



Sustainable Communities



Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2001-2002



FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2001-2002

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INTRODUCTION

The Comhairle's Food Service Plan covers the work undertaken as part of the Health and Consumer Services section of the Department for Sustainable Communities. It details the framework that will be adopted for the following year and describes the Service's:

- aims and objective;
- scope of responsibilities;
- service delivery;
- resources; and
- quality management

The Service Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis. The Comhairle's mission statement is detailed below.

MISSION STATEMENT 1999 - 2002

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is a democratically elected local authority whose purpose is to sustain and improve the quality of life for all people in the Western Isles, respecting the cultural and religious traditions, by:

1. listening to the community and responding positively to the variety of interests and needs within the islands
2. ensuring the well planned delivery of good quality services which represent best value within the resources available
3. displaying the highest standards of integrity in public life
4. developing highly-motivated and skilled people at all levels
5. working in partnership where appropriate and building on the considerable cultural and social strengths of the community
6. giving priority to economic development
7. seeking improvements in the quality of life for people in the Western Isles
8. promoting the Gaelic language and culture
9. providing leadership for the islands

Working together for the Western Isles

1. SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Aims and Objectives

1.1.1 It is the food service's objective to serve the communities and individuals of the Western Isles by protecting public health.

1.1.2 The food service aims to:

- meet all statutory objectives;
- carry out its duties as a statutory Food Authority;
- provide advice to consumers, traders and the public;
- improve levels of food hygiene in the Western Isles; and
- increase the level of training among food business personnel.

1.2 Links to corporate objectives and plans

1.2.1 This plan will be integrated into the objectives of the Health and Consumer Services Section of the New Sustainable Communities Service Plan, and is consistent with the Comhairle's Mission Statement.

2 BACKGROUND - PROFILE, ORGANISATION ETC.

2.1 Profile

2.1.1 Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar is the local authority for the Western Isles, which are located off the northwest mainland of Scotland. The Western Isles have a land area of 290,000 hectares and a coastal line of 2,700 kilometres (km). The Islands measure 210 km from the Butt of Lewis in the north to the uninhabited small islands of Berneray and Mingulay in the southern extremity. The islands are 60 km at their widest point.

2.1.2 The estimated population is 27,473 for the Western Isles with the largest settlement being Stornoway (6,000). The islands have a declining population and the projected population by 2016 is 23,980, a drop of 12.7%.

2.1.3 The main economic sectors are public services, construction, fishing, fish farming and fish processing. Government employment surveys suggest that 80% of employment is in service sector related activities.

2.1.4 There are over 5000 registered crofts in the islands with the majority of these in use. It is estimated that there are over 150,000 livestock on the island.

2.2 **Organisational Structure**

2.2.1 The following charts outline:

Chart 1 - The Comhairle Committee Structure

Chart 2 - Departmental Structure of the Comhairle

Chart 3 - Structure of Environmental Services Section

Chart 4 - Management Structure and Organisational Responsibilities of Environmental Services Section

Chart 1: Committee Structure of Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

