

Agenda Item	<b>23</b>
Report No	<b>EDI/83/18</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee

**Date:** 8 November 2018

**Report Title:** Environmental Health Operational Plan 2018/19

**Report By:** Director of Community Services

### **1. Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report invites Members to approve the Environmental Health Operational Plan 2018/19.
- 1.2 The plan details the objectives for the whole of the Environmental Health Team including those areas not covered by the Community Services Service plan. The report is published to meet statutory requirements and provide Councillors, members of the public and businesses with information on the team.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 Members are invited to approve the Environmental Health Operational Plan 2018/19 as detailed in **Appendix 1**.

### 3. Background

3.1 Members will be aware that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee approved the Community Services Service Plan 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.

3.2 Environmental Health carries out a wide range of statutory duties on behalf of the Council with the general remit to protect and improve public health. This includes:

- public health protection, including private water supplies, statutory nuisances, smoking in public places, port health, communicable disease investigation (e.g. food / water borne disease, Legionnaires Disease);
- food safety, covering food hygiene, food labelling, and food export certification;
- enforcement and advisory role for Health and 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, and an advisory role to other council services on asset transfer and development;
- animal health and welfare, which can include dealing with foot and 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, riding establishments, theatres, sports grounds and dangerous wild animals; and
- dog control, pest control, litter education and enforcement (including fly-tipping), waste duty of care, and abandoned vehicles.

3.3 The Operational Plan for 2018/19 is provided at **Appendix 1**.

### 4. Key objectives

4.1 The plan contains challenging objectives for Environmental Health to contribute to the aims of a healthier and safer Highlands; and are listed in **Appendix 2** of the plan. Key objectives are summarised below:

- continue review of policies and operational procedures to improve effectiveness and efficiency (redesign);
- maintain performance in key Performance Indicators particularly on food safety and private water supplies;
- review and develop improved methods of monitoring performance across all areas of work; and
- review and implement the Joint Health Protection Plan for the area in conjunction with NHS Highland.

4.2 Food Standards Scotland will be conducting an audit of the Council's capability, capacity and performance of its statutory role of Food Authority in November 2018. Previous reports to the EDI Committee have detailed the challenges that the Service has faced with regards to this role and the Service's approach has been to focus on premises presenting the highest risk to consumers. A report on the outcome of the Audit will be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.

## **5. Implications**

- 5.1 Resource – no specific resource implications as a result of the new plan
- 5.2 Legal – As reported previously to Committee, resources do not permit all statutory responsibilities to be implemented as per statutory/official guidance. This leaves the Council open to criticism and possible sanction by external agencies/Government. The team ensures resources are committed on areas of greatest public health significance with work being appropriately prioritised.
- 5.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – No implications.
- 5.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – No implications.
- 5.5 Risk - 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'.
- 5.6 Gaelic - No implications.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 8 October 2018

Author: Alan Yates, Environmental Health Manager

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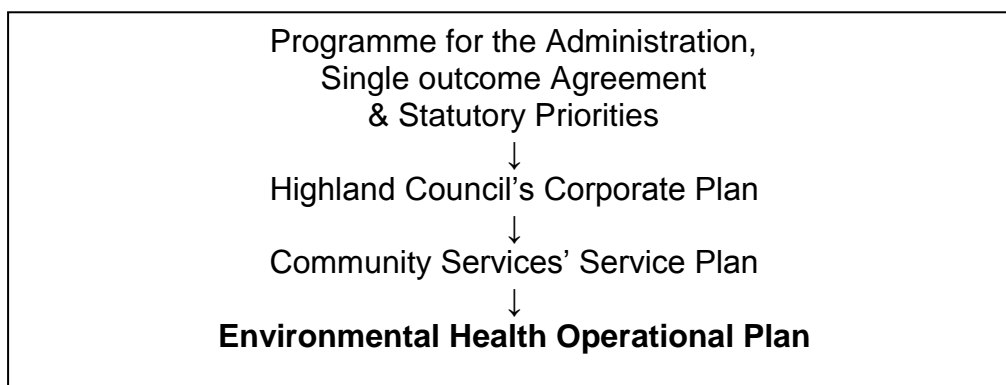
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## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### 1. Purpose, Timeframe and monitoring

- 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 2018/19 financial year. The plan forms an important part of the Service's processes to ensure national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally.
- 1.2 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:-



- 1.3 **Appendix 3** contains a Food Safety Team Plan that provides specific information on the Council's role as statutory Food Authority. A specific food plan is required to meet the requirements of the statutory Food Law Code of Practice issued by Food Standards Scotland.

**2. Structure and resources**

- 2.1 Environmental Health has 61 posts with a full-time equivalent of 54.78. The Service operates 3 operational areas and works through 7 offices throughout the area as shown below:-

<b>Operational Area</b>	<b>Offices</b>
North Team - Caithness, Sutherland	Wick, Golspie
West Team - Skye and Lochaber	Portree, Fort William
Mid-Highland Team – Ross & Cromarty, Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey	Dingwall, Inverness and Kingussie

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.

- 2.2 A structure diagram is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.3 The Service had a revenue budget of £2.229m for 2018/19.

**3. Roles and responsibilities**

- 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;
- Animal Health & Welfare which can include dealing with Foot & Mouth disease, Anthrax, Avian Flu, Bluetongue and Imported Pets;
- 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;

- Dog Control, Pest Control, Litter education & enforcement, abandoned vehicles; and
- Assisting with Civil contingencies and emergency planning, with specific responsibilities regarding recovery from incidents.

