	58	8	464

3.2.3 Issues notified via FSA Incidents Team

The Council will respond to alerts and incidents in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland) and the Food Alerts Procedure. The estimated number of alerts for the 2023/2024 year is outlined below (based on figures for 2022/2023). Other notified issues will be considered by the Principal Food Officer and actioned where necessary.

	Number	Task Time	Total Hours
Food Alerts/Localised Food Incidents	10	5	50

3.2.4 Food Related Illness and Infectious Disease

The Council completes investigations, alleged and confirmed, on behalf of the Public Health Agency for Infectious Disease Notifications through the completion of questionnaires and follow up action with implicated food businesses as necessary. The estimated number of food related illness for the 2023/2024 year is outlined below (based on figures for 2022/2023).

	Estimated Interventions	Task Time (hrs)	Total Hours
Sporadic Investigations including ID notifications from Public Health Agency	99	4	396
Outbreak Investigations	0	20	0

3.2.5 Service Requests

Queries from consumers, business owners and potential business owners, other Council departments, external organisations and Freedom of Information requests are received and responded to throughout the year. The estimated number of food related service requests for the 2023/2024 year is outlined below (based on figures for 2022/2023):

	Estimated No of service requests	Task Time (hrs)	Total Hours
Requests for food related service/advice	683	2	1366

3.3 Enforcement Action

Follow up enforcement action may be required as a result of either programmed or reactive work which involves additional officer time. Whilst it is not possible to predict how often each enforcement action will be required for 2023/2024, the estimated time spend for each type of enforcement action is outlined in the following table (based on 2022/2023 figures for some):

	Follow Up Action	Task Time Hrs/premises	Total Hours
Hygiene Improvement Notice	0	2	0
Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice	0	14	0
Caution (Based on 2022/2023)	1	10	10
Voluntary Closure	1	4	4
Voluntary Surrender (Based on 2022/2023)	1	6	6
Detention Notice	0	4	0

Remedial Action Notice	0	2	0
Prosecution/ legal file preparation	1	40	40

3.4 Food Safety and Standards Promotion

Throughout the year the Council participates in promotional campaigns in partnership with the Food Standards Agency, other Council departments and external partners to deliver promotional messages through various projects, including:

Promotional Activity	Total Hours
Highlighting food safety messages via social media channels (e.g.) food safety week; Christmas campaign; street parties	20
Presentations to Schools / Community Groups	25
Promotion of calorie wise/MenuCal	40

3.5 Additional Resource Requirements

In addition to delivery of the inspection programme a number of administrative and management duties must be completed for the delivery of the service. These are outlined in the following table (not an exhaustive list).

Additional Resource Requirements	Total Hours
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme including database/portal management, consistency training, weeks of action etc.	180
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Appeals / Right to Reply	20
FSA monitoring Return and quarterly 'temperature checks'	300
KPI performance statistics Unit Plan	100
Food Service Plan	60
Preparation of papers for the Environment Committee	100

Sample Plans	50
Advising/preparing for PACE interviews, preparation of legal files	200
Freedom of Information Requests	150
Food Officers CPD Personal Development/Competency Framework/Internal Monitoring	400
MUDC updating of policies/procedures/forms etc.	100
Representation at NIFMG, NI Approvals Forum, Food Standards and Food Fraud Subgroup, Food and Nutrition Subgroup and similar steering groups	200
Food Management – staff review and recruitment	100
Participation in regional work plan initiatives (e.g.) CBD product premises survey; food and nutrition surveys	400
Involvement with EU Exit/The Windsor Framework work streams (attendance at FIEPH meetings)	400
Preparation of consultation responses (FSA/DAERA)	100

4.0 Financial Allocation

A Generic Costs Framework for Food Safety is utilised to derive direct and support costs for delivery of the Food Function, in accordance with standard accounting practice. The estimated level of expenditure provided by the Council towards delivery of the food service for the financial year 2023/2024 is as outlined in the table below:

