



**Breckland Council**  
**Environmental Health**  
**Food Safety Service Plan**  
**2005/2006**

# Glossary

CIEH - Chartered Institute of Environmental Health  
EH - Environmental Health  
EHO - Environmental Health Officer  
FSA - Food Standards Agency  
HACCP - Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points  
HPA - Health Protection Agency  
ICT - Information Communications Technology  
LACORS - Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services  
PHLS - Public Health Laboratory Service  
TO - Technical Officer

## 1. **Aims and Objectives**

### 1.1 **Aim**

- To ensure the production and sale of safe food and improve the health of Breckland's residents and those eating food produced in Breckland by reducing the incidence of food poisoning and food borne illness.

#### **Objectives**

- To meet the 'standard' set out in the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement issued by the Food Standards Agency;
- To contribute to the Environment Portfolio Plan by assisting the Council to achieve its priorities, through the principles of performance, partnership and participation.

### 1.2 **Council Priorities**

The Council Priorities will be detailed in the Environment Annual Delivery Plan 2005/2006. This Food Safety Service Plan details performance to implement the safe and healthy environment priority. It supports the Environmental Health Annual Delivery Plan.

### 1.3 **Stakeholders**

Stakeholders include inhabitants of and visitors to Breckland, Breckland's food businesses and consumers of food produced in Breckland.

## 2. **Background**

### 2.1 **Profile of Breckland**

Breckland is one of the largest rural districts in England, at 1,305 square kilometres the size of some counties, and is one of the most sparsely populated (0.9 people per hectare). The sheer size and spread of the district has a major impact on service delivery and presents significant challenges to us in terms of customer access and community engagement. Much of the area is rural, given over to agriculture, with the second major land usage being open space and heathland (the "Brecks"). The nature of the area brings challenges in terms of transport and access.

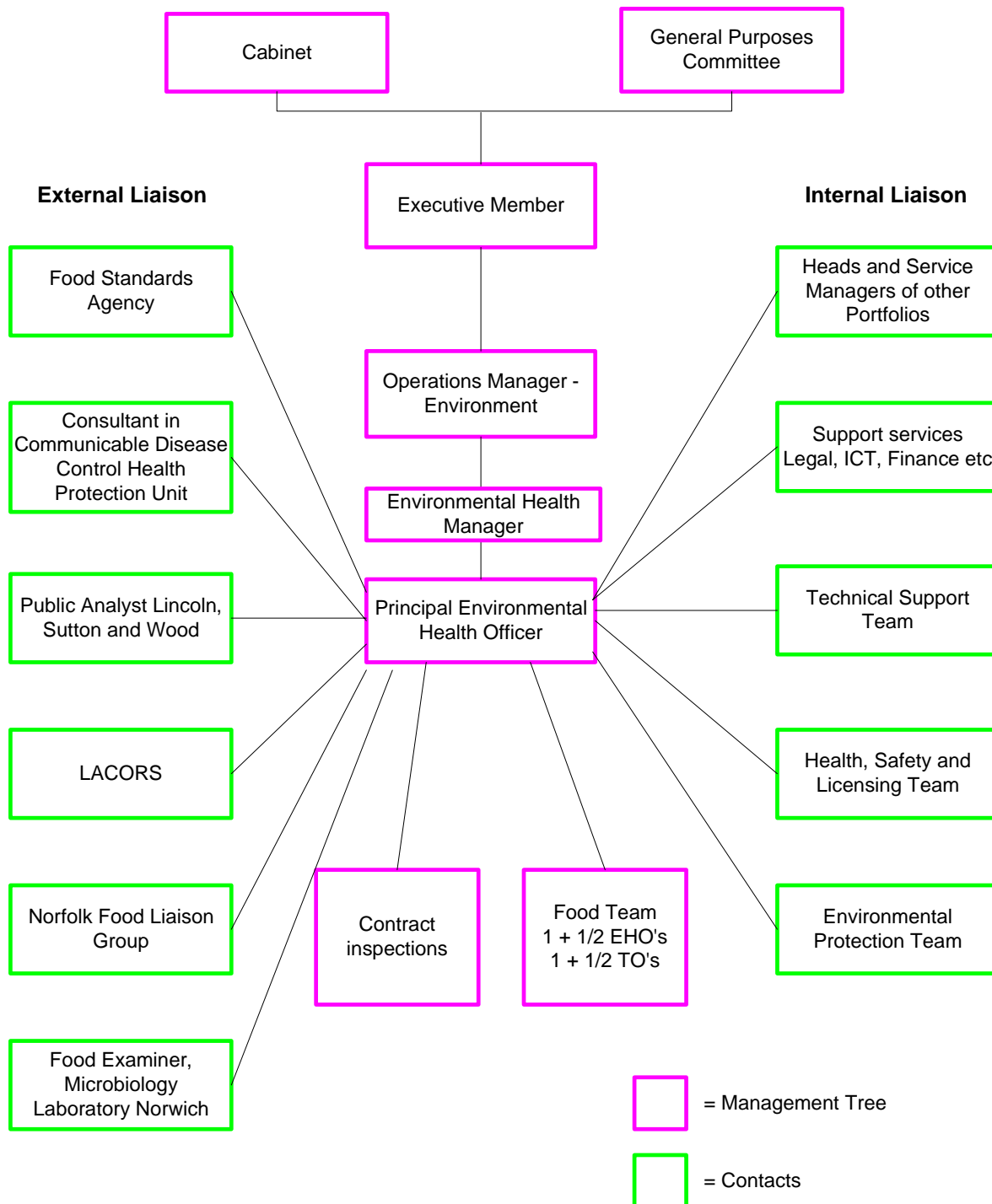
There is a dispersed settlement pattern across the district with approximately 49% of the population living in the five market towns: Attleborough, Dereham, Thetford, Swaffham and Watton. The other 51% is spread across 108 rural parishes that vary in size from a population of 20 in Stanford to 3,195 in Swanton Morley, two-thirds having a population of less than 500

