

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	6
Report No	SCC/12/26

Committee: Sutherland Area Committee

Date: 1 June 2026

Report Title: Environmental Health - Annual Report & Activity 2025/26

Report By: Strategic Lead for Environmental Health & Bereavement Services

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 2025/26.

2 Recommendations

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

- i. The scope and volume of work currently being delivered in the local area;
- ii. Local issues and current operational priorities;
- iii. Highland wide issues impacting Environmental Health services; and
- iv. The format and content of the report.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** – The resources available to Environmental Health must 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 help provide a sustainable workforce.
- 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 will be aware that Environmental Health submits an annual operational plan for approval. This plan sets out the objectives for the service as a whole, including the key priorities for the year ahead. The most recent 2025/2026 plan was approved by the Communities & Place Committee on 22nd May 2025. A revised plan will be presented in May 2026.

Consideration is currently being given to moving from an annual plan to a three-year Operational Plan. This approach would support longer term, strategic planning.

Annual progress updates would then be provided through these annual Area Committee reports.

- 5.2 The purpose of these Area Committee reports is to:-
- increase awareness of the range of activities undertaken locally by the Environmental Health team,
 - to seek feedback from Members on the work and performance of the service, and
 - to identify any existing or emerging local issues that Members wish to see prioritised going forward.

5.3 Environmental Health delivers a wide range of statutory functions on behalf of the Council, with the overarching remit to protect and improve public health. Key areas of responsibility include:-

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), blue-green algae, radon advice and National Assistance funerals.

Food Safety

This includes an enforcement and advisory role in all aspects of 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 (HMOs) and housing defects. It also includes the delivery and administration of the Council Scheme of Assistance that provides advice and funding by means of a grant for disabled adaptations in the home and for housing improvement and repairs. We also support the Ukrainian resettlement team in conducting property inspections.

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 team's work is proactive and preventative in nature. Environmental Health plays a vital role in ensuring that the Highlands maintains its reputation as a safe and healthy place to live, work, and visit. We aim to support local businesses by providing clear advice on regulatory requirements and by ensuring that our regulatory activity adheres to the five principles of better regulation: **proportionate, consistent, accountable, transparent, and targeted.**

We have also adopted a successful '**4Es**' approach — **Engage, Explain, Encourage, and Enforce** — which underpins how we respond to most cases and helps to promote compliance in a constructive and collaborative manner.

- 5.5 The Environmental Health team has recently undergone a management re-structure as part of ongoing workforce planning and in response to increasing demands on the service.

Two new Area Environmental Health Managers were appointed in October 2025 to cover the North and South operational areas. These roles are designed to support both the Strategic Lead for Environmental Health & Bereavement Services and the Senior Environmental Health Officers (SEHOs) who manage the operational teams in each local office.

There are eight Senior Environmental Health Officers across Highland, each responsible for managing local teams delivering the full range of Environmental Health functions. The SEHOs are based in the following area offices - Fort William, Inverness, Dingwall, Portree, Golspie and Wick.

In addition to their local management responsibilities, SEHOs hold Highland-wide functional lead roles for key statutory areas of work. These roles include developing policy and operational guidance and supporting officers in managing significant or complex cases.

Several members of the Environmental Health team also participate in local, regional, and national working or steering groups. Their involvement helps share best practice and contributes to the development of new legislation and statutory guidance.

Appendix 1 provides the latest Environmental Health team structure, including a map of the operational areas, the area office locations and relevant points of contact.

5.6 The Environmental health team that covers the Sutherland area is based in **Drummuie**. There are 9 posts (9.0 FTE); which consist of:-

- 1 x Senior Environmental Health Officer (1.0 FTE)
- 1 x Trainee Environmental Health Officers (1.0 FTE)
- 1 x Trainee Food Safety Officer (1.0 FTE)
- 1 x Licensing Standards Officer (1.0 FTE) covers Sutherland & Caithness
- 1 x EH Technical Officer 1 (Private Water Supplies) (1.0 FTE) covers Sutherland & Caithness
- 1 x Housing Grants Officer (1.0 FTE) covers Sutherland & Caithness
- 1 x Education & Enforcement Officer (1.0 FTE)
- 1 x EH Technical Officer (Short Term Lets) (1.0 FTE) covers Sutherland & Caithness
- 1 x Operational Support Officer (1.0 FTE) covers the whole of Highland

Where necessary officers may be required to undertake cross boundary work to support the other area-based teams. Any work related to contaminated land is delivered by officers based within our Dingwall office.

