**NORTH OF SCOTLAND FOOD LIAISON GROUP**

### TERMS OF REFERENCE, STRUCTURE & OPERATION

**1. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

* 1. Established under the auspices and supported by the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland (SOCOEHS) the North of Scotland Food Liaison Group will promote consistent action across Scotland and provide a forum for the discussion and development of local authority food law enforcement activities. The Group will also engage with government and other national bodies on relevant matters.
  2. Membership of the North of Scotland Food Liaison Group shall comprise representatives of:
* Aberdeen City Council
* Aberdeenshire Council
* Comhairle nan Eilean Sir Council
* The Highland Council
* The Moray Council
* Orkney Islands Council
* Shetland Islands Council
* Aberdeen Scientific Services
* Edinburgh Scientific Services
* Food Standards Scotland

# 2. PURPOSE

* 1. To promote a consistent approach between member authorities on the interpretation and enforcement of food safety law.
  2. To promote a consistent approach between member authorities on the implementation of approved codes of practice and other guidance to Food Authorities.
  3. To act as a focal point for the exchange of information and views between member authorities, the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee (SFELC) and Food Standards Scotland.
  4. To act as the forum through which member authorities can explore issues of common interest locally, engaging, where necessary, with the SOCOEHS, and SFELC at a national level.
  5. To facilitate liaison with other professional groups or bodies with areas of common interest.
  6. To maintain dialogue with local industry, promoting co-operation and the pursuit of common objectives.
  7. To organise seminars and workshops for food enforcement officers.

* 1. To initiate local surveillance programmes and projects and to contribute to national surveillance initiatives and projects.
  2. To review and comment on emerging legislation, guidance, codes of practice etc. as deemed appropriate.

**3. STRUCTURE**

* 1. The Group shall include one representative from each of the local authorities within the North of Scotland Food Liaison Group area, one from the Public Analyst’s Service (i.e. a food examiner) and one from the Food Standards Scotland. Each representative shall be regarded as a member of the Group.
  2. The representative of each local authority or organisation will have direct responsibility for the food safety and food standards functions within that authority or organisation.
  3. The Group shall appoint a Chairperson, and a Secretary, for a period of three years. Where possible, this should synchronise with the SFELC office bearer elections to promote continuity of NSFLG representation there.

At the end of their third year in office in the Group, all three appointees shall demit, although they remain eligible for subsequent re-election.

* 1. Member authorities may delegate additional officers to attend the Group as observers.
  2. Member authorities should make every attempt to be represented at Group meetings, when the substantive representative is unable to attend.
  3. The Group shall invite technical specialists, Official Veterinary Surgeons, trade, consumer or any other interested parties or experts to contribute to its work, as it deems necessary. Invited participants shall not hold voting rights.

**4. OPERATION**

* 1. The Group shall meet on a minimum of four occasions in each year, having regard to the SFELC meeting programme.
  2. Whereas the Group shall ordinarily conduct its business at planned meetings, the time, place and venue having been circulated to members timeously in advance of the meeting, this will not preclude members’ participation in meetings using telephone or video conferencing technologies, where practical.
  3. Either the Chairperson or the Secretary may decide for the purposes of expediency to transact any business which could not otherwise be dealt with at a scheduled meeting of the Group, on-line via e-mail or via telephone or video conferencing, where practical.
  4. The Group shall nominate representatives to attend the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee (SFELC), the Food Safety Sub-Committee, the Food Standards Sub-Committee and any other committees established on a permanent or ad hoc basis by the SFELC.
  5. The Group may establish working groups to address specific issues, as necessary.
  6. The Group may prior to referral to SFELC’s Secretary, circulate details of those issues, which they deem should be referred to SFELC or its sub-committees, to all other Liaison Groups for their information and consideration.
  7. The Group should seek to work on the basis of consensus or majority agreement, such that all member authorities are able to abide by the Group’s decisions.
  8. Standing items on the Liaison Group agenda shall include:
* Reports from members nominated to attend committees or Working Groups
* Reports from member authorities.
* Legislative changes/enforcement guidance.
* Food Standards Scotland report.
* Sampling programmes.
* Food Crime/Food Incidents

**Date of this review: 9 October 2017.**