

Agenda Item	14
Report No	SR/16/25

Committee: Isle of Skye and Raasay

Date: 30 June 2025

Report Title: Environmental Health - Annual Report and Activity 2024/25

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is to provide an update to Members on the Environmental Health team and provide an annual report on local activity during 2024/25.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to **note** and **provide** any feedback on:-

- i. the range and volume of work being undertaken locally by the Environmental Health team;
- ii. the Highland wide issues; and
- iii. the report format and content

3. IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 **Resource** – The resources available to Environmental Health have to be prioritised, focusing on areas of greatest public health significance. The team continually explores ways to delivering services more efficiently and within budget including reviewing associated income streams, working with COSLA regarding resource allocation and seeking efficiencies in working practice and team structure.
- 3.2 **Legal** - As a regulatory service the Environmental Health team have a wide range of statutory duties. The team have an Enforcement Policy in place and officers follow the five principles of better regulation - regulation should be transparent, accountable, consistent, proportionate and targeted.

Please note that for purposes of this report no reference is made to individuals or businesses to ensure compliance with Data Protection and not to impact on any ongoing investigations or court proceedings.

- 3.3 **Risk** – There is current pressures on the environmental health profession and challenges in workforce planning. These challenges have been noted by COSLA and the Scottish Government. Work is ongoing with the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (**REHIS**) and the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland (**SoCOEHS**) to increase resilience of the service and a sustainable workforce.

A BSc course at University of the West of Scotland (**UWS**) which includes an integrated placement with Councils has closed, with a replacement course being planned. Currently there is no method of new entrants training to become an EHO in Scotland.

Environmental Health currently have three students across the Service already enrolled in the UWS course. One student will qualify in 2026 (Sutherland), with two others qualifying in 2027 (Lochaber and Inverness).

Two Food Safety Officers have recently completed their training and have successfully passed their professional qualifications last month. This includes one officer in Caithness and another in Dingwall.

- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – There are no staff Health, Safety and Wellbeing implications arising from this report.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is a monitoring or update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Background

- 5.1 Members may be aware that Environmental Health submit an annual operational plan for Member approval. The plan details the objectives for the whole of the Environmental Health team, including the priorities for the year ahead. The 2024/2025 [Plan](#) was approved by the Communities and Place Committee on 6 March 2024. An updated [Plan](#) will be submitted on 22 May 2025.
- 5.2 This operational plan gave a commitment to provide reports on Environmental Health Activity and performance to local committees. The purpose being to increase awareness of the activities covered locally by the Environmental Health team, and to seek feedback from local Members on both the work being carried out and/or any local issues going forward that may wish to see prioritised.

- 5.3 Environmental Health conduct 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

This includes private water supplies, statutory nuisances (e.g. foul odours; smoke; premises in such a state etc.), smoking in public places, port health, and communicable disease investigation (e.g. food-borne / waterborne disease, legionnaires Disease).

Food Safety

This includes an enforcement and advisory role in all aspects of food authenticity, food hygiene, food labelling, and food export certification.

Health and Safety,

This includes an enforcement and advisory role for all aspects of health and safety at work in Local Authority enforced premises, particularly the investigation of workplace accidents.

Private Sector Housing

This includes an enforcement and advisory role in sub-standard housing, closing and demolition orders, Houses in Multiple Occupation and housing defects. It also includes the administration of housing improvement and repairs grants.

Pollution Control

This includes an enforcement and advisory role in respect of noise control (commercial and domestic) and local air quality management.

Contaminated Land

This includes a regulatory and enforcement role for contaminated land prevention through development control. The team also provide an advisory role to other council services on asset transfer and development.

Animal Health & Welfare

This includes an enforcement and advisory role in all aspects of Animal Health legislation. For example, dealing with disposal of animal carcasses on farm and taking animals into possession in serious farm welfare cases.

Licensing

This includes a general enforcement and advisory role for activities licensed under the Civic Government legislation, including short term lets. The Environmental Health team also have an administrative and enforcement role in respect of the licensing of caravan sites, venison dealers, animal boarding establishments, pet shops, zoos, cinemas, riding establishments, sports grounds and dangerous wild animals.

Dog Control,

This includes an enforcement and advisory role in respect of stray dogs, dangerous/aggressive dogs, dog fouling and micro-chipping.

Pest Control, Litter, Fly-tipping, Waste Duty of Care, Abandoned Vehicles.

