

The Highland Council
Community Services Committee
4 June 2015

Agenda Item	13
Report No	COM/26/15

Environmental Health Operational Plan 2015/16

Report by Head of Environmental & Regulatory Services

Summary

This report invites Members to approve the Environmental Health Operational Plan 2015/16

1. Background

- 1.1 Members will be aware that this Committee approved the Community Services Service Plan for 2014-2017 in August 2014 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 2015/16 is provided in Appendix 1.

2. Key objectives

- 2.1 The plan contains challenging objectives for Environmental Health to contribute to the aims of a healthier and safe highlands. Key objectives are summarised below:
- a) Implement the Joint Health Protection Plan 2015-2017 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.
 - b) Taking forward recommendations from the Scottish Government 'VTEC/E.coli O157 Action Plan for Scotland 2013-2017'. 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 partners on projects tackling Health Inequalities. This includes work on initiatives such as;

- I. 'Beyond the school gate' focussing on improving health food choices for school children
 - II. 'Supporting Healthy Choices' and 'Reformulation for Health' which encourage local food manufacturers and caterers to consider changes to support healthier diets
 - III. A specific project on saturated fat content in takeaway meals
 - IV. A proposed Place Standard/Scottish Neighbourhood Quality Standard from the 'Good Places Better Health' ongoing initiative on health and the environment.
- d) Work with Scottish Government on their review of the Public Health function. This is considering the three key domains of public health, health improvement, improving health services and health protection. The review is to consider systems and the delivery of all public health functions in Scotland with a strong focus on how public health contributes to improving health and wellbeing across the life-course, and reducing health inequalities for the future.

3. Implications

- 3.1 There are no Legal, Equalities, Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Gaelic or Rural implications arising from this report.
- 3.2 The operational plan contains actions that control risk associated with item CMS1 in the risk register 'Consequences of serious food and water borne disease outbreak'.

Recommendation

1. Members are invited to approve the Environmental Health Operational Plan 2015/16 as detailed in **Appendix 1**.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 22 May 2015

Author: Alan Yates, Environmental Health Manager 01463 228728

Background Papers: na

APPENDIX 1



TEC Services

Environmental Health

Operational Plan 2015/16

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Version: 0.2
Issued: 18-5-2015
Status: DRAFT
Review Date: xxx

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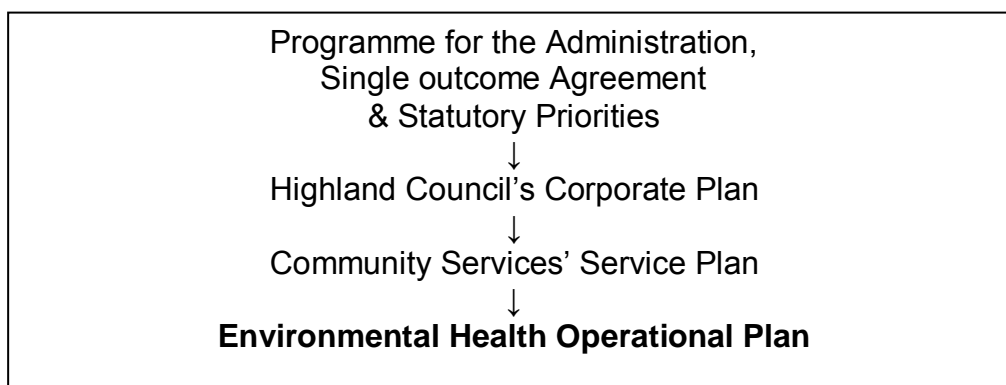
A. **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

A.1 **Purpose, Timeframe and monitoring**

A.1.1 The Environmental Health team of Community 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 2015/16 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 plans integrate as follows:



A.2 **Structure and resources**

A.2.1 Environmental Health has 59 posts with a full-time equivalent of 55.27. 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 2015/16 and a confirmed capital programme of £100k in 2015/16 for Contaminated Land investigation and remediation.

A.2.5 Age Profile

- Overall 25 officers (45%) are older than 50.
- No officers under 30

All Environmental Health staff

Date	age	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-65	Total FTE
18/05/2015	number	0	10	21	25	56
	%	0	18%	38%	45%	
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
18/05/2015	number	0	5	9	9	23
	%	0	22%	39%	39%	
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%	
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A.3 Roles and responsibilities

A.3.1 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 team manages significant risks in relation to the consequences of serious foodborne or waterborne disease outbreak. This is identified in the Corporate Risk Register (CS1).

B. PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

B.1 Priorities and challenges 2015/16

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

1. Implement the Joint Health Protection Plan 2015-2017 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. Further detail is provided in **Appendix 2**.
2. Taking forward recommendations from the Scottish Government 'VTEC/E.coli O157 Action Plan for Scotland 2013-2017'. 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 3**.
3. Work with the new Scottish Food Safety Body 'Food Standards Scotland' that was established in April 2015 to take forward food safety.
4. Work with Scottish Government and partners on projects tackling Health Inequalities. This includes work on initiatives such as;
 - 'Beyond the school gate' focussing on improving health food choices for school children
 - 'Supporting Healthy Choices' and 'Reformulation for Health' which encourage local food manufacturers and caterers to consider changes to support healthier diets
 - A specific project on saturated fat content in takeaway meals
 - A proposed Place Standard/Scottish Neighbourhood Quality Standard from the 'Good Places Better Health' ongoing initiative on health and the environment
5. Work with Scottish Government on their review of the Public Health function. This is considering the three key domains of public health, health improvement, improving health services and health protection. The review is to consider systems and the delivery of all public health functions in Scotland with a strong focus on how public health contributes to improving health and wellbeing across the life-course, and reducing health inequalities for the future.
6. Taking forward initiatives with colleagues in Waste Management on issues such as Pest Control, Dog Control (including barking dogs), fly-tipping and general litter enforcement.
7. Continuing engagement with the Councils improvement process including projects on mobile working and improving methods of receiving customer complaints.
8. Continuing internal improvements on internal communications, the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) and internal Health & Safety policies.

9. Conclude review of options for procurement of Contaminated Land technical services to meet the Council's objectives and to obtain maximum value for money.
10. Progressing the Primary Authority partnership with Boots the Chemist in relation to occupational health and safety.
11. Specific activity projects are provided in **Appendix 4**.

B.2. Objectives and performance indicators

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

Id.	8.04
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	CMS1

Id.	8.05
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	CMS1

Id.	8.06
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

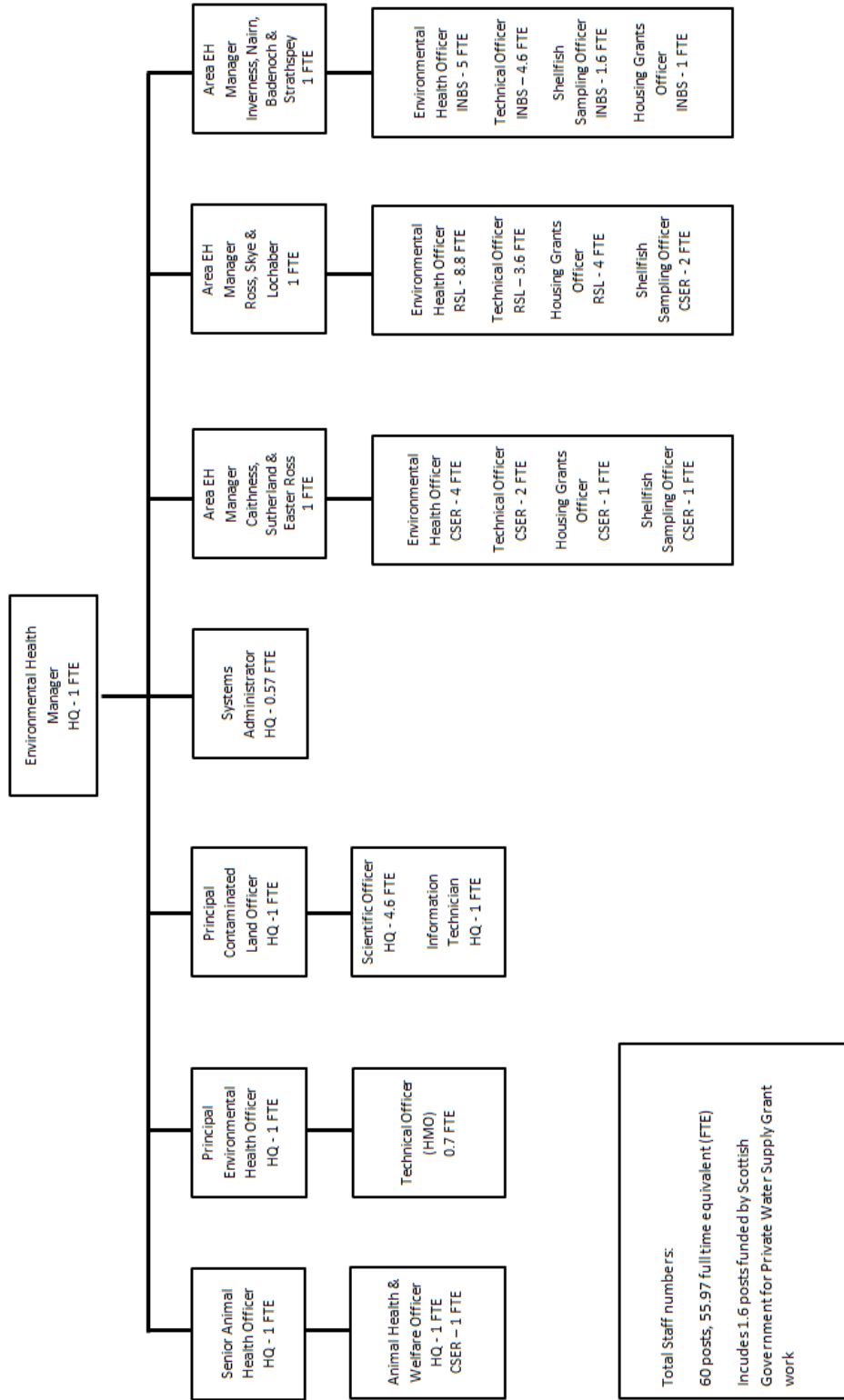
Id.	8.03
Additional Service Commitment	Respond timeously to consultants' Contaminated Land submissions associated with Planning Applications
Key Performance Results	% of consultant's submissions within development control responded to within 28 days. (IPI)

