

Gateshead Council

Annual Service Plans for the Food and H&S services 2011 - 2012

PART ONE – GENERAL INFORMATION

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1. Foreword

During 2010 two major national issues stood out for the impact they will have on future local authority regulatory services enforcement of commercial premises:

- **Government comprehensive spending review**

This has, and will continue to have, a huge effect on local authorities for the foreseeable future and also on many of our delivery partners such as the Food Standards Agency, Health Protection Agency and the Health & Safety Executive. Impacts will extend across the food and H&S services with a wide affect including on staff resources, training, sampling and inspections.

- **Lord Young's Report on health and safety**

A major outcome of the 'Common Sense Common Safety' report for our teams is a new, combined Environmental Health team for joint inspections for food and H&S legislation. This will enable resources to be concentrated on significant risk businesses without increasing the burden on businesses or bureaucracy. Young's report also supports the FSA Food Hygiene Rating System - which would require Gateshead to transfer from the Scores on the Doors rating system. This is under consideration.

The 2011/12 action plans have been carefully drawn up to reflect these impacts, identify priorities and minimise impact on the services we deliver. Our priority will always be the protection of the public through the delivery of excellent services that recognise customer service and value for money. Every officer appreciates the need to work efficiently and effectively, to encourage business improvement through education and fair enforcement achieved by targeting locally identified need and prioritising businesses presenting the highest risk. We will continue to support national and regional campaigns that we consider have an impact in Gateshead and to help businesses for whom we are the home authority

Five 'National Enforcement Priorities for Local Authority Regulatory Services' were identified through the Rogers Review of 2007. They include:

- Improving health and safety in the workplace
- Hygiene of businesses selling, distributing and manufacturing food and the safety and fitness of food in the premises

There is also a mandatory requirement on local authorities to enforce an extensive raft of legislation. Gateshead Council delivers its food safety and health and safety responsibilities through the two service areas covered in these plans that describe:

- How Gateshead Council approaches its regulatory responsibilities with regards to the protection of consumers and people at work,
- The assistance it gives to the local business community so that standards can be improved and a fair trading environment maintained.

Regulatory responsibilities also have a very direct effect on health. The Department of Health White Paper, "Choosing Health - Making Healthy Choices

Easier” confirms that these council services can make a difference and play an important role in preventing ill health.

The Council recognises that our work helps local people live longer and healthier lives and directly links it to Vision 2030 priorities for improving health and economic sustainability. Our priorities for the coming year will include:

- A focus on high and medium risk rated businesses.
- Engaging lower risk businesses and certain business activities through alternative strategies to inspection. These are less onerous and intrusive to business but help them to maintain and improve their standards.
- A secondary focus on interventions to other premises and improving the premises database to ensure local business needs are fully considered.
- Investing some resources in local and national campaigns that improve health and protect consumers.
- Encouraging self regulation through sound management practices based on risk assessment and hazard control.
- Reorganising the services to reflect the Government ‘Common Sense Common Safety’ report recommendations and the Council ‘Fit for the Future’ plans.

2. Introduction

The Health & Safety and Food Control services within Development and Public Protection are required to prepare annual Service Plans to meet the statutory requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement respectively.

The plans are required to be written on an annual basis and to be approved at a ‘relevant level established for the authority’. In accordance with Gateshead Council Constitution, they are therefore approved by Council following consideration by the portfolio holders for:

- Economic Development, Housing and Transport
- Adult Social Care and Health

To facilitate the approval process, this document comprises 3 parts:

1. General Information - as directed by the statutory requirements this covers information relevant to both the Health & Safety and Food Control Plans.
2. Health and Safety Plan
3. Food Control Plan

The Enforcement Policies relevant to the services can be viewed or downloaded from: www.gateshead.gov.uk. Hard copy is available on request ([for contact details, please see end of document](#)).

3. Profile of Gateshead

Gateshead Council is one of five Tyne and Wear metropolitan borough councils. It has the largest area of 55 square miles and the 22 wards cover a mix of urban and rural environment. The borough stretches for 13 miles along the south bank of the River Tyne.

Gateshead is an area with exciting new developments including progress toward a modern, vibrant town centre and further development of the Gateshead quays.

