

The Highland Council

Transport, Environmental and Community Services Committee 6 February 2014

Agenda Item	11
Report No	TEC 9/14

Environmental Health Operational Plan 2014/15

Report by Environmental Health Manager

Summary

This report invites Members to approve the Environmental Health Operational Plan for 2014/15.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Members will be aware that this Committee approved the TEC Service Plan for 2012 to 2017 in November 2012 which sets out the general objectives for the Service. Environmental Health also submits a general operational plan for member approval. The plan provides members with information on the objectives for the whole of Environmental Health including those areas not covered by the service plan. The report is published to provide members of the public and businesses with background information on the function.
- 1.2 The Operational Plan for 2014/15 is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 Some of the key objectives for 2014/15 are summarised below:
 - a) Preparing a new Joint Health Protection Plan for the area in conjunction with NHS Highland. The Public Health etc. (Scotland) Act 2008 requires NHS Boards and Local Authorities to produce a Joint Health Protection Plan which provides an overview of health protection (communicable disease and environmental health) priorities, provision and preparedness. A review will also be carried out of the current plan covering April 2012 to March 2014.
 - b) Taking forward recommendations from the Scottish Government 'VTEC/E.coli O157 Action Plan for Scotland 2013-2017' that was published in November 2013. A number of the recommendations are for local authorities and cover private water supplies, food safety, animal visitor attractions and events/agricultural shows.
 - c) Work with Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency Scotland on the introduction of the new Scottish Food Safety Body 'Food Standards Scotland'. The current proposals are for Food Standards Scotland to be established in April 2015.
 - d) Reviewing progress on the food safety cross-contamination initiative.
 - e) Taking forward further initiatives with colleagues in Waste Management on

issues such as Pest Control, Dog Control (including barking dogs), fly-tipping and general litter enforcement.

- f) Explore options for more short-term partnership/joint initiatives with other agencies such as the Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, SEPA, UK Border Agency etc. Examples for short-term joint initiatives are: Police – HMOs, licensed premises, domestic noise; Fire Service - HMOS, gas safety; SEPA – commercial waste, bin storage/management, fly-tipping; UK Border Agency – illegal workers.
- g) Managing the relevant consequences of the Council's organisational changes in 2014/15.
- h) Continuing engagement with the Councils improvement process including the information management project for Housing Grants.
- i) Continuing internal improvements on internal communications, the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) and internal Health & Safety policies.
- j) Conclude review of options for procurement of Contaminated Land technical services to meet the Council's objectives and to obtain maximum value for money.
- k) Progressing the Primary Authority partnership with Boots the Chemist in relation to occupational health and safety and looking to extend the partnership to include Boots Opticians.

1.4 The Plan will assist in achieving the general 'Healthier Highlands' outcome of the Single Outcome Agreement.

2. Implications

2.1 There are no specific resource implications arising from this report.

2.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

2.3 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

2.4 There are no Climate Change implications arising from this report.

2.5 There are no risk implications arising from this report.

3. Recommendation

3.1 Members are invited to approve the Environmental Health Operational Plan for 2014/15.

Designation: Environmental Health Manager

Date: 24 January 2014

Author: Alan Yates, Environmental Health Manager



TEC Services
Environmental Health
Operational Plan 2014/15

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Contents

- A. Background and context**
 - 1. Purpose, Timeframe and monitoring**
 - 2. Structure and resources**
 - 3. Roles and responsibilities**
 - 4. Risk Management**

- B. Priorities and objectives**
 - 1. Priorities and challenges for 2014/15**
 - 2. Objectives and performance measures**

A. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

A.1 Purpose, Timeframe and monitoring

A.1.1 The Environmental Health Service of Transport, Environmental and Community Services (TEC Services) provides regulatory and advice functions within the Highland Council area. This Operational Plan outlines the Environmental Health approach to delivering all aspects of regulatory and advice functions for the 2014/15 financial year. The plan forms an important part of the Service's processes to ensure national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally.

A.1.2 The Plan will be monitored throughout the year and an annual review will be brought to the Committee.

