

To: ENVIRONMENT POLICY BOARD

On: 9 NOVEMBER 2016

Report by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Heading: FOOD STANDARDS SCOTLAND – SHAPING SCOTLAND’S FOOD
FUTURE – OUR STRATEGY TO 2021

1. Summary

- 1.1 On 17 August 2016, Food Standards Scotland (FSS) published their strategy entitled - *“Shaping Scotland’s Food Future – Our Strategy to 2021”*.
- 1.2 The strategy sets out a clear vision for Food Standards Scotland: *“to create a food and drink environment in Scotland which benefits, protects and is trusted by consumers”* and outlines a broad remit to be the authoritative voice on food issues, giving out clear advice on nutrition, food safety and food and feed policy. In doing this, Food Standards Scotland will put consumers first, aiming to be a credible, consistent and trusted voice on food matters in Scotland.
- 1.3 The strategy provides a focus for what Food Standards Scotland will do up to 2021 with six strategic outcomes:
 - Food is safe
 - Food is authentic
 - Consumers have healthier diets
 - Responsible food businesses flourish
 - Food Standards Scotland is a trusted organisation
 - Food Standards Scotland is efficient and effective
- 1.4 The new strategy clearly aligns with Renfrewshire Council’s Business Regulation Service Plan presented to Board on 24 August 2016 as part of the

wider Public Protection Service Operational Plan. It is also consistent with the Better Regulation and Enforcement Guidelines (Integrated Enforcement Policy) agreed at the Leadership Board on 14 September 2016.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Environment Policy Board:

- 2.1 Notes the publication of the Food Standards Scotland (FSS) strategy entitled - *“Shaping Scotland’s Food Future – Our Strategy to 2021”*.
 - 2.2 Notes the purpose, vision and outcomes of the Food Standards Scotland strategy and their alignment with the work being undertaken by Renfrewshire Council.
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3. Background

- 3.1 Food Standards Scotland (FSS) was launched in April 2015 by the Scottish Government to deliver independent, consistent, evidence-based and consumer-focused information as it works to protect public health, help improve the Scottish diet and protect the interests of consumers in relation to food.
- 3.2 Food Standards Scotland replaced the Food Standards Agency (Scotland) which was originally formed in 2001.
- 3.3 Food Standards Scotland’s purpose is defined in the Food (Scotland) Act 2015 with three objectives:
 - to protect the public from risks to health which may arise in connection with the consumption of food;
 - to improve the extent to which members of the public have diets which are conducive to good health; and
 - to protect the other interests of consumers in relation to food.
- 3.4 The Act also identifies a number of general functions for Food Standards Scotland:
 - to develop and help others develop policies on food and animal feed;
 - to advise the Scottish Government, other authorities and the public on food and animal feed;
 - to keep the Scottish public and users of animal feed advised and to help them make informed decisions about food and feed stuffs; and

- to monitor the performance of food enforcement authorities.
- 3.5 Renfrewshire Council works closely with Food Standards Scotland, also reflecting our responsibilities for Glasgow Airport. At present there are regular imports of consignments of fish, fruit and vegetables through Glasgow Airport that are subject to controls, as administered by the Council's Business Regulation Team (Regulatory Services). The Business Regulation Team is also involved in the surveillance of exports from the Airport as well as having a Port Health role.
- 3.6 Food Standards Scotland audited the Business Regulation Team (Regulatory Services) in September 2015 with no non-conformances noted and the report stating:

"The system and the operation of monitoring checks performance reports within the department are comprehensive and thorough. These provide information which contributes towards Official Controls being achieved".

Wider Food Policy in Scotland

- 3.7 The food and drink sector is a significant part of Scotland's economy. Employing some 350,000 people in Scotland, there are ambitions to grow the industry to £16.5 billion by 2017. In 2014, Scottish food exports surpassed £1.1 billion for the first time, with total food and drink exports valued at £5.1 billion.
- 3.8 In their strategy, Food Standards Scotland recognise their high dependence on their partners in Scotland's 32 local authorities including Renfrewshire Council, who are carrying out much of the 'on-the-ground' delivery of food and feed law, including compliance and enforcement work. The future of these services, provided by skilled and competent teams and individuals, is key to FSS activities in protecting consumers.
- 3.9 The primary concerns of Food Standards Scotland are protecting public health in relation to food safety and diet, and protecting the interests of consumers in relation to food, for example ensuring that consumers can have confidence that the food they buy is authentic and accurately labelled with information they can understand and trust. In working to achieve these goals and putting the consumer first, FSS also have a responsibility to ensure that food businesses are treated fairly and that regulatory functions are proportionate and do not add undue burden to the industry. This is consistent with the approach set out in the Better Regulation and Enforcement guidelines and that the Council has developed and agreed at the Leadership Board on 14 September 2016.