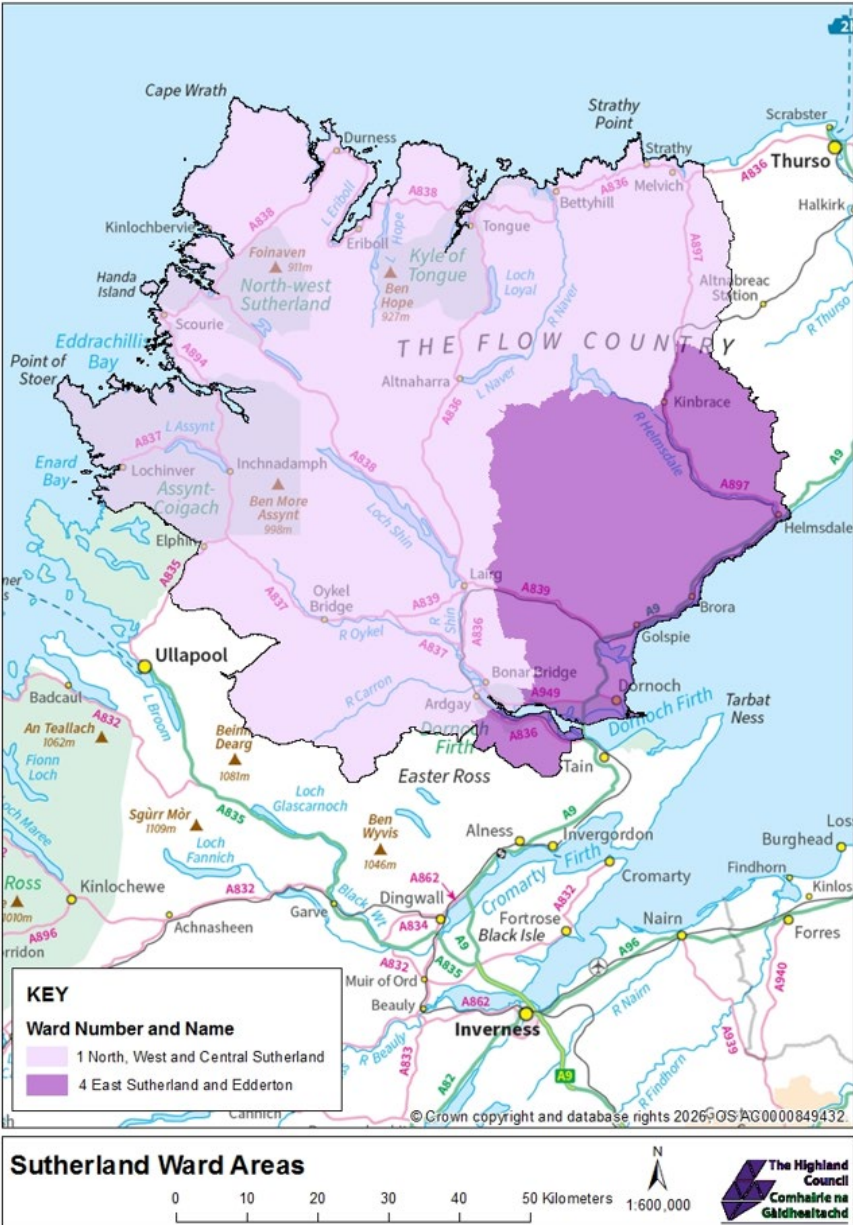
6.0 Summary of Environmental Health Activity/Local Issues

6.1 This report groups Environmental Health activity into three key areas. These are outlined below:

- Reactive work (i.e. service requests)
- Pro-active/scheduled work (i.e. programmed inspections/visits)
- 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 and presented as a total figure for all the Sutherland wards (i.e. wards 11 & 21). See Fig 1 below for ease of reference

Fig 1 - Ward Areas covered by Report



All data presented is for the period between 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

6.2 Reactive Work

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: Number of Service Requests by General Category Type for Wards 1 & 4

Category Type	Number of Service Requests 2024/25	Number of Service Requests 2025/26
Short Term Let Licensing Consultation / Enquiry / Complaint	383	140
Animal Health and Welfare	16	53
Abandoned Vehicle	48	116
GENERAL EH Enquiry	42	23
Nuisance	9	21
Planning – General Consultation	48	86
Food Premises Registration	35	46
Housing grant enquiry	29	20
Civic Government Licensing Consultation / Enquiry	32	36
Private Water Supply enquiries, complaints etc	73	71
Miscellaneous Licensing Enquiry / Complaint / Consultation	16	17
FSS SHELLFISH - Alert & Sample failure	21	1
FOOD SAFETY enquiry/consultation	15	14
Planning – MAJOR Applications	10	4
Housing (Scotland) Act - HMO Application / Complaint	10	7
DC Fouling patrols	3	96
Dog Control	9	20
H & S Complaint / RIDDOR	9	10
Miscellaneous Licensing Consultation	21	4
Noise	15	21
Request for Housing Condition Report / complaint	6	8
Food complaint	6	10
Litter / fly tipping	3	7
Other	32	78

The total number of Service requests received by the Environmental Health team for these wards was **909**.

There was a significant reduction in the number of STL licence consultations compared to the previous year, largely due to the three-year licence cycle. As licences begin to reach renewal, application numbers are expected to rise again, particularly as the legislation has now been fully in place since October 2022. Although this deadline was set, existing hosts were granted a one-year grace period, allowing them to operate without a licence until October 2023. This resulted in a notable surge in applications in October 2023. Given the three-year duration of licences, a similar increase in workload is anticipated in October 2026.

In terms of resourcing, the service is currently operating with one officer, although it would ordinarily be staffed by two. A maternity cover post is expected to commence in summer 2026 for a period of approximately one year. The substantive postholder is due to return from maternity leave in October 2026, which will result in a period of overlap of several months before the cover post ends in 2027. This temporary increase in capacity (potentially up to three officers) will place the service in a strong position to manage the anticipated increase in workload.

This is a similar position in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licences where there was a notable increase last year compared to year before due to the 3yr licence period.

Similar to across Highland, there was also a notable increase in reports of abandoned vehicles. Further detail is provided on these services requests within Section 6.7 of this report.

- 6.3 To provide details of the **OUTCOME** for each of these Service requests, a breakdown of the outcome codes recorded for each is shown in Table 3 below. For ease of understanding, the outcomes have been consolidated under 5 main headings.

Table 2: Breakdown of the outcome for Service Requests

Outcome Descriptor	Number
No Breach/No Further Action Required	337
Advice, Guidance & Informal Resolution	407
Statutory / Formal Enforcement Action	7
Case Referred, Withdrawn or Managed Elsewhere	118
Internal / Administrative	2
Total	871

For the full set of outcome codes recorded on our database please refer to **Appendix 3** which outlines how our database outcome codes have been consolidated into these headings.

