

**REPORT TO THE PERSONNEL, LICENSING  
AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

Report No. 8

Date of Meeting	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2007
Title of Report	<b>Food Report: Hazard Rating and Star Rating for Food Premises</b>
Link to Corporate Priorities	<b>To promote vibrant, safe and inclusive communities</b>
Public Report	<b>Yes</b>

**Summary of Report**

To seek the Committee's endorsement to publish on the Council's web site a numerical hazard rating score and star rating score of food premises inspected in the North Wiltshire District. The information on food premises will be available for the public to access and will promote higher standards of hygiene in food businesses operating in North Wiltshire.

The publication of such information on the Council's web site would also satisfy requests made to the Council about food premises under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**Officer Recommendations**

**That the Committee endorses the publication, as proposed, by the Environmental Health Team Leader of the hygiene hazard and star ratings of food premises on the Council's web site in order to promote safer food better businesses across the district and to satisfy Freedom of Information Act 2000 requirements.**

Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
Yes	None	Yes	None	Yes

<b>Contact Officer</b>	Mike Doran Environmental Health Team Leader 01249 706401 Email: ehealth@northwilts.gov.uk
------------------------	--

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The report sets out a proposal to publish information on the standards of hygiene and food safety regarding food premises in the North Wiltshire District on the Council's web site. The purpose being to provide relevant information to the public, to satisfy Freedom of Information requests and improve hygiene in food premises.

## **2. Options and Options Appraisal**

- 2.1 To approve the publication of the hazard rating and star rating scores for food premises on the Council's web site as proposed by the Environmental Health Team Leader.
- 2.2 To reject the proposal to publish the hazard rating and star rating scores for food premises as proposed by the Environmental Health Team Leader.

## **3. Background Information**

- 3.1 Since 1995 as part of a routine food hygiene inspection, the business being inspected is measured and scored against a national government framework laid down in an approved Code of Practice.
- 3.2 The hazard rating score is an aggregate score given on eight parameters set in a Government framework agreement and currently such ratings are recorded on both manual and electronic premises files. These parameters cover types of food handled; potential hazards; methods of processing; consumers at risk; compliance with handling practices and procedures; compliance with structural and equipment requirements and confidence in management with an option to additionally weight the rating for vulnerable groups and significance of risk. A copy of the hazard rating score is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The score is discussed with the proprietor of the food business at the time of inspection and is used to determine the frequency of the next routine inspection. A premises with an "A" rated score is inspected on a frequency of at least every 6 months, "B" at least every year, "C" at least every 18 months, "D" at least every 2 years and "E" 3 years.
- 3.4 Nationally the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has encouraged the publication of the hazard rating score with the aim of encouraging food business operators to improve their hygiene standards.
- 3.5 Approximately 200 local authorities have now published the hygiene element, namely confidence in management, structural and equipment compliance and compliance with practice and procedures in the form of stars or traffic lights. This published information has been effective in raising standards of hygiene, as the public is able to easily access the conditions of food premises. In some areas this system has been called "Scores on Doors" because some authorities issue certificates which may be voluntarily displayed. However the Food Standards Agency (FSA) are currently investigating this matter and there are no national guidelines. Whilst remaining flexible, it is not intend to provide certificates to Food businesses at this stage until such time as the FSA provide formal advice.
- 3.6 The Environmental Health Team Leader, together with the other Environmental Health Managers in Wiltshire, have agreed to use a star rated system in order to improve hygiene and consistency of approach. This has been used successfully by West Wiltshire District Council since August 2006 and is called "Scores on the

Doors". This system uses a series of stars to give a quick "at a glance" guide to the caterers hygiene standard i.e.: "0" stars would denote poor compliance and "5" stars would denote excellent. See Appendix 2 for extract of star rating system. Whilst hazard rating will be published for all food premises, the star rating system will only be applied to catering and establishments handling high risk food.

- 3.7 As part of the consultation process, businesses across North Wiltshire have been sent a letter explaining the Council's intention and a copy of that letter is detailed in Appendix 3.
- 3.8 A premises would not normally be reassessed until its next routine inspection but it is recognised that a business may undergo significant material change such as major refurbishment or change of ownership and under the circumstances provision will be made for reassessment.
- 3.9 As stated in 3.3 the score is discussed with the proprietor of the business when the inspection has been completed. A robust appeals procedure will be put in place for those businesses that feel they have been incorrectly assessed. Should the proprietor object to the scoring carried out by the Environmental Health Officer at the time of the inspection, the Officer will take photographs of the premises. The proprietor initially will be able to appeal to the Principal Environmental Health Officer. The appeal will be in two stages - the Principal Environmental Health Officer will determine the hazard score initially by interviewing the inspecting officer, visiting the food business and interviewing the business proprietor. It is hoped that most appeals will end at this stage. In the event that the business operator still wishes to pursue an appeal the appeal will be passed to the Environmental Health Team Leader who will make the final decision.
- 3.10 The publication of this data is provided for under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. It is considered that public access to such information will promote higher standards of hygiene across the district. It is proposed that publication of data on the Council's web site regarding food inspections carried out in North Wiltshire shall commence from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007.
- 3.11 It is anticipated that Swindon Borough Council, Kennet District Council and Salisbury District Council will launch their similar schemes from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Proprietary Scores on the Doors systems usually cost in the region of £3000, plus annual on going costs. As we have agreed to share the best practice across Wiltshire and as work in adapting the West Wiltshire system has been carried out in-house within the Environmental Health team, there are no financial implications.

#### **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications as we are adopting a tried and tested system used by a neighbouring authority and comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

#### **6. Community and Environmental Implications**

- 6.1 Introduction of the star rating system "Scores on the doors" and publication of hazard ratings will give the public access to food premises hygiene information and should bring about further improvements in hygiene standards.

## 7. Equality and Diversity Implication

7.1 The star rating system "Scores on the Doors" will be applied equally to all catering establishments handling high risk food both in the North Wiltshire District and the other local authorities in Wiltshire.

## 8. Risk Analysis

8.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

<b>Appendices:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) <b>Hazard rating and North Wiltshire inspection form.</b></li><li>2) <b>Star rating system.</b></li><li>3) <b>Environmental Health Team Leader letter to businesses.</b></li></ol>
<b>Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>

### Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

<b>Report</b>	<b>Committee &amp; Date</b>	<b>Minute Reference</b>
<b>NONE</b>		