3.2 Much of the work is preventative and the team has an important role in ensuring the Highlands maintains its reputation as 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.

3.3 An approximate summary of officers allocated against function is provided below:-

Function	Full time equivalent
Food Hygiene	9.4
Food Standards	1.6
Health & Safety at work	2
Private Water supply	5.2
Animal Health & welfare	2.1
Licensing	3
Public Health	5.6
Housing	7.5
Contaminated Land	2.3
Pollution control	1.5
Litter, dog and pest control, abandoned vehicles	9.4
General management	3.3
Dedicated IT support	1.4

54.3

#### 4. **Demands**

4.1 The workload for the environmental health can be simplistically split into proactive (programmable) work and reactive work.

#### 4.2 **Proactive work**

4.2.1 The team carry out proactive/programmable work under certain legislation. The work is risk based and intelligence driven. Often specific proactive work is carried out in Partnership with other agencies such as Police Scotland, SEPA, HMRC and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

A summary of the some of the **proactive** demands is provided below:-

#### 4.2.2 **Food Safety**

Responsible as statutory Food Authority for approximately 4500 food businesses in Highland. Resources allow around 800 programmed

inspections of premises in Highland per year focussed on those presenting highest risk. Approximately 150 proactive food samples are taken as part of national surveys.

#### **4.2.3 Private Water Supplies**

In Highland the population served by private supplies is estimated at 14%. There are currently 775 “Regulated” supplies (commercial or large private water supplies) that are registered and subject to mandatory risk assessment and monitoring and intervention by the Council. With the implementation of new Regulations at end of 2017 the number of “Regulated” supplies will increase by an estimated 25% as a result of private rented properties on PWS requiring risk assessing and monitoring.

It is estimated these supplies serve 3000 properties. Each supply is visited annually as part of a proactive programme to ensure they meet the required standard.

There are also 1651 “Type B” (smaller private water supplies) registered whereby our duty is to offer advice and assistance and discretionary powers in respect of sampling. It is estimated these supplies serve 2300 properties.

#### **4.2.4 Health & Safety at Work**

Enforcement of health and safety at work legislation is divided between the Health and Safety Executive and local authorities. HSE is responsible for workplaces including factories, farms, building sites, schools, hospitals and offshore installations. The Council cover businesses including offices, shops, hotels, leisure premises, caterers, nurseries and clubs. In Highland the Environmental Health team have responsibility for over 5000 businesses.

In line with national guidance proactive work is carried out based on intelligence and focussed on those sectors and activities with the most serious risks or where the risks are least well-controlled. Recent initiatives have looked at fixed LPG installations, commercial sunbed operators; and gas safety in commercial catering premises. Around 40-60 targeted inspections are carried out per year in addition to general awareness raising campaigns

#### **4.2.5 Animal Health and Welfare**

Officers carry out proactive inspections of animal markets and other sales, and Assembly Centres to ensure compliance, in particular with biosecurity (vehicles, premises and people), livestock identification, welfare, transport, licensing and record keeping. Around 140 inspections are carried out per year. The team also investigate allegations of illegally imported pets from both the EU and third countries.

#### **4.2.6 Dog fouling and littering patrols**

Officers carry out patrols in the worst affected areas to maintain a visible profile and issue fixed penalty notices. Officers will also speak to dog walkers on best practices regarding dog control. Current resources only allow limited pro-active patrols to be carried out and these are targeted at the worst affected areas based on feedback from communities and members.

### 4.3 **Reactive work**

4.3.1 The team deal with significant number of incidents and major investigations in addition to the more routine service requests from the public and businesses.

The numbers of requests have been increasing year on year. Some of this may be down to improved recording but the general trend is up.

year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total requests	4413	5314	5391	6568	8779

The summary below of service requests is based on 2017 data.

Category	count	Category	count
Animal Health & Welfare	612	Public Health Incidents (pollution/flooding)	7
Dog fouling & general dog enquiries	323	Air Quality Monitoring Unit Work	54
Stray dogs	165	National Assistance Burial enq	28
Aggressive dogs/dog bites	213	Exhumation/re-internment enquiry	1
Planning & general consultation	440	Home Burial enquiry/request	8
FOI request	142	Housing grant enquiry	528
Abandoned vehicles	568	Housing general enquiry	21
Litter	60	Housing complaint - dampness	29
Accident reports	119	Housing complaint - structural	7
H&S complaints	153	Housing complaint - other	29
H&S request for info	51	Housing visit for immigration	7
Smoking ban complaint	2	Request for Housing Condition	120
Licensing enquiry	172	Pest control requests	379
Licensing Consultation	508	Food Premises Registration	298
Licensing complaint	47	food safety enquiry	353
Noise enquiry	172	Fish/Shellfish Export Cert	1149
Noise complaint	379	Food (non Fish/Shellfish) Export cert	4
Dirty house complaint	23	Approval/Lic/Auth application	5
Foul Odours	73	Shellfish Registration Document	48
Dust Complaint	6	Shellfish sites closure	24
Smoke Complaint	81	Complaint - Food (Unfit)	110
General Nuisance - Other	120	Complaint - Hygiene of Premises	79
Light Nuisance	5	Complaint - Food Standards (e.g. labelling)	16
Insect Nuisance	2	Infectious disease enquiry/rep	20
Choked/Defective Drain / Sewer	41	Infectious disease notification	151
Choked/Defective Septic Tank	20	Outbreak investigation	3
Blue Green Algae Alert	4	Ship Sanitation Certificate Request	21
Beach Sampling Enquiry/Activity	1	Ship/aircraft request for sample	12
Radon query	2	Private water supply enquiry	147
Plant cmplt/query (injurious weeds)	5	Private water supply request for sample	114



Fly-tipping	174	Private water supply other	59
Whale/animal carcass	12	Public water supply query/cmplt	21

4.3.2 Significant incidents can take considerable time to investigate and conclude as often complex issues involved. For example, a prosecution can take the equivalent of 4-6 weeks of one officer's time to investigate including interviewing witnesses and then to prepare a detailed case for the Procurator Fiscal. The Service currently has 6 such cases being taken to Court by the procurator Fiscal covering a wide range of offences in terms of food safety, animal health, housing and health & safety.