6.4 To provide an indication as to the different demand between the ward areas, a breakdown of the numbers within the individual ward areas is shown in Table 3 below.

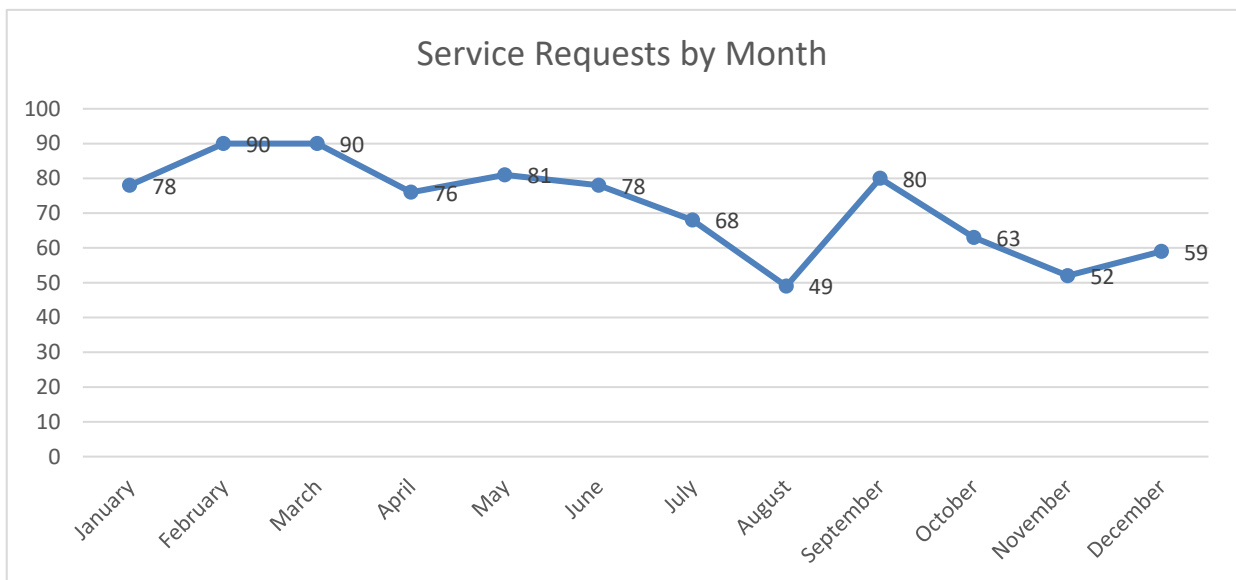
Table 3: Service Request Numbers by Ward Area

Ward No	Area	Number
1	North, West and Central Sutherland	401
4	East Sutherland and Edderton	463
N/A	Other/ Not recorded	45
Total Sutherland Area		864*

**This figure does not include the number of Contaminated Land planning screening assessments undertaken in each ward area. These are recorded on a separate database.*

6.5 To provide an indication as to the variations in demand across the year, a breakdown by calendar month is provided in Fig 2 below.

Fig 2: Monthly breakdown of Service Request demand



6.6 In addition to the above Service Requests, **333** planning applications were screened by our Contaminated Land Officers. Whilst the majority of actions were only advisory/informative due to the proposed developments not materially changing the risk of potential contamination, a number of applicants were required to submit detailed site histories and/or recommended to undertake further contamination site investigations, remediation or validation works at former uses such as depot/petroleum licensed sites; electrical works; landfill/refuse sites; engineering works, railway land, sheep dips, smiddy and miscellaneous works.

6.7 Table 4 below provides the number of Housing Scheme of Assistance and Private Water Supply Improvement Grants that have been approved during the period within Wards 1 & 4.

Table 4: Number and value of Approved Grants

Type	Number	Total Value of Grants
Scheme of Assistance Housing Grant – Adaptation (i.e. for installation of stairlifts; level access showers and access ramps etc)	19	£172,815
Scheme of Assistance Housing Discretionary Grant – Repair (for significant essential repairs of privately owned property)	0	0
Private Water Supply Grants (i.e. to carry out improvements to the private water supply system)	9	£13,104.07

6.8 Abandoned Cars

As highlighted in Section 6.2 above, there was a significant increase in the number of abandoned vehicle reports last year. Note, a small proportion of the increase in 25/26 may be down to a change in the database as in 25/26 officers ensured every case report covered only one vehicle, whereas the format in 24/25 could include multiple vehicles in one case report. A detailed breakdown of the service requests is included below for reference.

Table 5: Service request by Type of Vehicle Reported Abandoned

Vehicle Type	Number of Service Requests
Car	98
Van	9
Trailer	0
Caravan	5
Boat	2
Lorry	2
Motorbike	0
Total	116

Table 6: Status of reports of Abandoned Vehicle

For ease of understanding, the outcomes recorded against these reports have been consolidated under 7 main headings

Status	Number of Service Requests
Under Investigation/Monitoring	4
Not Abandoned – Case Closed	24
Self-resolved	9
Following intervention, vehicle removed	48
Enforcement Action – Vehicle Removed	6
Invalid or Unactionable Report	10
Other Outcome	15
Total	116

For the full set of outcome codes recorded on our database please refer to **Appendix 3** which outlines how our database outcome codes have been consolidated into these headings.

In October 2025, cost recovery measures were introduced to try and recover costs from the registered keepers of abandoned vehicles. There are prescribed sums which can legally be recovered depending on the size (weight), positioning (on or off road) and condition.