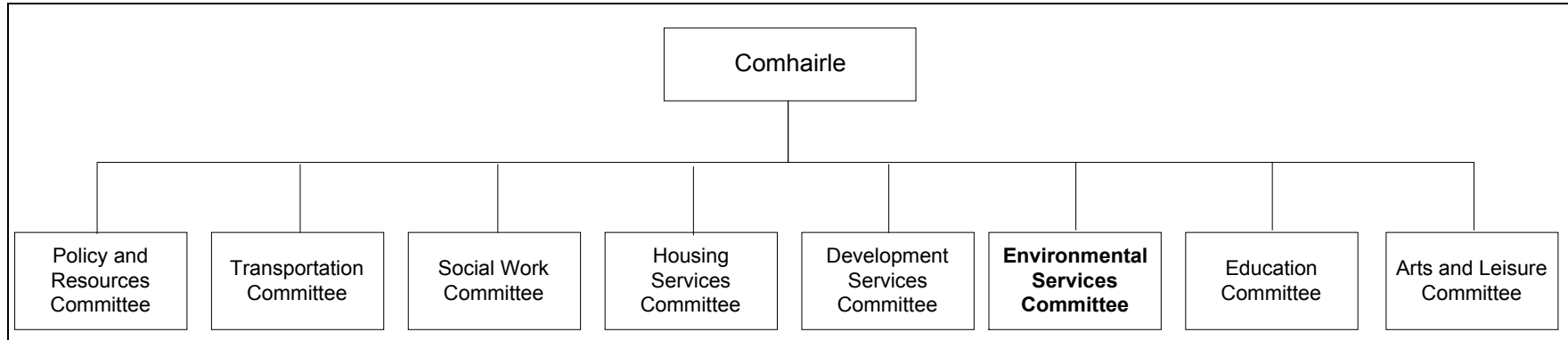


Chart 2: Departmental Structure of Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

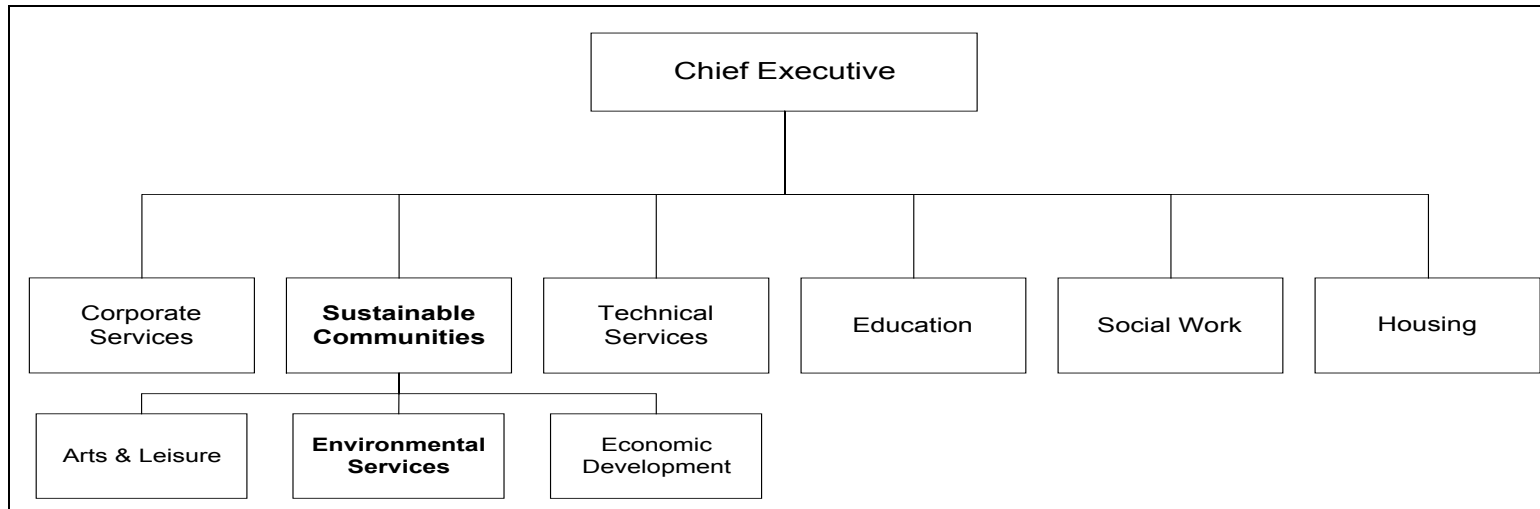


Chart 3: Structure of Environmental Services Section of Department for Sustainable Communities