## 5. Risk Management

5.1 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).

## PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

### 6. Priorities and challenges 2018/19

6.1 Over the next year the team will be taking forward a range of projects and these are listed in in **Appendix 2**. These include:-

- a) Continue review of policies and operational procedures to improve effectiveness and efficiency (redesign).
- b) Maintain performance in key Performance Indicators particularly on food safety and private water supplies.
- c) Review and develop improved methods of monitoring performance across all areas of work
- d) Review and implement the Joint Health Protection Plan for the area in conjunction with NHS Highland.

6.2 The environmental health management team have been reviewing the changes that have occurred since 2016, the workload demands, budgets and the redesign process. An improvement plan is being developed and will be implemented in 2018/19. It includes the following goals to address the challenges facing environmental health:-

1. PRIORITIES: Ensure team have clear goals and priorities;
2. STRUCTURE: Ensure team structure in place that: (1) can manage performance to meet demands and achieve objectives of service plan; (2) has capacity to consider strategic issues and capacity to respond to serious incidents; (3) has clear roles, and responsibilities;
3. DELIVERY METHODS: flexible workforce and methods of delivery to meet demands of priority functions in all geographical areas;

4. SUPPORTING PROCEDURES: Clear & consistent work procedures to improve efficiency and avoid duplication of effort;
5. IT & BUSINESS SUPPORT: Continual improvement in use of technology & reducing administrative burdens;
6. WORKFORCE PLANNING: sustainable workforce;
7. OFFICER DEVELOPMENT: build capacity by improving learning and development process for officers;
8. OUTCOMES: Demonstrate benefits and Improve profile
9. SAVINGS & INCOME: Increase income & identify further commercial opportunities;
10. PARTNERSHIP: Partnership/shared working with internal colleagues, external partners and neighbouring councils.

## 7. **Objectives and performance indicators**

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

<b>Id.</b>	<b>8.05</b>
<b>Additional Service Commitment</b>	Ensure high risk food premises are inspected for food hygiene purposes.
<b>Key Performance Results</b>	% of high risk food businesses inspected for Food Hygiene purposes (IPI)
<b>Risk</b>	CMS1

<b>Id.</b>	<b>8.06</b>
<b>Additional Service Commitment</b>	Ensure Risk Assessment and sampling of all relevant Private Water Supplies to reduce risk of water borne disease.
<b>Key Performance Results</b>	% of high risk Private Water Supplies inspected and sampled (IPI)
<b>Risk</b>	TEC 4

7.2 Key Performance Results:

<b>Target</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
100% of high risk food businesses inspected for food hygiene (Category A & B premises)	96%	94%	92%	85%
100% of high risk private water supplies are inspected and sampled (Regulated supplies)	95.2%	96%	87%	93%