A.1.3 The plan fits into the set of plans the Council has created to ensure its corporate objectives, the Programme for the Administration and Single Outcome Agreement are fulfilled. The Environmental Health Service also publishes team plans for specific functions. The plans integrate as follows:



A.2 **Structure and resources**

A.2.1 Environmental Health has 60 posts with a full-time equivalent of 55.97. The Service operates 3 operational areas and works through 8 offices throughout the area as shown below:

Operational Area	Offices
Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross	Wick, Golspie
Ross, Skye and Lochaber	Dingwall, Portree, Fort William
Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey	Inverness and Kingussie
Headquarters	Inverness

The Service is progressing with the mobile and flexible working initiative and increasing numbers of officers are working from home and hot-desking in various Council venues.

A.2.2 A structure diagram is provided in **Appendix 1**.

A.2.3 The Service has a proposed revenue budget of £1.9m for 2014/15 and a confirmed capital programme of £100k in 2014/15 for Contaminated Land investigation and remediation.

A.2.5 Age Profile

- Overall 23 officers (40%) are older than 50.
- Only 1 officer under 30
- No qualified EHOs younger than 30.

All Environmental Health staff

Date	age	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-65	Total FTE
21/01/2014	number	1	12	22	23	58
	%	2%	21%	38%	40%	
04/01/2013	number	2	14	20	22	58
	%	3%	24%	34%	38%	
19/05/2008	number	8	18	20	10	56
	%	14%	32%	36%	18%	

EHOs (inc. PEHOs, AEHMs, EHM)

Date	age	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-65	Total FTE
21/01/2014	number	0	7	9	8	24
	%	0%	29%	38%	33%	
04/01/2013	number	0	7	10	7	24
	%	0%	29%	42%	29%	
19/05/2008	number	3	7	10	7	27
	%	11%	26%	37%	26%	

A.3 General Goals, roles and responsibilities

A.3.1 The Environmental Health Service operates within the framework of the TEC Services' Goals:

- To provide customer orientated and responsive high quality, cost effective and efficient services;
- To develop and implement strategies that promote and enhance social inclusion, public safety, public health, protect the environment, and encourage public and community and economic well-being;
- To encourage and promote sustainable and best value practices and procedures;
- To undertake our statutory duties and discretionary powers working in partnership with statutory and voluntary bodies where appropriate;
- To encourage and develop staff to deliver a high quality, safe and efficient service.

A.3.2 Environmental Health is the branch of public health which deals with all aspects of the natural and built environment that may affect public health, together with animal welfare and licensing duties. The main functions include:

- Public Health Protection which includes Water supplies, Nuisances, Smoking in Public Places, Port Health, Communicable disease investigation e.g. Food-borne / Waterborne disease, Legionnaires Disease;
- Food Safety covering enforcement and advisory role for food hygiene, food labelling, and export certification;
- Enforcement and advisory role for Health & Safety at Work legislation;
- Private Sector Housing including sub-standard housing, improvement and repairs grants, closing and demolition orders, Houses in Multiple Occupation and housing defects;
- Pollution Control which includes Noise Control and local Air Quality management;
- Contaminated Land covering the regulatory role for contaminated land prevention through development control, advisory role to other council services on asset transfer and development and regulatory duty to investigate historical land use.;
- Animal Health & Welfare which can include dealing with Foot & Mouth disease, Anthrax, Avian Flu and Bluetongue;
- Licensing duties which include a general enforcement role for activities licensed under the Civic Government legislation and an administrative and enforcement role for licensing of caravan sites, venison dealers, animal boarding establishments, pet shops, zoos, cinemas, theatres, sports grounds and dangerous wild animals;
- Assisting with Civil contingencies and emergency planning, with specific responsibilities regarding recovery from incidents.

A.3.3 Much of the work is preventative and the team has an important role in ensuring the Highlands maintains its reputation of a safe and healthy place in which to live, work and holiday. We aim to support local businesses by providing advice on appropriate regulations and ensuring any regulatory activity follows the five principles of better regulation: Proportionate, Consistent, Accountable, Transparent and Targeted.

A.4 Risk Management

A.4.1 The Service manages significant risks in relation to the consequences of serious foodborne or waterborne disease outbreak. This is identified in the Corporate Risk Register (TEC 4).

B. PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

B.1 Priorities and challenges 2014/15

B.1.1 Over the next year the service will be looking at the following specific issues:

1. Preparing a new Joint Health Protection Plan for the area in conjunction with NHS Highland. The Public Health etc. (Scotland) Act 2008 requires NHS Boards and Local Authorities to produce a Joint Health Protection Plan which provides an overview of health protection (communicable disease and environmental health) priorities, provision and preparedness. A review will also be carried out of the current plan covering April 2012 to March 2014.
2. Taking forward recommendations from the Scottish Government 'VTEC/E.coli O157 Action Plan for Scotland 2013-2017' that was published in November 2013. A number of the recommendations are for local authorities and cover private water supplies, food safety, animal visitor attractions and events/agricultural shows. These are summarised in **Appendix 2**.
3. Work with Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency Scotland on the introduction of the new Scottish Food Safety Body 'Food Standards Scotland'. The current proposals are for Food Standards Scotland to be established in April 2015.
4. Reviewing progress on the food safety cross-contamination initiative.
5. Taking forward further initiatives with colleagues in Waste Management on issues such as Pest Control, Dog Control (including barking dogs), fly-tipping and general litter enforcement.
6. Explore options for more short-term partnership/joint initiatives with other agencies such as the Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, SEPA, UK Border Agency etc. Examples for short-term joint initiatives are: Police – HMOs, licensed premises, domestic noise; Fire Service - HMOS, gas safety; SEPA – commercial waste, bin storage/management, fly-tipping; UK Border Agency – illegal workers.

7. Managing the relevant consequences of the Council's organisational changes in 2014/15.
8. Continuing engagement with the Councils improvement process including the information management project for Housing Grants.
9. Continuing internal improvements on internal communications, the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) and internal Health & Safety policies.
10. Conclude review of options for procurement of Contaminated Land technical services to meet the Council's objectives and to obtain maximum value for money.
11. Progressing the Primary Authority partnership with Boots the Chemist in relation to occupational health and safety and looking to extend the partnership to include Boots Opticians.
12. Specific activity projects are provided in **Appendix 3**.

B.2. Objectives and performance indicators

B.2.1 Environmental Health has a number of objectives and performance results that originate in the TECs Service Plan and these are summarised below:

Id.	8.05
Additional Service Commitment	Ensure Environmental Health Operational plan is prepared detailing key objectives and outcomes to cover statutory responsibilities and other commitments.
Key Performance Results	Plan and review approved annually by TECs Committee
Risk	TEC 4

Id.	8.06
Additional Service Commitment	Ensure high risk food premises are inspected for food hygiene purposes.
Key Performance Results	% of high risk food businesses inspected for Food Hygiene purposes (IPI)
Risk	TEC 4

Id.	8.07
Additional Service Commitment	Ensure Risk Assessment and sampling of all relevant Private Water Supplies to reduce risk of water borne disease.
Key Performance Results	% of high risk Private Water Supplies inspected and sampled (IPI)
Risk	TEC 4

Id.	8.08
Additional Service Commitment	Ensure Health and Safety at Work interventions are carried out for projects identified as national priorities and at high risk premises.
Key Performance Results	Projects completed (IPI) % of high risk Health & Safety at Work premises inspected (IPI).