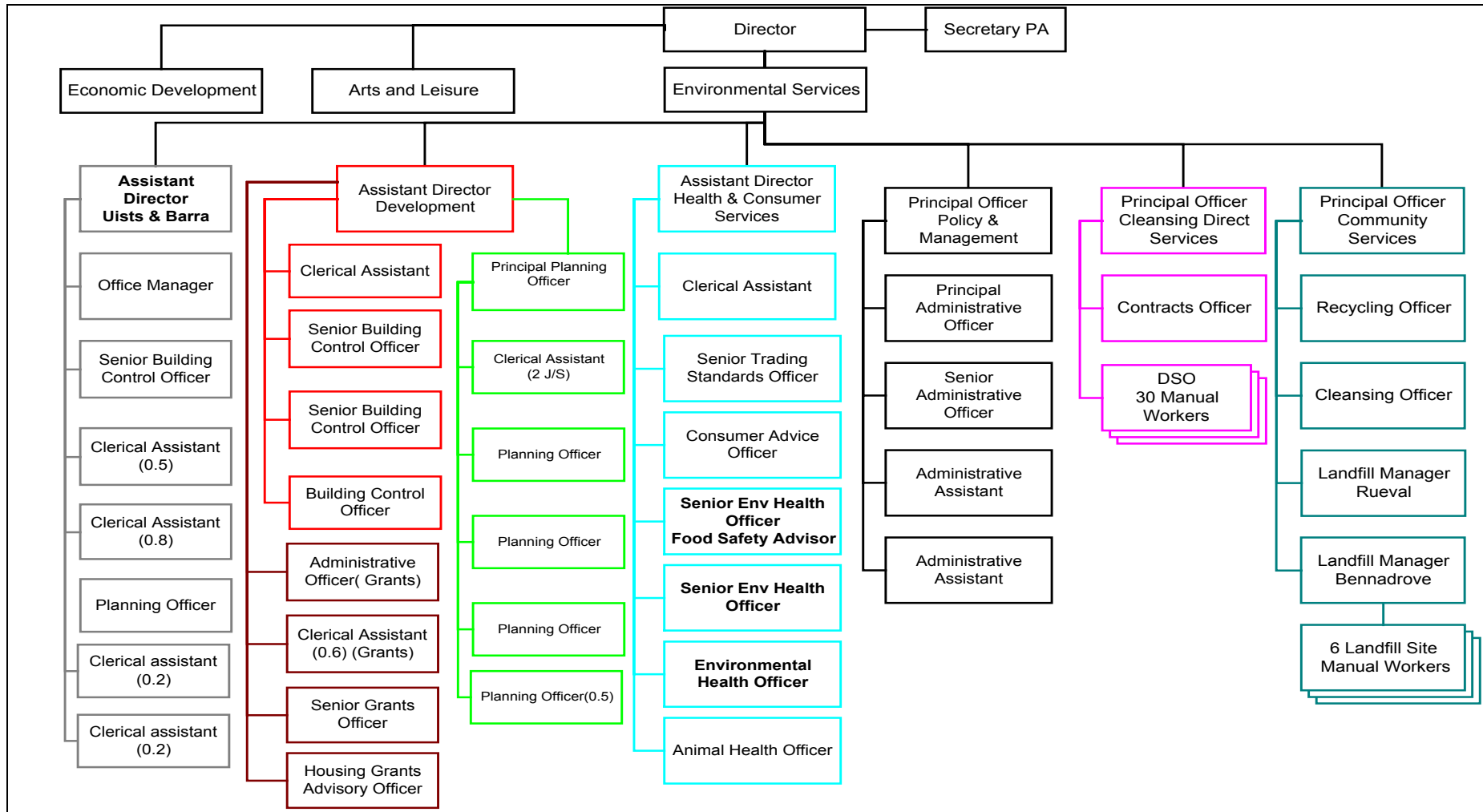