Our Service is currently undertaking a review of our operational procedures in respect to reports of abandoned vehicles due to the significant increase across Highland.

- 6.9 As well as being a statutory consultee for miscellaneous licences, Environmental Health also administer the issuing of these licences. Miscellaneous licensing includes animal boarding, breeding, and selling, riding establishments, caravan sites, cinemas, dangerous wild animals, performing animals, venison dealers & zoos.

The Miscellaneous Licences are typically issued for a calendar year. The exception is caravan site licences for touring/holiday sites – applications are only required if new site or change in licence holder.

Table 7: Number of licences issued by the Service

Licence Type	2025	2026
Animal Boarding Establishment	3	6
Caravan Site – Holiday/Touring	5	1
Cinemas Act 1985	1	1
Riding Establishment	1	3
Venison Dealers	10	1
Total	10	12

6.10 **Pro-Active/Scheduled Work**

The Environmental Health team conduct a range of programmed work, particularly in respect of food safety where a significant number of inspections/interventions 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/Interventions that were undertaken for the period **1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026** within the Sutherland Area wards is detailed within Table 8 below.

Table 8: Pro-Active Inspections/Visits/Interventions by Type

For ease of understanding, the outcomes recorded against these reports have been consolidated under 5 main headings

Visit Type	Number
Food Safety/Hygiene/Advisory Intervention	13
Approved Food Establishment/Export Health Intervention	2
H&S Workplace Pro-active Intervention	3
Licensing Compliance Check/Intervention	121
PWS Sampling/Survey	125
Dog Fouling / Litter patrols	98
Total	362

For the full set of outcome codes recorded on our database please refer to Appendix 3 which outlines how our database outcome codes have been consolidated into these headings.

Please note that these figures **do not** include any reactive inspections/visits conducted in response to a Service Request (i.e. complaints or licence consultation visits).

- 6.11 Private Water Supply officers operating from the Sutherland office also provide service to the Caithness area. In total, Sutherland and Caithness have 164 regulated private water supplies. These water supplies are regulated due to use in a commercial setting, such as a holiday let, hotel or restaurant. They require routine monitoring and are subject to risk assessment once every 5 years.

Area	Number
Caithness	10
East Sutherland and Edderton	53
North, West and Central Sutherland	101
Total	164

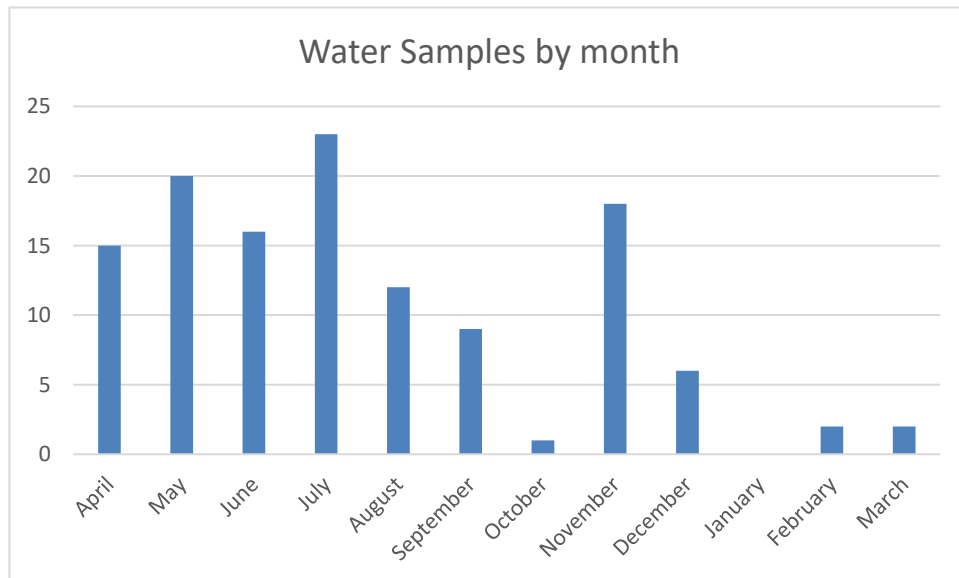
The geographical area of Sutherland makes resourcing this work very challenging. For example, samples must be returned to Dornoch in time for the Scottish Water courier service at 2pm which limits the number of samples which can be taken in any one day taking into account travel distances and heavy traffic from tourism in the summer months.

Environmental Health provided the previous Water Sampling Officer with an opportunity to train as a Food Safety Officer. Recruitment to Food Safety Officer roles has historically been challenging in the Sutherland area, largely due to the requirement for candidates to hold a relevant qualification. Investing in an existing member of staff is therefore expected to strengthen long-term service resilience, with the benefits becoming evident over the coming years. A replacement was appointed in April 2026.

Despite this, samples were taken from a total of 125 premises in 2025/26. However, it is worth noting that for returns to the DWQR, officers that work on a calendar year basis rather than financial year. Furthermore, the true number of total samples taken is 184 (which would include non-regulated supplies on request, or re-samples for those which have failed).

There is a notable decrease in figures from around September 2025 which would

coincide with the expiration of the fixed term contract for a water assistant and our water sampling officer commencing studies. Despite this, efforts were made to continue delivering a service through use of other officers who were in a given area or borrowing resource from further afield.



The training opportunity has been accelerated through Highland Council fully funding a one-year course at the University of Birmingham. This is significantly shorter than alternative training routes, which can take up to four years to complete. The Sutherland office is piloting this pathway, and if successful, it is likely to be rolled out more widely to support the development of other staff across the Service.