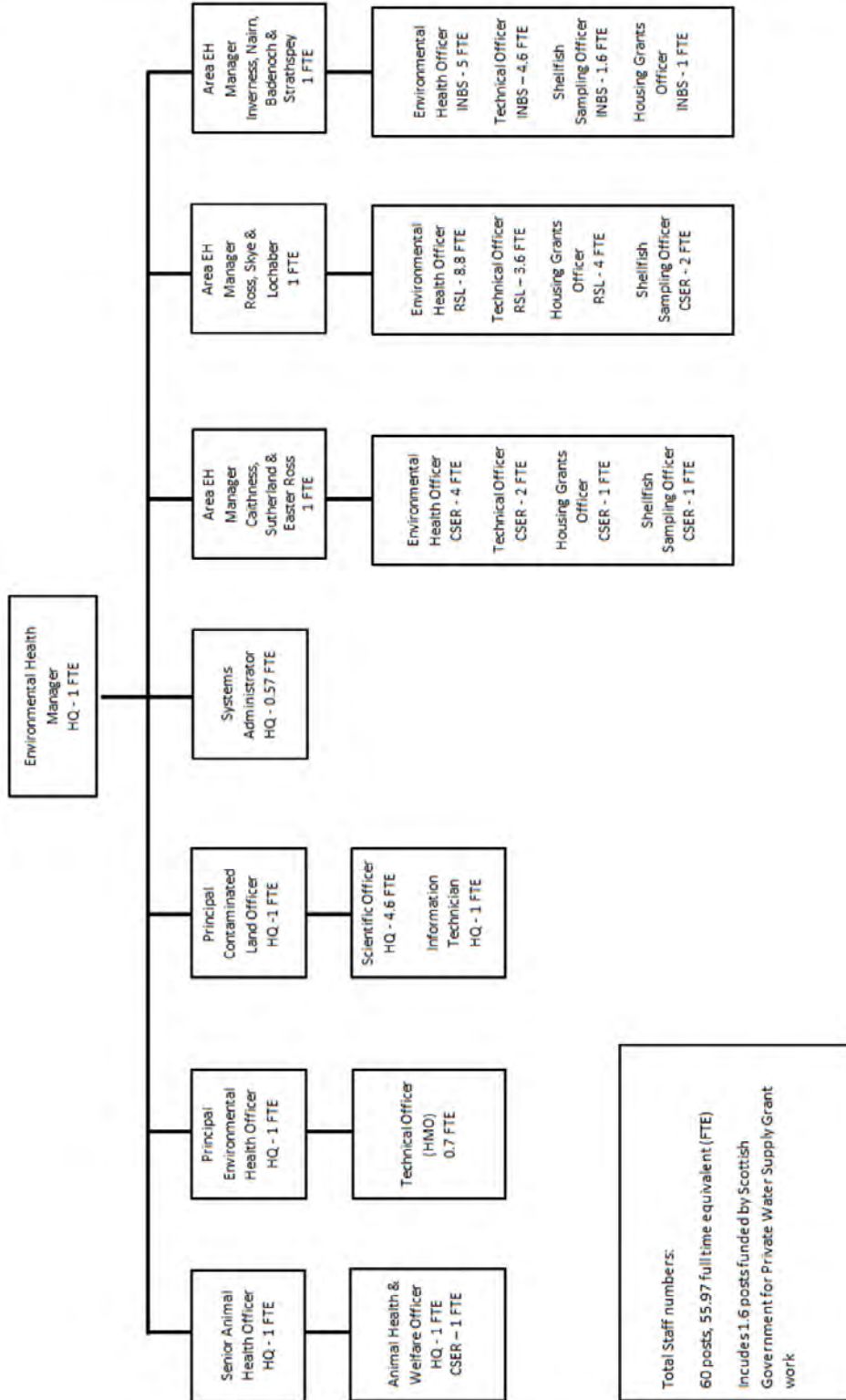
Id.	8.04
Additional Service Commitment	Respond timeously to consultants' Contaminated Land submissions associated with Planning Applications
Key Performance Results	% of consultant's submissions within development control responded to within 28 days. (IPI)

B.2.2 Further measures are being developed through the PSIF process to monitor performance against the JHPP and for specific activities. The team is also participating in the development of National Performance Measures and benchmarking.