B.2.2 The team is also participating in the APSE Performance Network for Environmental Health.

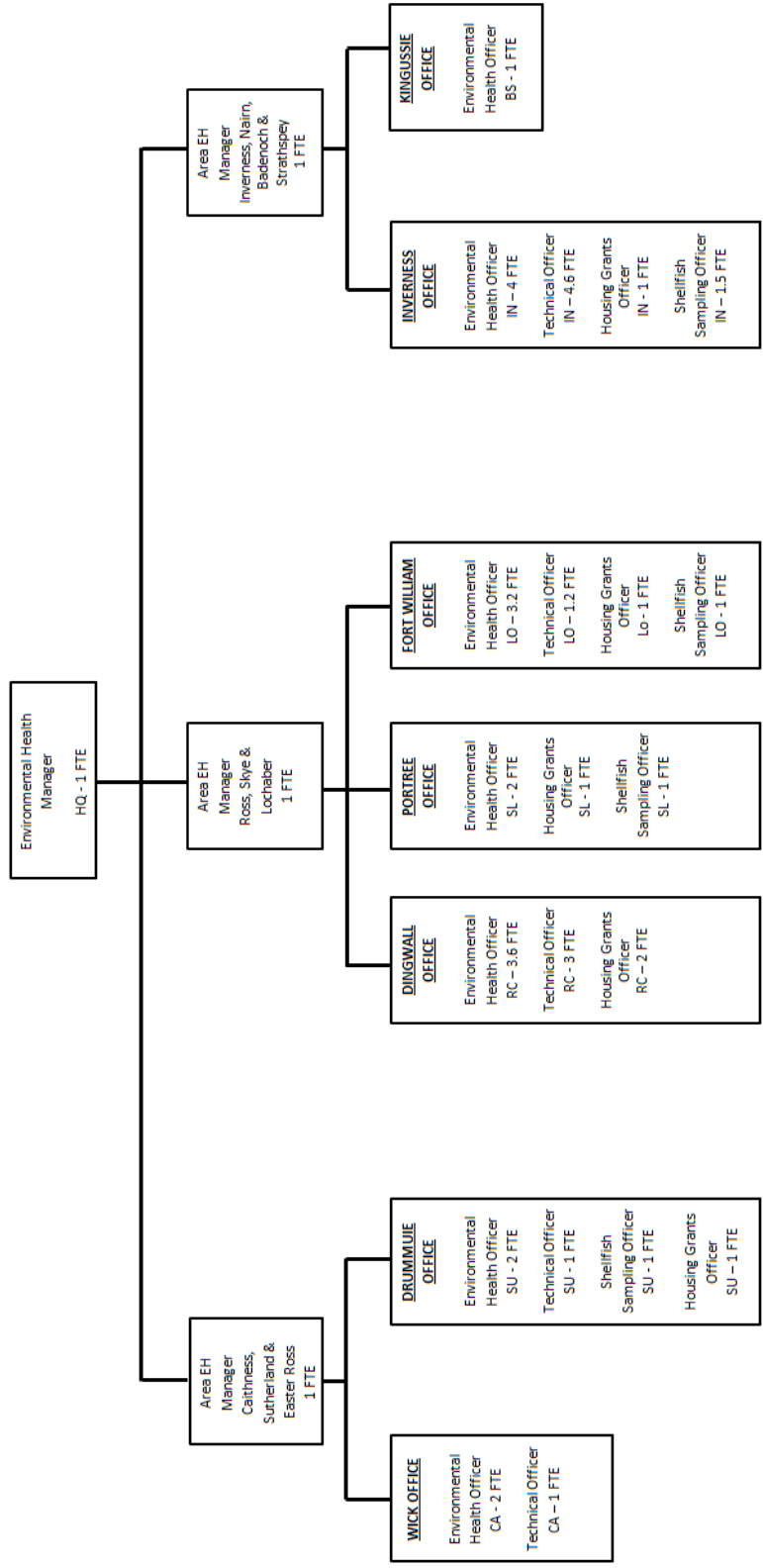
B.2.3 Reports will be brought to the Community Services Committee to cover Environmental Health's performance and review the Operational Plan.