There continues to be an increase in the number of regulated supplies on the Council's PWS Register, which is likely to be a result of the introduction of short-term let licensing requirements.

6.12 Formal Enforcement Activity

Whilst most 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 2025 and 31 March 2026 in the Sutherland area wards are detailed in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Enforcement Notices Served between 1 April 2025 & 31 March 2026

Notice Type	Number Served 2025/26
Shellfish Temporary Closure Notice	1
Animal Health and Welfare Notice	1
Prosecution	1

All enforcement notices were complied with by the duty holder.

The relatively 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

7.0 Local Matters

7.1 Poor Housing Condition

A series of Poor Housing Condition complaints about a single landlord with property in Sutherland led to inspections of multiple properties, many of which were found to be below tolerable and repairing standards. In total, six out of eight properties were inspected. Despite ongoing engagement, progress by the landlord was initially limited, resulting in three appearances before the Highland Council Licensing Committee. Ultimately, sufficient repairs were completed to allow the landlord to retain their landlord registration, subject to final checks. This approach prioritised improving the living conditions of the tenants whilst also preventing homelessness pressures, and maintenance of local housing provision.

7.2 **Pest concern, Lairg**

Residents of Lairg have raised concerns regarding an increase in rat activity in the area, which they partially attribute to a dilapidated property. The condition of the property is perceived to be providing harbourage conducive to vermin. Review of historical Google Maps imagery indicates that the property was significantly damaged by fire several years ago and abandoned prior to that.

Progress in addressing the issue has been constrained by legal complexities. The registered owner of the property passed a number of years ago with no next of kin. Recent investigative work undertaken by Environmental Health has successfully identified and established contact with surviving relatives. Now aware, these parties have expressed an interest in the sale of the property.

While the legal position remains unresolved at present, the establishment of new structures and resources within the Drummie offices since February 2026 places Environmental Health in a stronger position to support and progress resolutions to such long-standing issues.

8.0 **Highland-wide Issues/Service Priorities**

8.1 **Short Term Lets**

The short term lets licensing regime commenced on 1 October 2022. The team have a key role as a consultee on applications, assessing compliance at licensed premises and responding to complaints. To date, the Environmental Health Team have responded to over 9000 licence applications. It is estimated that there could be up to 10,000 short term let properties within Highland. The implementation of the scheme will continue to be a priority and require significant resource going forward to conduct compliance monitoring; complaint investigations and process both new and renewal applications. Renewal applications are now being received.

8.2 **Animal Health – New Enforcement Powers**

Recent legislative changes have introduced new fixed penalty powers for enforcing animal health and welfare requirements. These powers provide officers with an additional, proportionate tool to address non-compliance, enabling swift and effective action where breaches are identified without the need for immediate escalation to formal reporting or court proceedings. This is particularly important in Highland, where livestock farming, crofting, and frequent animal movements are integral to the rural economy. Maintaining high standards of biosecurity and disease control is essential to protecting animal health, safeguarding the food chain, and preserving the region's reputation for high-quality agricultural produce.

At present, the Council is awaiting the final enforcement guidance from the Scottish Government on the implementation of these new fixed-penalty provisions. Once this guidance is issued, targeted training will be provided to the Council's three Animal Health Officers, and the necessary enforcement protocols and procedures will be put in place.

8.3 **EU Exit/Export Certification**

The Environmental Health team continues to undertake a range of EU-exit-related activities, including inspections and audits of food businesses involved in export to verify compliance with legislative requirements; the provision of Export Health Certificates; and ongoing liaison with both the UK and Scottish Governments regarding import control arrangements. The team also supports the organisation and delivery of audits carried out by countries receiving Highland-produced exports.

This work remains a priority for Environmental Health in Highland due to the region's significant reliance on food production, particularly within the aquaculture, meat, and game sectors. Many local businesses depend on access to international markets, and maintaining compliance with evolving export and import regulations is essential to safeguard these trade routes.

Whilst there may be upcoming changes in the requirement to provide Export health Certification, it is unlikely that any such changes will be implemented within the next 18 months and so this will continue to be a priority for the Service.

8.4 **Approved Food Establishments**

The team is continuing with the implementation of a new national approach to inspection of Approved Food Establishments – Official Control Verification (OCV). Approved Establishments are manufacturers of products of animal origin (i.e. smokehouses; fish processors, dairies, manufacturing butchers etc).

This approach, which is required across **69* establishments** in Highland, (**9** premises of which are based in Sutherland) has increased the resourcing necessary to inspect such premises.

**The figure of 69 is subject to change depending on whether a premises continues to require approval or not for the activities undertaken, or for any new premises requiring approval.*

8.5 **Non-Surgical Cosmetic procedures – Licensing**

New Scottish Government legislation will introduce a licensing scheme for non-surgical cosmetic procedures (i.e such as fillers and injectable treatments). The aim is to strengthen public protection by ensuring practitioners and licensed premises meet consistent hygiene, safety, and competency standards. Local authorities will be responsible for administering and enforcing the new licensing regime. The Scottish Government has indicated that the legislation is expected to be introduced during 2026, with licensing requirements coming into force following the publication of final guidance. Once this guidance is issued, Environmental Health will work with colleagues in Licensing to develop procedures to support effective implementation across Highland.

8.6 **Renewable Developments**

Environmental Health continues to provide significant input to major infrastructure and renewable energy developments across Highland, including SSEN Transmission projects and proposals for wind farms, Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), and hydro schemes. Officers from all area offices assess and respond to planning consultations, with a particular focus on complex noise assessments and potential noise impacts. This work has been substantial over the past few years and is expected to continue throughout 2026/27 and beyond, reflecting the scale of national infrastructure investment in the region.