In addition, Gateshead is home to:

- Metro Centre, one of Europe's largest indoor shopping and leisure complexes
- Several very large trading and industrial estates
- The Angel of the North
- Gateshead International Stadium
- Baltic the Centre for Contemporary Art
- The SAGE Gateshead
- The Millennium Bridge

Profile area	Gateshead	Tyne and Wear	Information source
Population	189,900	1,096,100	Office of National Statistics. Mid Year Estimate 2008
Labour Force	84,827	477,704	Census 2001
Employees in Employment	76,382	419,931	Census 2001
Unemployment	5.7%	6.3%	Office of National Statistics. December 2008
Households	84,267	462,824	Census 2001
Dwellings	87,570	481,118	Census 2001

For more information visit the Gateshead website:

<http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/DocumentLibrary/People/genie/census/GatesheadFactsheet2010.pdf>

There are also a number of individual businesses whose regulatory needs are more complex and technical than usual. These require specific and often technical attention. Examples include a hospital cook chill facility delivering more than a million meals/year to vulnerable people, a number of very large warehousing premises, several approved food premises and home authority companies dealing for example with dairy, bakery, ice cream and ethnic foods.

5. Council structure

Constitution

Gateshead Council has agreed a constitution that sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are to be followed to ensure that it is efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by law; others are a matter of choice for the Council.

The Constitution is the framework for realising the Council's vision for Gateshead. It includes its standing orders and sets out the basic rules governing the Council's business. If anything in the Constitution is inconsistent with something in the law, then the law has priority. The Constitution can be viewed on the Council web site www.gateshead.gov.uk

The Council

Gateshead has 66 local ward Councillors who meet every six weeks in a full Council meeting. This is the public face of the Council and the forum for public debate about key issues facing the borough and the people who live and work here. Members of the public may present petitions at the Council meeting and may put questions to the Leader and Cabinet members.

Key roles of the Councillors are to:

- Uphold and promote the purposes of the Constitution
- Collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions
- Represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision-making process
- Deal with individual casework and act as advocates for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances fairly and impartially
- Effectively represent the interests of their ward and of individual constituents
- Respond to constituents' enquiries and representations
- Participate in the governance and management of the Council and be involved in decision-making
- Ensure that the Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community
- Promote public involvement in the Council's activities
- Be available to represent the Council on other bodies
- Maintain the highest standard of conduct and ethics and observe the authority's code of conduct

The Council appoints the Leader and Cabinet every May at the Council's annual meeting. It agrees the budget and budget changes, Council Tax and Council policies. The Council also receives regular reports from Portfolio holders and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Mayor of Gateshead, supported by the Deputy Mayor, chairs the Council.

The Cabinet

The Cabinet operates on the basis of collective responsibility and decision making. However each Cabinet member has areas of special interest - known as 'portfolios' - which are allocated to them by the Leader of the Council.

There are ten portfolios that cover everything the Council does. They are based on the policies and principles outlines in Vision 2030, the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the Corporate Plan. Five portfolios relate to specific policy themes within the LAA.

The Health & Safety and Food Control Services link directly to the portfolios for:

- Economic Development, Housing and Transport portfolio
- Adult Social Care and Health and Safer

There are also strong links to the portfolio for Stronger Communities and Culture.

The other five portfolios relate to the five geographical areas of the Borough — Central, East, South, Inner West and West. Each area has a Cabinet member with direct responsibility for what happens in the area, giving local communities a direct link into the Cabinet.

Cabinet members lead the process of policy development on behalf of the Council and make recommendations for change to the full Council. They are the public face of the Council on their portfolio areas.

They work collectively with other Council members in carrying out these tasks and ask advice from the Council's Advisory Groups on policy development. They also receive reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on policy reviews and performance management.

The Leader of the Council chairs the Cabinet and takes overall responsibility for its decisions.

When major decisions are to be discussed or made, they are published in the Cabinet Forward Plan, so far as they can be anticipated. The Cabinet has an important role in seeing that the Council's existing policies are delivered and in developing proposals for changes to policy or new policies.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Council's overview and scrutiny committees are an integral part of the Council's framework. They support the work of the Cabinet and Council, to whom they make recommendations.

They contribute to the policy-making process by reviewing policies, scrutinising best value reviews, examining issues in the Cabinet's forward plan and reviewing information on the performance of services.

The committees monitor Cabinet decisions and hold decision makers to account. They can question decisions yet to be implemented and ask the decision maker to think again.

They can also hold reviews and inquiries into matters concerning local people, not only dealing with Council services but also ensuring that other agencies, public and private, play their part in achieving a better quality of life for Gateshead residents.