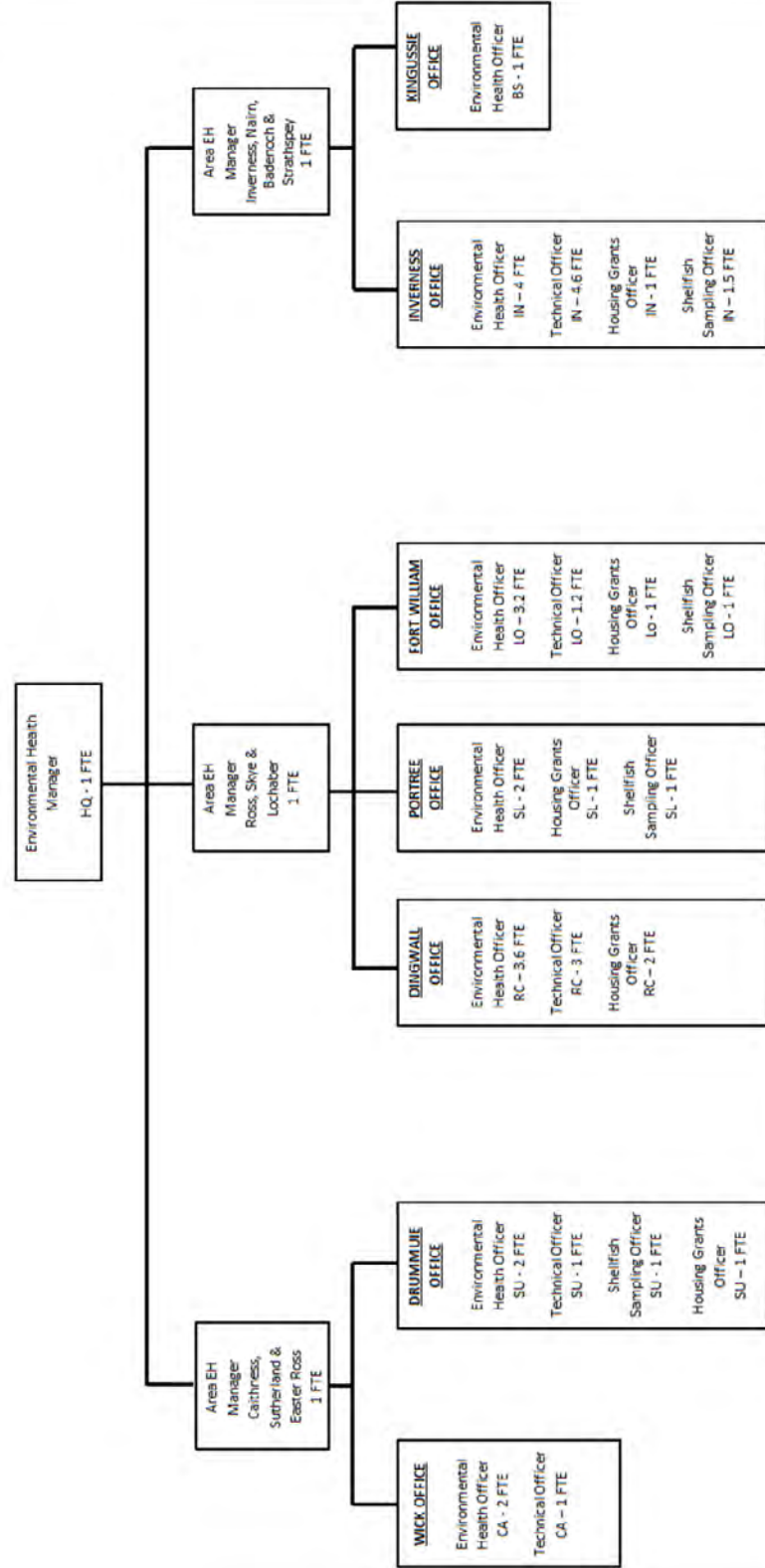
B.2.3 Future reports will be brought to the TECS Committee to cover Environmental Health's performance and review the Operational Plan.

