

# Environmental Services

## Service Overview

Environmental and Regulatory Services provide two key services to the highland community:

1. **Environmental Health** is a regulatory service that assists the public by dealing with their concerns on issues such as noise, private housing, food hygiene, animal health, and pollution. We aim to support local businesses and boost local economic growth by helping businesses to understand and comply with controls, and also by tackling rogue businesses that undermine reputable businesses and consumer confidence. We have a small team that work out of 7 offices throughout the Highland area.

Our main activities include:

- Public Health Protection which includes checking private water supplies, the smoking ban and disease outbreak investigation;
- Enforcement of Food Safety and Health & Safety at Work legislation;
- Private Sector Housing improvement including tackling sub-standard housing;
- Pollution Control which includes Noise Control, contaminated land and Air Quality;
- Animal Health & Welfare;
- Enforcement of licenses issued by the Council.

We work with Scottish Government and other partners such as Food Standards Agency to ensure national policies are implemented in the Highland area.

2. **Waste Management** provides waste services to the public and businesses throughout Highland. The service assists the public by arranging collection of household waste, recyclables, garden waste, and in some areas kitchen food waste. Services are also provided for bulky uplifts and local recycling centres. The service also provides a waste collection service for businesses.

Our main activities include:

- Leading for the Council on delivering a long term, sustainable strategy for waste management;
- Providing waste collection and disposal services to all parts of the Highlands;
- Operating a network of 21 recycling centres, 210 recycling points and two operational landfill sites;
- Education and Awareness raising on waste, recycling to the public, schools and businesses;
- Providing pest and dog control services;
- Providing teams to address street cleaning and litter.

We work with Scottish Government and other partners such as Keep Scotland Beautiful to ensure national policies on waste are implemented in the Highland area. Of particular importance is work ongoing to address the future ban on landfilling of biodegradable household waste which comes into place in 2021.

3. **Trading Standards.** The overall objective of Trading Standards is to fulfil the Council's statutory duties under consumer protection and trading standards legislation to ensure that trade in the Highlands is carried out in accordance with relevant statutory requirements and in so doing to protect the safety and economic interests of consumers and businesses.

Our main activities include:

- Counterfeiting and other intellectual property breaches;
- Doorstep crime/ cold calling;
- Product safety, pricing, credit, weights & measures, e-commerce, taxis;

- Health & safety relating to supply and storage of petrol and pyrotechnics;
- Consumer advice and conciliation service provided in partnership with Citizens Advice, with an increasing role in enforcing compliance of business with civil law relating to consumer transactions.

## Council Performance

### 1. Environmental Health

The cost of Environmental Health per 1000 population has improved. This is good given the challenges of the population and business distribution throughout the Highlands. Work is ongoing to establish more meaningful national measures of performance.

### 2. Waste Management

Recycling rates in the Highlands continue to improve with the figures for 2013/14 showing 45% compared to 44% in 2012/13. The Council was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> best in 2013/14 compared to 15<sup>th</sup> in 2012/13.

Costs continue to be contained whilst efficiency continues to improve as evidenced by the fact that households have risen by over 10,000 whilst the waste fleet continues to contract.

For street cleanliness the Council has maintained a very high score of 99% and was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> best in Scotland in 2013/14 compared to 5<sup>th</sup> in 2012/13. It was noted that Customer Satisfaction in street cleaning for the same period decreased 74% in 2012/13 to 67% in 2013/14 and work is being done to improve communication with the public on this issue.

The service has also successfully passed audits by SEPA, Food Standards Agency and HSE in the previous five years. It has also been the subject of several internal audits the most recent delivering a "full confidence" the first received by any service in Highland Council's history.

### 3. Trading Standards

The only national performance indicator currently in place (ref. ENV5a) i.e. How much does my council spend on providing trading standards (£ per 1,000 people). 2013/14 costs of £3790 compared to Scottish average of £5585, equating to the 9th lowest expenditure by all 32 Councils.