Decision Making Committees

By law, certain decisions cannot be made by the Cabinet. These are mainly decisions that relate to granting permissions or licences, hearing appeals and certain personnel matters. These committees thus deal with specific areas of work.

Advisory Groups

The Cabinet is guided by five Advisory Groups, which advise on the main policy areas. The Groups are made up of non-Cabinet members, including opposition Councillors. Cabinet portfolio holders meet with Advisory Groups and discuss specific issues on which they need advice. This process enables non-Cabinet members to have a direct input into policy development.

In addition there is a Ward Liaison Group for each of the 22 Council wards, consisting of the three Councillors for that ward, which enables ward members to be consulted on local issues.

The Healthier Communities Advisory Group provides advice to the Cabinet on these annual service plans. They consider performance during the previous year and the key service activities planned for the current year.

5. Organisational structure

There are five groups of services led by Director(s) that enable focussed strategic management in the Council:

- Development and Enterprise
- Community Based Services;
- Learning and Children;
- Local Environmental Services;
- Central Services.

Within each of the five groups are a number of services, each run by a Head of Service who takes responsibility for the day to day running of the service and the management of employees.

The Chief Executive leads and has authority over all other employees and is responsible for:

- Providing strategic advice and arranging other advice to the Council, Cabinet and all other council bodies
- The strategic management of the local authority providing advice and support to elected members
- Developing and maintaining key relationships with strategic partners and other agencies and bodies

The services that these Plans relate to are part of Development and Enterprise.

Development and Enterprise

Development and Enterprise is a diverse but related range of services concerned with the built and natural environment, its present and future use and the promotion and regulation of activities within it.

The Group includes services that manage the Council's involvement in new developments in the borough, the management and construction of its buildings and roads. It also controls regulations ranging from planning applications through to food safety and the development of environmental strategy.

D&E Group vision: "To be the best nationally at what we do locally".

D&E Group mission: "To enhance and protect the quality of life in our community by working together to maintain and improve the environment and economy. We will add value because by being together we tackle complex issues creatively"

Development and Public Protection vision: "To secure high quality developments and ensure that businesses and residents in Gateshead have access to a safe and healthy working and living environment through education and where necessary, enforcement"

Led by the Head of Development and Public Protection, this service deals with the following services, each of which has a Service Manager:

- Environmental Health, Licensing and Enforcement (*covering: Environmental Health (**food control / health & safety**) / taxi and general licensing / Licensing Act licensing / planning, highways and environmental health enforcement*)
- Environmental Health and Trading Standards (*covering: commercial noise control / air quality management / wider public health / trading standards / fair trading // Tyne & Wear metrology laboratory*)
- Development Management (*covering: development control and building control*)
- Spatial Development

In 2010/22 the service priorities in support of Vision 2030 are based around:

- Improving health
- Improving customer service and supporting business
- Creating a high quality and sustainable environment
- Maximising efficiency and value for money

6. Links to corporate plans and objectives

- **Community Strategy**

The Community Strategy sets out the Gateshead Strategic Partnership priorities. The GSP is a Local Strategic Partnership – in other words a ‘family of partnerships’ involving different parts of the public sector, as well as the business community, the voluntary sectors and government agencies.

The partnership reflects on the issues and priorities that local people view as important for the future of Gateshead - it aims to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the area.

The result from these ideas is an ambitious plan, called **Vision 2030**. Within Vision 2030 are the ‘Six Big Ideas’ that the Council hopes to achieve:

1. **Sustainable Gateshead** - ‘When it comes to making Gateshead more sustainable we want to improve our environment to the point where we are recycling 50% of our waste and our economic performance exceeds the national average.’
2. **Gateshead Goes Global** - ‘Going global is about expanding our horizons and taking up opportunities to make local businesses attractive to the worldwide market, as well making Gateshead a magnet for international talent with an increase in the number of international cultural events hosted here.’
3. **Creative Gateshead** – ‘Creativity is all about investing in our heritage and our people. We want to improve learning opportunities for everyone and by 2020 see an increase in the number of young people going on to further education. We also want to see and 25% increase in visitors to our heritage and cultural sites.’
4. **Active and Healthy Gateshead** – ‘By 2030, we want have one of the healthiest communities in the country with Gateshead leading the way at the top of the life expectancy tables in England by 2030. ‘
5. **City of Gateshead** – ‘This is not just about becoming known as a city. It's about all the things can go with this status - it's about Gateshead taking its place alongside other great cities in terms of design, growth, natural resources, people and culture.’
6. **Gateshead Volunteers** – ‘Gateshead Volunteers is about involving more local people in their community in a way that benefits them and the people around them. We want Gateshead to be known as a national leader in promoting and supporting volunteering. So, by 2012 we want to see more people achieving GNVQ in Volunteering and by 2020 have 500 businesses actively taking part in volunteering.’