This includes a general enforcement and educational role regarding such issues. The team work closely with the Councils waste team and SEPA regarding waste and fly tipping issues.

- 5.4 Much of the work is pro-active and preventative. The team has an important role in ensuring the Highlands maintains its reputation of a safe and healthy place in which to

live, work and holiday. We aim to support local businesses by providing advice on appropriate regulations and ensuring any regulatory activity follows the five principles of better regulation: Proportionate, Consistent, Accountable, Transparent and Targeted. This includes successfully adopting a '**4Es**' approach - Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce in responding to the vast majority of cases.

- 5.5 The Environmental Health operate three operational areas: North, Mid and West, with the Isle of Skye and Raasay being part of the **West Team**. The West Team has one Senior Environmental Health Officer who manages officers covering the different functions for both Skye & Lochaber. This SEHO is based in Fort William. For the Mid area, three SEHOs manage the officers, two from Inverness, with the third based in Dingwall. For the North, one SEHO manages the team.

There are SIX posts (6 FTE) based in the area office at Broom Place, Portree. They are:-

- 2x Environmental Health Officers (2 FTE);
- 1x Licensing Standards Officer (1 FTE) *[VACANT: at interview stage];*
- 1x EH Technical Officer 1 (Private Water Supplies) (1 FTE) *[NEW START 19 May 2025];*
- 1x EH Technical Officer (Short Term Lets) (1 FTE); and
- 1x EH Technical Officer 1 (Food Safety) (1 FTE) *[VACANT: under review as part of service wide Work Force Planning]*

All officers will also undertake cross boundary work to support the Mid and North teams as and when necessary. Any work related to contaminated land is delivered from our Mid team (Inverness).

Senior EHOs also have a Highland wide functional lead role for key statutory areas of work. This functional lead role includes developing policy & operational guidance and supporting officers with significant/complex cases.

Appendix 1 details the latest team structure for Environmental Health and includes a map of the relevant EH operational areas.

6 Summary of Environmental Health Activity/Local Issues

- 6.1 For the purpose of this report, the Environmental Health activity has been split into three main areas. These are outlined below: -

- i) **Reactive work** (i.e. service requests);
- ii) **Pro-active/scheduled work** (i.e. programmed inspections/visits); and
- iii) **Formal Enforcement Activity** (i.e. Formal enforcement notices and reports to Procurator Fiscal)

For each area of activity, the relevant figures have been obtained from our case management system (CIVICA APP [Flare]) and presented as a total figure for Ward No 10 – Eilean a' Cheò See Fig 1 and 2 below for ease of reference.

