Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

Food Service Plan 2026/27

CONTENTS

Forward	3
1. Aims and Key Priorities	4
2. Background	5
3. Service Delivery	11
4. Resources	19
5. Quality Assessment	20
6. Review	21

Appendix 1 – Liaison with Other Organisations - Key to abbreviations

Forward

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is a growing centre of culture and heritage and enjoys many natural resources. The Borough has an excellent recreation and amenity infrastructure and is a major growth hub for industry. The economy is supported by over 2200 food businesses including the largest food manufacturing establishment in Northern Ireland.

This Plan sets out Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Councils Food Service delivery priorities for the 2026-27 and is developed in order to meet the requirements of the Food Standard Agency's Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement.

The plan takes account of the Government's Better Regulation Agenda in planning and delivering these services. Key to this agenda are the five principles of good regulation:

1. Targeting
2. Proportionality
3. Accountability
4. Consistency
5. Transparency

We endeavor to ensure that all food available to the residents, employees, visitors and the wider public is safe and healthy. Our role is to help food businesses deliver products which are safe and are produced in premises which are hygienic and properly controlled. We will also provide information to the public to help them make informed choices about what and where to eat, through education and promotion.

This is a quality focused service and therefore we plan to maintain ISO 9001 accreditation; respond to complaints within the agreed timeframes and meet key performance indicators. Service reviews will be undertaken to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery within agreed budgets. We will ensure that staff have the necessary training and skills to maintain and improve competencies supporting the technical and professional skills of staff to deliver high-quality services. We also plan to further develop policies and procedures to help ensure consistency and efficiency in service delivery.

1.0 Aims and Key Priorities

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The key aims and objectives of the food service are to:

1. Protect consumers and ensure that the food produced and sold in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is safe to eat and meets the necessary legal standards.
2. Help consumers and businesses understand about safe food and to help ensure that consumers have the information they need to make informed choices.
3. Respond to complaints or service requests within target times and meet the needs of local people through effective delivery of quality and customer centered services.
4. Support the local economy and individual businesses through clear advice, guidance and good regulation which are effective, risk based and proportionate.

1.2 Link to corporate objectives and plans

The Food Safety Service provided by the Council's Environmental Health Department contributes to the Council's Corporate vision set out in the Corporate Plan 2023-2027 to create **'"A happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning."**. In delivering the food service the department will contribute to the creation of a healthy community by:

- Helping to reduce health inequalities in partnership with other agencies.
- Ensuring that high standards of health protection and safety are met across the borough.

1.3 Link to FSA Strategic Plan

The work undertaken by the Food Safety Service of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council aims to support the Food Standards Agency mission 'Food you can trust' as set out in its Strategic Plan for 2022-2027. The FSA vision is a food system in which:

- 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.