7.3 Other performance measures and outcomes

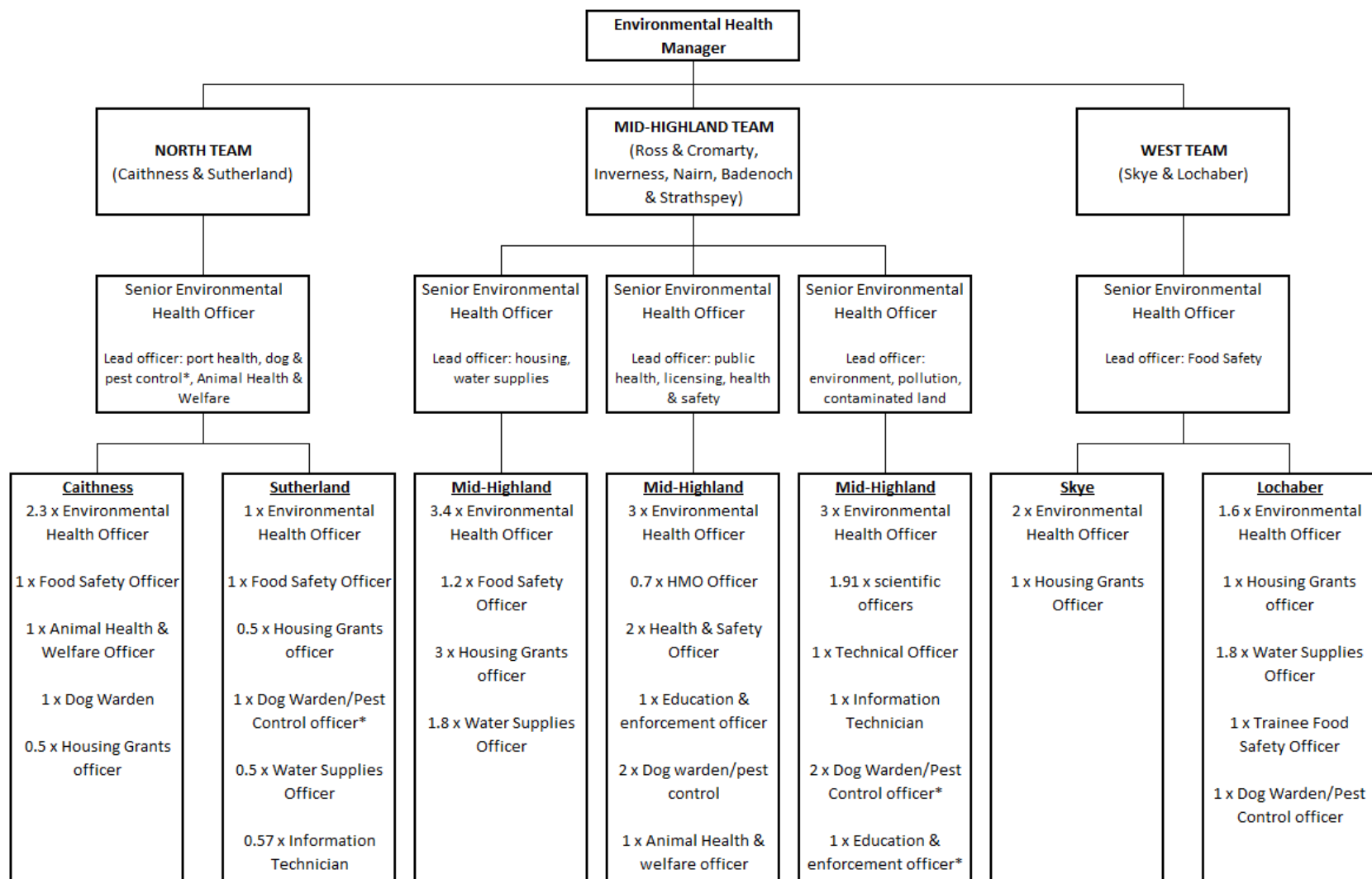
As a mainly preventative service, it is challenging to demonstrate the impact of all statutory interventions. The team are working with APSE on benchmarking and other appropriate performance measures for the future.

7.4 For food safety, the inspection programme is designed to check food hygiene standards and staff do take appropriate enforcement action, including closure of premises, where poor standards are found. These interventions are

required under the statutory Code of Practice and will contribute to Food Standards Scotland's strategy for reducing foodborne illness. This estimates the burden of foodborne disease in Scotland annually at 43,000 cases of illness, with 5,800 cases presenting to GPs and 500 cases requiring hospital treatment.

- 7.5 For Health and Safety at Work, interventions are intelligence led in liaison with the HSE. In addition to the direct impact of any workplace injury on the individual and their family, the HSE estimated the wider cost to society as £18,500 for each case of 7 day or more absence due to work related ill health, £29,500 for each case of 7 day or more absence due to work related non-fatal injury, and £1.6m for each workplace related fatality. In Highland, our officers investigated 87 cases last year related to workplace injury and ill-health, and in the last 5 years have investigated 3 workplace fatalities. The benefits to workers, their families and the Highland economy of maintaining health and safety interventions are demonstrable.
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## Appendix 1 – Environmental Health team structure



## **Appendix 2**

### **Specific activity projects for 2018/19**

#### **1. Health & Safety at work**

- 1.1 To devise and deliver a programme of health and safety interventions based upon Local Authority Circular (LAC67/2) (rev6) and the list of national priorities published by the HSE. The programme shall consist of work to deliver those national priorities set by HSE, work to deliver local priorities and an inspection programme that meets the requirements of the National Local Authority Enforcement Code.

In 2018/19, three projects are being undertaken:-

1. **Inflatable Play Equipment:** Following a number of tragic incidents associated with the use of inflatable play equipment, most notably the tragic death of a young girl at Harlow, Essex in 2016 when a bouncy castle was blown away due to being improperly secured in windy conditions, and more recently the death of a young girl at Goreslton, Norfolk after an inflatable trampoline exploded, Highland Council want to raise awareness of Health and Safety legislative requirements within this activity sector. The aim is to contact activity providers to advise and ensure they fully aware of the inherent risk factors and highlighting best practice.
  2. **Minimising Infection at Animal Petting farms:** One of the HSE priorities for 2018/19 is to reduce the risk of infections associated with animal petting farms (i.e E.coli, campylobacter etc). One of the principal controls is to ensure adequate handwashing facilities are available and readily accessible at such premises. Highland Council want to raise awareness of Health and Safety legislative requirements within this activity sector and ensure suitable and sufficient handwashing facilities.
  3. **Commercial Gas Safety.** One of the HSE priorities for 2018/19 is to improve gas safety within commercial kitchens. It is important that all gas equipment is properly maintained by a competent Gas Safe engineer and that all employees are trained in the use of equipment. Highland Council want to raise awareness of Health and Safety legislative requirements within the catering industry with respect to gas safety. This will be achieved through a combination of targeted inspections and awareness campaigns through social media and the press.
- 1.2 Where resources permit, to review existing health and safety enforcement procedures and integrate fully with our APP Civica database
- 1.3 Where resources permit, to devise and implement a regular training programme for all warranted officers to ensure maintain competence in health and safety

1.4 Where resources permit, to publish a register online of all relevant HSW information that is commonly requested under FOI legislation. This would include details of all Improvement Notices and Prohibition Notices issued under the HASAWA 1974, and a register of Cooling Towers.