Fig 1 – Ward Areas

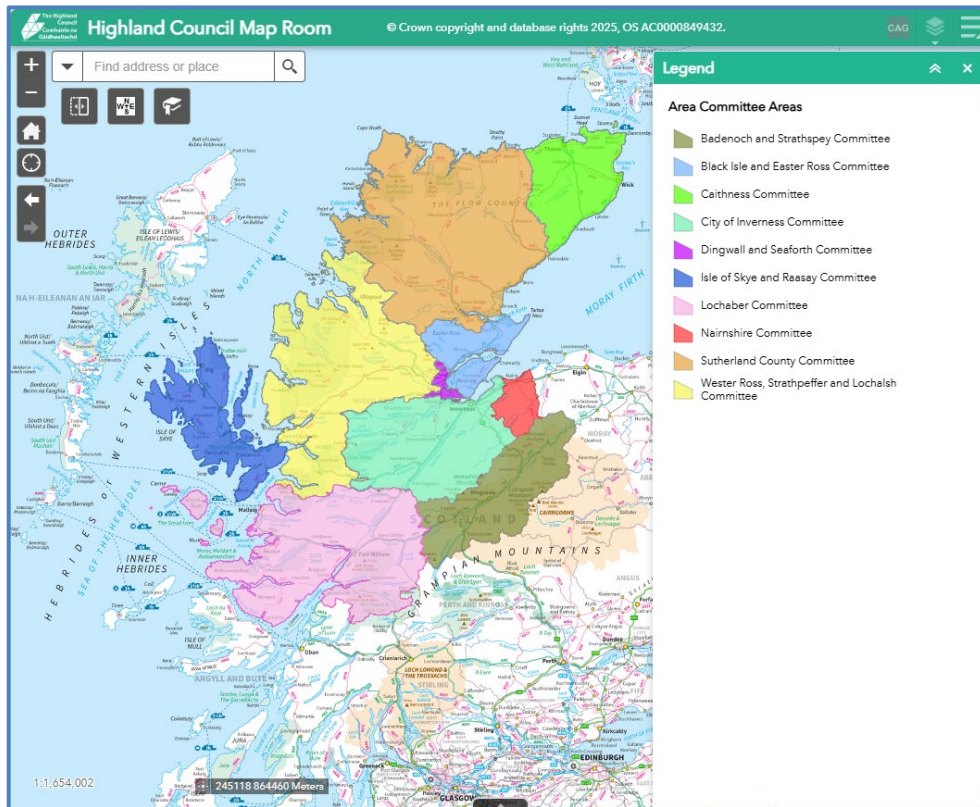
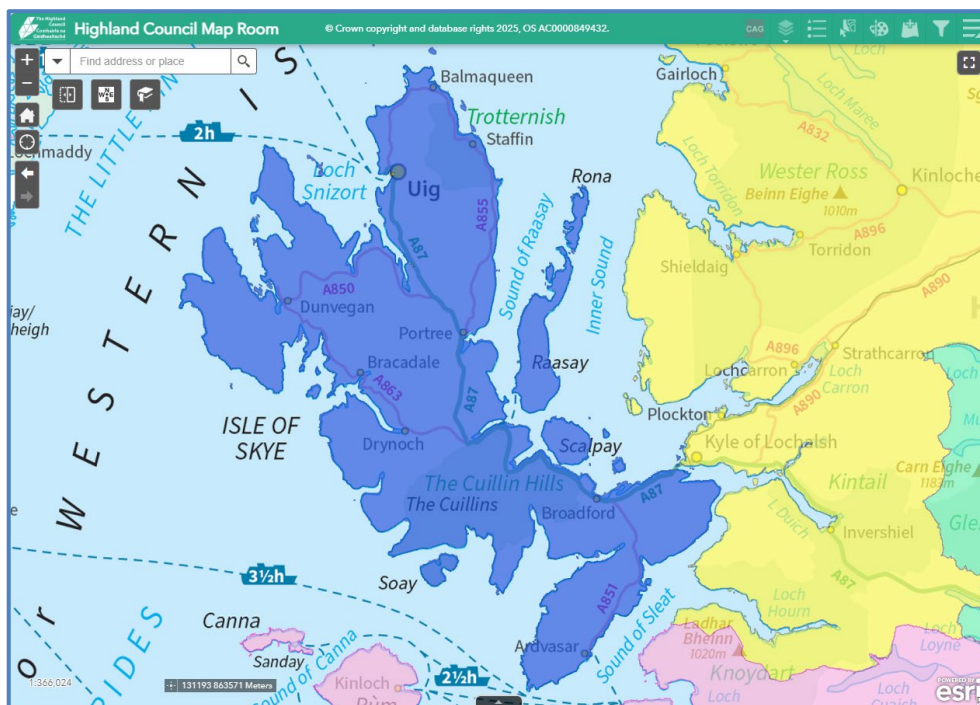


Fig 2 – Ward Areas covered by Report



Ward No 10 – Eilean a' Cheò

All data is for the period between 1 April 2024 – 31st March 2025.

Reactive Work

- 6.2 Table 1 below provides the number of Service requests (i.e. complaints; requests for advice; consultations etc.) received by the Environmental Health team, broken down by the general type of category. A more detailed breakdown within each of the general category types is contained within **Appendix 2**.