	Total
Staffing	394,996.30
Travel and Subsistence	10,239.00
Sampling Budget	17,000.00
Total	422,235.30

4.1 Staffing Allocation

Officer	Total
PEHO	0.4
SEHO	1.0 (vacant)
DEHO	5.9
Support Staff	N/A
Clerical Staff	1.0
Total	
EHO	7.3
Business Support Officer	1.0

The total number of estimated Environmental Health Officer hours required to deliver the food service for 2023/2024 as outlined in this plan is **12436.5** hours. This equates to **8.86** full time equivalent environmental health officers (based on 1403 hours per FTE). This does not account for time spend on corporate training or (e.g.) unexpected leave; nor does it reflect that while the allocation of EHO resource above is **7.3** FTE, the food team operated with vacant posts equivalent to 1.7 FTE officers for 2022/2023. A deficit of 1.0 FTE remains due to a maternity cover which has not been filled due to an ongoing restructure within the department. To deliver the food service for 2023/2024 as outlined above, there is a current shortfall of **1.5** FTE officers. Therefore, delivery of the food service, as outlined in this plan, will be continually monitored and reviewed to ensure priority is given to food service delivery

on a risk-based approach and based on available staffing resources at any given point in time.

4.2 Staff Development Plan

All staff within the Food Section are encouraged to identify training needs via the competency framework and in conjunction with the Principal and Senior EHOs (Food and Consumer Protection) on an annual basis at their PDP meetings. These needs are recorded and prioritised when requested for training needs on a regional basis by FSA via Northern Ireland Food Managers Group.

All lead and authorised officers are required to undertake at least 20 hours of Continuing Professional Development each year. Food Officers are required to complete at least 10 core hours in food training.

In addition training needs may arise outside the annual review due to changing workloads, staff movement and legislation. Such additional training needs may be accommodated in house.

The programmes for training courses are assessed for relevance by the PEHO for Food to ensure the training needs can be met by the course objectives. Requests are then presented to the Environmental Health Manager for consideration and recommendation for approval.

5.0 Quality Assessment

The PEHO/SEHO (Food) will carry out management checks on planned vs actual inspections, examine workload distribution, monitor file management and review performance at food team meetings. Accompanied inspections will be carried out, as and when necessary, including to EC approved establishments.

Additionally, the Principal Officer/Senior Officer will carry out periodic documentation checks of files, letters etc. Consistency exercises will be undertaken with all staff to ensure uniformity in enforcement and scoring of premises, particularly, under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

6.0 Review

6.1 Review against the Service Plan

In addition to this overarching Food Service Plan, KPIs for delivery of the desired outcomes are specified in the unit plan for the food and consumer protection team. Regular reviews of the following will be undertaken against the work carried out:

- A 6 monthly review on achievement of food related KPIs within the Food and Consumer Protection Unit Plan, and the Departmental business plan where appropriate (*This was reviewed at month 8 due to restructuring within the department*).
- Annual review on achievement of targets reported to the Environmental Health Manager.

6.2 Identification of any variation from the Service Plan

A review will be carried out at the end of the 2023/2024 year to identify variation from this plan. A review of the 2022/2023 food related targets from the Food and Consumer Protection Unit Plan is detailed in the table below:

Service Objective	Target	Actual
Provide advice to businesses on matters relating to food, consumer protection and tobacco control.	90% of queries responded to within 5 working days	98%
Provide information to local community, businesses, and members of the public using MUDC social media channels, as the need arises.	Number of posts/ publications on MUDC website/social media channels relating to food, Consumer Safety education initiatives, Tobacco Control.	Target Met
To ensure officers undertaking food and consumer protection duties are appropriately authorised under the revised legislation following EU Exit	Reviewed authorisations for each officer undertaking food and consumer protection duties.	Ongoing
As a minimum, undertake food hygiene and food standards inspections at food premises as per recovery programme informed by FSA.	Food Hygiene inspections (A&B)	FSA target met
	Food Standards inspections (A)	FSA target met
	New premises inspections	153 completed