## **2. Licensing enforcement and administration**

2.1 To devise and implement new operating procedures based upon the PSIF framework in respect of all licences issued under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 where EH have a remit in terms of the Highland Councils Enforcement Protocol.

2.2 To review and amend as necessary the current guidance issued to applicants in respect of all licences issued under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 where EH have a remit in terms of the Councils Enforcement Protocol.

2.3 Where resources permit, to arrange refresher training for all authorised officers in Civic Government Licensing procedures and the associated EH operating procedures.

2.4 Review administrative process on miscellaneous licensing to provide a more consistent approach and better utilisation of Civica APP (Flare). The first phase of this has now been completed and is currently being piloted for Riding Establishment Renewals. This will be extended to Breeding Establishments Licences and Boarding Establishment Licences in mid-October. As part of this process a framework has been developed to allow similar improvements to be applied across other areas of Environmental Health.

2.5 Review and update online miscellaneous licence application forms to reflect changes in current procedures.

2.6 Caravan Sites - In preparation for new legislation coming into force:-

- a) Conduct an overview of caravan sites and licences issued to date;
- b) Review and update all caravan site premises records and reflect amendments in Civica APP register; and
- c) Review and update current licence conditions to reflect current model standards.

## **3. Private Water Supplies**

3.1 Achieve 100% on PWS monitoring programme of Regulated "commercial" supplies.

3.2 Continue to explore ways to identify privately rented properties that are on a PWS and are classified as a "Regulated" supplies and work with landlords/letting agents to improve water supplies so as to protect the health of tenants.

- 3.3 Complete the radon sampling of supplies identified by the Drinking Water Quality Inspectorate.
- 3.4 New Regulations require that all “Regulated” supplies are risk assessed by 2022 using a new Scottish Government risk assessment tool and. Using a risk based approach to inspection (e.g. supplies that serve a large population and water quality compliance) , complete 250 risk assessments by 2020.
- 3.5 Continue to work in partnership with NHS Highlands concerning reports of illness and links to PWS.
- 3.6 Review how PWS data is stored and shared with the Scottish Government (DWQR), NHS Highlands and the general public.
- 3.7 If resources permit, promote PWS grants targeting Type B "domestic" premises e.g. social media, liaison with Community Councils, rural community organisations.
- 3.8 If resources permit, develop a PWS record book that relevant persons/users can purchase from the Council to assist with their maintenance and monitoring record keeping income generation.

#### **4. Food Safety**

##### **4.1 Food Safety – inspection priorities**

It must be noted that investigations, or enforcement action, significant to public health will take priority over the targets specified below.

##### **Priority 1: Routine programme**

To inspect the following on time for the due date (or within 28 days subject to Senior EHO approval):

- Food hygiene: 100% target for A rated, B rated, Approved premises;
- Food hygiene: 100% target for C, where resources permit with most overdue targeted first;
- Food Hygiene: Where resources permit, most overdue D rated.
  
- Food Standards: 100% target for A rated;
- Food Standards: 100% target for B rated that are manufacturers where resources permit.

For all food hygiene inspection in caterers and retailers also carry out a focussed food standards inspection.

##### **Priority 2: Unrated food hygiene premises**

Senior EHOs and officers to ensure all food hygiene premises that are unrated premises are given priority and inspected according to the service procedure and the area list of unrated food hygiene premises is reviewed monthly.

- 4.2 Work with the Food Standards Scotland on implementation of all national legislation and standards, in particular implementation of a new method of undertaking official controls in our Approved Establishments (manufacturers of products of animal origin).
- 4.3 Reconfiguring the EH food officer resource to optimise delivery of official controls in the Approved Establishments and other high risk manufacturers. Purpose being to protect public health and support economic development.
- 4.4 Continue to engage with partners in Scottish Government and Industry to ensure EH Service is structured and financed to best facilitate the needs of the export market.
- 4.5 Continue to support the national working groups, such as the high risk foods working group, tasked with providing clear and consistent guidance for service delivery.

## **5. Private Sector Housing (PSH)**

- 5.1 Review our policy/produce a PSIF procedures on PSH inspection and intervention in relation to both BTS standard (Housing Act 1998) and the Repairing Standard (Housing (Scotland) Act 2006) and whether the Council will adopt the new powers for LA's to refer 3rd party applications to the First Tier Tribunal (formerly PRHP) on behalf of tenants.
- 5.2 BTS referrals - approx. 95% of these property inspections relate to minor non-compliance with the Repairing Standard. Improve how we record PSH inspection data in Civica APP i.e. categories of non-compliance for BTS/repair standard so as to enable future reporting on PSH stock condition and the scoping of future initiatives.
- 5.3 Expand and develop EH and Landlord Registration Officer relations.
- 5.4 If resources permit, further engagement with landlords/letting agents - Involvement with Shelter Housing, local commerce.
- 5.5 If resources permit, develop initiatives to identify poor/sub-standard housing and bring about improvements so as to protecting vulnerable tenants from health/safety risks and expose rogue landlords.
- 5.6 If resources permit, advice/educate home owners on how to repair houses before they need major overhaul and investment. Interface with other agencies/organisations.
- 5.7 If resources permit, work with housing colleagues on Empty property strategy for PSH - develop a campaign to provide help and support to owners of empty properties to bring them back into use (social media, leaflets, signposting).

## **6. General Public Health Protection**



- 6.1 Review and implement the 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.
- 6.2 National assistance funerals - Review and update policy and operating procedures in respect of requests for National Assistance funerals.
- 6.3 Port Health:-
- a) Provide inspection and sampling provision of the International Health Regulation 2005 in all approved ports in Highland Council and provide support to NHS Highland in respect to ship or aircraft sourced infections.
  - b) If resources permit, continue to provide training in Port Health to Scottish local authority staff.