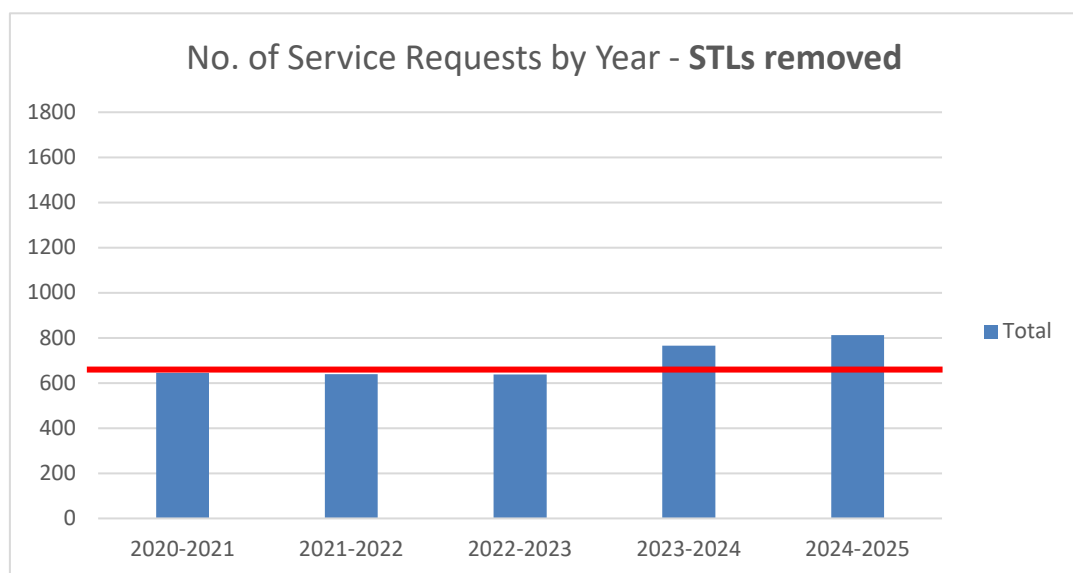
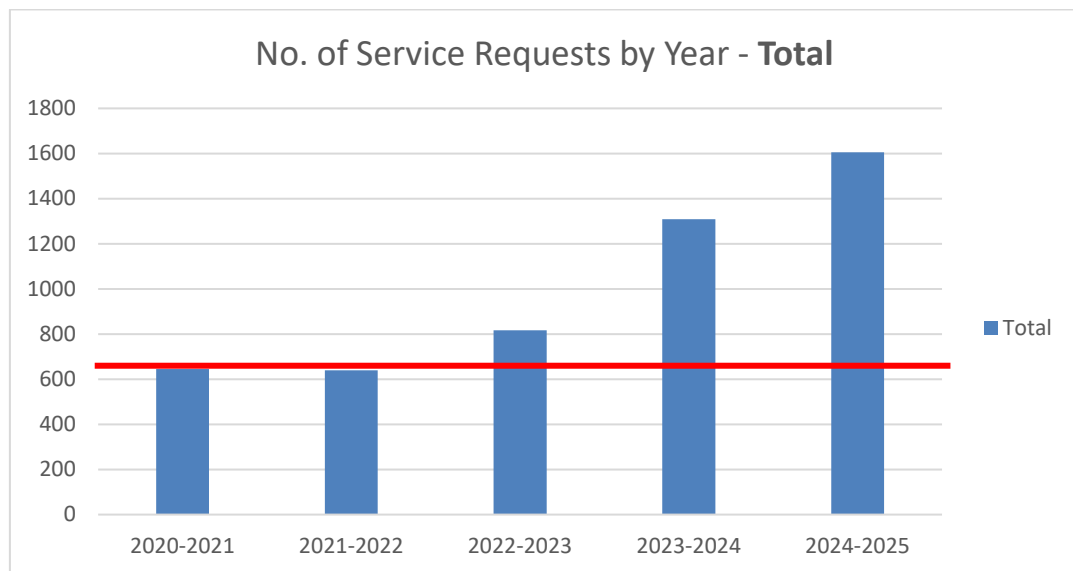
Table 1: No. of Service Requests by Category Type for Ward 10

Category Type	Number of Service Requests 2024/2025
Short Term Let Licensing	793
Port Health	217
Food Safety	102
Water Supply (inc PWS)	94
Planning Consultations	79
Civic Government Licensing	48
General Enquiry	48
Noise	28
Abandoned Vehicles	28
Housing	25
Animal Health	24
Miscellaneous Licensing	22
Statutory Nuisance	18
HMO Licensing	17
Health & Safety	10
Dog Control	9
Pests (e.g. mice, rats, seagulls etc.)	9
Infectious Disease/HPT Referral	5
Trading Standards	3
FOI and EIR requests	2
Roadkill	1
S87 Public Health Funerals	1
Fly Tipping/Waste/Trade Waste	1
Litter	1

The total number of Service requests received by the Environmental Health team for these wards was **1606**.

This continues the post COVID trend of increased numbers of service requests. There is a general trend of increasing numbers of service requests across Highland. It reflects the increased statutory duties undertaken by the Service. Fig 3 illustrates Comparison of Service Request demand between 2020 – 2024 within Ward 10.

Fig 3 – Comparison of Service Request demand between 2020 – 2024 within Ward 10



Consultations arising from the Short Term Lets (STL) regime has resulted in a significant increase in service demand across the whole of Skye. This has been recognised and new resource there has been implemented since the introduction of the scheme. EH West has gained a total of four new posts to process STLs – two based in Portree and another two in Fort William.

