



Subject:	Food Standards Agency Audit of Belfast City Council's Food Law Enforcement Service
Date:	14 th January 2020
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director, City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Damian Connolly, City Protection Manager, Elizabeth Gilchrist, Senior Environmental Health Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The Food Standards Agency as the central competent authority for food and feed regulation in the UK, is responsible in overseeing the official (food law) controls undertaken by district councils. As part of this role the FSA undertake focused audits of the standards of performance expected across the full range of district council's law enforcement activities.
1.2	On the 13-14 August 2019 the Food Standards Agency NI (FSANI) carried out a focused audit of Belfast City Council's implementation and operation of the Food Hygiene rating scheme under the Food Hygiene Rating Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

1.3	The audit report (appendix 1) showed Belfast City Council to be in compliance with the requirements of the Food Hygiene Rating Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and the procedures associated with it. FSA NI made no recommendations for action.
1.4	Members are asked to note the findings of the audit report.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the findings of the FSA audit report.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Food Hygiene Rating Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (The Act) came into operation on 7th October 2016, and is operated by our food safety and port health officers in partnership with the Food Standard Agency.</p>
3.2	The Act is designed to help consumers make an informed choice by providing information regarding the hygiene standards in restaurants, cafes, takeaways, hotels, supermarkets and other food premises.
3.3	The Act requires food businesses to display their food hygiene rating on a window sticker and their ratings are published online at food.gov.uk/ratings . The Food hygiene ratings range between zero, indicating urgent improvement necessary and five indicating very good compliance.
3.4	The Act incorporates safeguards to ensure fairness to businesses. These include an appeal procedure, a 'right to reply' and a mechanism for requesting an inspection for re-rating purposes if improvements have been made and other conditions are met.
3.5	The Act requires the FSA to review the implementation and operation of The Act within the first three years of the commencement. The initial review must assess the adequacy of any time scales detailed in the Act and whether the appeals process and request for re-rating process are operating satisfactorily. As part of this review the FSA audit aimed to assess how the Act is operating in Belfast City Council. The audit included an assessment of the

Councils arrangements and records for service planning, delivery and review, provision and adequacy of officer training, authorisations and internal service monitoring arrangements.

The Audit report confirmed the following findings:

1. Belfast City Council had a comprehensive system in place for recording officers' competency and training
2. The Council had introduced a scheme of delegation in 2015 and had clearly delegated authority to officers for the delivery of official controls
3. The council had developed and implemented a documented procedure that described how internal monitoring was carried out within the food service. Comprehensive records were available for all of the activities covered by the procedure.
4. Belfast City Council had a comprehensive system of policies and procedures that covered the range of control procedure subject areas listed in Annex II, Chapter II of regulation (EC) No 882/2004. These procedures covered all the required aspects of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS),
5. The auditors found very good levels of detail in the records for interventions carried out at food establishments. An examination of the activities to support the operation of the FHRS indicted the Council had implemented a FHRS which provided clear communication to FBO's regarding the scheme, their FHR scores and how FBOs could request re-ratings and appeals.
6. The Council had a comprehensive range of procedures that addressed all aspects of the enforcement activities which covered the FHRS. In all cases examined informal and formal enforcement action had been carried out in accordance with the Council's hierarchy of enforcement policy.

3.6 No deficiencies were noted and no recommendations were made.

Finance and Resource Implications

3.7 None.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

3.8 There are no equality or good relations implications, there is no requirement for rural needs assessment

4.0 Appendices – Documents Attached

Appendix 1: Audit Report