## **7. Local environment issues (dog control, pest, abandoned vehicles, litter)**

- 7.1 **Abandoned vehicles:-**
- a) Review the protocol for abandoned vehicles and update the Highland Council Website to provide advice and information to the public on the service provision of Highland Council. Review has been completed for enforcement under the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978.
  - b) If resources permit, provide information of the number of vehicles uplifted by Highland Council onto the Highland Council website for freedom of information enquiries.
  - c) If resources permit, carry out a focused enforcement initiative of unlicensed vehicles in collaboration with Police Scotland and DVLA within Highland Council.
- 7.2 **Litter and Dog Control:-**
- a) Review the operational requirements for the provision of dog control and litter control staff within Highland Council to ensure suitable provision of enforcement through the area.
  - b) Where resources permit, carry out focused litter control initiatives with Police Scotland within Inverness city centre.
  - c) Where resources permit, carry out anti-dog fouling initiatives in collaboration with local communities.
  - d) Where resources permit, provide information to the Highland Council website on the number of notices issued for dog control and littering for freedom of information enquiries.
- 7.3 **Seagulls**
- a) Review and where necessary update information provided to the public on seagulls (website & information leaflet)
  - b) If resources permit, develop further campaign material on not feeding gulls in targeted areas affected by foraging gulls.

#### 7.4 **Inverness City Centre – Trade Waste Project**

Implement the approved trade waste policy within Inverness City Centre and conduct a full public consultation and review after a period of 6 months. Main aim of the trade waste policy is to reduce litter, nuisance and visual impact associated with commercial bins within Inverness City Centre.

### 8. **Pollution**

#### 8.1 Local Air Quality Management

- a) Continue work on Local Air Quality Management Area Action Plan
- b) Review local air quality issues in Queensgate, Inverness and wider Local Air Quality Management strategy.
- c) Maintain monitoring facilities at Queensgate, Inverness, Telford Street, Inverness and Strath Viach.
- d) Prepare and submission of annual Local Air Quality Progress Report to the Scottish Government

#### 8.2 Contaminated land:-

- a) 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.
- b) Promote ways of providing contaminated land advice in-house to other Services within the Council in order to minimise spend on external consultants.
- c) Continue to provide support and assistance to other Council departments regarding the City Deal development of the Longman site.
- d) Assist with other Services within the Council, SEPA and external consultants on the Inverness City Region Deal land regeneration commitment for the remediation of parts of Longman Landfill.
- e) Assist and advise when consulted on sites being considered under the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund.
- f) Continue to advise relevant authorities regarding non-radioactive contamination during the decommissioning of the Dounreay Nuclear Facility.

### 9. **Animal Health and Welfare**

- 9.1 a) Participate in the Animal Health & Welfare Framework agreement.
- b) Provide support, through advice and enforcement, to agricultural industry on animal disease issues of concern.

### 10. **General management**

- 10.1 Continue general review of approach to work to improve effectiveness and efficiency (redesign).
- 10.2 Explore options for more short term partnership/joint initiatives with other agencies.

10.3 Continue internal improvements on internal communications and internal Health & Safety policies including stress management.

10.2 Management Information system - Civica APP (Flare)

- a) Review and develop document templates to increase automation in action diaries to reduce officer admin time and speed up processing tasks.
  - b) Review the miscellaneous licensing module in conjunction with the overall review of miscellaneous licensing administration. This has now commenced for Riding Establishment Licence Renewals with significant automation introduced which is designed to save time and improve consistency.
  - c) Continue to develop and implement improvements identified through the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) process.
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**Environmental Health: Food Safety Team Plan 2018/19**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The Environmental Health team within Community Services carries out the statutory role of Food Authority within the Highland Council area. This Food Safety Team Plan outlines the Environmental Health approach to delivering all aspects of food regulatory and advice functions.

**2. Background Information**

**2.1 Profile of the Local Authority**

2.1.1 In geographical terms the Highland Council is the largest Council in Scotland, spanning an area of 26,000 square kilometres – one third of the landmass of Scotland, one eighth of landward Britain. The population of the area is 232,950 (2013 data). Detailed profile information on the Highland area is available [here: http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/695/council\\_information\\_performance\\_and\\_statistics/165/highland\\_profile\\_-\\_key\\_facts\\_and\\_figures](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/695/council_information_performance_and_statistics/165/highland_profile_-_key_facts_and_figures)

**2.2 Organisational structure**

2.2.1 The Council operates through the Chief Executive's team and four service departments:

- Care and Learning
- Community Services
- Corporate Resources
- Development and Infrastructure

[http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/695/council\\_information\\_performance\\_and\\_statistics/387/council\\_structure](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/695/council_information_performance_and_statistics/387/council_structure)

2.2.2 This Service Plan does not address Feedingstuffs as responsibility for this aspect of food legislation lies within the Trading Standards team.

**2.3 The Scope of the Food Safety Service**

2.3.1 Operational responsibility for food safety and food standards enforcement in premises subject to local authority enforcement currently lies totally with Highland Council Community Services. No duties are currently outsourced. Field staff include EHOs and technical Officers (Food Safety). Many of these Officers carry out other functions in addition to food safety and food standards work, e.g. several of the EHOs involved in food safety and food standards work also carry out the full range of environmental health duties e.g. health and safety inspections and investigation of public health complaints.