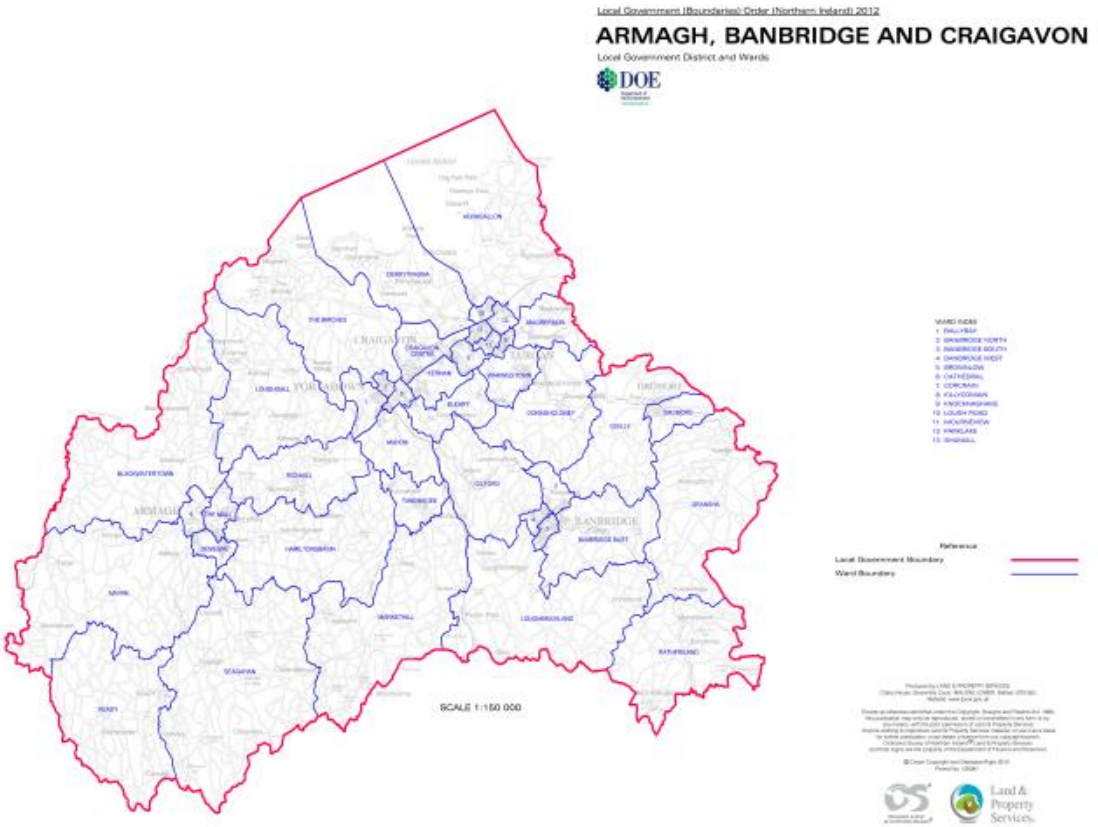
2.0 Background

2.1 Profile of the Local Authority

The Council is located on the Belfast-Dublin cross border commuter and transport corridor. The Borough has the rural character of the Orchard County, the Upper Bann, Lagan Valley and Lough Neagh southern shoreline and Armagh's ecclesiastical prominence underlines the significance of the area regionally and nationally.

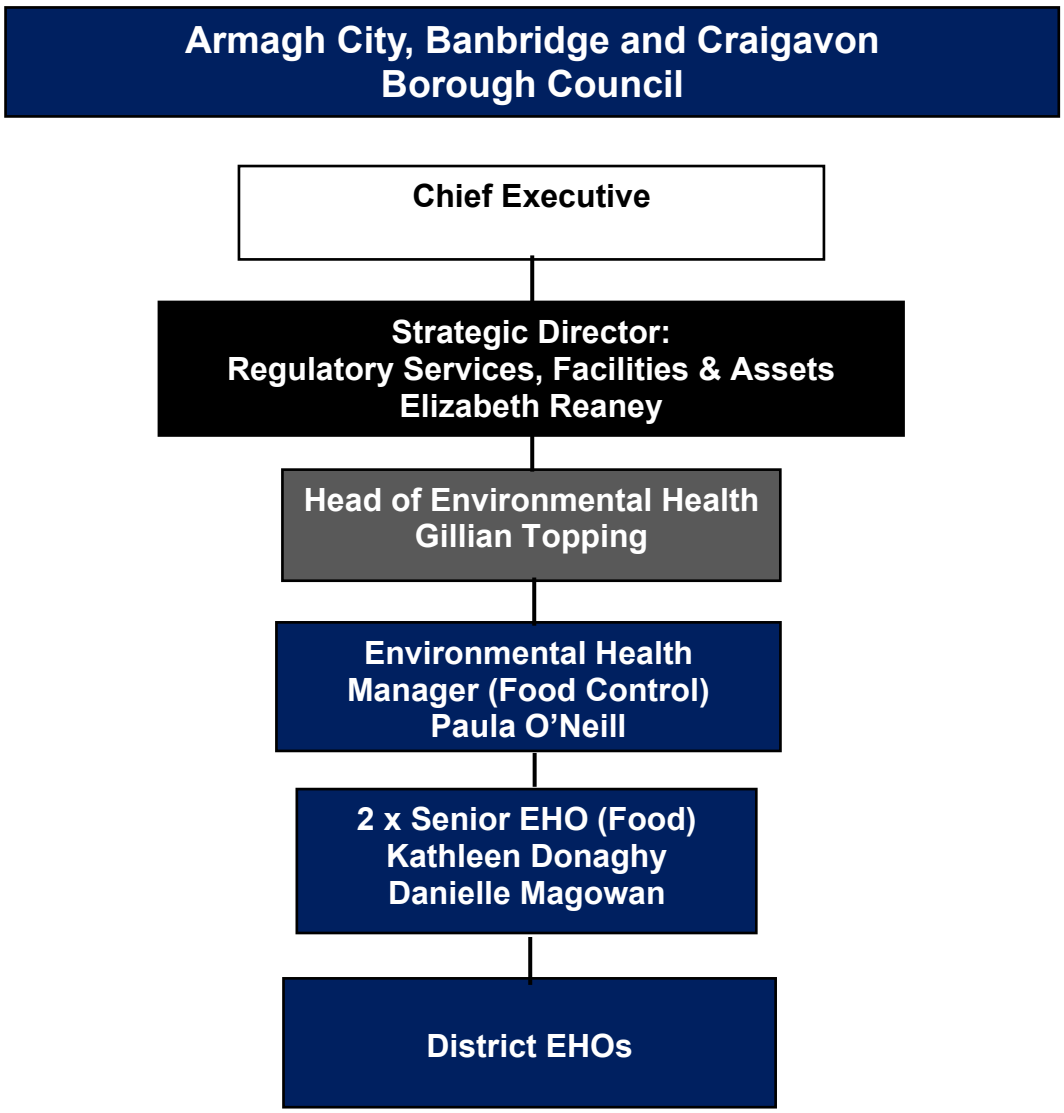
The Borough has a thriving business community with growth sectors including pharmaceuticals, engineering, rural diversification, agri-foods, creative industries and tourism as well as supporting small enterprise development and entrepreneurship.

