Environmental Health Food Law Service Plan 2023/24 - Food Standard Scotland's audit report findings of implementation of Interventions Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland) Food Law Enforcement Services noted.

4 There was submitted a report by the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability regarding an Environmental Health Food Law Service Plan 2023/24 and the findings of Food Standard Scotland's (FSSs) audit of this Council's implementation of the Interventions Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland) Food Law Enforcement Services, advising

(1) of the FSSs audit and its aims, which had taken place on 1st and 2nd November 2022 and was part of its arrangements to maintain and improve consumer protection and confidence in relation to food by ensuring that local authorities were providing an effective food law enforcement service;

(2) that the overall outcome of the audit had determined that there was insufficient assurance in that controls were not acceptable and had notable weaknesses and that the findings showed that there were significant weaknesses in the current risk, governance and control procedures to the extent that the delivery of objectives was at risk;

(3) of an action plan and progress in relation to the 9 recommended action points, as detailed in appendix 1 of the report;

(4) of the impact of COVID-19 on the service and of current staffing resources and difficulties that had been experienced in recruiting appropriate staff, with work ongoing both at a local and national level to address the root causes of the current recruitment crisis;

(5) that the FSS had recognised that the national deficit of Environmental Health staff had impacted on the delivery of the national food enforcement delivery programme and had initiated the Scottish Authority Food Enforcement Re-Build (SAFER) Project, which aimed to implement a new approach to food law implementation in Scotland; and

(6) of the Environmental Health Food Law Service Plan 2023/34, as detailed in appendix 2 of the report, which all local authorities were required to prepare for food enforcement and to review performance against it on an annual basis.

After consideration, the committee noted the

(a) update on current progress of the FSSs audit report findings; and

(b) Environmental Health Food Law Service Plan 2023/24.