Breckland is one of the fastest growing areas in England, with a 2001 census population of 121,418, an increase of 13.3% since 1991, compared to the national average of 2.5%, although population density remains relatively low. The ONS mid year estimate for 2002 shows a further increase to 122,200.

In common with the rest of Norfolk, most people in Breckland work in the retail (25%), distribution and catering (23.3%) sectors. However, there are huge differences between the towns, with manufacturing accounting for nearly 50% of employment in Thetford. The majority of jobs in the towns are provided by a few relatively large employers, resulting in a risk of economic reliance on these employers.

## 2.2 Organisational Structure

Detailing only those parts of Breckland's organisation directly relevant to management of the Food Team



## 2.3 **Scope of Food Service**

The Food Team is responsible for all aspects of food hygiene including infectious disease and food safety related health promotion. Food nutrition and other personal health issues are not within the remit of the Food Team. Health and safety is carried out by a separate team. Much liaison takes place with regard to common issues such as the Flare database, inspection frequencies and legal action. The Food Team at present use a contractor for food hygiene training and some food hygiene inspection work.

## 2.4 **Events likely to affect the work of the Food Team during 2005/2006**

### **New Legislation**

New EU-wide Food Hygiene Legislation comes into force on 1 January 2006. The major new areas of work will be the requirement for a written HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) and written records of checks for all food businesses.

The Food Standards Agency will be providing some support, but the work of realising these changes will fall on the Food Team.

### **Revised Code of Practice**

The revised Code of Practice issued by the Food Standards Agency introduced several changes to the Food Hygiene Inspection regime, such as all inspections having to be carried out within 28 days of the due date, rather than within the year that they were due.

## 2.5 **Demands on the Food Service**

On 1 April 2005 there are likely to be 1258 food premises in Breckland. The number of each type of food business is as follows: Producers - 29, Manufacturers – 16, Packers – 14, Slaughterhouses - 4, Distributors/Transporters – 29, Retailers – 314, Restaurants/Caterers - 835, Manufacturers selling mainly by retail - 17.

### **Approval/Licensing/Registered Premises at 1 April 2005**

1070 premises are likely to be registered under the Food Premises Registration Regulations 1991, 21 butchers are licensed. 7 premises are approved under the Meat Products or Meat Preparation Regulations, 1 under the Milk Products Regulations and 2 under the Fishery Product Regulations. 40 Game Dealers Licences are current, and 94 Good Food Hygiene Awards are current.

The rural nature and large size of the district necessitates much time and expense in travelling, even with good time management. There are several major food processors including canning, poultry, meat products and preparations, sugar confectionery, bacon production and vegetable processors. There are many agricultural producers including egg producers, small poultry slaughterhouses and farmers selling meat directly to the public. With more farmers diversifying into food businesses much support is needed. The majority of food businesses are catering but there are a number whose needs are different such as food businesses where staff speak languages other than English.