Appendix 1 – Structure diagrams

Environmental Health Structure



Area Environmental Health Structure



Appendix 2

Joint Health Protection Plan, April 2015 – March 2017

Actions for Highland Council Environmental Health

JHPP Ref	Outcome	Work plan
2	Addressing health inequalities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Utilise Private landlord registration scheme to assist with housing and anti-social behaviour.2. Continue work on Housing improvement including licensing of HMO's3. Implementation of the national initiative "Beyond the School Gates"4. Review approaches to incivilities to identify good practice and specific projects to implement. Incivilities can include issues such as vandalism, graffiti, litter, dog-fouling and fly-tipping.
3	Minimise the risk to the public from E.coli contamination	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To deliver the E.coli strategy relating to the implementation of the national cross contamination guidance for food safety2. Ensure that public health interventions are taken for any failing drinking water supply, whether public or private, as necessary for E.coli failures3. Promotion of safe practices and procedures where there is contact with livestock at animal parks and farms4. Monitoring of bathing water quality (designated beaches/lochs).5. Take forward recommendations of the VTEC/E. coli O157 Action Plan for Scotland, 2013 - 2017
4	Monitoring and Improving drinking water quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Collaboration between all 3 agencies and Scottish Water in the monitoring and improvement of public and private water supplies2. Work to deliver the Scottish Governments Private Water Supply – Strategy for Improvement 2014.
5	Control Environmental exposures which have an adverse impact on health	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tackle the effects of antisocial or excessive noise in the communities2. Report on local air quality within each local authority area.3. Review approach to swimming pools and spas to ensure appropriate controls are in place regarding infection control4. Blue-green algae - Promotion of safe usage of recreational waters where there is a risk of BGA and responding to incidents5. Progress Contaminated land strategies
6	Resilience to Pandemic Flu outbreak	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review business continuity plans and Pandemic Flu Plans
7	Effective sea and airport health plans to provide adequate disease control measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review existing sea and airport health plans across Argyll and Bute Council and Highland Council to include Ebola arrangements.2. Develop a generic approach to sea and airport plans to ensure compliance with International Health Regulations3. Review the current situation concerning Port Health and identify whether Argyll and Bute should become a designated Port Health Authority
8	Enhance recovery planning for a major incident	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review and further develop a generic Recovery Plan outlining multi-agency responses.2. Exercise recovery plan3. Contribute to Regional Resilience Partnerships
9	Effective and proportionate arrangements in place to protect public health	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Revise joint health protection policies and procedures between all three parties2. Review existing arrangements/plans as a routine part of each incident that occurs.3. Undertake specific exercises for the purposes of training and evaluation of contingency plans relating to water and waste-water incidents; recovery phase following a radionuclide incident.4. Ensure that public health is inbuilt into the revised animal health and welfare contingency plans at a national and local level.

