Item 4

24th November 2026

Glasgow City Council

Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods City Policy Committee

Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability

Contact: Denise Hamilton Ext: 07879906826

Food Law Service Plan 2026/27

Purpose of Report:

To update Committee on the NRS Food Law Service Plan 2026/27

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Committee note the content of the report.

Ward No(s): All wards	Citywide: ✓
Local member(s) advised:	Consulted: Yes

1. Service Aims and Objectives

1.1 It is the aim of this Service to:

- Protect the safety, health and wellbeing of residents, visitors and others; Ensure that food produced, stored, offered for sale or used within the City is authentic, wholesome and safe to eat;
- Advise and assist businesses to comply with relevant current legislation, to promote the adoption of documented food safety management systems and encourage adoption of best practice
- Enforce the Food Safety Act 1990 (and associated legislation), the Food Hygiene (Scotland) Regulations 2006, The Food (Scotland) Act 2015 and other relevant legislation as may apply to the Service;
- Inspect or otherwise intervene with businesses in accordance with national guidelines using risk-based approach outline within the Food Law Code of Practice;
- Routinely sample food produced within the City and other food as appropriate;
- Ensure that food produced, stored, offered for sale or used within the City is authentic, wholesome and safe to eat;
- Protect consumers from being misled and to ensure acceptable trading practices in food;
- Develop and implement strategies to improve compliance;

2. Background/Resources

2.1 Environmental Health sits within NRS Community Safety and Regulatory Services. The Group Manager, Environmental Health holds the role of Lead Food Officer for Food Law as defined in Section 4.7 of the Food Law Code of Practice Scotland.

2.2 Day to day delivery of food law enforcement is undertaken by the Environmental Health Business Regulation team. The service operates on geographical basis across the north and south of the city with officers working flexibly across service areas to respond to operational demand, enforcement activity and urgent public health matters. Overall responsibility for food law performance rests with the Group Manager, Environmental Health.

2.3 A small number of officers have specialist experience, such as food export certification, food incidents and food crime investigations, providing support across the city and contributing to service resilience, which requires citywide work. The service is currently working to build resilience in these areas.

2.4 Ward 10 (Anderston/City/Yorkhill) is shared equally across the two geographical teams.

2.5 Both Environmental Health Officers and Food Safety Technical Officers carry out food law activities with FSTOs working solely on matters relating to food law, while EHOs also cover events, licensing, port health, health and safety.

2.6 Informal food sampling is carried out by Glasgow Scientific Services, with Environmental Health providing intelligence to target sampling activity based on local risks, complaints, incidents, and emerging issues. Environmental Health officers are responsible for undertaking any subsequent investigative work and implementing appropriate enforcement action where sample results indicate contraventions of food law.

3. Demands on the Food Service

3.1 There are currently 7,471 registered food premises within Glasgow City Council.

3.2 This includes 43 premises handling products of animal origin approved under Retained EC Regulation 853/2004, inspected annually on a risk basis. A further 11 establishments fall under the direct regulatory oversight of Food Standards Scotland, with whom the Council works closely to ensure effective enforcement arrangements.

3.3 All other food premises are subject to a risk rating scheme which combines food hygiene and food standards and an interventions programme is in place throughout the year.

3.4 Compliance levels remain challenging and continue to place significant demand on the service through the requirement for additional interventions and revisits. Contributing factors include economic pressures, workforce shortages within the hospitality sector, increasing operating costs and high levels of business turnover. Compliance is being improved through targeted interventions, advice and guidance, enforcement action where necessary and a continued focus on higher risk premises, increasing the need for revisits and affecting performance. Economic pressures, workforce challenges and rising operating costs continue to contribute to declining standards in some businesses.

4. Additional Food Activity

4.1 In addition to inspection of food businesses, the following is also carried out by Officers working in the Service:

Responding to Food Incidents and Alerts as reported by Food Standards Scotland
Working collaboratively with partner agencies to prevent and detect food crime
Investigation of both confirmed and alleged food poisonings and food related outbreaks

Following up on food sample results provided by Glasgow Scientific Services as part of ongoing surveillance programme
Issue of Export Health Certificates
Issue of Support Attestations for European Exports
Provision of New Business Guidance and advice
Respond to Food Complaints
Liaison with other organisations such as Food Standards Scotland, Scottish Government, etc.
Contribution to National Guidance through participation in working groups
Contribution to the Glasgow City Council Civic Government Licensing regime, namely processing of Late Hours Catering, Market Operators and Public Entertainment Licence applications
Inspection of Street Trading vehicles
Supporting the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 process through issuing of Certificates of Suitability (Sectio 50s)
Training and development of Student FSTOs and EHOs through mentoring, workplace shadowing and ongoing assessment

5. Key Performance Indicators

5.1 Environmental Health has a series of KPIs, a number of which relate to matters of food law enforcement and updates are provided to NRS Senior Management on a monthly basis. As a service there is accountability within the process should there be significant deviation from these.