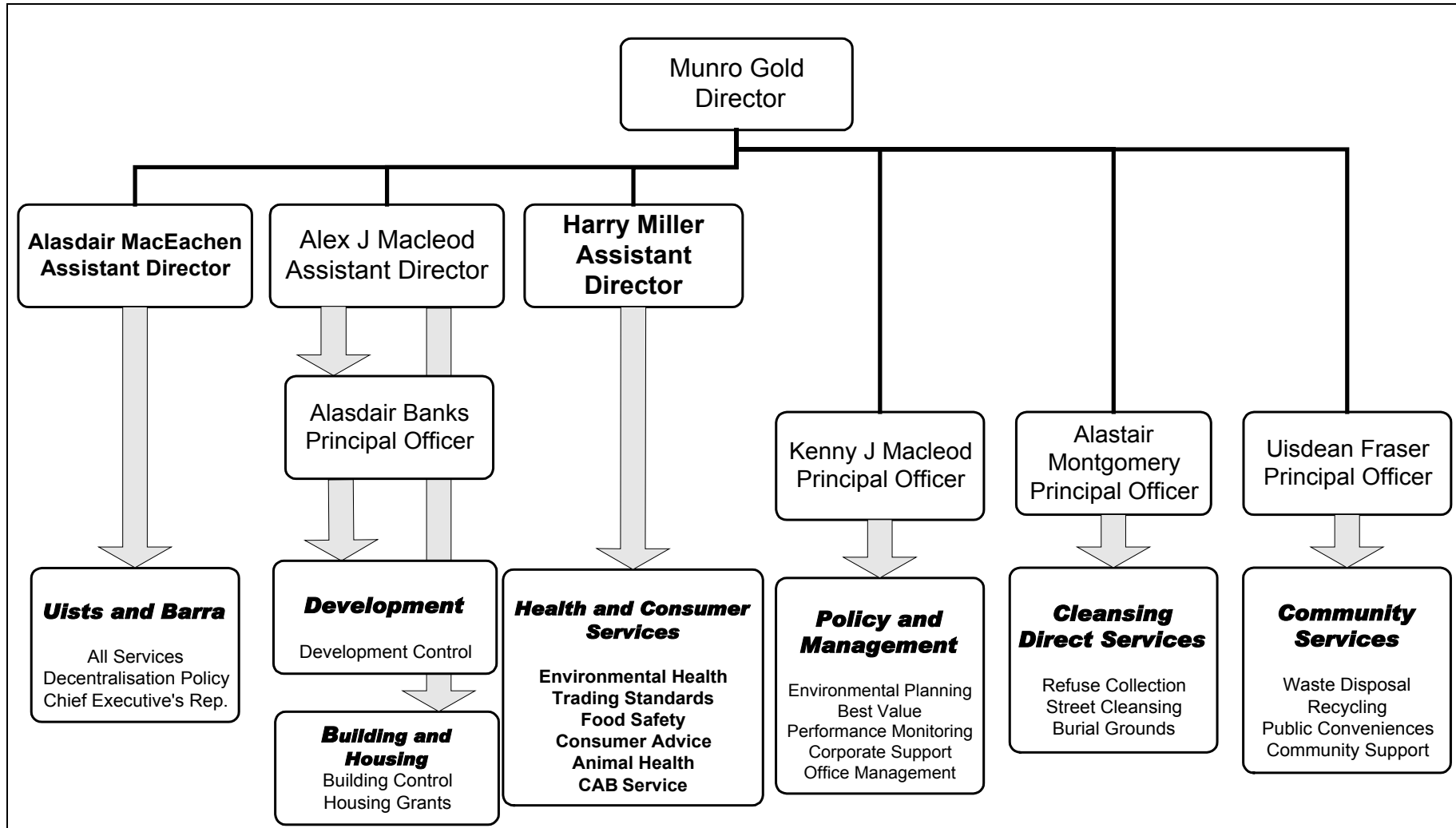