### 3. Demands on the Food Safety team

#### 3.1 Total businesses:

3.1.1 The team has responsibility for 4669 food business in the Highland area. This breaks down as follows:-

Type of food business	number
Primary producers	343
Manufacturers & packers	313
Importers/Exporters	1
Distributors/Transporters	68
Retailers	794
Restaurants and caterers	3150
Grand Total	4669

For comparison, the total number of premises in Scotland (top five):

	LA Name	Total premises
1	Edinburgh (City of)	6197*
2	Glasgow City	6193*
3	Highland	4669
4	Fife	4441*
5	North Lanarkshire	2615*

\*2016 data – new data not available

3.1.2 **Approved establishments:** The numbers given in 2.4.1 include premises that have been formally approved. Food Hygiene Legislation requires premises that manufacture and wholesale products of animal origin to be approved by their local Food Authority before they start trading.

3.1.3 With 70 Approved establishments Highland has a significant number of approved premises when compared to other Scottish authorities (Aberdeenshire have 88, Argyll & Bute 59, Glasgow City 48 and other authorities have lower numbers). Approved establishments include cheese producers, milk processors, ice cream producers, fish processors and smokers, shellfish dispatch centres, and manufacturing butchers.

3.1.4 The approach to interventions at Approved premises and other manufacturers is currently being reviewed in a joint approach by Food Standards Scotland and a Local Authority Officer group. The review is to ensure a risk based approach to these establishments is taken, with detailed review of their specialist food safety management systems. Future interventions at these establishments will require **greater** commitment of staff resources.

3.1.5 **Food Hygiene Information Scheme:** The Council have fully implemented the national Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS). The scheme is designed to provide further information to the public on outcomes of hygiene inspections of food business where the public have access e.g. caterers and retailers. The display of such information at the business is voluntary but all outcomes will be displayed on the web.

3.1.6 Ratings at October 2018:

<b>FHIS rating</b>	<b>number</b>
Pass & Eatsafe	33
Pass	2260
Improvement Required	402
Pass & Exempt	176
Outwith scope	546
Sensitive – pass	119
Sensitive - improvement required	5

The inspection results for inspected premises are listed on the internet at [ratings.food.gov.uk](http://ratings.food.gov.uk). A searchable mobile phone app is also available.

### 3.2 **Inspection performance**

3.2.1 The statutory Food Law Code of Practice issued by Food Standards Scotland requires local authorities to carry out interventions in a risk-based approach at the frequencies specified in the Code. Current resources do not permit full compliance with these requirements. Resources are focussed on premises presenting the highest risk to consumers.

3.2.2 Inspections of Highest risk premises (A & B rated premises) have dropped from 92% in 2016/17 to 85% in 2017/18.

3.2.3 There has been a decrease in total food hygiene inspections carried out by officers in the last 2 years.

Total Food Hygiene inspections carried out in last 4 years

<b>year</b>	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>number</b>	965	1096	883	764

\*Note figures will include multiple inspections of the same business. Does not include data on follow-up, advisory or sampling visits.

3.2.4 The table below sets out the total numbers of food businesses in the Highland area categorised by risk in terms of food hygiene (figures 16/10/18). Note the business may be rated high risk due to inherently high risk processes or due to poor standards within the premises.

	Category	required inspection frequency	Total Number	overdue
Highest Risk	A	every 6m	16	0
	B	every 12m	172	7
	C	every 18m	873	402
	D	every 24m	1425	1187
Lowest Risk	E	every 36m	1268	1113
	not yet rated	-	898	

Comments:

- i. The 7 overdue category B rated premises are in one particular area office due to significant staff shortage/work demands. Programme is in place to inspect all overdue premises in next 3 months.
- ii. Category E premises are low risk businesses.
- iii. Not yet rated – comments below

**3.2.5 Not yet rated**

Highland have had a significant number of premises that have yet to be rated. The premises may have never been inspected or have only received a pre-opening advisory visit. Officers assess any new premises that register with us and assign a priority for inspection based on type of food business. Of those yet to be rated, 5 have been given 'high' priority to be inspected and these will be fitted in with monthly inspection programmes. There are a significant number of low risk businesses within the list such as B&Bs, childminders and deer larders.

**3.2.6 For comparison, 2016 UK data is provided below of number of premises not yet rated (top ten):-**

	Country	LA Name	Total (including not yet rated & outside)	not yet rated
1	England	Birmingham	8341	1314
2	Scotland	Glasgow City	6193	1154
3	England	Croydon	3511	856
4	Scotland	Edinburgh (City of)	6197	770
5	Northern Ireland	Ards and North Down	1944	766
6	Scotland	Highland	4566	762
7	England	Camden (2)	3761	672
8	England	Bristol	4481	606
9	England	Lewisham	2628	489
10	Scotland	Aberdeenshire	2257	466

Unfortunately 2017 data is not available.

**3.3 Planned improvements:**

- 3.3.1 To improve performance on inspections of both existing and new food businesses, the team are taking forward a number of initiatives:

- **Recruitment using existing resources:** funding from vacant posts has been used in 17/18 to recruit a further 1FTE dedicated food safety officer post. The post holder is currently undergoing training.
- **Through managing demands and different approaches to other work:** Work is ongoing on reviewing the approach to all EH workload (redesign process). This may allow further EHO time to be committed to food hygiene inspection work.
- **Improving efficiency and effectiveness of inspections:** Officers are using further electronic communications to improve efficiency of inspections and approaches to inspections are being reviewed to improve effectiveness. In line with our enforcement policy, this will target enforcement work at businesses that ignore or wilfully avoid compliance with hygiene standards.