There are over 2200 registered food premises in the Borough. There is a large and varied food manufacturing base with some of the main factories producing meat, poultry, bakery, fruit and vegetables, health foods, cereals and snack products that are consumed locally, sold in other European Member States and also sent to Third Countries.



2.2 Food Service - Staff Structure

The Environmental Health Department sits within the Directorate Regulatory Services, Facilities & Assets. The Head of Environmental Health is responsible for the overall management of the Environmental Health Service and delivery of the food service plan. The Head of Service is assisted by the Environmental Health Manager (Food Control), a Senior EHO and a pool of suitably qualified and authorised EHOs.



The service is supported by the following organisations and groups:

- Food Standards Agency (NI)
- Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS)
- Public Health Agency (PHA)
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
- Eurofins Food Ireland Testing Ltd as Public Analyst Scientific Services
- Northern Ireland Water (NIW)
- Safefood
- DWI – Drinking Water Inspectorate
- NIFMG and associated subgroups

2.3 Scope of the Service

The Food Service covers a range of legislative and advisory functions all of which are undertaken by staff employed directly by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 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
♦ Food Hygiene Interventions/provision of FHRS ♦ Food Standards Interventions ♦ Alternative Enforcement Strategy ♦ Food sampling (microbiological, compositional and labelling) ♦ Risk assessment and water sampling on behalf of DWI ♦ Health Promotion activities ♦ Regional coordination ♦ Student training ♦ Service management ♦ Training	♦ Food/Waterborne illness ♦ Food Complaints ♦ Requests for service/advice ♦ Food Alerts/Incidents ♦ Consultations ♦ Liaison with other organisations ♦ Advice to Food Business Operators and Members of the Public on Request ♦ Reactive revisit requests/appeals under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) ♦ Advice on Proposed New Premises ♦ Export Health Attestations

The Service Plan allows for the integration of other work whilst food premises are being inspected. In undertaking food hygiene and/or food standards inspections, officers, for the purposes of effectiveness, efficiency and economy, also undertake other inspections and initiatives under health and safety and tobacco control legislation. New premises are registered for Health & Safety as well as food.