## **Service Delivery Points**

The Food Team is based at the Dereham Office which is open from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Thursday and 9.00 am to 4.30 pm Friday. Out of hours availability is on a voluntary basis through the Flagship Housing Association 24 hour call centre. Food complaints and requests can also be received at the Thetford Office. Requests and information can also be received at part-time presence offices at Attleborough, Swaffham and Watton. In view of the rural nature and large size of the district the team are committed to carrying out visits to receive complaints and to fulfil service requests where necessary.

The Food Team is connected to the CIEH EHC Net intranet service and is accessible by e-mail. The team is fully committed to development of the Breckland website for communication with food businesses and the public.

### **2.6 Enforcement Policy**

Enforcement action is carried out in accordance with the Environmental Health and Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy which complies with the Enforcement Concordat and the Home Office Code of Practice for Crown Prosecutors. The Enforcement Policy has been approved by the Council and a summary is available on the Council's website.

## **3. Service Delivery**

### **3.1 Food Premises Inspections**

Breckland's policy in relation to food premises inspection is based on the Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice. This is to ensure that all premises are inspected at an appropriate minimum frequency determined by risk. These vary from one to three years, previously one to five years. Where circumstances prevent 100% of inspections in accordance with these frequencies, priority is given to higher risk (band A, B and C) premises.

Food hygiene inspections are carried out in accordance with the Food Hygiene Inspection Protocol which complies with the Code of Practice in all respects and which also complies with advice given by the Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS).

The Council's Enforcement Policy is complied with in relation to all action taken by officers, and specific protocols detail action to be taken in relation to the service of Improvement, Prohibition and other Notices in accordance with the Food Safety Act Code of Practice.

## Premises Profile

Likely number of Food Premises by type and risk band at 1 April 2005

	Producers	Manufacturer	Packers	Slaughter houses	Distributors	Retailers	Restaurants	Man mainly retail	TOTAL
Band A	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	1	11
Band B	0	2	1	0	0	6	50	6	65
Band C	0	3	3	0	2	55	415	9	487
Band D	5	3	3	0	2	70	120	0	203
Band E	6	1	4	0	12	100	149	0	272
Band F	16	1	3	0	12	65	75	0	172
<b>Unrated</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Not insp rated</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1258</b>

### Inspections Due 2005/2006

Band F premises will be absorbed into Band E after 1 April.

Approximately 775 premises are due for inspection during 2005/2006 as follows:

High Risk: band A - 9, band B - 69, band C – 299,	Total 377
Low Risk: band D – 97, band E – 285,	Total 382
Unrated: 15	Total 15
	<b>Total 774</b>

The high number of band E inspections is due to the abolition of band F by the changing of the maximum period for inspections from 5 years to 3 years.

At least 100 additional businesses will also need inspection due to change of ownership, new businesses opening, licensed premises requiring annual inspections, and following complaints etc.

### Revisits and Hazard Checks

It is anticipated that at least 300 revisits will be needed during 2005/2006. This includes planned hazard check visits to "high risk and poor confidence" businesses in-between completion of work following an inspection and the next full inspection.

### Resources

It is anticipated that approximately 400 inspections will be contracted out during the year, slightly higher than the previous year. These will include most low risk premises and some higher risk premises. All bands A and B premises, most new premises and all premises with poor confidence scores will be inspected by the food team.

## Performance Indicators and Targets 2005/2006

- To achieve 90% of inspections of all food premises due within 28 days of the due date with priority being given to bands A, B and C.
- Working with the Food Standards Agency to begin a programme of introducing written HACCP systems to all Breckland's food businesses, including use of Breckland's Hazard Pack and the FSA hazard pack, over a period of several years. It is not known at present exactly how much resource will be needed for this work. Information will be provided later in the year by the FSA.
- Good Food Hygiene Awards to be issued to premises achieving best practice including written hazard analysis system and records of checks.
- 100% compliance for actions taken in accordance with the Enforcement Policy.
- To maintain an up to date register of all food businesses by registering all new businesses.
- Inspections, surveys and liaison with other agencies to be carried out to reduce the likelihood of illegal slaughter, illegal import of food or the use of such products in Breckland.
- To research alternative enforcement strategies for low risk businesses and introduce where appropriate.

## Inspection of Specialised Premises

There is adequate competency within the team for inspection of all types of food premises in Breckland.

