

The Highland Council
Community Services Committee
20 August 2015

Agenda Item	21
Report No	COM 49/15

Environmental Health Operational Plan Review 2014/15

Report by Director of Community Services

Summary

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

1. Background

1.1 At the last meeting of the Transport, Environmental and Community Services on 6th February 2014 members approved the Environmental Health Operational Plan for 2014/15. 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 also provide members of the public and businesses with background information on the function. The operational plan for 2105/16 was approved by this committee on 4th June 2015.

1.2 This report provides a review of the 2014/15 Environmental Health Operational Plan.

2. Review of 2014/15 Environmental Health Operational Plan

2.1 A review of the specific objectives of the plan is provided in **Appendix 1**.

2.2 In summary, good progress was made with the key projects identified in the 2014/15 plan. Of the 46 identified:

- 33 were either completed or are on track;
- 12 were shown to have made some/little progress. Difficulties in progressing these projects were down to delays at national level or with lack of resources/competing priorities internally.
- 1 project showed no significant progress – this was on internal retention procedures. Work on this is being undertaken in 2015/16.

2.2 Key areas of work/achievements were:

- a) Continued high performance on inspections of high risk food establishments and monitoring of high risk private water supplies;
- b) Development and approval of new Joint Health Protection Plan for 2015-2017 with NHS Highland and Argyll & Bute Council;

- c) Taking forward work to control risks from VTEC/E.coli O157 at animal visitor attractions and events/agricultural shows;
- d) Taking forward work on an air quality management area within Inverness;
- e) Proactive work completed on gas safety and legionella with businesses throughout the Highlands;
- f) Working with the Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency Scotland on the proposals and introduction of the new Scottish Food Safety Body 'Food Standards Scotland'. The new body was established in April 2015.
- g) Responding to over 5000 service requests from businesses and the public throughout the year. These include complaints and queries on all areas of Environmental Health and includes
 - 530 requests for assistance through housing grants;
 - 400 food safety related queries;
 - Investigation of 90 accidents at work;
 - Investigation of 120 cases of enteric disease;
 - Investigation of 8 disease outbreaks (2 related to E.coli O157, 6 norovirus) and involvement at Ebola management group;
 - Investigation of 300 noise complaints;
 - Investigation of 370 nuisance complaints;
 - Investigation of 160 food hygiene/standards complaints;
 - Investigation of 100 complaints into private sector/rented properties;
 - Responding to 340 queries and complaints on animal health and Welfare;
 - Responding to 100 queries on private water supplies;
 - Responding to over 440 planning consultations.

3. Implications

- 3.1 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'.
- 3.2 There are no Legal, Equalities, Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Gaelic or Rural implications arising from this report.

Recommendation

Members are invited to approve the review of the Environmental Health Team Plan for 2014/15 as detailed in Appendix 1.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date:

Author: Alan Yates 01463 228728

Background Papers:

TEC 9/14 'Environmental Health Operational Plan 2014/15', Transport,
Environmental and Community Services Committee 6 February 2014

Environmental Health: Review of key projects for 2014/15

Ref No	Action	Actions going forward	RAG
1 Public Health and pollution control			
1.1	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.	New plan approved by Community Services Committee on 5th February 2015	G. complete
1.2	Taking forward recommendations from the Scottish Government 'VTEC/E.coli O157 Action Plan for Scotland 2013-2017' that was published in November 2013.	Within new JHPP. Actions being taken forward on national basis. Highland Council officers having direct input on issues such as private water supplies.	G. complete
1.3	Update Air and Seaport Health Procedures and implement changes introduced by International Health Regs 2005.	Sea Port Health Procedure has been reviewed and redrafted. Progressing in partnership with NHS Highland and Argyll & Bute Council.	G. On track
1.4	Ensuring that all Type A private water supply sources are risk assessed and sampled in 2014.	Complete	G. complete
1.5	Review database of private water supplies to ensure supplies are being appropriately addressed under the regulations.	Officers have continued to identify new supplies. Work ongoing with Meeting with Scottish Government DWQR to progress national issues.	A. Some progress made
1.6	Review local air quality issues in Queensgate, Inverness and wider Local Air Quality Management strategy.	Report received. Passed to SEPA & Scottish Govt. for comment. Engage with stakeholders - next step. Air Quality Management Area declared. Work progressing on required action plan. Steering group has been set up and consultant appointed.	G. On track
2 Food Safety			
2.1	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.	Officers participated in national working groups and to consultations. New body in place and work continuing on proposals for alternative approaches to meeting food safety requirements.	G. complete