2.4 Demands of the Service

2.4.1 Establishment Profile

The Council has **2255** food premises registered as trading for which the authority has food enforcement responsibility. They fall into the following categories:

``	No. of Premises	Percentage (%)
Primary Producers	36	1.6%
Manufacturers and Processors	225	10%
Importers/Exporters	3	0.1%
Distributors/ Transporters	77	3%
Retailers	465	21%
Restaurants and Caterers	1449	64%
Total	**2255**	

2.4.1.1 EC 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.

There are currently 31 premises approved under the EC Regulations. These premises are inspected in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice. The following table provides a breakdown of the number of each Approved product specific establishment. These premises, due to the nature of the processes and activities, require additional time spend compared to other premises as outlined in the following table:

APPROVAL TYPE	Number of Premises Approved	Task Time	Total Hours
(Stand Alone) Meat Products and/ or Meat Preparations Manufacturer	9	25	225
(Integrated) Fresh Meat & Meat Products Only Manufacturer	4	25	100
(Stand Alone) Dairy Products Manufacturer/Repackaging	5	25	125
Egg products	1	25	25
(Stand Alone) Cold Store	11	25	275
Edible Co products	1	25	25
	31		**775**

2.4.1.2 Home Authority Premises (excluding EC approved premises)

As well as Approved Premises, the Council has a number of specialist/complex manufacturers and packers and some for which they act as Home Authority, providing additional advice and guidance on legislative requirements. Where necessary, queries on specialist or complex processes are directed to the Northern Ireland Food Managers Group (NIFMG) or the Northern Ireland Official Controls Group Forum for opinion to ensure competent and consistent enforcement of legislation. Advice may also be sought from other external agencies as necessary.

Task	Estimated Time Spend	Total No of Hours
Non-Approved Medium to Large Manufacturers x 100	10	1000
Total		**1000**

2.4.2 Imported Foods

The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 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 original (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 Food Service is available between normal office hours i.e., between 0900hrs and 1700hrs at the 3 locality offices below.

Environmental Health Department, Old Armagh Hospital, 39 Abbey Street, Armagh, BT61 7DY	Environmental Health Department, Civic Building, Downshire Road, Banbridge, BT32 3JY	Environmental Health Department, The Civic Centre, PO Box 66, Lakeview Road, Craigavon BT64 1AL

Officers can be contacted by telephoning 033 0056 1011 or by email to ehealth@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

There is an out-of-hour arrangement specifically to deal with food and waterborne emergencies.

Inspections of food premises will normally be unannounced. However, in certain circumstances it may be appropriate for an appointment to be made. Visits to food premises will be undertaken outside normal hours when appropriate.

2.4.4 Factors likely to Impact on Food Safety Service Delivery during 2026-2027.

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

- Continued work on allergen management within businesses.
- Delivery of food official controls (including DCs legal obligations to implement food
- sampling, including EU sampling requirements).
- The continued implementation of the new Food Standards Delivery Model including management information changes and data reporting requirements.

- 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.

2.5 Enforcement Policy

The Council has a general enforcement policy that includes food safety and food standards to ensure consistency of enforcement across the Borough. The policy draws on guidance contained in Food Law Code of Practice and aims to ensure the principles contained within the 'Enforcement Concordat' are adhered to. Food businesses and the general public can access our policies on the Council's website at www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

3.0 Service Delivery

3.1 Programmed Interventions

This year's food service delivery plan sets out priorities for the food team and incorporates the Food Standards Agency's priorities for District Councils throughout 2026/2027. These include

- Delivery of food official controls (including DCs legal obligations to implement food sampling, including EU sampling requirements).
- Food Standards Delivery Model: supporting changes to management information systems to allow data reporting to the FSA; and consistency exercise training for officers on the new model.
- Engagement in broader FSA workstreams including the Future of Food Regulation Programme and the LA data project.
- Engagement on dietary health policies including: potential enforcement approach to restricting promotion of foods high in fat, sugar and salt; and the implementation of the nutrition standards to vending machines in local council settings.

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 under Regulation 852/2004 or, where necessary, approved under Regulation (EC) No 853/2004.

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

- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council 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.

3.1.2 Operational Standards

A key objective of the department is to ensure that the following operational standards for Food Control are achieved:

Food Hygiene

- Carry out Food Hygiene inspections/interventions for 100% of Category A and B premises within 28 days of due date.