### 3.2 Food Complaints

Breckland's policy in relation to food complaints is based on advice given by LACORS. Food complaints are investigated in accordance with complaint protocols relating to the contamination of food, unfit food, out of code food, food hygiene complaints and food poisoning complaints. The Council's Enforcement Policy is complied with in relation to all action.

	2003/2004	Likely 2004/2005	Estimated 2005/2006
Total Complaints	148	163	160

Demand on the Service is likely to be similar to previous years.

## Performance Indicators and Targets 2005/2006

- 90% of first responses to complaints to be within 3 working days.

### 3.3 Home Authority Principle

Breckland supports the Home Authority Principle as detailed by LACORS.

Breckland is committed to maintaining good relationships with businesses in Breckland for whom it acts as home or originating authority. Additional time is allowed during inspections to provide all advice necessary.

In particular Breckland is committed to forming Home Authority Partnership Agreements with interested businesses and 6 have now been signed up to. This commits Breckland to extra audit visits and support.

Requests for investigations by other local authorities, in relation to food complaints arising from food produced in Breckland, will be fully investigated in partnership with the business concerned with a view to ascertaining the cause of the complaint and preventing a recurrence. Full reports are provided to the local authorities concerned.

	2003/2004	Likely 2004/2005	Estimate 2005/2006
Number of Home Authority Partnerships	4	6	6
Number of requests from other Authorities for investigation	23	12	15

### **Performance Indicators and Targets 2005/2006**

- Audits will be carried out at 100% of food business with whom Breckland has a Home Authority Partnership Agreement.

### **Resources**

Extra officer time has been allocated for Home Authority Partnership Audits. Demand for requests from other authorities is likely to be similar in 2005/2006.

## **3.4 Food Safety Advice and Training for Food Businesses and the Public**

Breckland will provide advice and support to all food businesses, voluntary groups, charities and members of the public.

Breckland will offer training courses in food hygiene, giving opportunities to gain sufficient knowledge to achieve high standards of food hygiene at work, in the community or at home.

These Services will be provided by:

### **Advice and Support**

- Verbal advice on request;
- Leaflets and written advice on request;
- Advice during food hygiene inspections;
- Written and verbal advice and literature to new businesses;
- Consultation visits to food businesses on request;
- Provision of Breckland's hazard pack and FSA hazard pack by recommendation or request;
- Provision of seminars for food businesses when required e.g. new legislation;

- Offering Good Food Hygiene Awards to food businesses;
- Issuing 2 newsletters a year to all food businesses.

## Training

The following will be provided subject to adequate demand:

- A programme of Basic Food Hygiene Courses;
- Provision of in-house Basic Food Hygiene Courses on request.
- Provision of Intermediate and Advanced Food Hygiene Courses in partnership with other training organisations;
- Provision of own Language Basic Food Hygiene Courses for ethnic businesses in partnership with other organisations;
- Provision of other Food Hygiene Courses where the need arises;

Advice and Training	2003/2004	2004/2005	Estimate 2005/2006
Number of Requests for Advice	614	664	650
Number of Food Hygiene Courses	11	12	11

## Performance Indicators and Targets 2005/2006

- 90% of responses to service requests to be within 3 working days.
- 100% of demand for food hygiene courses to be fulfilled.
- Two newsletters to be issued during the year.
- Seminars to be set up if necessary for new legislation.
- Work to continue to take place with Norfolk Food Liaison Group and others as necessary with a view to increasing the availability of food hygiene courses for non-English speakers.
- To ensure Breckland's website is kept up to date with regard to food safety issues and to utilise the website to enable more advice to be provided by that means.

## Resources

- Food Hygiene Courses will be provided by a trainer contracted for this purpose. This is an income generator that covers the cost incurred.
- Demand for requests for advice is likely to remain stable.

## 3.5 Food Sampling and Examination

### Informal Microbiological Sampling

Breckland will sample foods to determine the microbiological safety of food produced and sold in Breckland, to indicate trends in microbiological quality of food, to ascertain whether

handling, processing and storage techniques are satisfactory and to improve when necessary and to determine the effectiveness of cleaning and disinfection. Samples will be taken in accordance with the sampling protocols.

The Sampling Programme comprises two parts:

- The Breckland Sampling Programme which consists of samples of high risk food from producers or caterers in the district;
- The Eastern Region Food Liaison Group Food Sampling Programme which is carried out in conjunction with other local authorities in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex. This will include samples carried out for LACORS, EEC and the Food Standards Agency in conjunction with the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital Trust Microbiology Laboratory and the Health Protection Agency.