		<p>5. Consider key performance standards for the response, investigation and actions for public health incidents</p> <p>6. Joint training in managing incidents/outbreaks and chairing these meetings</p> <p>7. Implement the recommendations from Health Protection Oversight Group (HPOG) and work with other agencies to deliver.</p> <p>8. To investigate and take appropriate action in response to service requests which have the potential to impact adversely on the environment or to public health.</p> <p>9. To ensure that appropriate public health measures are embedded into the regional Animal Health Notifiable Disease Plans as they relate to zoonotic diseases to humans</p>
10	Minimise the risk to the public from Lyme Disease	<p>1. Assist with on-going research and reviews.</p> <p>2. Continue to raise public awareness.</p> <p>3. Review and develop websites/links to provide suitable information</p>
11	Reducing the impact of tobacco, alcohol and other harmful substances on public health	<p>1. Continued regulation of the smoking ban in enclosed and public places</p> <p>2. Continue to review and consider possible health issues related to e-cigarettes.</p>
12	Strong and Safe Communities	<p>1. To investigate and implement effective controls to minimise the spread of suspected and confirmed cases of communicable and notifiable diseases in the community</p>
14	Radon protection	<p>1. Ensure that the public in radon affected areas are provided with adequate information relating to the risks of radon and the mitigation measures which can be taken to reduce the risk.</p> <p>2. Promoting radon monitoring programmes in public bodies</p> <p>3. Raising awareness of radon monitoring responsibilities to employers and landlords.</p> <p>4. Produce a Radon Strategy for ABC to include council owned property, rented property</p>
15	Education and advice programme	<p>1. Raising awareness of communicable disease and controls through improved public information.</p> <p>2. Development and review of existing information leaflets and improvements to website</p> <p>3. Where possible, consider and co-ordinate seasonal promotions e.g. summer - ticks, bbqs</p> <p>4. Increase awareness of health protection issues with local businesses through use of alternative enforcement plans</p>
16	Preventing and minimising the spread of infection	<p>1. Investigation of suspected and confirmed cases of communicable disease and implementation of appropriate controls to prevent further spread</p> <p>2. Monitoring trends by surveillance and reporting</p> <p>3. Delivering vaccination programmes</p> <p>4. Participate in HPS/FSA national research on Campylobacter infection</p>
17	Food safety priorities	<p>1. To undertake the statutory duties of the food authority in protecting food safety in the food industry, and deliver the Councils Food Safety Law Enforcement Work plan</p> <p>2. Review arrangements in light of the new Food Standards Scotland agency</p> <p>3. Work with other agencies to reduce impact of illegal shellfish harvesting and distribution.</p>
18	Health and safety at work initiatives	<p>To complete the Councils Health and Safety at Work Law Enforcement Plan</p>

Appendix 3

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

The Scottish Government

<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.	SG, LAs, REHIS, SoCOEHS, DWQR

	(b) The extent to which PWS owners/users are complying with the advice from 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 4

Specific activity projects for 2015-16

1. Public Health and pollution control

- a) Implement the Joint Health Protection Plan 2015-2017
- b) Taking forward recommendations from the Scottish Government 'VTEC/E.coli O157 Action Plan for Scotland 2013-2017'.
- c) Ensuring that all Type A private water supply sources are risk assessed and sampled in 2015.
- d) Review database of private water supplies to ensure supplies are being appropriately addressed under the regulations.
- e) Review local air quality issues in Queensgate, Inverness and wider Local Air Quality Management strategy.
- f) Review blue-green algae risk assessments

2. Food Safety

- a) Work with the new Scottish Food Safety Body 'Food Standards Scotland' established in April 2015 on food safety.
- b) Engage with FSS on the EC review of official controls in 2015/16
- c) Conclude review of unrated premises & unregistered premises
- d) Conclude review of export certification procedures and charges in line with proposed national guidance that will be issued in 2015.
- e) Provide targeted training sessions for local business sectors on new regulatory requirements.
- f) 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) Participate in the 2015/16 national programme of work identified by the HSE e.g. on raising awareness of asbestos risks
- b) Work with businesses in areas identified as higher risk for radon gas to ensure appropriate sampling and assessments are carried out.
- c) Revisit work on preventing and controlling ill-health from animal contact at visitor attractions
- d) In 2015/16 continue on-going project on gas safety in catering premises - to raise awareness of the dangers from LPG in kitchens etc.
- e) 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.
- f) Project on Legionella Risks from Swimming pool /spa bath water quality

4. Contaminated Land

- a) Conclude Framework Agreement for the review of options for procurement of Contaminated Land technical services to meet the Council's objectives and to obtain maximum value for money.
- b) Review ways of providing contaminated land advice in-house to other Services within the Council in order to minimise spend on external consultants.
- c) Undertake a review of the Council's Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy

- d) 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.
- e) Contribute to strategic planning consultation on the Local Development Plans, Highland Wide Local Development Plan and the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan.
- f) Continue to review information and reports submitted in support of Planning Applications and to liaise with Planning and Building Control Officers to ensure sites are safely redeveloped through the planning process.

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

- a) Conclude review of procedures for dealing with houses in disrepair.
- b) Publicise the available support and assistance to help tenants and home owners with houses in disrepair
- c) 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) Continue review of existing caravan sites 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) Continuing engagement with the Councils improvement process
 - d) Continuing internal improvements on internal communications, the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) and internal Health & Safety policies.
-