See; [2013/14 Trading Standards Performance Review](http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/66864/item_16_trading_standards_annual_performance_review_201314) ([http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/66864/item\\_16\\_trading\\_standards\\_annual\\_performance\\_review\\_201314](http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/66864/item_16_trading_standards_annual_performance_review_201314)); included a 90% customer satisfaction score that relates to consumer advice/ conciliation provision.

The primary internal indicator relates to obtaining Council approval for annual operational plan and annual performance review, which includes a customer satisfaction survey that relates to consumer advice/ conciliation provision.

Target response times for the provision of consumer and business advice are however retained as an internal indicator of performance.

Latest published figures 12/13 for response times for the provision of consumer and business advice:

- Consumer complaints dealt with within 14 days of receipt =74.0%
- Business advice requests dealt with within 14 days of receipt = 96.7%

## What the Council is doing to improve services

The service is further developing an annual calendar of enforcement events to address litter and dog fouling. The Council have also approved a Zero Tolerance approach to litter, dog fouling and fly-tipping.

In 2015 a project is being taken forward to look at the issue of the number of bins being placed on streets in the city centre.

To increase recycling rates that Council has increased the range of materials that can be added to recycling bins.

To improve efficiency both Environmental Health and Waste Management are implementing the Public Service Improvement Framework and Workforce Planning projects.

Following serious concerns expressed a report by [Audit Scotland](#) about the sustainability of the provision of Trading Standards services in Scotland. Highland Council agreed to look to COSLA and the Scottish Government for guidance before taking any action. This has resulted in a Strategic Review of Trading Standards being initiated through COSLA, with which the Council's Trading Standards Manager is an active participant. Phase 1 of the review is due to report to COSLA Convention in June 2015.

## How the public can get involved

The team welcomes feedback on the services provided. This can be done via Councillors, direct to the team, or via the general customer surveys such as the Environmental Health Survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/highlandeh>

Simple steps taken by the public can make a huge difference to recycling rates and help to minimise waste disposal costs. Advice on how to reduce, reuse and recycle much of the waste we produce in our homes can be found at [http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1055/recycling/108/waste\\_awareness](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1055/recycling/108/waste_awareness)

The public can also get involved by taking part in local projects such as clean-up initiatives.

### Trading Standards

- Participation by all those invited to take part in the ongoing customer satisfaction survey.
- Contributing to the regular surveys undertaken by Trading Standards to better understand consumer experiences and therefore to better target resources. E.g. [Counterfeit Goods Survey](#) or [Report Excessive Delivery Charges](#).
- Empowering your community through the development of a [Cold Call Control Zone](#).

Theme	Indicator Code	SPI - Benchmark	FY 12/13	12/13 Rank	FY 13/14	13/14 Rank
Environmental Services	ENV1	Net cost of Waste collection per premises - ENV1	£101.87	31	£90.93	28
	ENV2	Net cost per Waste disposal per premises - ENV2	£102.94	23	£112.16	27
	ENV3a	Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population - ENV3a	£15,061.61	15	£11,607.64	11
	ENV3b	Street Cleanliness Score - ENV3b	98.7	5	99.1	4
	ENV4a	Cost of maintenance per km of roads - ENV4a	£3,414.10	5	£2,839.43	4
	ENV4b	Road network - A Class - ENV4b	24.6%	13	25.3%	14
	ENV4c	Road network - B Class - ENV4c	33.5%	20	35.9%	23
	ENV4d	Road network - C Class - ENV4d	34.6%	17	41.9%	23

ENV4e	% Unclassified Roads to be considered for maintenance ENV4e	36.4%	16	37.2%	16
ENV5a	Cost of Trading Standards per 1000 population - ENV5a	£3,662.36	7	£3,790.51	9
ENV5b	Cost of Environmental Health per 1000 population - ENV5b	£17,435.92	19	£17,317.02	17
ENV6	% Household waste recycled and composted - ENV6	44.0%	15	45.03%	11
ENV7a	% adults satisfied - refuse collection - ENV7a	86%	17	83%	20
ENV7b	% adults satisfied - street cleaning - ENV7b	74%	20	67%	28

For more information about our service plan and performance or further information on getting involved in helping to improve our services, please contact us on:

**01349 886606 or 01349 886603**

Or contact us by email: [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)