All Microbiological food samples are submitted for examination to Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital Trust microbiology laboratory in accordance with a service level agreement.

Informal Samples	2003/2004	Likely 2004/2005	Estimate 2004/2005
Eastern Region/Food Liaison Group Programme	108	74	80
Breckland Sampling Programme	82	126	130

### **Formal Microbiological Samples**

Formal food samples will be taken when necessary and submitted to Norwich Public Health Laboratory Service in accordance with the service level agreement. No formal food samples were taken last year in Breckland.

### **Formal Examination and Analysis**

Food complaints submitted to Breckland are examined by a member of the Food Team in accordance with the Food Complaints Protocol. Where further detailed examination is necessary the food is submitted to the Public Analyst, Lincolne Sutton and Wood Ltd in Norwich.

### **Water Samples**

These are taken by Breckland's Environmental Protection Team and full liaison takes place in relation to food premises and infectious disease investigations.

### **Performance Indicators and Targets 2005/2006**

- 100% compliance with sampling programme.
- Breckland's samples to include 100% of manufacturers producing high risk food.

### **Resources**

Food sampling is carried out by one of the team's Technical Officers.

### 3.6 **Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Cases of Food Related Infectious Disease**

Breckland will investigate sporadic cases of gastrointestinal illness to prevent the spread of infection, to identify potential outbreaks, to identify common sources of infection, to promote good hygiene practices and to analyse information gained from the investigation. Outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness will be investigated in order to limit the outbreak, identify the cause and prevent a recurrence. Investigations will be carried out in accordance with Breckland's protocols. Illnesses investigated include salmonella, campylobacter, viral illness, E coli and suspected food poisoning.

	2003/2004	Likely 2004/2005	Estimated 2005/2006
Cases Investigated	258	358	300
No of Outbreaks Investigated	3	7	5

Investigations of outbreaks are extremely time consuming and always take priority over all other work.

#### **Performance Indicators and Targets 2005/2006**

- 100% of first responses to cases and outbreaks to be within 2 working days.

#### **Resources**

Demand is likely to be similar to previous years.

### 3.7 **Food Safety Incidents**

All Food Safety Incidents will be investigated and all Food Alerts notified by the Food Standards Agency will be acted upon in accordance with Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice.

Consideration is given during all food hygiene inspections, sampling activities, investigation of food complaints etc, to the implications of the matters found having an effect outside Breckland.

Food Alerts are treated as high priority and are responded to within 24 hours. Action required as a result of hazard warnings is always given top priority.

## Food Alerts Received

	2003/2004	Likely 2004/2005	Estimated 2005/2006
Food Alerts Requiring No Action	67	74	70
Food Alerts Requiring Phone Calls, Letters or Press Release	2	3	2
Food Alerts Requiring Calls to Premises	0	1	1

Many Food Alerts are dealt with by Norfolk County Council Trading Standards Officers as they related to chemical contamination issues.

## Performance Indicators and Targets 2005/2006

- 100% of first responses to Hazard Warnings within 24 hours.

## Resources

Demand is likely to be increased over previous years in relation to unfit meat.

### 3.8 Liaison with Other Organisations

Breckland will liaise with other agencies and local authorities to ensure consistency of enforcement and sharing of Best Practice. Liaison will be carried out as follows:

- Breckland will play a full part in: the Norfolk Food Liaison Group, The Breckland Health Forum, the Norfolk Joint Meat Hygiene Enforcement Agency Liaison Group, the Norfolk Food Safety Benchmarking group, the Eastern Region Food Group, the Norfolk Communicable Disease Environmental Advisory Group, the Veterinary and Medical Advisory Group Eastern Region;
- The Principal Environmental Health Officer is a member of LACORS Food Hygiene Focus Group;
- Breckland is committed to taking the advice of LACORS when there is doubt with regard to consistency, and takes account of all advice issued by LACORS;
- Breckland is committed to liaising in food sampling issues through the Eastern Region Sampling group;
- The Food Team takes part in liaison with other Portfolios in Breckland that provide services to the public to ensure consistency of approach;
- Breckland is committed to the attendance at seminars organised by the Food Standards Agency, LACORS etc;
- Liaison on new food premises is carried out by checking building regulation and planning application lists;

- Breckland will liaise with Originating/Home Authorities to ensure consistency of application of food hygiene legislation.
- Breckland is committed to the process of inter-authority auditing and in comparing standards with other authorities.

