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**Steps taken to promote and increase sustainable economic growth and to improve efficiency, effectiveness and economy in 2015/16**

Under Section 32(1)(a) and (b) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2000, public bodies have a duty to publish a statement of the steps they have taken during the financial year, through the exercise of their functions, to:

1. promote and increase sustainable growth; and
2. improve efficiency, effectiveness and economy.

**(a) Sustainable economic growth**

Food Standards Scotland’s primary concern is consumer protection – making sure that food is safe to eat, ensuring consumers know what they are eating and improving nutrition. With that in mind, our vision is to create a food and drink environment in Scotland that benefits, protects and is trusted by consumers.

In the course of doing this, we aim to ensure that responsible businesses flourish.

**Regulatory strategy**

During 2015/16 we developed a draft regulatory strategy, outlining in a transparent fashion how we will meet our statutory obligation to comply with the Scottish Regulators Strategic Code of Practice and embed the five principles of better regulation in all that we do.  We also outlined our proposed approach to regulatory decision making so that stakeholders can be assured that we are taking a consistent approach to decision making.

**Risk-based and proportionate regulation**

We worked with the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee to develop a a system, shortly to be piloted with local authorities, which is designed to help reward compliant businesses by reducing the burden of inspection visits where sustained past compliance has been demonstrated.

We provided expert advice to COSLA in their work to develop uniform guidance to local authorities on the issuing of export health certificates, designed to minimise duplication and standardise approaches. We also provided scientific and technical advice to Defra related to risk assessment around levels of heavy metals in crabs being exported to China. The advice has helped to secure a continuation of exports to China.

**(b) Efficiency, effectiveness and economy**

We aim to be efficient and effective in all that we do. For us this means being an organisation of well-motivated and appropriately skilled people committed to carrying out all our duties in a responsible way. Our resources are focused on doing the right things, and doing them in ways that are most effective for achieving our objectives.

**Governance**

In 2015/16 we established our first Board and Senior Management Team to lead the organisation, and the Board approved a Code bringing together the core elements of FSS governance, which will be subject to annual review.

**Partnership**

Partnership working supports efficiency and effectiveness across our remit. Key actions this year include agreement of a memorandum of understanding with the Food Standards Agency, underpinned by protocols covering key areas of collaboration essential to consumer protection. And we have worked in partnership with the local authorities, providing advice, guidance and support for the delivery of official controls in the majority of food businesses.

**People strategy**

This year most of our staff accepted an offer of transfer to Scottish Government Main bargaining unit terms and conditions of employment to take effect from 1 April 2016. The change will deliver efficiency savings and, by more effective use of HR shared services, will enable FSS staff to focus on strategic development of HR and learning and development functions, rather than on process delivery.

The year has also seen significant recruitment activity to fill critical roles in new areas of work, with new staff and internal promotions allowing the organisation to benefit from a mix of new skills and experience as well as developing and building on existing expertise. Secondments have also enabled sharing of skills and knowledge, and development activities have covered a range of new skill areas.

**Cost effective official controls**

FSS delivers official controls in respect of meat, shellfish and wine, and has established an integrated Operations team for more efficient and effective official controls delivery.

A new meat hygiene official controls charging system, developed with the industry on the principle of simplicity, was introduced on 1 April 2015, and is kept under review.

**Digital Strategy**

We use the Scottish Government shared services IT platform allowing for secure sharing of information between FSS and Scottish Government departments. In addition, we have provided secure a communication facility for our Scottish Food Crime and Incidents Unit, implemented a means of sharing information from the operations field in near real time, and introduced a geographical information system (GIS), to facilitate communication of complex data or information to the public.

More information about how we contribute to the Scottish Government’s

purpose and the National Performance Framework can be found in our Strategy to 2021 and Corporate Plan 2016-2019 on [our website](http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/sites/default/files/FSS%20Strategy%20Doc%20Final.pdf) .