Continue to implement the requirements of the Food Standards Agency's statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) consistently across the District Council area.	Food team to participate in FSA National FHRS consistency exercises and regional FHRS consistency exercises when they are available.	Completed
Review profile of FHRS premises in the area.	Report on % of 0, 1 & 2 rated premises from those premises included in scheme.	Completed
Respond to and investigate all confirmed and alleged food poisoning incident notifications	Respond to 100% of confirmed notifications within 1 working day	Target met
Undertake sampling - both food and water - from premises across the district to ensure safe food and water is available for all	Collect water samples on behalf of DWI from food establishments as per NIEA schedule	Target met
	Collect food samples from premises as per MUDC schedule. Samples for compositional and labelling purposes (203 per year)	Target met
	Samples for microbiological purposes (34 per month)	Target met
Investigate and respond to all food complaints received from members of the public, businesses or from other agencies (e.g.) FSA	Respond to 90% of complaints within 3 working days.	98%
	Respond to remaining within 5 working days	100%
Contact new premises within 28days of start up or of becoming aware that a new business has opened with a view to issuing a food hygiene rating as soon as practicable accounting for pandemic restrictions.	Contact new premises within 28days of the business starting up or of becoming aware that a new business has opened with a view to issuing a Food Hygiene Rating.	95%
Promote use of online registration for new food businesses to reduce administration burden on businesses and staff within the EH department.	Promotion of online registration with new food business operators.	Ongoing

Carry out an initiative in relation to CBD oil amongst retailers.	Increase awareness of the requirements relating to the sale of CBD oil products from retailers/manufacturers in the MUDC area to assist the FBOs with compliance.	Completed
Assist businesses with ongoing queries and requests for Support Health Attestations (SHA) and labelling queries as a result of EU Exit	Give priority to businesses requesting advice or the issuing of support health attestations or labelling queries as a result of EU Exit.	Completed
To work in partnership with the FSA and Health and Wellbeing subgroup of NIFMG to promote CalorieWise and assist businesses with achievement of award	Attend meetings of the Food and Nutrition subgroup of NIFMG and participate as a member council.	Completed
	Provide information on CalorieWise to relevant businesses after food interventions.	Completed
To ensure officers undertaking food duties area assessed under the Competency Framework under the recently reviewed FLCOP	Completion of competency framework documents for all officers undertaking food duties.	Ongoing

6.3 Areas of Improvement

The work carried out by the food team continued to be impacted throughout the 2022/2023 year by a number of factors, most notably the COVID-19 pandemic and the FSA Recovery Plan for Local Authorities, re-allocation of officers from the food team to other core functions, vacancies unfilled (e.g.) no backfill for a seconded post and maternity covers, and unexpected absences due to illness.

Any suggested areas for improvements are raised and discussed at quarterly food team meetings. The improvements may be at the suggestion of district officers undertaking food duties or at the suggestion of the PEHO/SEHOs. An area of improvement that was suggested and implemented last year, which aimed to streamline procedures to improve efficiencies, was the trialling of a new approach to undertaken infectious disease notifications from the Public Health Agency. The new approach ensured the target for the return of the forms to PHA was achieved whilst also allowed officers to continue with planned work without reactive notifications coming to them for action as frequently. The food service has reverted to the original system due to staff resourcing, however, it is hoped this is a practice that can be reinstated when staff resource levels improve. Other improvements suggested in relation to allocation of workloads per ward, in relation to sampling rotas and in relation to improvements to business support procedures were considered. Action was taken in relation to all suggestions in an attempt to improve the service delivery.

Other areas for improvement will be identified throughout the year via quality assessment procedures (as outlined in section 5.0), at team meetings and PDPs. Plans to action such improvements will be developed and implemented to address these as they arise.