### **3.4 Other demands**

- 3.4.1 The Service recognises its responsibilities for the hygiene inspection of shipping, aircraft and trains. Shipping includes international cruise vessels, merchant shipping, and ferry services that visit or operate in the Highland area.
- 3.4.2 Highland Council has 28 shellfish production areas. The Council works closely with Food Standards Scotland to ensure sites are closed if naturally occurring algal toxin levels increase. In 2017/18 24 closures were managed.
- 3.4.3 The Service recognises its responsibilities for general surveillance work on imported foods at retail and catering level. This is carried out during routine inspections.

## **4. Service Delivery**

### **4.1 Food Premises Inspections**

#### **4.1.1 Food Hygiene**

Food premises have been risk assessed and categorised in terms of the Code of Practice. All premises are entered onto the Flare database and inspection programmes have been generated.

#### **4.1.2 Food Standards**

Food Standards work is concerned with composition and labelling of food. Food premises have been risk assessed and categorised in terms of the Code of Practice. All premises are entered onto the Flare database and inspection programmes have been generated.

### **4.2 Food Complaints**

- 4.2.1 The Service has a policy for dealing with complaints raised regarding food premises enforced by the Service. This covers complaints from the public such as poor hygiene of premises, foreign body contamination, out of date food, food poisoning, pests in premises and poor personal hygiene practices.



### **4.3 Home Authority Principle**

4.3.1 Environmental Health supports the Home Authority Principle, and will assist any other food authority in the UK with an enquiry about food produced in the Highland area.

### **4.4 Advice to Business**

4.4.1 The food team work closely with local food businesses are happy to offer advice on areas of food safety. Officers are encouraged to attend and provide advice to any food industry meetings in their areas, in addition to offering advice during inspections and on request at our offices.

### **4.5 Food Sampling**

4.5.1 Environmental Health has contracts for bacteriological examination and chemical analysis of foodstuffs with the Public Analyst, City of Edinburgh Council.

4.5.2 In addition to locally targeted sampling, Environmental Health participates in sampling surveys organised by the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee and in UK food surveys co-ordinated by the FSA.

### **4.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease**

4.6.1 Environmental Health works closely with NHS Highland on the investigation of Foodborne and Waterborne disease. A national Public Health Incident Plan is followed with any actual or threatened major outbreak within the Highland Council area. Procedures for investigating sporadic cases of foodborne diseases are outlined in the Council's Protocol for Investigation of Enteric Disease.

4.6.2 Standard infectious gastro-enteritis questionnaires are used by all Officers for investigation purposes and procedures are in place for the investigating officer to forward the completed forms to the Consultant in Public Health Medicine at NHS Highland. A copy is also sent simultaneously to the Environmental health manager. There is on-going close liaison between Environmental Health and the NHS Highland including joint infectious disease outbreak exercises.

### **4.7 Food Safety Incidents**

4.7.1 Food Alerts are currently brought to the attention of Environmental Health by email. Food Standards Scotland is aware of the procedure for contacting relevant Officers outwith normal working hours via Council's emergency out-of-hours number.

### **4.8 Liaison with other organisations**

4.8.1 Environmental Health takes measures to ensure that enforcement action taken in its area is consistent with that in neighbouring authorities. The lead Senior EHO is a member of the North of Scotland Food Liaison Group (NSFLG) which comprises members of all food authorities in the north of Scotland, i.e. Highland, Orkney, Shetland, Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen, Moray and Western Isles. This group meets regularly to discuss matters of mutual concern and seeks to ensure uniform enforcement action across the entire

area. Minutes from all meetings are forwarded to Environmental Health Area offices. Monthly meetings are held with The Animal Health and Plant Agency (APHA) to share information on emerging animal health concerns and focus inspections on at risk flocks/herds with respect to Animal Health.

4.8.2 The Environmental Health Manager is also a member of the Environmental Health Liaison Group which has representatives from NHS Highland, Animal Health, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Health Protection Scotland, Scottish Agricultural College and Scottish Water. This group provides a forum for discussion of various environmental health matters including food safety and the presence of NHS Highland and HPS officials provide regional and national perspectives respectively.

4.8.3 Environmental Health Officers currently liaise with the Council's Planning and Building Control Service with regard to examining planning applications and building warrant applications which may relate to food safety activities. This provides opportunities for advising planning or building control officials of any relevant problems and also for contacting applicants/agents to discuss proposals and offer advice and guidance.

#### **4.9 Food Safety and Standards Promotion**

4.9.1 The resources available to Environmental Health are limited and hygiene inspections of high risk food premises have been given priority. Consequently food safety promotion has to be very focussed. Officers promote the Food Hygiene Information Scheme and the Eatsafe awards during routine work.

#### **4.10 Enforcement Policy**

4.10.1 The Highland Council has formally adopted an Enforcement Policy that includes food safety.

### **5. Staff**

5.1 Information on finance and staffing is contained within the 2018/19 EH Operational plan.

**5.2 Staff Development** - Officers are and will be encouraged to identify courses in which they have a particular interest. In particular:

- Regular Food Working Group meetings provide a focus for discussion of training needs.
- Every Officer has received in-house training in the operation of the Civica APP database system.
- Officers shall be permitted to attend external training courses and seminars
- The Service has access to online food hygiene training courses

### **6.1 2018/19 Priorities and Targets**

6.1.1 Priorities and targets for food safety are included with the EH operational plan.

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