Ref No	Action	Actions going forward	RAG
2.2	Review progress on cross-contamination initiative	Initiative completed December 2014. The project started in April 2013 and involved focussed, repeat visits to high and medium risk businesses to explain and help implement the FSA's new Cross Contamination guidance. At the end of the project over 640 premises were assessed with 470 premises identified as fully compliant with work progressing with the remainder. Enforcement action was taken where significant breaches identified.	G. complete
2.3	Engage with FSA on the EC review of official controls in 2014/15	Work progressing.	G. On track
2.4	Conclude review of unrated premises & unregistered premises	Unrated premises all categorised on risk basis. Pilot project completed looking at unrated/unregistered premises in Inverness. Identified further 80 unregistered premises. Further work required to inspect unrated and identify unregistered.	A. Some progress made
2.5	Conclude review of export certification procedures and charges in line with proposed national guidance that will be issued in 2014.	National guidance progressed and issued in July 2015. Work commenced on charges review	G. On track
2.6	Implement and close Action Plan agreed with FSAS following audit of shellfish sampling activities in 2013.	updated action plan sent to FSA 1/8/14. Further administrative work required to close action plan.	A. Some progress made
2.7	Provide targeted training sessions for local business sectors on new regulatory requirements.	Talks were carried out with childminders about food hygiene and allergens (FIR regs).	A. Some progress made
2.8	Continue working with colleagues in Education services on food standards and school meal procurement.	6 monthly meeting with ECS re menu choices and food standard compliance. Discussed new FIR regulations with Education and Early years food service provision.	G. On track
3 Health and Safety at Work enforcement and advice role			
3.1	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.	PA now includes Boots Opticians. No need for separate agreement. 1 officer involved approx. 1 day per week on developing assured advice.	G. On track
3.2	Participate in the 2014/15 national programme of work identified by the HSE for the control of Legionella.	65 premises contacted (July) - distilleries, fishery & dispatch/distribution premises. Poor return. Follow up. Check position with Council premises. 2 premises not previously registered identified - follow up with visit.	G. On track
3.3	Work with businesses in areas identified as higher risk for radon gas to ensure appropriate sampling and assessments are carried out.	Mailshot sent out in Helmsdale area. Further work planned in 2015/16	A. Some progress made

Ref No	Action	Actions going forward	RAG
3.4	Review work on preventing and controlling ill-health from animal contact at visitor attractions	Concluded. All premises identified and visited. All compliant. Consider appropriate follow up. Agricultural Shows: Complete. Review planned for 2015/16	G. complete
3.5	Review work on project to raise awareness on the duty to manage Asbestos.	12 premises in Inverness City Centre still to be contacted by mailshot. Mailshot completed March 2015.	G. complete
3.6	In 2014/15 further roll-out of on-going project on gas safety in catering premises - to raise awareness of gas safety in kitchens etc.	Premises identified follow up with questionnaire / possible survey monkey. List of independent businesses produced.	G. On track
3.7	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.	Discussions held with legal, internal health & safety and HSE. Agreement reached on responsibilities. Work underway with identified establishments.	A. Some progress made
4	Contaminated Land		
4.1	Conclude review of options for procurement of Contaminated Land technical services to meet the Council's objectives and to obtain maximum value for money.	Procurement exercise carried out and completed. New Framework agreement in place	G. complete
4.2	Engage with DSRL, SEPA, ONR, NDA in securing the long term remediation and re-use of the former Dounreay Nuclear Plant.	No issues raised in 2014/15	G. On track
4.3	Undertake a review of the Councils Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy (2009)	Survey of approach taken by all Scottish Councils completed. Review ongoing of strategy.	A. Some progress made
4.4	Participate in the proposed review of the Statutory Guidance for the Contaminated Land regime	Consultation by Scottish Government has not taken place.	G. On track
4.5	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	Work completed for 2014/15	G. complete
4.6	Work with Fujitsu, ICT and Planning Service to implement the IDOX hosted Contaminated Land Information Management System	Work completed with IDOX system successfully implemented.	G. complete
4.7	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.	No issues raised in 2014/15	G. On track