- 3.10 To underpin this, Food Standards Scotland in their strategy are clear that they will adopt and implement a regulatory strategy which transparently outlines their approach to regulatory decision making and targets interventions in ways that effectively identify and dissuade non-compliance, while providing incentives and rewards for compliance.

Food and Health

- 3.11 Scotland faces considerable challenges in relation to food and health. It is known that poor diets are one of the most significant causes of ill health in Scotland and are a major factor in people being overweight and obese. Poor diet contributes to Scotland having one of the highest prevalence rates of obesity in Europe.
- 3.12 In addition to health problems related to poor diet, considerable numbers of consumers in Scotland suffer from food poisoning every year. It is estimated that there are 43,000 cases of food poisoning in Scotland every year with 23,000 attributed to *Campylobacter*. In addition, the Food Crime Annual Strategic Assessment, published in March 2016 by Food Standards Scotland and Food Standards Agency (which undertakes a similar role in England and Wales), considers spirits to be a substantial area of concern given both the potential health risks and intelligence suggesting increasing counterfeiting in UK markets.
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4. Food Standards Scotland Strategy and Corporate Plan

- 4.1 The Food Standards Scotland strategy provides details about six strategic outcomes they have identified; what they mean, why they matter and what the FSS will do to deliver them:

Food is Safe

- 4.2 This highlights the importance that food on the market complies with legislation, has instructions for safe storage and handling (where appropriate) and that consumers understand how to protect themselves from foodborne illness. As stated in 3.13, there are approximately 43,000 cases of food poisoning every year in Scotland and it is a key aim of the Food Standards Scotland to reduce this figure.

Food is authentic

- 4.3 This ensures that food is of the nature, quality and substance described by the supplier. Labelling is important for members of the public to understand what they are buying; however, 'food fraud' is still noted to be an issue in the

UK, as highlighted by the Horsemeat incident of 2013. This priority is about ensuring all food offered for sale is authentic.

Consumers have healthier diets

- 4.4 In a new focus, with this priority outcome, the FSS are striving to ensure that the dietary choices of the Scottish population change towards meeting the recommended dietary balance and Scottish Dietary Goals. Almost two thirds of adults in Scotland are either overweight or obese and this priority tries to improve the diets of people within Scotland.

Responsible food businesses flourish

- 4.5 In line with proportionality, the FSS will assist responsible businesses by overseeing and providing risk based and proportionate regulation that enables them to flourish. The focus will be on non-compliant businesses and this clearly aligns with the Renfrewshire Council Integrated Enforcement Policy. There will require to be a strong and consistent regulatory strategy and significant partnership working with local authorities to deliver this priority.

FSS is a trusted organisation

- 4.6 Through this outcome it is hoped that consumers are increasingly aware of FSS and trust it as the national body to put them first in relation to food safety, food standards and healthy eating. This strategy is a first step in FSS communicating more to ensure that consumers are aware of who they are and what they do.

FSS is efficient and effective

- 4.7 This outcome is focused internally to deliver well motivated and skilled staff, who are resourced and capable of delivering all the other priorities and outcomes set out in the strategy.
- 4.8 To deliver these six strategic outcomes, Food Standards Scotland has developed their first Corporate Plan (April 2016 – March 2019) attached as an appendix to their five year strategy. This details what the outcome means, why this matters and what they will do about this outcome over the coming years.
- 4.9 A full copy of the Food Standards Scotland strategy, including the Corporate Plan is available from the FSS website at the link below:
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/shaping-scotlands-food-future-our-strategy-2021>

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – there are no direct costs from this report.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community Planning**

Community Care, Health & Well-being – this strategy will have a direct impact on communities in relation to health and well-being. Safe food is essential and healthy eating contributes to healthier and longer lives.

Greener – none
4. **Legal** – none
5. **Property/Assets** - none
6. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - There are no impacts on equality and human rights as part of this paper.
8. **Health & Safety** – none
9. **Procurement** – none
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** - none

List of Background Papers

- a) The Food Standards Scotland (FSS) strategy entitled - *“Shaping Scotland’s Food Future – Our Strategy to 2021”*.

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