

ANIMAL HEALTH SERVICE PLAN 2012-13

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1** The Council's Animal Health & Welfare Strategy duties are provided by qualified and competent authorised inspectors located within the Council's Regulatory Services unit.
- 1.2** As a requirement of the new Framework Document issued by the Scottish Government, the Service Plan requires to be formally approved by the Council. This Report details the Animal Health & Welfare Service Plan for 2012/2013 and outlines the challenges to be met in delivering the service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** That Members formally approve the Service Plan and recognise that the Animal Health & Welfare Service meets the standards defined in the Framework Agreement for Local Authorities.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1** Animal Health & Welfare responsibilities are wide-ranging and cover inspections of farms, market inspections, control or investigation of animal disease notifications, and disposal of animal by-products (including carcasses). In addition, a significant extent of the workload involves providing advice and information to the agricultural community and working with other agencies (eg, Rural Payments, Inspectorate, SSPCA, Police, etc).
- 3.2** Over the last two years the service has been modernised, with the introduction of a risk-rating system for programming work, computer systems for monitoring workload, and being performance-focused through the delivery of Service Plans and key indicators. This has brought the Council to the forefront of animal health in Scotland, and this is reflected by the new Framework Document which does not present the same challenges to us as it does to other Local Authorities.
- 3.3** One of the difficulties posed by the Framework minimum standard is the need to attend 75% of all markets. This has significant resource issues for Argyll and Bute Council as to do so would tie up 1.2FTE of our 2 FTE resource and remove our ability to undertake other core

activities (e.g. farms visits, responding to service requests etc) . A novel risk-based market strategy has been developed to reflect market activity in Argyll and Bute and focus our resources to those markets and issues which require greater input and utilising other agency visits where possible. This approach has been agreed with the Divisional Veterinary Manager.

3.4 In terms of performance in 2011-2, we achieved 100% of all high risk visits and exceeded the 90% target to resolve service requests within 20 working days. A recent customer survey of users of the service in January 2012 identified a satisfaction level of 93%, with 100% believing that they were being treated fairly. Areas for improvement have been incorporated into the Plan for 2012/2013.

3.4 The Government has introduced a Framework Document by which Councils will be measured, and intends to implement an electronic reporting system (AMES). There are issues relating to both proposals and agreement has been reached that :-

(i) The minimum standards in the Framework may not be met, provided agreement is reached with the Divisional Veterinary Manager and the Local Authority.

(ii) The AMES System (which was found to be unsatisfactory in a pilot) will not be implemented as a minimum standard, and that further work will be undertaken nationally to assess its appropriateness for Local Authorities.

3.5 This agreement was put in place by the Council's Regulatory Services Manager, representing Scottish Local Authorities.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Service Plan outlines the service priorities for 2012/2013 and the requirements of the Framework Agreement A novel risk-based market strategy has been agreed with the Divisional Veterinary Manager, who is very interested in this approach.

5. IMPLICATIONS

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| Policy : | None |
| Personnel : | None |
| Legal : | Meets our legal requirements |
| Equal Opportunity : | None |
| Financial : | None |

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