#### **Performance Indicators and Targets 2005/2006**

- 100% compliance with the Environmental Health Enforcement Policy
- Inter-authority audits through Norfolk Food Liaison Group to continue this year.

#### **Resources**

Demand is likely to be similar to previous years.

### **3.9 Infectious Disease and Food Safety Health Promotion**

Breckland is committed to food safety health promotion work with a view to making health interventions which will raise awareness of health issues in relation to food and which will influence and inform decisions about food safety, with a view to reducing the incidence of food poisoning.

All Health Promotion activities will be carried out in accordance with the Health Promotion Protocol which includes full evaluation of every health promotion project carried out.

Health Promotion projects are often long term and therefore continue from one financial year to the next.

#### **Performance Indicators and Targets 2005/2006**

- High schools food hygiene training partnership to continue with exam papers sent out within 7 days of application and certificates processed within 14 days.
- Continue use of Breckland Voice as a food safety promotion vehicle. One article in each Breckland Voice.
- To continue to develop support for schools to assist the development of food hygiene training for young people not already on approved food hygiene training programmes by assisting the development of new projects and by facilitating access to information on projects for food hygiene training for schools. Information to be put on Breckland website by 30/6/05.
- To continue the project to provide additional support to premises with non-English speaking food handlers.

#### **Resources**

Food Safety Health Promotion work for 2005/2006 will continue to be carried out by all the Food Team field officers in partnership with others where possible.

## 4. Resources

### 4.1 Financial Allocation

The total expenditure on the food service is relatively stable, rising at the most at inflation levels.

#### Expenditure Trend

Description	Actual 2003/2004 £	Probable 2004/2005 £	Estimate 2005/2006 £
Employee related expenses	119,032	163,105	163,045
Transport related expenses	9,973	12,390	12,580
Supplies and services	31,954	27,120	27,120
Support services	51,946	43,725	48,525
Income	11,475	9,560	9,560
Total expenditure	231,430	236,780	241,710

### 4.2 Staffing Allocation

The Food Team consists of:

One Principal Environmental Health Officer, and one full time and one part time Environmental Health Officer, one full time and one part time technical officer.

A contracted inspections budget exists to allow employment of contractors to carry out some inspections.

Any contracted inspectors will be qualified to a minimum standard of the Higher Certificate of the Environmental Health Officers Registration Board.

Support for keying to databases, typing, library, infectious disease administration, purchasing, etc. is provided by the Technical Support Team.

#### Resource Challenges 2005/2006

Resource challenges this year will include:

- introducing the new food hygiene legislation
- continuing to improve the standard of our food premises
- maintaining our good standards of response to customers
- campaigning to reduce the incidence of food poisoning in domestic premises.

## **Estimate of Resources Required for the Year**

The work plan for the current year is designed to make the most of the resources available to the team within the budget approved. It is therefore anticipated that there will be sufficient staff and budget available to carry out the plan in full. Estimates of the resource needs are based on comparisons with previous year's workload.

Improvements to the Service detailed in this plan will be carried out by Team members.

### **4.3 Staff Development Plan**

Breckland's appraisal system includes a fully documented personal development plan which includes skill and competence training as well as personal development training. Competence training with regard to the Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice will be provided for the team in-house by programmed training sessions. Additional training is carried out in conjunction with Norfolk Food Liaison Group and the Eastern Region Centre of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, linking with training provided by the Food Standards Agency and LACORS. In-house training is also provided in relation to information technology training and the Flare database as necessary and as systems develop. Training in management skills is also provided as necessary.

## **5 Quality Assessment**

- 5.1 The Food Team are fully committed to the principle of continuous improvement and will continue to apply Charter Mark standards.

Breckland's protocols cover all aspects of the work of the team and are reviewed regularly. A comprehensive Monitoring Programme is ongoing. Records of all monitoring is kept. The information obtained is used to amend protocols as necessary and to retrain and give feedback to staff.

The ethos of the team is to be the most knowledgeable, flexible and agile in these times of continuous change and to be willing to take risks and be adept at innovation in order to achieve the Council's priorities and those of the Food Standards Agency.

### **Performance Indicators and Targets for 2005/2006**

- Develop and improve the monitoring programme for the food team and implement the monitoring programme.
- Take part in customer surveys together with the rest of Environmental Health.