

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 6 JUNE 2017

Recommendations from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 April 2017:-

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – Cost Recovery (Minute 56 refers)

The report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) advised the Committee of the change in the Food Standards Agency charging policy and proposed that the Council introduced a cost recovery fee for Food Hygiene Rating Scheme re-inspections/re-visits.

Members then watched a short film of a restaurant owner who had agreed to be interviewed about his experiences when dealing with Environmental Health Officers following a routine food hygiene inspection.

Members noted that a high food hygiene score was seen as a selling point for businesses.

Members expressed surprise that food businesses were not required by law to display their current food hygiene rating and that it was possible to continue to trade when the business had scored zero.

A Member commented that businesses often operated under different names which then made it difficult for customers to identify the food hygiene score awarded to those establishments from the internet and other sources. It was the view of Members that, for clarity, a detailed food rating guide would be helpful.

A Member commented that because the majority of the businesses inspected across the Borough had been in Hatfield, it appeared that Hatfield had been targeted. Officers advised that the law allowed for food establishments to be inspected in a variety of ways and times. There were a number of different sanctions which could be applied depending on the level of risk.

Officers advised that residents should always be encouraged to report their concerns about a food service establishment to the Council. All food poisoning symptoms should be reported to the doctor, who would then report it to the Council, particular concerns would be followed up separately in more detail.

Members went on to note that Officers focussed on those establishments which had poor hygiene scores and provided help and support to address these issues by working closely with the owner/operative.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the change in the Food Standards Agency charging policy be noted and the proposal to introduce a cost recovery fee for Food Hygiene Rating Scheme re-inspections/re-visits be agreed.
- (2) That delegated authority be given to Head of Public Health and Protection, Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business, Partnerships and Public Health, that a suitable fee be determined having regard to the Food Standards Agency's guidance and in consultation with the Council's Finance team.
- (3) That the Cabinet be recommended that the changes be introduced and to refer to the Council that they be adopted and the budget book adjusted accordingly.