8.7 **Green Freeport**

With development associated with the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport expected to increase for the foreseeable future, there will be a corresponding rise in demand on Environmental Health resources to assess potential environmental impacts. This will include work on contaminated land assessments and the evaluation of operational impacts such as noise etc. Environmental Health input is critical at this early stage of development to ensure that such developments are safe and delivered in a way that protects public health. By identifying risks early and setting clear requirements for mitigation, the team helps maintain community confidence, supports responsible economic development, and ensures compliance with statutory environmental standards during both the construction and operational stages of such developments

8.8 **Environmental Crime**

Environmental Health will place a renewed focus on tackling Environmental Crime in 2026/27 and beyond, with particular emphasis on issues such as abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping, and other forms of antisocial environmental behaviour. The Service recognises that these matters are a priority for many Local Members, as they have a direct impact on community wellbeing, local amenity, and the wider environment. Addressing them often requires coordinated, multi-agency action. By prioritising this area of work, Environmental Health aims to take a more proactive approach, strengthen enforcement activity, and ensure that incidents are managed promptly, consistently, and effectively across Highland.

9.0 **Going Forward**

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 The local team would welcome feedback on this report, particularly on the usefulness of the information provided, the type of data presented, and the overall report format. We are also keen to hear what additional information Members would find helpful in future reports. In addition, we would welcome any views on local issues that Members believe should be prioritised or given increased attention going forward.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

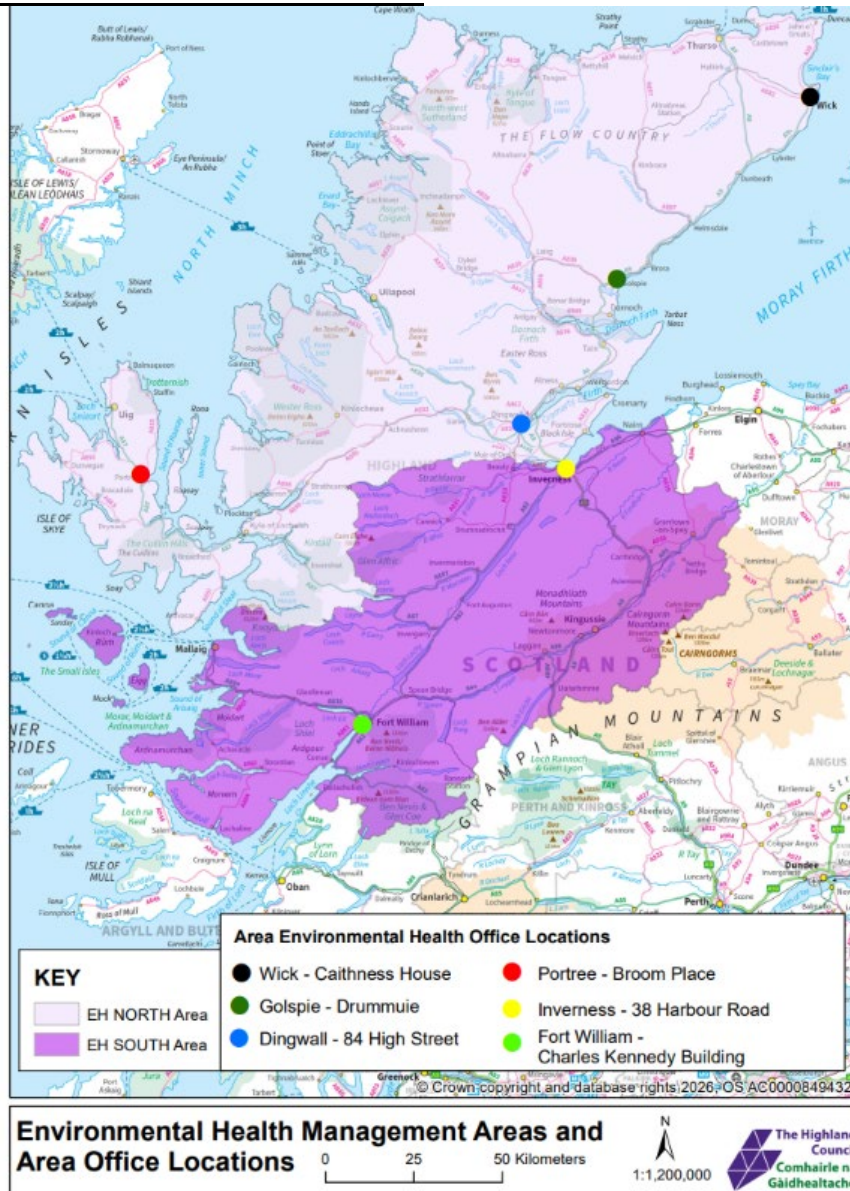
Date: 15 May 2026

Author: Tim Lush (Senior Environmental Health officer)

Background papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Environmental Health Team Structure & Contact Arrangements
Appendix 2 – Detailed breakdown of service request numbers within each of the general category types
Appendix 3 – Consolidation of outcome codes from EH Civica Database

EH Operational Areas and Area Offices



Contact Details for Environmental Health Teams

The preferred and best method to contact Environmental Health Teams is via our generic mailbox - envhealth@highland.gov.uk