Year to Date Performance 2025/26

Performance measure	
Number of programmed food law inspections planned for the year	1,387
% of programmed food law inspections planned for the year carried out within time	61%
Number of food businesses in the missed inspection category	2,613
Number of programmed food law inspections carried out at premises rated as requiring intensive intervention within 1 month	124
% of programmed food law inspections carried out within time at premises rated as requiring intensive intervention within 1 month	100%
Number of programmed food law inspections carried out within time at premises rated as requiring intensive intervention within 3 months	296
% of programmed food law inspections carried out on time at premises assessed as requiring a 3 month inspection	89%
Number of programmed food law inspections due at Group 1 premises	240
% of programmed food law inspections of Group 1 premises carried out on time	83%
Number of Food Law service requests	2,234
Total number of unrated food premises	2,201
Number of Health and Safety service requests	730
Number of Health and Safety Notices issued	78
Number of HINs (Hygiene Improvement Notices) served	144
Number of RANs (Remedial Action Notices) served	136
Number of HEPNs (Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices) served	0

5.2 The service is prioritising statutory and risk-based work, focusing on high-risk premises, missed inspections, complaints, food poisoning investigations and outbreak response.

5.3 New establishment inspections were below plan due to higher service request and licensing demand.

5.4 Missed inspections reduced from 3,485 (2024/2025) to 2,613 (2025/2026) reflecting continued efforts to reduce the inspection backlog.

5.5 One-month intensive intervention targets were met throughout the year.

5.6 Inspections at premises subject to three months intervention frequency were completed within the required Code of Practice timescales. The KPI figure reflects the timing of performance measurement rather than any failure to meet statutory requirements. All three-month inspections were completed within Code of Practice timescales, although KPI performance appears lower due to the measurement date.

5.7 Group 1 premises are higher risk establishments identified within the Food Standards Scotland intervention framework as requiring enhanced regulatory oversight. Of the 240 inspections due during 25/26, 83% were completed within the target timescale and all inspections were ultimately completed during the reporting year.

5.8 Food Law service requests rose to 2,234, up 22.5%.

5.9 Hygiene Improvement Notices increased from 83 to 144.

5.10 Remedial Action Notices increased from 83 to 136.

6. Resource Modelling

6.1 The service is prioritising statutory and risk-based activity, focusing resources on the highest-risk premises, complaints, food poisoning investigations, outbreak management and public health protection. This supports statutory delivery within current capacity while targeting the greatest public health risks.

6.2 Key risks are: growth in food businesses, inspection backlogs, major event pressures and workforce shortages

6.3 The Council's main long-term response is a "grow your own" workforce model, including training existing staff, developing apprenticeships and supporting alternative qualification routes.

6.4 Across Scotland and the UK as a whole, the shortage of qualified Environmental Health Officers remains the most significant risk to statutory compliance and service resilience. This risk is reflected in the SOCOEHS risk register, where the residual risk score remained at the maximum level of 20 at the March 2026 review.

6.5 The Food Law Service Plan 2026/27 sets out how the Council will meet its statutory food law duties in a challenging operating environment, using a risk-based approach to prioritise activity. Implementation of the plan will support public health protection, statutory enforcement and business compliance while recognising the need for sustained workforce development and service improvement.

7. Overall Conclusion

7.1 The report highlights the scale and complexity of food law enforcement across Glasgow. Despite workforce and capacity challenges, the Service continues to prioritise high-risk interventions, support business compliance and protect public health. The Service is also striving to support development of new officers through ongoing training of student officers.

8. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications: Food law enforcement activity will be delivered within existing approved budgets as far as possible. However, the plan identifies significant capacity pressures and a substantial gap between assessed demand and available staffing.

Financial: Temporary external inspection support may be required to address short-term pressures, subject to budget availability and approval through normal governance arrangements.

Legal: The Council has statutory responsibilities for food law enforcement and must deliver its functions in accordance with relevant legislation, the Food Law Code of Practice and Food Standards Scotland requirements. Failure to maintain effective arrangements could increase risk to public health and expose the Council to regulatory, reputational and legal challenge.

Personnel: There are significant workforce implications. The service is affected by Environmental Health Officer vacancies, national recruitment shortages, an ageing workforce and limited training routes into the profession. Workforce development actions, including grow-your-own pathways, enforcement officer development and apprenticeship approaches, are central to improving long-term resilience. There may also be a requirement to procure temporary external inspection support or specialist services to assist with short-term delivery pressures. Any procurement activity will be undertaken in line with Council procurement procedures.

Procurement: None

Council Strategic Plan: The Food Law Service Plan supports the Council's strategic priorities by protecting public health, supporting safe and responsible businesses, contributing to sustainable service delivery, and helping maintain confidence in the city as a safe place to live, work, visit and invest.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2025-29? Please specify.	The plan supports fair and consistent access to regulatory protection by ensuring that food safety enforcement is applied across all communities and business types on a risk-based basis.
What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?	No significant negative equality impacts have been identified. The plan is expected to have a positive public health impact by supporting safe food standards for residents, workers and visitors.
Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.	Effective food law enforcement supports public health protection across all communities, including those experiencing socio-economic disadvantages. It also supports compliant food businesses by providing advice, intervention and enforcement on a fair and consistent basis.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	The report does not directly deliver specific Climate Plan actions. However, planned and risk-based regulatory activity can support wider sustainable service delivery by making effective use of available resources.
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	No significant climate impacts have been identified.
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	There is no direct contribution to the net zero carbon target arising from this report.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts: Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report Y/N	No significant data protection impacts have been identified. Operational case records, complaints and enforcement information will continue to be managed in accordance with the Council's data protection policies and statutory requirements.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Committee note the content of the report.