Infectious Disease

- Return Food Poisoning Investigation Forms to PHA by end of next working day.

New Premise Inspection

- Inspect 80% of new premises within 28 days of opening/registration.

3.1.3 Food Hygiene

The Food Law Code of Practice specifies the risk rating that is applied to a premises and the subsequent inspection frequency. The frequency and type of intervention aims to concentrate resources on the worse offenders and higher risk businesses.

The following inspections are *planned* for the period of 1st April 2026- 31st March 2027:

Risk Category	Planned Interventions	Task Time (hrs)	Total Hours
A	16 (8 premises)	7	112
B	109	6	648
C	241	4	964
D	364	4	1456
E	132	2	264
Unrated	250 (estimated)	3	750
	1077		**4194**

The following planned inspections are *outstanding* up to 1st April 2026:

Risk Category	Planned Interventions	Task Time (hrs)	Total Hours
A	0	7	0
B	0	6	0
C	3	4	12
D	71	4	284
E	314	2	628
	340		**924**

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 above 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.

3.1.3.1 Food Hygiene - Other Visits

Revisits may be required for a number of reasons. The number of planned revisits is outlined below (Figures based on figures April 2025-26)

	No of tasks	Task Time (Hrs)	Total Hours
Planned Revisit (FHRI)	140	2	280
Food Hygiene Verification/ Focused inspection (FHV, FHFI, FHRO)	60	2	120
Total	**200**		**400**

3.1.3.2 Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)

The introduction of the statutory FHRS in October 2016 allows businesses to apply for unlimited revisits however there is a cost of £150 for each. This may reduce the numbers applied for but may result in businesses appealing against the rating given. As businesses are required to display their FHR sticker the Council may carry out display visits to determine if businesses are displaying their correct sticker. Failure to display the correct rating may result in a FPN being served.

	No of Tasks (Based on 25/26)	Task Time (Hrs) Per Visit	Total Hours
Requested Revisit (FHRSRI)	36	3	108
Appeal (FHRSA)	2	4	8
Right to Reply (FHRSR)	1	0.5	0.5
FHRS Display Visits (FHRSDV)	51	0.25	12.75
Total	114		**129.25**

3.1.4 Food Standards

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council had previously piloted the Food Standards Delivery Model (FSDM) as part of the FSA Achieving Business Compliance Programme.

From April 2025 the FSA required all councils to implement the new FSDM which changed the frequency of inspections for food standards inspections. The scheme is aimed at focusing resources on high risk/non-compliant premises by requiring priority interventions at a frequency of 1 month, 3 months and 6 months creating the potential that premises may require a number of interventions in the same year. In addition, the scheme requires interventions to be inspected as a result of intelligence received. Therefore due to the reactive nature of the scheme, it is difficult to predict and estimate the number of interventions due in year.

Migration to the FSDM created a new inspection programme for 2025/26, with a significant number of premises requiring an inspection. Inspections of premises within the 1-12 months

categories may be undertaken as stand alone inspections. Inspections of premises in the other categories will be undertaken alongside the hygiene inspections. The table below also includes those inspections outstanding from 2025/26.

Frequency	Planned Interventions	Task Time (hrs)	Total Hours
1 month	0	4	0
3 months	2	4	8
6 months	20	4	80
12 months	46	3	135
24 months	139	2.5	347.5
36 months	217	2	434
48 months	233	2	466
60 months	43	2	86
72 months	46	2	92
120 months	0	1.5	0
Unrated etc	250 (estimated)	3	750
Total	**996**		**2398.5**

3.1.4.1 Food Standards - other visits

Revisits and other may be required for a number of reasons. The number of planned revisits is outlined below (Figures based on figures April 2025-26)

	No of tasks	Task Time (Hrs)	Total Hours
Planned Revisit (FSRI)	90	2	180
Food Standards Verification/ Focused inspection (FSV, FSFI)	210	2	420
Total			**600**

3.1.5 Enforcement Actions

Councils are responsible for the enforcement of food law relating to food safety, hygiene, composition, labelling and imported food. Any enforcement action is taken in accordance with the relevant legislation, the Department's Enforcement Policy and the Food Law Code of Practice for Northern Ireland. These reflect the principles of better regulation and to reduce the administrative burdens on businesses, while maintaining standards of public health and consumer protection.