In addition, **345** planning applications being screened by Contaminated Land Officers, for Ward 10 – Eilean a' Cheò.

6.3 Table 2 below provides the number of Housing Scheme of Assistance and Private Water Supply Improvement Grants that have been approved during the period within Ward 10.

Table 2 – Number and value of Approved Grants

6.5 As well as being a statutory consultee for miscellaneous licences, Environmental Health also administer the issuing of these licences. Miscellaneous licensing includes:-

- animal boarding;
- animal welfare and rehoming centres;
- breeding and selling;
- riding establishments;
- caravan sites;
- cinemas;
- dangerous wild animals;
- performing animals;
- venison dealers; and
- zoos

Full details are provided [here](#).

In Skye, thirteen such licences have been issued, this is in keeping with previous years.

Pro-Active/Scheduled Work

6.6 The Environmental Health team conduct a range of programmed work, particularly in respect of food safety where a significant number of inspections are conducted of food businesses to check compliance. Such work is in addition to responding to Service Requests.

A breakdown of the number of programmed inspections/visits that were undertaken for the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 within Ward 10 is detailed within Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Pro-Active Inspections/Visits by Type

Visit Type	No. of Visits
E01 PI Intervention (On time)	14
E02 PI Intervention (LATE)	12
E03 CLOSED - PERMANENT	5
E07 Advisory/Educational Visit	7
E16 OCV Start (1st intervention)	1
E20 APP EST - Pre Approval	1
E21 APP EST - 3 Month	2
Grand Total	42

Note there are **6** Approved Establishments in Skye. These are premises which are classified as food manufacturers and/ or processors. These require an enhanced level of intervention at regular intervals throughout the year. The introduction of a new inspection regime by Food Standards Scotland (FSS) called Official Control Verification (OCV) has resulted in a significant increase in resource demands which has impacted routine inspections of non-approved premises.

Table 4 – Approved Establishments by EH area office

Approved Establishments		Amount
EH Mid		36
	Ross and Cromarty	31
	Inverness	3
	Badenoch	1
	Nairn	1
EH West		30
	Lochaber	24
Skye		6
EH North		16
	Sutherland	8
	Caithness	8
Other		4
	Reg with Other LA	4
Grand Total		86

There are 695 private water supplies (PWS's) in the area. Although Isle of Skye and Raasay have a lower number compared to other area offices in Highland it has a disproportionately higher number of commercial PWS's. PWS's which are commercial or use over a certain amount water on a daily basis are classed as Regulated Supplies under the legislation and require sampling on an annual basis. There are 140 regulated supplies in Ward 10 which accounts for a fifth of all PWS's in the ward area.

The geographical area of Skye presents significant challenges for resourcing this work. Additionally, the seasonal occupancy of many holiday accommodations—with higher occupancy during summer months and closures over the winter—further impacts access to collect samples.

Table 5 – Private Water Supplies by EH area office

Area Office	Total No. of PWS Premises	%	Regulated PWS	%
EH Mid	4841	51.1%	539	45.2%
Ross & Cromarty	1992	22.2%	179	15.0%
Inverness	1494	16.8%	174	14.6%
Badenoch	1158	10.6%	163	13.7%
Nairn	197	1.5%	23	1.9%
EH West	3095	37.2%	493	41.3%
Lochaber	2400	27.4%	353	29.6%
Skye	695	9.8%	140	11.7%
EH North	1010	11.8%	161	13.5%
Sutherland	871	10.2%	151	12.7%
Caithness	139	1.6%	10	0.8%
Grand Total	8946	100.0%	1193	100.0%

Formal Enforcement Activity

- 6.7 Whilst the vast majority of service requests and issues identified by the Environmental health team are satisfactory resolved without the need to pursue formal enforcement action (i.e. by following the 4 Es approach), there is always a number of cases due to their seriousness or failure of the duty holder to comply, where formal enforcement action is required.

A breakdown of the number and type of enforcement notices that have been served between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 in Ward 10 are detailed in Table 6 below.

Table 6 – Enforcement Notices Served between 1st April 2023 & 31st March 2024

Notice Type	Numbers Served
F11 2006 REGS - R6-hygiene improvement notice	5
AA1 Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010	2
G15 H&S S21-improvement notice	1
Grand Total	8

The low numbers of notices being issued serves as a strong indicator of the officers' professionalism and effectiveness in achieving outcomes by applying the principles of the 4E's (Engage, Educate, Encourage, and Enforce) approach, and avoiding the necessity of formal action.