Appendix 1 – Structure diagrams

Environmental Health Structure



Area Environmental Health Structure



Appendix 2

VTEC/E. coli O157 Action Plan for Scotland, 2013-2017

The Scottish Government, Nov. 2013

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/11/8897>

Actions for Local Authorities

SECTION VII - STEP-SPECIFIC CONTROL MEASURES, MONITORING AND EVALUATION		Key Agencies
Step 3 - Controlling contamination of the environment from contaminated animal faeces		
3.2	SG and LAs, in liaison with HSE, should consider measures to ensure that animal visitor attractions make their activities known to LAs.	SG, LAs, HSE
3.5	SG, in liaison with LA representatives, should establish national systems to monitor compliance with issuing and implementation of SG guidance on clearing pasture before/after recreational events involving animals that are registered with an LA (e.g. galas, agricultural shows).	SG, LAs
- Private Water Supplies:		
5.8	SG, the DWQR, SoCOEHS and REHIS should determine local authorities' training needs for their statutory duties relating to PWS, and should develop and deliver training as appropriate.	SG, DWQR, SoCOEHS, REHIS
5.9	DWQR, in liaison with SERL and LAs, should issue guidelines to LAs and to laboratories analysing PWS samples, on the forwarding of <i>E. coli</i> isolates to SERL for typing.	DWQR, SERL, LAs
5.10	SG, in partnership with LAs, DWQR, and public health professionals should develop a strategy to further promote the benefits of the risk assessment and risk management approach for PWS and the PWS grants scheme to deliver real and lasting improvements to PWS and consequential health benefits. This strategy should include: (a) Methods for improving awareness of the potential health risks from PWS to owners and users and their visitors, and the need for correct installation, operation and maintenance of treatment systems. (b) SG updating section 11 of the PWS Technical Manual (Waterborne Hazard Response for PWS) to include more information on dealing with waterborne incidents; and increase the range and detail on treatment options for small supplies following consultation with LAs, REHIS, DWQR and HPS. (c) SG, in liaison with DWQR, should review the 'Information Guide' for owners and users of PWS in line with recommendations from recent research by Aberdeen University.	SG, LAs, DWQR, REHIS
5.13	SG should liaise with LAs, REHIS and SoCOEHS, and consult with DWQR, to consider methods of improving: (a) Compliance by owners/users of PWS serving public or commercial activities, with legislation requiring them to display notices informing the public that a PWS is in use. (b) The extent to which PWS owners/users are complying with the advice from	SG, LAs, REHIS, SoCOEHS, DWQR

	LA risk assessments and sampling, on how to improve/protect their supplies.	
Step 7 - Controlling the contamination of treated food from contaminated animal faeces, untreated food, or the environment		
7.3	FSAS and LAs should ensure that, where possible, catering specifications for schools, care homes and hospitals take into account the principles of the cross-contamination guidance.	FSAS, LAs
7.4	FSAS and REHIS should ensure that the principles of the cross-contamination guidance are embedded in training materials and guidance for food businesses in Scotland.	FSAS, REHIS
7.5	SG should liaise with REHIS and SoCOEHS to ensure that LAs continue to disseminate the new Industry Code of Practice 'Preventing or controlling ill health from animal contact at visitor attractions' to all relevant businesses in Scotland.	SG, REHIS, SoCOEHS, LAs
Step 10 - Controlling the infection of humans from contaminated untreated or treated food		
10.1	FSAS and LAs should review the display of point of sale information for unpasteurised cheeses sold loose in Scotland (including those served in restaurants) to ensure consumers are able to make an informed choice.	FSAS, LAs
SECTION VIII - PROPOSALS FOR RISK COMMUNICATION AND HEALTH EDUCATION		
C4	FSAS and LAs should continue to highlight the risks associated with undercooked minced meat products, and promote advice on safe cooking.	FSAS, LAs
C8	SG should liaise with REHIS and SoCOEHS to ensure that LAs and HPTs continue to provide information and guidance on preventing contamination of food by human faeces in both private households and commercial premises.	SG, REHIS, SoCOEHS, LAs, HPTs
C9	SG, LAs and REHIS, with input from DWQR and HPS, should develop educational materials to promote risk awareness and management for all PWS owners or users.	SG, LAs, REHIS, DWQR, HPS
SECTION IX - PROPOSALS FOR RESEARCH AND SURVEILLANCE		
RS7	FSAS and LAs should ensure that surveillance of VTEC in foods is intelligence led and targeted to evaluating the effectiveness of controls applied to the production of foods which are a known VTEC risk.	FSAS, LAs
RS8	FSAS and LAs should ensure that food surveillance programmes include microbiological sampling at food premises producing 'at risk' RTE foods, to evaluate the effectiveness of cross contamination controls undertaken at butchers and catering businesses.	FSAS, LAs

Appendix 3

Specific activity projects for 2014-15

1. Public Health and pollution control

- a) Preparing a new Joint Health Protection Plan for the area in conjunction with NHS Highland. A review will also be carried out of the current plan covering April 2012 to March 2014.
- b) Taking forward recommendations from the Scottish Government 'VTEC/E.coli O157 Action Plan for Scotland 2013-2017' that was published in November 2013.
- c) Update Air and Seaport Health Procedures and implement changes introduced by International Health Regs 2005.
- d) Ensuring that all Type A private water supply sources are risk assessed and sampled in 2014.
- e) Review database of private water supplies to ensure supplies are being appropriately addressed under the regulations.
- f) Review local air quality issues in Queensgate, Inverness and wider Local Air Quality Management strategy.