The Health & Safety and Food Control Service Plans have an influence on Vision 2030 both proactively and reactively through a combination of regulation, promotion of good practice and education.

Achieving Excellent Policy, Service Planning and Performance Management

There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement and the Council is working to embed a performance culture throughout the organisation. The Council has continued to strengthen its planning and performance management arrangements so that we can have the greatest possible impact on local people's quality of life.

The key features of the Council framework are:

- Bold aspirations to stretch and motivate the organisation
- A focus on people, service and financial performance
- An integrated system linking Vision 2030 and the Council's priorities to service plans and employee objectives
- Strong leadership and accountability across all levels of the Council
- Engagement of employees at all levels and in all areas - a culture of ownership and commitment to ensure that individuals who are best placed to ensure delivery of targets have real ownership for doing so
- Robust, transparent and rigorous systems, processes and procedures
- A coherent set of performance measures and targets to translate the aspirations into a set of specific indicators against which performance and progress can be measured
- Rigorous performance review to ensure that continuously improving performance is being delivered in line with expectations
- Easy to understand performance information that can be used for decision-making and service improvement
- Integration of performance with risk management
- Reinforcement of the importance of improvement to motivate individuals to deliver the targeted performance

On an annual basis the Council agrees its priorities for improvement in the year ahead. Priorities for improvement are identified in a number of ways:

- Monitoring current performance and assessment of existing and emerging priorities (Cabinet; Overview and Scrutiny Committees)
- Ongoing evaluation of performance and review
- Involving the community – this occurs throughout the year, but is focused in the activity of Viewpoint and the biennial residents survey
- As a result of changes in legislation or other external factors

Vision 2030

Vision 2030 Strategic objective	Contribution examples from Food and H&S
Building Stronger Communities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance engagement with neighbourhoods and communities to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to a Senior Officer 24/7 • Initial response to requests for service within two

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> deliver locally responsive services Build cohesive and diverse communities Ensure a cleaner, greener, safer Gateshead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> working days Risk based programme of inspections In depth advice and support available Engagement with employees and employers for promotion of H&S for workers whose first language is not English Statutory consultee for licensing applications
Empowering Older People and Ensuring Healthier Communities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support local people living longer, healthier lives; reducing the life expectancy gap between the best and worst areas in the Borough Implement the smoking ban and ensure Gateshead becomes “smoke-free” Through the Gateshead Strategic Partnership, work with the voluntary sector and other partners to further develop preventative services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working to prevent work related ill health and injury through proactive campaigns and inspections Investigation of reportable work related injuries, ill health and dangerous occurrences Responding to requests for service and complaints about smokefree, Active participation to the Gateshead Tobacco Alliance and smoke free implementation Improvement in the hygiene of food establishments through the “Scores on the Doors” scheme
Improving Accessibility, Connectivity and Economic Prosperity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract more people to live, work, visit and study in Gateshead Reduce worklessness and improve skills, and focus on knowledge based creative and innovation industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensible health and safety management is part of good management and we provide information, advice and support to employers. Consistent and fair enforcement, approachable services and professional officers supports economic prosperity. Improvement in the hygiene of food establishments through the “Scores on the Doors” scheme
Ensuring a Sustainable Gateshead	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build capacity across the Council, partners, and local communities Collaborate to deliver efficient, high quality services – through the Gateshead Strategic Partnership – and with other public, private and voluntary sectors Ensure best use of resources to deliver Value for Money services and long-term financial sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of flexible warrants between HSE and the NE councils Working more efficiently with other D&PP teams including Licensing and Economic Development Partnership working with HSE and the regional authorities to maximise outcomes from campaigns Maintaining the data base of business information enables targeted campaigns and interventions
Serving our customers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously improve services, targeting areas of under performance Improve communication and develop mechanisms to involve all user groups in the improvement of customer-focussed services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High satisfaction levels (over 80%) evidenced through satisfaction surveys and feedback from customers Reduce burdens on business through the risk rated inspection programme Promotion of web information, and on line application forms using ‘single point’ standards Customer Service Excellence

Engaging Our Communities

Both services engage our customers in reviewing performance and in looking for improvements to our service via customer satisfaction surveys. Both services have achieved high levels of satisfaction over the last 12 months. It is planned that the

surveys will be amended to request customers views on how the service can be improved.