Chart 4: Management Structure and Organisational Responsibilities of Environmental Services Section of Department for Sustainable Communities



2.3 **Scope of Food Service**

2.3.1 The Comhairle is the statutory food authority for the Western Isles with the Department for Sustainable Communities having responsibility for all relevant food legislation.

2.3.2 The Health and Consumer Services Section of the Department for Sustainable Communities also provide the following services alongside food:

- Health And Safety Inspections;
- Public Nuisances;
- Private Water Supplies;
- Trading Standards;
- Licensing; and
- Animal Health.

2.4 **Demands on the Food Service**

2.4.1 There are over 500 food premises in the Western Isles, which include:

28 Manufacturers/Processors

112 Retailers

359 Restaurants and other Caterers

2.4.2 The Department for Sustainable Communities has offices in Stornoway (serving Lewis and Harris) and Balivanich (serving Uist and Barra), which are normally open between 9am and 5pm, each weekday.

2.4.3 There are four officers qualified to undertake food safety duties, along with other departmental duties, (3 officers covering Lewis and Harris and 1 officer covering Uist and Barra).

2.5 **Enforcement Policy**

2.5.1 The Comhairle is legally responsible for enforcing the terms of a significant body of legislation. Much of this legislation is aimed at protecting the interests of individuals and the public. To enable enforcement to be done in a consistent and clearly understandable way, it is best done within the framework of an enforcement policy. The Comhairle has adopted a general enforcement policy, on which the Food Safety Enforcement Policy is based.

3 SERVICE DELIVERY

3.1 Food and Feedingstuffs Premises Inspections

3.1.1 Food premises inspections are carried out in line with the relevant Approved Codes of Practices and the departmental food procedures. The main inspection principles are:

- To identify risks arising from the activities of that business;
- To ensure that businesses have carried out an effective food hazard analysis, and implemented suitable controls;
- To assess compliance with compositional and labelling requirements;
- To identify contraventions of food safety legislation and seek to have them remedied;
- To advise proprietors of legislative changes and to offer advice on food safety including the use of guidance documents where appropriate.

Feedingstuff premises inspections are to be carried out in line with the LACOTS risk assessment scheme. The main inspection principles are to:

- Control the manufacture and use of certain types of additives;
- Ensure that these additives, and the feeds that contain them are produced, handled and used with proper regard to human and animal safety.

3.1.2 Premises Profile

3.1.2.1 The premises type is as defined in the Food Standard Framework Agreement.

3.1.3 Food Hygiene Inspections

3.1.3.1 The following risk categories have been determined in accordance with) the Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice No 9 and the Lancashire Association of Chief Environmental Health Officers - Food Officer Group - *"Guidance on Scoring of Food Premises"*.

Premises Type	Risk Category							Totals
	A	B	C	D	E	F	Not Rated	
Primary Producers	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Slaughterhouses	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Manufacturers/Processors	3	14	4	1	4	1	1	28
Packers	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Importers/ Exporters								
Distributors/Transporters	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	4
Retailers	5	14	50	19	15	3	6	112
Restaurants and other Caterers	10	29	82	56	70	63	49	359
Totals	18	57	142	78	92	67	56	510

3.1.4 Food Standards Inspections

Food standards inspections have been integrated with food hygiene inspections and premises have been inspected based on the food hygiene risk assessment scheme. The Comhairle intend to initiate an independent food standards inspection programme based on Code of Practice No.8. Premises will initially be risk assessed via a desktop exercise, with premises initial food standards programmed inspection date coinciding with the next programmed hygiene inspection. Premises rated as high risk (annually inspected), will be inspected this year irrespective of the food hygiene rating. The desktop exercise shall be completed by 01/04/02.

3.1.5 Priorities

The Department's priorities are to:

- provide a food service that is adequately maintained and to ensure that officers are appropriately trained.
- risk assess all food premises, for food standards in line with Code of Practice No 8 and create an inspection programme. Premises will initially be risk assessed via a desktop exercise, with premises initial programmed inspection date coinciding with the next food hygiene programmed inspection in line and generally through visits (with the perceived lower risk premises being assessed via a desktop exercise if necessary).
- Identify, register and risk assess all premises subject to the Feedingstuffs Regulations.
- The Department is able to draw on expertise from the Food Standards Agency - Scotland, Glasgow Scientific Services –

the Public Analyst, the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health (SCIEH), the Director of Public Health for the local health board, and other local authorities.

3.2 Food and Feedingstuffs Complaints

3.2.1 Food complaints are investigated in line with relevant LACOTS guidance, Approved Codes of Practices and the departmental food procedures.

3.2.2 Feedingstuffs complaints are investigated in line with departmental procedures. Cognisance will be taken of any future guidance from LACOTS or other relevant body.

3.3 Home Authority Principle

3.3.1 The Comhairle shall have regard to any information or advice it has received from any liaison with home and/or originating authorities. The Comhairle having initiated liaison with any home and/or originating authority, shall notify that authority of the outcome.

3.3.2 The Comhairle does not have any formal home authority agreements but will respond to enforcement queries when acting as the originating authority.