This mailbox is monitored by our Business Support Admin and so ensures any matters can be picked up timeously and responded to by relevant SEHO or investigating officer.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT – STRATEGIC & HIGHLAND WIDE ISSUES			
Alan Yates	Strategic lead Environmental Health & Bereavement Services	Highland Wide	alan.yates@highland.gov.uk
Gregor MacCormick	Area Environmental Health Manager (South)	Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Sutherland Areas	gregor.maccormick@highland.gov.uk
Daniel Hopwood	Area Environmental Health Manager (North)	Ross & Cromarty; Skye; Sutherland & Caithness	daniel.hopwood@highland.gov.uk
LOCAL AREA MANAGERS - ALL OPERATIONAL MATTERS			
Beatrice Aitken	Senior Environmental Health Officer	Sutherland Area Main contact for all operational Environmental Health matters	beatrice.aitken@highland.gov.uk
Eleanor Hood	Senior Environmental Health Officer	INBS Area Licensing, Animal health, Noise, Statutory Nuisance and Inverness Trade Waste Policy issues	eleanor.hood@highland.gov.uk
Patricia Sheldon	Senior Environmental Health Officer	INBS Area Housing Grants; Private Water Supplies; Statutory Nuisance and Health & Safety	patricia.sheldon@highland.gov.uk
John Murray	Senior Environmental Health Officer	INBS Area Food safety; Food Standards; Approved premises; Export Certification	john.murray@highland.gov.uk
Barry Cumming	Senior Environmental Health Officer	Ross & Cromarty Main contact for all operational Environmental Health matters	barry.cumming@highland.gov.uk
Tim Lush	Senior Environmental Health Officer	Sutherland Main contact for all operational Environmental Health matters	tim.lush@highland.gov.uk
Philip Dent	Senior Environmental Health Officer	Caithness Main contact for all operational Environmental Health matters	philip.dent@highland.gov.uk
Coila Hunter	Senior Environmental Health Officer	Skye Main contact for all operational Environmental Health matters	coila.hunter@highland.gov.uk

Appendix 2

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

North, West and Central Sutherland (Ward 1)	Count
A02 Animal welfare ENQUIRY	2
A03 ANIMAL- General ENQUIRY(not nuisance etc)	5
A05 Animal traceability ENQUIRY	5
A06 WATSR ENQUIRY	1
A11 ABP COMPLAINT	5
A12 Animal welfare COMPLAINT	8
A14 Animal disease COMPLAINT	9
A15 Animal traceability COMPLAINT	2
D01 DC Dog Fouling	32
D04 DC Aggressive Dog	4
D05 DC Dog Bite - Person	2
E02 Planning –General CONSULTATION (enter type code)	59
E12 FOI (enter type code)	4
E16 Planning –MAJOR Applications (enter type code)	4
E17 GENERALEH Enquiry	6
E18 Planning –ENQUIRY(enter type code)	3
G01 Abandoned Vehicle	37
G16 Roadkill - removal of dead animals from verge	2
G21 Fly-tipping - Non-Urgent	3
H03 H &S Complaint (Non Work Related)	2
LAB Miscellaneous Licensing Enquiry (enter type code)	3
LAC Miscellaneous Licensing Consultation (enter type code)	1
LBB Civic Government Licensing Enquiry (enter type code)	4
LBC Civic Government Licensing Consultation (enter type code)	7
LBE Short Term Let Licensing Consultation	63
LBF Short Term Let Licensing Enquiry	2
LBG Short Term Let Licensing Complaint	2
LDB HMO Complaint - Licensed Premises [Enter Type Code CHC-CHF]	1
N07 Noise Domestic (enter type code)	5
N21 Premises - Dirty Houses & Gardens	1
N33 Smoke Complaint	1
N37 Water Nuisance	1
N41 Choked/Defective Septic Tank	4
N55 Travelling People	2
N60 Routine Refuse Complaint	1
N61 Serious Refuse - Foul or Putrescible	1
N62 Animal waste nuisance (not dog fouling-use code D01)	1
N64 Other animal complaint (not noise)	1
NGB Housing grant enquiry	8
NHD Housing complaint - structural	1
NHE Housing complaint - other	1
NHG Request for Housing Condition Report	1
OAI Other	5

P04 Rats aff. House HIGH (enter type)	1
P08 Rats NOT aff. House LOW (enter type)	3
X02 Food Premises Registration	22
X05 FOOD SAFETY enquiry/consultation	7
X16 Fishing Vessel Registration	5
X19 FSS SHELLFISH - Sample FAILURE	1
X49 Support Attestation	1
XIC ID CONFIRMED Notification from NHS Highland	1
XPC Ship Sanitation Certificate Request	3
XW1 Private supply grant enquiry	12
XWB Private supply enquiry (non grant)	15
XWC Private supply complaint/contamination report	2
XWD Private supply request for sample	7
XWF Private supply other consultation	1
XWG Private supply insufficient: enquiry or complaint	2
XWH Private supply STL Questionnaire	6
(blank)	
Grand Total	401

East Sutherland and Edderton (Ward 4)	Count
A01 ABP ENQUIRY	2
A02 Animal welfare ENQUIRY	2
A03 ANIMAL - General ENQUIRY (not nuisance etc)	10
A06 WAISR ENQUIRY	1
A12 Animal welfare COMPLAINT	1
A14 Animal disease COMPLAINT	3
A15 Animal traceability COMPLAINT	4
D01 DC Dog Fouling	65
D02 DC Stray Dog CALL OFFICER IMMEDIATELY	1
D04 DC Aggressive Dog	3
D05 DC Dog Bite - Person	1
D06 DC Dog Bite - Animal	1
D07 DC Dog - Other	5
E02 Planning - General CONSULTATION (enter type code)	19
E12 FOI (enter type code)	1
E15 EIR (Environmental Information Request)	1
E17 GENERAL EH Enquiry	10
E18 Planning - ENQUIRY (enter type code)	2
G01 Abandoned Vehicle	75
G11 Litter	1
G16 Roadkill - removal of dead animals from verge	6
G21 Fly-tipping - Non-Urgent	2
G22 Local Environment Patrol (e.g. dog fouling, litter, smoking ban)	1
H03 H & S Complaint (Non Work Related)	2
H19 RIDDOR Accident Notification	7
LAB Miscellaneous Licensing Enquiry (enter type code)	6
LAC Miscellaneous Licensing Consultation (enter type code)	3