The following table outlines anticipated Formal Enforcement Action (based on 2025/26 figures):

	No Of Tasks	Task Time	Total Hours
Hygiene/Standards Improvement Notice	15	2	30
Remedial action Notice	4	3	12

Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice	0	14	0
Detention Notices	0	4	0
Voluntary Closure/Undertaking	6	2	12
Voluntary Surrender	3	6	18
Caution	1	10	10
Prosecution	1	40	40
FPN	0	2	0
Total			**122**

3.2 Food Complaints

Food complaints received and investigated by the service fall into one of two broad categories: - food complaint due to contamination or labelling and complaints about food businesses (hygiene and practices).

An initial response to a food complaint will be made within 3 working days. The Council intends to fully investigate food complaints in line with the Food Complaints procedure and take enforcement action in accordance with the Council's enforcement policy.

Type of food complaints	**Anticipated no of food complaints (Based on figures 2025/2026)**	**Task Time Hours**	**Total Hours**
Food Complaints (contamination) Including home authority complaints	21	10 hours	210
Complaints about Food Businesses	37	3 hours	111
Requests for Service (FHC & FSC)	221	1 hour	221
Total			**542**

3.3 Home Authority Principle

The Council supports the Home Authority Principle. Officers give advice to companies and other Local Authorities Food Enforcement Services on either a Home Authority or Originating Authority basis e.g., originating means where the food is manufactured.

The Department currently acts as Home Authority over for 100 manufacturing/approved premises. It is the Department's policy to continue to apply the principles and responsibilities of the Home Authority Principle.

The Council prepares and issues export certificates for 5 businesses in the area as a means to facilitate trade with third countries.

Anticipated Number of Export Certificates Requests (based on 2025/26)	**Task Time (Hrs)**	**Total Hours**
50 certs issues	0.5	**25**

3.4 Advice to Business

The food team will take a proactive role in providing advice and support to businesses to help them comply with the law and encourage best practice. This is achieved through -

- advice given during inspections and other visits
- advice given to proposed and new food businesses
- advice given on the food hygiene rating scheme
- the provision of advice leaflets
- advisory messages issued on social media

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 2025/2026 year is outlined below (based on figures for 2024/2025):

Number of Advisory activities	**Task Time (Hrs)**	**Total Hours**
38 Food Hygiene/Standards advice visits	2	74
300 Requests for Service	1	300
200 New Premises Advice	1	200
Total		**574**

3.5 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.

The Council also undertakes water sampling on behalf of the Drinking Water Inspectorate. This programme of sampling includes 25 food businesses using private water supplies. 13 DWI risk assessments for supplies are due to be completed during 2026/27.

	Planned Interventions	**Task Time (hrs)**	**Total Hours**
Microbiological Sampling	770	1.0	770
Chemical Sampling	150	1.0	150
DWI Water Samples	65	1.0	65
DWI Risk Assessments	13	10	130
Total			**1115**

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

The department will investigate all notified and alleged cases of food and waterborne disease in accordance with the protocol issued by the Public Health Agency for the Investigation of Food and Waterborne Diseases and take effective action to control the

spread of infection. Investigations of outbreaks of food related illness are conducted in liaison with the Consultant in Health Protection of the PHA, and in accordance with the existing Outbreak Control Plan.

The estimated number of food related illnesses for the year 2026/2027 is outlined below (based on figures for 2025/2026).

No of Notifications	**Task Time (Hrs)**	**Total Hours**
120 cases notified	2	240
Outbreak	20	0
Total		**240**

The Council operates an on-call food service in conjunction with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council for the investigation of infectious disease notifications and food incidents out of normal office hours.

3.7 Food Alerts and Incidents

The FSA issues information about foods within the supply chain which have been found to be unsafe or does not meet legal requirements. These include Product Recall Information Notices (PRIN), Product Withdrawal Information Notices (PWIN) and Allergy Alerts.