Local Matters

6.8 Abandoned Vehicles

As can be seen there is a significant number of abandoned vehicles reported to our Service for investigation. We received **28** service requests which equates to around 2% of the total service requests for Ward 10. These individual cases can take up a significant resource in investigating and following up and are often found not to be truly "abandoned" vehicles. The team have been working with colleagues in the Housing and Parking enforcement teams to continually improve the response to abandoned vehicles. Improvements have been made to the Council website and cost recovery. Improvement work in this area will continue in 2025/26.

6.9 Dog Control/Littering

There were **12** cases reported to EH West - Skye relating to dog control, litter and fly-tipping in the last year. This work is resourced from EH Mid – Dingwall.

7 Highland Wide Issues/Service Priorities

- 7.1 The Short-Term Lets licensing regime commenced on 1 October 2022. The service has a key role as a consultee on applications, assessing compliance at licensed premises and responding to complaints. The Environmental Health service across Highland has responded to over 8100 application consultations. The scheme will continue to be a priority and require resource going forward.

- 7.2 There have been new licensing requirements introduced for animal breeders (dog, cat & rabbit) and certain animal welfare establishments. This includes rehoming centres and animal sanctuaries. The new licensing schemes are in the process of being implemented. Following a Scottish Government consultation in 2023, the team are awaiting confirmed proposals on extending animal licensing to cover activities such as dog walking, dog grooming, livery services, and canine fertility services. It is expected that canine fertility services will be licenced from April 2026, with no current planned date for the other activities, although an update on this is expected in the next year.
- 7.3 The Environmental Health team are continuing with EU exit related activities including undertaking inspections/audits of exporting food businesses to verify legislative compliance; provision of Export Health Certification; and liaison with UK and Scottish Government on import controls. As well as assisting with the arrangement of audits by countries we export to.
- 7.4 The team is continuing with the implementation of a new national approach to inspection of Approved Food Establishments – Official Control Verification (OCV). This approach, required across 6 establishments in Skye, has substantially increased to resourcing required to inspect such premises.

Approved Establishments are manufacturers of Products of Animal Origin (POAO) (i.e. smokehouses; fish processors, dairies, manufacturing butchers etc.).

- 7.5 The Scottish Government are considering the regulation of non-surgical cosmetic procedures. This is likely to generate additional work for Environmental Health as some of these procedures are likely to fall to Environmental Health for enforcement. We do not have a definitive count of the number of such premises in operation in Isle of Skye and Raasay.

7.6 SSEN Network – Pathway to 2030

SSEN Transmission is currently consulting on and undertaking significant work to upgrade the electricity transmission network across the North of Scotland. Officers from each of our three EH operational teams are involved in assessing and responding to consultations for overhead line and substation proposals. Such work has been ongoing throughout the last year and will continue through 2025/26 and beyond. Particular input is being required in respect of assessing complex noise assessments and any potential noise impacts arising from such developments.

8 Going Forward

- 8.1 The local team will continue to follow the priorities as set by the Environmental Health Operational Plan and respond to any local emerging issues as and when they arise. Any urgent public health issues will always continue to be prioritised.

- 8.2 The local team would welcome feedback on this report, particularly regarding the usefulness and type of data presented; the report format and any information that members would wish to see for future reports. Additionally, the local team would want to know if there are any local issues that members consider should be prioritised or be given increased attention, we would welcome comments.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