Last year the Health and Safety Service provided a health and safety advisory service that was well received by our customers and has led to this approach being used in more businesses and a plan to introduce a healthy business award for small and medium businesses.

Corporate Sustainability

The food and health & safety services both work closely with partners to help deliver our services. The health and safety team work closely with the Health and Safety Executive, Fire Brigade and other Local Authorities. The food team work with the Health Protection Unit, Health Protection Agency, Public Analyst, Food Standards Agency and other Local Authorities. Both services work closely with other services within the Council, including Licensing, Trading Standards, Corporate Safety and Economic Development.

Both services are looking at ways they can work more closely and have agreed a joint training programme to ensure the competence of all staff to carry out the work in both teams. This has led to a reorganisation and amalgamation of the two teams into one team. Further information on this is given in parts 2 and 3 of this plan. This has enabled the services to be leaner and more efficient, whilst reducing the risks to the service.

Awards

Customer Services Excellence - Regulatory Services (including these services) has held Charter Mark since 2003. D&E Group was awarded Customer Service Excellence in February 2011. These are government awards for excellence in customer services.

Investors in People - The Investors in People Standard is a framework that helps organisations to improve performance and realise objectives through the effective management and development of their people. Gateshead Council achieved corporate status in 2009. Regulatory Services initially received IIP status in 2005.

Service Charters

Caring for our Customers - The D&E customer care strategy setting out how we:

- Involve our customers
- Communicate
- Seek continuous improvement
- Deliver customer care through our staff

Environmental Health and Trading Standards - The Charter clearly and simply sets out the standards people can expect from the service:

- What the particular service involves
- What our aims are
- What you can expect from us
- How you can help us

- How to make a comment, compliment or complaint
- Where to go for more help

<http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/DocumentLibrary/council/strategy/charters/Environment.pdf>

Cross linkages with other plans

The Service Plans support various Council and inter-agency plans including:

- Major Outbreak Plan
- Major Incident Plan
- Local Health Delivery Plan
- Local Agenda 21 Strategy: “Here Today HERE TOMORROW”
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Gateshead Obesity Strategy

7. Complaints and compliments

Gateshead Council is committed to providing the best possible service for the people of Gateshead in a courteous and caring manner. The Council welcomes complaints, suggestions and compliments and acknowledges that things may occasionally go wrong or people may be unhappy with the service given. If a complaint is found to be justified, the Council’s aim is to find an appropriate remedy that fits the harm or injustice and is satisfactory to the complainant.

The Council complaints and compliments procedure is known as “**Have Your Say**”. An explanatory leaflet and complaint form is available from all Council services and the Council’s website. Link:

<http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/Council%20and%20Democracy/say/home.aspx>

8. Financial allocation

As part of its annual policy planning cycle the Council sets the budget, fees and charges and council tax, focusing areas of spending on Council priorities.

Through a wide range of consultation exercises Councillors, the public, businesses and partners are given the opportunity to have their say. Focus groups are held with residents using Viewpoint, Gateshead Council's Citizen Panel. A survey in Council News goes to every household including details of how residents can access the survey online through the council website, complete it and return it to us. Local businesses are consulted through the Chamber of Commerce. All of these views are then fed into the priority and budget setting process.

The Council has agreed financial regulations for Gateshead that control the way the Council manages its finances and safeguards its assets. They are to be read in conjunction with the Council's Constitution.

9. Staff authorisation, competency and development

The Council Constitution delegates powers to individual managers. The Head of Development and Public Protection is delegated to authorise officers for enforcement purposes.

The service managers are responsible for ensuring that all authorised officers are suitably qualified, experienced and competent with regard to their post and work activities. An authorised officer may also direct the work of an unauthorised officer.

All officers involved in enforcement carry a signed Warrant of Authority. Officers involved in enforcement work are aware of the limit of their authorisation.

The Council recognises its success depends upon the skills and efforts of individual employees and is committed to making sure that all staff have the knowledge, experience and skills they need to perform effectively and to realise their potential. It is important that everyone understands how their work links to Council objectives and that they receive guidance and support in their jobs.

An independent employee survey and the employee Achievement and Development scheme are examples of how the Council provides employees with the opportunity to feedback issues of concern, reflect on performance, think about personal development and plan for the future.