A Food Alert for Action is issued when Councils are required to take specific action to protect consumers. Food alerts received by the Council will be actioned in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice. The Council will also notify the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland of any serious or localised incident in accordance with Food Law Code of Practice. The Council also reviews such incidents to identify any trends within businesses in the Borough.

Food Alerts (Based on Food Alerts received from April 2025 to March 2026)

Number of FH Alert notifications	**Task Time Hours**	**Total Hours**
3 x Food Alert for Action	3	9
141 x PRIN/Allergy Alerts	0.25	35.25
40 x Localised Food Incidents	10	400
Total		**444.25**

3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations

The Food Safety service has extensive liaison arrangements in place with a range of other Council departments and other external organisations:

- Liaise with other Councils/FSA through the NI Food Managers Group (NIFMG) and associated subgroups at local, regional and national level as required.
- Support Council Food Heartlands scheme and other internal strategies such as the ABC Agriculture Strategy
- Liaise with and co-ordinate enforcement activities with other key players e.g., Food Standards Agency, DAERA, Public Health Laboratory Service, Public Health Agency, Trading Standards, Public Analyst, DWI, Safefood etc.
- Participate in joint Environmental Health and Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) Working Group

	Total time spend
Attendance at food related meetings (including internal Food Officers Group (FOG) meeting/team briefings)	**400 hrs**

List of abbreviations are outlined in Appendix 1

3.9 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; register your food business, allergens etc.	20
Presentations to Schools / Community Groups	25
Promotion of calorie wise	40
	85

3.10 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).

Category	Additional Time Spend
Internal monitoring/accompanied visits	400
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – Including database updating, management and uploading of the portal, consistency meetings attended, review of the consistency framework.	200
KPI performance statistics Unit Plan	50
FSA Returns (twice per year) including AROC return, returns to DAERA, DEFRA	150
Food Service Plan development and review	70

Sample Plan development and review	30
Food Management – staff reviews and recruitment, preparation of committee papers	150
Advising/preparing for PACE interviews, preparation of legal files	200
Freedom of Information Requests	100
Maintenance of ISO 9001 system including updating of policies/procedures/forms etc.	100
Officer Food Safety and Standards research and training/personal development (Continued Professional Development (CPD))	400
Participation in regional work plan initiatives	400
TOTAL	**2250**

4.0 Resources

4.1 Financial Allocation

The cost of running the food control aspects of the Environmental Health department is calculated and is detailed in the table below for 2026/27.

	Total
Staffing	£637,054
Travel and Subsistence	£20,000
Sampling Budget	£25,000
Equipment and sundry supplies	£1,980
Total	**£684,034**

4.2 Staffing Allocation

Position	**Allocation of Time to Food Control**
1 x Environmental Health Manager (Fully authorised)	1 x 50%

2 x Senior Environmental Health Officer (Fully authorised)	2 x SEHO x 80%
District Environmental Health Officers *Temporary staff may not be fully authorised but will be allocated activities relevant to current level of authorisation)	8 x EHO's x 80% (**Total 8.5)**

The total hours required to carry out all food safety functions is stated as **16218 hours** which equates to approximately **11.5** full time equivalent (FTE) food officers (taking one full-time equivalent officer to equal 1403 hrs/year). The Officer allocation to Food Control within the Council is 8.5 FTE. Staff are authorised to carry out Food Service functions in accordance with the delegated powers and authorisation procedure. Competency is assessed through the Department's internal monitoring programme. To deliver the food service for 2026/2027 as outlined above, there is a current shortfall of **3.5** FTE officers. This shortfall means that planned activities will be prioritised based on available resources.

4.3 Staff Development Plan

Staff training needs are identified through completion of the competency framework and also through the corporate 'Personal Development Conversation' process. Regular staff and team Meetings are held to cascade information and for consistency of enforcement issues. Training may be provided in house through accompanied inspections to various premises within the Borough.

Staff will receive formal training in accordance with the training plan, training needs identified and availability of resources. Regional training is identified though discussions with NIFMG and the FSANI.

Under The Food Law Code of Practice, 20 hours CPD are required per officer per year. This will be monitored to ensure this criterion is met. Additionally, in-house training sessions may be undertaken during food team meetings and CPD certificates are issued accordingly.