3.4 Advice to Business

3.4.1 The Comhairle shall work with businesses to help them comply with the law.

3.4.2 As well as offering on the spot advice during routine visits and inspections and responding to queries, the Comhairle also organises training courses for food businesses (through the use of external trainers).

3.5 Food and Feedingstuffs Inspection and Sampling

3.5.1 Food and Feedingstuffs inspection and sampling shall be carried out in accordance with the Comhairle's sampling policies, which are based on the relevant codes of practice, where available.

3.5.2 Very few samples are submitted as a result of food complaints and again resources are provided from within the Service.

3.5.3 The Comhairle's currently has a Service level agreement appointing Glasgow City Council's Public Analyst Service (Glasgow Scientific Services) as the Food Examiner for bacteriological, chemical and feedingstuffs analysis.

3.6 Control and Investigation of Outbreaks and Food Related Infectious Disease

3.6.1 The Comhairle operates a documented procedure for the investigation of outbreaks and notifications of food related infectious diseases, where it is part of a multi-agency team, including the Western Isles Health Board.

3.7 Food Safety Incidents

3.7.1 The Comhairle manages food hazard warnings from the Food Standards Agency - Scotland in line with Code of Practice No. 16 (Revised): Enforcement of the Food Safety Act 1990 in relation to the Food Hazard Warning System (Revised August 1997).

3.8 Liaison with other Organisations

3.8.1 The food service ensures that enforcement action taken is consistent with those of neighbouring local authorities by means including:

- Representation at the West of Scotland Food Liaison Group;
- Liaison with other authorities via EHCnet, LACOTS, and other discussion sites on the internet;
- Liaison with the Director of Public Health of the Western Isles;
- Consultation and liaison with other departmental services including building and development control; and
- Reference to REHIS and SCIEH good practice information and guidance notes.

3.8.2 No specific allocation of resources is made for these liaisons as they are covered by existing arrangements.

3.9 Food and Feedingstuffs Safety and Standards Promotion

3.9.1 The Comhairle shall aim to promote food hygiene, throughout the islands. This shall include publicity through press releases and articles for the local papers/newsletters and local radio.

3.9.2 The Comhairle shall aim to promote feedingstuffs registration and safety through meetings and contact with agricultural bodies.

4 RESOURCES

4.1 Financial Allocation

4.1.1 The overall level of expenditure, involved in providing the food service is budgeted at £162,000, which is an increase, in real terms, on previous years (this does not include feedingstuffs enforcement).

4.1.2 The budget is broken down into the following categories.

Categories	Cost
Staffing	£113,595
Travel and Subsistence	£4,119
Departmental Services, (including IT support)	£39,921
Food Database	£1,650
Sampling	£6,000
<i>Miscellaneous income</i>	<i>£3,822</i>

4.1.3 The Comhairle has a contingency fund that the food service could utilise for any legal action necessary as part of its enforcement function, subject to committee approval.

4.2 Staffing Allocation

4.2.1 The number of staff currently working in food law enforcement and related matters (including clerical and management) is 3.33, in terms of full time equivalent (fte) staff. All officers (not including clerical staff) are authorised by the Chief Executive, under the Food Safety Act 1990.

4.2.2 All staff are authorised in accordance with the Approved Codes of Practice, and with the Comhairle's "*Food Authorisation Procedure*". Although there are 4 officers fully authorised under the Act, the full time equivalent (fte) is 2, as officers are engaged in other duties).

4.3 Staff Development Plan

4.3.1 The Comhairle supports ongoing staff training, and the food service ensures that staff are trained in accordance with the food training policy, ensuring that staff remain professionally competent and meet the requirements of any continual professional development schemes. Staff development is incorporated within

the Comhairle's staff appraisal scheme, with staff being appraised biannually.

5 QUALITY ASSESSMENT

5.1 The quality of the food service is audited using the internal monitoring procedure. Auditing is also carried out by:

- department auditors;
- external auditors for the Comhairle and
- auditors from the Food Standards Agency - Scotland.

6 REVIEW

6.1 This service plan shall be reviewed on an annual basis and will include information on the previous year's performance against the service plan and any specified performance targets and performance standards and target outcomes.