Monthly team meetings help identify training and development needs.

10. Stakeholders

The following table identifies major stakeholders for the Health & Safety and Food Control services. These are identified as individuals, groups, organisations and other services that:

- Use our services
- Have an interest in the successful delivery of our services
- Are involved in maintaining the quality of our services
- Have a share in "ownership" of our services
- Have a working relationship with our services that creates added value for customers

Major Health & Safety and Food Control Stakeholders					
Employees	Government	Communities	Businesses	Partners	Elected representatives
Team members	Home Office	Residents	Proprietors and owners of commercial premises where we are the enforcing authority	Other Gateshead Council services	Councillors
Families of our team members	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)	Visitors to the borough	Architects and designers	Food Standards Agency (FSA)	Cabinet Members
D&PP and D&E group	Dept of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	Potential customers	Developers	HSE: Yorkshire and North East Division, Local Authority Unit and H&S Laboratory	Members of Parliament
Work experience students	Drinking Water Inspectorate	Older people	Building contractors	Health Protection Agency: Newcastle Environmental Lab and Health Protection Unit	Members of the European Parliament
Out based services	Environment Agency	Unemployed people	People seeking advice and assistance with their problems	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health	Lamesley Parish Council
Trade Unions	Local Government Regulation (LGR)	Young people	Voluntary groups and organisations	Northumbrian Water	Birtley Community Council
Agency staff	Local Government Ombudsman	People with disabilities	People applying for licences and registration	Northumbria Police	
Contracted staff		Local Jewish community	Trade associations	T&W Fire Service	
		Other local religious communities	Media, Press and Radio	Magistrates Courts	
		Asylum seekers	CIPFA	Management of the Metro Centre /Team Valley Trading Estate / North East Fruit and Vegetable Market and other trading areas.	
		Neighbourhood groups		Gateshead College, Northumbria University and Northumberland College,	
		Community centres		Other north east region councils: Tyne and Wear, (Newcastle, South Tyneside, North Tyneside, Sunderland), Durham and Northumberland	
		Voluntary organisations		North-east Tobacco Alliance	
		Planning applicants and their neighbours		FRESH	
		Ethnic groups		Tyne Port Health Authority	

11. Service Monitoring and assessment

Team performance is closely monitored by the Senior Officers, Team Leader and Manager. Statistical and narrative reports on team performance are considered on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis and if necessary, action is taken to improve performance.

Quality control

- **Service level**

Employees are the most important factor in providing effective and consistent services. Recruitment, training, supervision, information technology, technical equipment and support must be provided for continued improvement. There are work instructions for all major aspects of the services delivered.

On a day to day basis, quality control in the Health & Safety and Food Control services gives a high regard to the competence of the officers, excellent team working involving peer review, in-depth discussion of decisions and strict adherence to the enforcement policies, supported through supervision by very experienced senior EHOs and team leaders.

- **Corporate level**

At a corporate level, six monthly reports are made to the Cabinet and quarterly to the Strategy Group. Data is collated against local performance indicators and targets are set to show year-on-year improvements in service and progress against targets.

- **National level**

A number of formal and informal returns are made including to Food Standards Agency, Health and Safety Executive, CIPFA and North-east Tobacco Alliance.

12. Property database

The services covered in these plans use specialised computer software to provide a flexible system that is integrated with other Environmental Health and Trading Standards services.

Authority Public Protection (APP) is a Windows based system that allows an effective and high level of data management and service monitoring.

The database information is linked to individual properties. Risk based inspections, requests for service, miscellaneous activities such as sampling, accident investigation and extensive reporting facilities are all enabled.

13. Access to our services

The Council provides access to Council information, including an A to Z of services (web based and hard copy), use of free information kiosks and IT access points in the Civic Centre, libraries and other council buildings.

Telephone:	Service admin team: 0191 433 7007 Customer Service Operator: 0191 433 3000 Officers also have direct phone lines and mobiles.
Out of hours emergency or urgent service telephone:	0191 477 0844
Fax:	0191 477 4827
IT access:	www.gateshead.gov.uk environmentalhealth@gateshead.gov.uk
D&E Service reception is open to visitors:	08:45 - 17:00 Monday to Thursday 08:45 - 16:30 Friday
In person or by post to:	Gateshead Council Development and Enterprise Development and Public Protection Civic Centre Regent Street Gateshead NE8 1HH