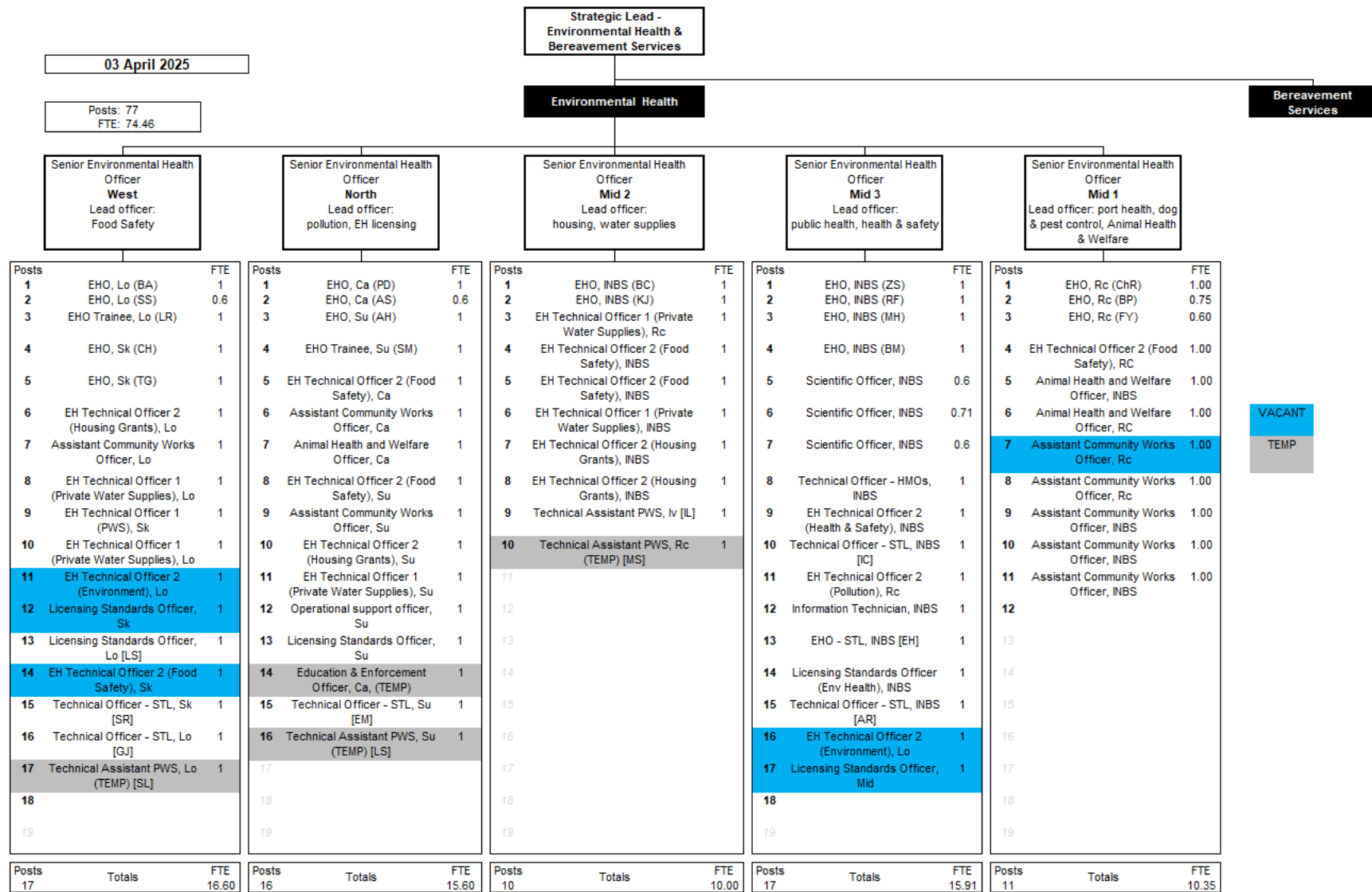
Date: 15 May 2025

Author: John Murray, Senior Environmental Health Officer - EH West

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Environmental Health Team Structure
Appendix 2 – EH Operational Areas
Appendix 3 – Detailed breakdown of service request numbers within each of the general category types

Appendix 1 - Current Environmental Health Team Structure



Appendix 2 - EH Operational Areas



Detailed breakdown of service request numbers within each of the general category types

Category of Service Request	No. of SRUs
Short Term Let Licensing	793
LBE Short Term Let Licensing Consultation	786
LBG Short Term Let Licensing Complaint	5
LBF Short Term Let Licensing Enquiry	2
Port Health	217
XPB Port Health enquiry/consultation	214
XPC Ship Sanitation Certificate Request	2
XPD Ship/aircraft request for samples	1
Food Safety	102
X02 Food Premises Registration	44
X05 FOOD SAFETY enquiry/consultation	30
X11 Shellfish REGISTRATION Documents	9
X42 Complaint: Hygiene of Premises	8
X41 Complaint: Food (Unfit, Microbiological, foreign body)	3
X16 Fishing Vessel Registration	2
X19 FSS SHELLFISH - Sample FAILURE	2
X43 Complaint: Food Standards - item (composition, labelling etc.)	2
X44 Complaint: Food Standards - premises (composition, labelling etc.)	1
X17 FSS Food INCIDENT Report	1
Water Supply (inc PWS)	94
XW1 Private supply grant enquiry	25
XWH Private supply STL Questionnaire	23
XWB Private supply enquiry (non-grant)	22
XWD Private supply request for sample	19
XWC Private supply complaint/contamination report	2
XWO Public supply complaint/contamination report	1
XWF Private supply other consultation	1
XWG Private supply insufficient: enquiry or complaint	1
Planning Consultations	79
E02 Planning – General CONSULTATION (enter type code)	56
E18 Planning – ENQUIRY (enter type code)	18
E16 Planning – MAJOR Applications (enter type code)	5
Civic Government Licensing	48
LBC Civic Government Licensing Consultation (enter type code)	38
LCC Liquor Licensing Consultation (enter type code)	4
LBB Civic Government Licensing Enquiry (enter type code)	4
LCB Liquor Licensing Enquiry (enter type code)	1
LBD Civic Government Licensing Complaint (enter type code)	1
General Enquiry	48
E17 GENERAL EH Enquiry	48