LAD Miscellaneous Licensing complaint (enter type code)	3
LBB Civic Government Licensing Enquiry (enter type code)	1
LBC Civic Government Licensing Consultation (enter type code)	22
LBE Short Term Let Licensing Consultation	72
LBG Short Term Let Licensing Complaint	1
LCC Liquor Licensing Consultation (enter type code)	1
LDA Housing (Scotland) Act - HMO Application [Enter Type Code CHA or CHB]	5
N05 Noise Advice Enquiry (enter type code)	4
N06 Noise Non-Domestic (enter type code)	2
N07 Noise Domestic (enter type code)	8
N21 Premises - Dirty Houses & Gardens	5
N31 Foul Odours	2
N33 Smoke Complaint	1
N35 Light Nuisance	3
N37 Water Nuisance	1
N40 Choked/Defective Drain / Sewer	1
N41 Choked/Defective Septic Tank	1
N60 Routine Refuse Complaint	1
N64 Other animal complaint (not noise)	1
NGB Housing grant enquiry	6
NHG Request for Housing Condition Report	5
NHZ Ukraine Refugee Property Check	1
OAI Other	9
P08 Rats NOT aff. House LOW (enter type)	2
X02 Food Premises Registration	24
X05 FOOD SAFETY enquiry/consultation	7
X16 Fishing Vessel Registration	3
X41 Complaint: Food (Unfit, Microbiological, foreign body)	5
X42 Complaint: Hygiene of Premises	2
X43 Complaint: Food Standards - item (composition, labelling etc.)	3
XW1 Private supply grant enquiry	3
XWB Private supply enquiry (non grant)	15
XWC Private supply complaint/contamination report	2
XWD Private supply request for sample	2
XWF Private supply other consultation	1
XWG Private supply insufficient: enquiry or complaint	2
XWH Private supply STL Questionnaire	1
(blank)	
Grand Total	463

Consolidation of Outcome Codes used on the Environmental health Civica database

For ease of understanding within the report, our Service consolidated a number of the recorded outcome codes/descriptors that are used within our Civica case management database.

The following outlines how we have consolidated the codes.

Service Requests - Section 6.3 – Table 2

Database Outcome Descriptor	Consolidated Report Descriptor
<i>No breach identified</i>	No Breach/No Further Action
<i>NO FURTHER CONTACT from Client</i>	
<i>Logged as INTEL or INFORMATION ONLY</i>	
<i>No action possible</i>	
<i>Issued ADVICE or Information</i>	Advice, Guidance & Informal Resolution
<i>INFORMAL or VERBAL ACTION Taken</i>	
<i>Responded to CONSULTATION / FOI etc.</i>	
<i>CERTIFICATE(S) etc. Issued</i>	Statutory / Formal Enforcement Action
<i>Formal enforcement action taken</i>	
<i>REFERRED to OTHER THC Department</i>	Case Referred, Withdrawn or Managed Elsewhere
<i>REFERRED to EXTERNAL Organisation</i>	
<i>Client cancelled service</i>	
<i>ALREADY LOGGED in Flare</i>	
<i>Not actioned (manager use only)</i>	Internal / Administrative (Manager Use Only)
<i>OTHER (give details)</i>	
<i>Blank</i>	

Abandoned Vehicles - Section 6.7 – Table 6

Database Outcome Descriptor	Consolidated Report Descriptor
<i>Under On-Going Investigation</i>	Under Investigation/Monitoring
<i>Deemed NOT abandoned - Monitor</i>	
<i>Deemed NOT abandoned – Case Close</i>	Not Abandoned – Case Closed
<i>Objection received by Landowner</i>	
<i>On initial visit, vehicle gone</i>	Self-resolved
<i>On any revisit, Vehicle Gone</i>	Following intervention, vehicle removed
<i>Removed and Destroyed</i>	Enforcement Action – Vehicle uplifted and destroyed
<i>No further contact or details</i>	Invalid or Unactionable Report
<i>Insufficient information to locate vehicle</i>	
<i>Duplicate request from same complainant</i>	
<i>Duplicate request from different complainant</i>	Other Outcome
<i>Other – details in comments</i>	

Pro-Active Inspections/Visits/Interventions – Section 6.9 – Table 8

Database Outcome Descriptor	Consolidated Report Descriptor
E01 PI Intervention (On time)	Food Safety/Hygiene/Advisory Intervention
E02 PI Intervention (LATE)	
E07 Advisory/Educational Visit	
E08 Partial or non-PI Intervention	
E12 EXPORT Random Insp ON TIME	Approved Food Establishment/Export Health Intervention
E13 EXPORT Random Insp LATE	
E16 OCV Start (1st intervention)	
E17 OCV Routine	
E18 OCV Complete (last intervention)	
E20 APP EST - Pre Approval	
E21 APP EST - 3 Month	H&S Workplace Pro-active Intervention
LAB Misc Lic DESKTOP Audit	Licensing Compliance Check/Intervention
LS2 Licensing - STL Compliance Visit	
E05 Sampling visit/sampling survey	PWS Sampling/Survey