5.0 Quality Assessment

The quality of the service will be assessed using the following performance measures:

- Internal monitoring is carried out in accordance with the Internal Monitoring procedure. The Environmental Health Manager and Senior Environmental Health Officers monitor premises files following interventions including reports, proformas and follow-up action taken. Qualitative assessment of inspection procedures is also conducted through accompanied inspections of officers where necessary and where resources permit.

- Consistency of the service provided is monitored through the Department's continued adherence to ISO accredited quality system. The Department is subject to annual ISO 9001:2000 audits. Internal audits are carried out throughout the year according to a schedule.

- We participate in NI/UK wide consistency exercises for application of the FHRS and FSDM.

6.0 Review

6.1 Review against Service Plan

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

- Ongoing review of Food Control Unit Plan
- Quarterly reporting on the operational standards/KPI's
- Ongoing monitoring within the corporate process for reporting of Environmental Health business plan progress.

6.2 Identification of any variation from the Service Plan

A review will be carried out at the end of the 2026/2027 year to identify variation from this plan. A review of the 2025/2026 food related targets from the Food Safety Unit Plan and the Environmental Health Business Plan is detailed in the table below:

Performance Indicator-KPI	**Target**	**Performance**
Carry out Food Hygiene inspections/interventions for 100 % of Category A and B premises within 28 days of due date (in year)	**100%**	**97%**
Notifications of food/waterborne diseases responded to by the end of the next working day	**100%**	**100%**
Inspect new premises within 28 days of opening/registration	**80%**	**93%**
Respond to complaints within 3 working days (Department target)	**85%**	**98.4%**
Percentage of premises within the scope of the FHRS that meet the standard broadly compliant	**99%**	**99.1%**

During 25/26, 97% (114 out of 117) of category A and B inspections were undertaken within 28 days of due date. These inspections were not undertaken within the timeframe due to staff illnesses during the year. While the department continues to receive a large number of new premises registrations, the department achieved 93% of premises inspected within 28 days which exceeded the target of 80%. All food poisoning notifications were undertaken within the time frame.

During 2025/26 the team have continued to observed a decrease in standards among businesses and food hygiene conditions were found to have deteriorated in 11% of

premises. This has resulted in increased revisits and enforcement action. There was a successful prosecution case taken in 25/26.

Any identified variation from 2025/26 has been incorporated into this plan.

6.3 Areas for Improvement

The department continues to invest significant time on developing and enhancing staff competence and experience within the food team so that any gaps in competency which existed due to the changes in personnel in the department are filled. This enhanced staff development will ensure staff within the team are trained in high risk/specialised processes.

Any areas for improvement identified throughout the year as part of internal monitoring or internal audits for ISO accreditation are agreed and implemented through food team meetings. Regular team briefings are also held in addition to bimonthly team meetings to improve communication within the team.

The FSA performance returns for 25/26 judged the department as low area of concern for completion of inspections in A-C category and unrated premises due to these inspections being undertaken with required timeframes. However the FSA considered the department to be medium area of concern for category D and E as there was a decrease in inspections resulting a backlog of inspections of these lower risk premises. FSA however acknowledged that the department was undertaking inspections based on a risk based approach.

To improve performance in inspection of Category D and E, the department has undertaken a review of the flexibilities in the Food Law Code of Practice to identify if there are any available which could be used to target these premises. However, as the majority of the premises in these low categories are included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, a physical inspection is required. Therefore, the Department has plans in place to provide additional staff resource to specifically target Category D and E premises inspections during the quarters 3 and 4 of 2026/27.

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

Appendix 1

LIAISON WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS CHART- KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

CDSC	Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre
EHNI	Environmental Health Northern Ireland
CIEH	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Development
DoH	Department of Health
DOE	Department of the Environment
DWI	Drinking Water Inspectorate
FSA	Food Standards Agency
FSPB	Food Safety Promotion Board
LGR	Local Government Regulation
EA	Education Authority
SHSCT	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
NIFMG	Northern Ireland Food Managers Group
PHA	Public Health Agency
PHLS	Public Health Laboratory Service
FOG	Food Officers Group