Noise	28
N06 Noise Non-Domestic (enter type code)	11
N05 Noise Advice Enquiry (enter type code)	9
N07 Noise Domestic (enter type code)	7
N09 Noise Housing Referral (enter type code)	1
Category of Service Request	No. of SRUs
Abandoned Vehicles	28
G01 Abandoned Vehicle	28
Housing	25
NGB Housing grant enquiry	8
NHG Request for Housing Condition Report	8
NHB Housing general enquiry	3
NGD Housing grant application	2
NHE Housing complaint - other	2
NHZ Ukraine Refugee Property Check	1
NGC Housing grant property visit	1
Animal Health	24
A03 ANIMAL - General ENQUIRY (not nuisance etc)	6
A02 Animal welfare ENQUIRY	6
A04 Animal disease ENQUIRY	3
A12 Animal welfare COMPLAINT	3
A11 ABP COMPLAINT	3
A13 ANIMAL - General COMPLAINT (not nuisance)	1
A14 Animal disease COMPLAINT	1
A06 WATSR ENQUIRY	1
Miscellaneous Licensing	22
LAB Miscellaneous Licensing Enquiry (enter type code)	13
LAC Miscellaneous Licensing Consultation (enter type code)	9
Statutory Nuisance	18
N34 General Nuisance - Other	5
N63 Animal/Whale etc Carcass	3
N41 Choked/Defective Septic Tank	3
N31 Foul Odours	2
N60 Routine Refuse Complaint	2
N62 Animal waste nuisance (not dog fouling-use code D01)	1
N40 Choked/Defective Drain / Sewer	1
N61 Serious Refuse - Foul or Putrescible	1
HMO Licensing	17
LDA Housing (Scotland) Act - HMO Application [Enter Type Code CHA or CHB]	16
LDB HMO Complaint - Licensed Premises [Enter Type Code CHC-CHF]	1
(blank)	14
E06 Groundwater Consultation/Enquiry	5
E11 SEPA Consultation/Enquiry	3
N48 Plant cmplt/query (injurious weeds, invasive species, ragwort etc)	2
G42 Trade waste policy complaint (enter type code)	1
NBF Other burial/body enquiry	1
G02 Grounds Maintenance - General	1
G05 Grounds Maintenance - Trees	1

Category of Service Request	No. of SRUs
Health & Safety	10
H03 H & S Complaint (Non-Work Related)	3
H19 RIDDOR Accident Notification	3
H23 H & S Request for Information/ Advice	2
H28 H & S Cooling Tower Notification	1
H11 H&S Request For Information	1
Dog Control	9
D06 DC Dog Bite - Animal	5
D04 DC Aggressive Dog	2
D01 DC Dog Fouling	1
D02 DC Stray Dog CALL OFFICER IMMEDIATELY	1
Pests (e.g. mice, rats, seagulls etc.)	9
P08 Rats NOT aff. House LOW (enter type)	8
P02 Biting insects HIGH (enter type)	1
Other	6
OA1 Other	6
Infectious Disease/HPT Referral	5
XIB ID REPORT from public	3
XID ID ENQUIRY	2
FOI and EIR requests	2
E12 FOI request	2
Roadkill	1
G16 Roadkill - removal of dead animals from verge	1
S87 Public Health Funerals	1
NBB National Assistance Burial enquiry/request (s50)	1
Complaints against service	1
ZCC Complaint against the Service	1
Fly Tipping/Waste/Trade Waste	1
G21 Fly-tipping - Non-Urgent	1
Litter	1
G03 Grounds Maintenance - Litter	1