Ref No	Action	Actions going forward	RAG
4.8	Contribute to strategic planning consultation on the Local Development Plans.	Work completed for 2014/15	G. On track
5 Private sector housing enforcement, grants and disrepair/overcrowding advice role			
5.1	Review historical housing enforcement notices in Caithness.	Project undertaken by intern which greatly improved data available and resolved number of cases. Work ongoing.	G. On track
5.2	Conclude review of procedures for dealing with houses in disrepair in conjunction with Housing services	Complete. Procedures in place for (a) Below-Tolerable-Standard Inspections and (b) General procedure for housing disrepair	G. complete
5.3	Publicise the available support and assistance to help tenants and home owners with houses in disrepair	complete information on line	G. complete
5.4	Further publicise the availability of housing assistance to deal with elevated levels of radon gas.	complete - further information provided on the Council's website	G. complete
6 Animal Health and Welfare			
6.1	Provide support, through advice and enforcement, to agricultural industry on animal disease issues of concern such as bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) and sheep scab.	Sheep scab action taken when notified of any concerns. Work ongoing. BVD eradication scheme enters phase 4 on 1 June 2015. This increases movement restrictions on bovines.	G. On track
6.2	Conclude review of contingency plans	New Readiness & Resilience Partnership (Animal Health sub group) established in 2014/15. Scottish Government produced a plan which will be considered as possible Scotland wide, multi-organisational plan. Little action in relation to HC operational plans due to lack of time. Ongoing work to ensure HC plans up to date especially with many changes going on in relevant organisations.	A. Some progress made
6.3	Participate in the Animal Health & Welfare Framework agreement	Work being taken forward at national level - some delays with agencies involved.	A. Some progress made
6.4	Review database to ensure accurate reconciling of information relating to Animal Health and feeding stuffs.	Database being update during routine activities. Resources to not permit wider review.	A. Some progress made
7 Licensing enforcement and miscellaneous licensing administration			
7.1	Commence review of existing caravan sites to meet proposed new licence conditions	Work taken forward on reviewing standard licence conditions. Project underway in 2015 on updating existing caravan site licences.	G. On track
7.2	Commence review of existing animal boarding establishments to meet proposed new licence conditions	New conditions in place. Being implemented with existing establishments.	G. On track
7.3	Commence review of existing pet shops to meet proposed new licence conditions	New conditions in place. Being implemented with existing establishments.	G. On track

Ref No	Action	Actions going forward	RAG
8	General		
8.1	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.	Joint enforcement initiatives carried out in 2014/15	A. Some progress made
8.2	Explore options for more short term partnership/joint initiatives with other agencies	Ongoing pilot with Police and other agencies: 'Inverness Area Response'. Progressed well in 2014/15 and continuing.	G. On track
8.3	Managing the relevant consequences of the Council's organisational changes in 2014/15.	Savings achieved through vacancy management. Workforce planning underway for team.	G. complete
8.4	Continuing engagement with the Council's improvement process including the information management project for Housing Grants.	New SharePoint system implemented for grants.	G. complete
8.5	Continuing internal improvements on internal communications, the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) and internal Health & Safety policies.	Work ongoing on workforce planning Internal Health & Safety procedures updated. Little done on PSIF	A. Some progress made
8.6	Update retention policy and implement flare archiving	Initial draft of retention policy done. No significant work undertaken due to resources.	R. No significant progress