2. Food Safety

- a) Work with Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency Scotland on the introduction of the new Scottish Food Safety Body 'Food Standards Scotland'. The current proposals are for Food Standards Scotland to be established in April 2015.
- b) Review progress on cross-contamination initiative
- c) Engage with FSA on the EC review of official controls in 2014/15
- d) Conclude review of unrated premises & unregistered premises
- e) Conclude review of export certification procedures and charges in line with proposed national guidance that will be issued in 2014.
- f) Implement and close Action Plan agreed with FSAS following audit of shellfish sampling activities in 2013.
- g) Provide targeted training sessions for local business sectors on new regulatory requirements.
- h) Continue working with colleagues in Education services on food standards and school meal procurement.

3. Health and Safety at Work enforcement and advice role

- a) Progressing the Primary Authority partnership with Boots the Chemist in relation to occupational health and safety and looking to extend the partnership to include Boots Opticians.
- b) Participate in the 2014/15 national programme of work identified by the HSE for the control of Legionella.
- c) Work with businesses in areas identified as higher risk for radon gas to ensure appropriate sampling and assessments are carried out.
- d) Review work on preventing and controlling ill-health from animal contact at visitor attractions
- e) Review work on project to raise awareness on the duty to manage Asbestos.
- f) In 2014/15 further roll-out of on-going project on gas safety in catering premises - to raise awareness of the dangers from LPG in kitchens etc.

- g) Conclude work with HSE on responsibilities towards health and safety in council services run by independent bodies e.g. swimming pools and associated leisure facilities.

4. Contaminated Land

- a) Conclude review of options for procurement of Contaminated Land technical services to meet the Council's objectives and to obtain maximum value for money.
- b) Engage with DSRL, SEPA, ONR, NDA in securing the long term remediation and re-use of the former Dounreay Nuclear Plant.
- c) Undertake a review of the Councils Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy (2009)
- d) Participate in the proposed review of the Statutory Guidance for the Contaminated Land regime
- e) Continue to prioritise the technical review of VDLF documentation provided in respect of a number of projects involving the investigation and remediation of long-term vacant and derelict land
- f) Work with Fujitsu, ICT and Planning Service to implement the IDOX hosted Contaminated Land Information Management System
- g) Engage with the stakeholders of the 3 former oil fabrication yards (Ardersier, Nigg, Kishorn) to ensure the sites are suitable for use as they are redeveloped.
- h) Contribute to strategic planning consultation on the Local Development Plans.

5. Private sector housing enforcement, grants and disrepair/overcrowding advice role

- a) Review historical housing enforcement notices in Caithness.
- b) Conclude review of procedures for dealing with houses in disrepair in conjunction with Housing services
- c) Publicise the available support and assistance to help tenants and home owners with houses in disrepair
- d) Further publicise the availability of housing assistance to deal with elevated levels of radon gas.

6. Animal Health and Welfare

- a) Provide support, through advice and enforcement, to agricultural industry on animal disease issues of concern such as bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) and sheep scab.
- b) Conclude review of contingency plans
- c) Participate in the Animal Health & Welfare Framework agreement
- d) Review database to ensure accurate reconciling of information relating to Animal Health and feedingstuffs.

7. Licensing enforcement and miscellaneous licensing administration

- a) Commence review of existing caravan sites to meet proposed new licence conditions
- b) Commence review of existing animal boarding establishments to meet proposed new licence conditions
- c) Commence review of existing pet shops to meet proposed new licence conditions

8. General

- a) Develop further initiatives with colleagues in Waste Management on issues such as Pest Control, Dog Control (including barking dogs), fly-tipping and general litter enforcement.
 - b) Explore options for more short term partnership/joint initiatives with other agencies
 - c) Managing the relevant consequences of the Council's organisational changes in 2014/15.
 - d) Continuing engagement with the Councils improvement process including the information management project for Housing Grants.
 - e) Continuing internal improvements on internal communications, the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) and internal Health & Safety policies.
-