

Refreshed Communications and Marketing Strategy

1 Purpose of the paper

- 1.1 This paper presents the updated Communications & Marketing Strategy 2026–2031 for the Board's information.
- 1.2 The strategy has been revised to align with the FSS Organisational Strategy 2026–2031 and to reflect changes in the operating environment, including the impact of generative AI, increased exposure to misinformation, the SAFER regulatory reform programme, SPS-related engagement and Board-agreed Public Health Nutrition recommendations. It strengthens FSS's approach to trust, transparency, partnership working, message coherence, and the visibility of evidence across the food system.
- 1.3 The Board is asked to:
 - **Confirm the Board is content with** the enhancements made to reflect organisational priorities, governance arrangements and external developments.
 - **Discuss and agree the** on the strategic direction outlined in the updated plan.

2 Strategic aims

This work supports FSS Strategic Outcomes: Food is safe and authentic; Consumers have healthier diets; Consumers are empowered to make positive choices about food; and, FSS is trusted and influential.

3 Background

- 3.1 The existing Communications & Marketing Strategic Plan was drafted in 2023 and requires revision to reflect organisational developments, the new strategy and the direction set by the Board. Key changes since the previous iteration include:
 - the publication of the FSS Strategy 2026–2031,
 - the establishment of the SAFER regulatory reform programme,
 - increasing relevance of SPS-related engagement,
 - the Board's Public Health Nutrition recommendations,
 - the growing influence of generative AI on how information is accessed,
 - and increased misinformation risk, as noted in recent Board discussions.

The updated strategy supports FSS in operating transparently, proportionately and independently by reinforcing:

- evidence-based communication,
- stakeholder understanding of FSS decisions and recommendations,
- trusted and accessible public information,
- clear governance, including the role of the Strategic Engagement Committee,
- and alignment with organisational SPIs.

The Board has previously highlighted the increasing risk that misinformation may pose to consumers and wider public health, particularly when inaccurate narratives circulate through social media, political commentary or other influential voices. The refreshed strategy now explicitly recognises this risk. It positions FSS as a trusted source of authoritative information, taking a risk-based, proportionate approach to addressing misinformation where it has the potential to undermine consumer safety, confidence or regulatory understanding.

4 Discussion

4.1 Issue for Consideration

- 4.2 The Board is invited to discuss and agree the revised strategy assuming you are content that it provides the right strategic direction for FSS's communications function for the next five years and whether it reflects Board priorities, particularly in relation to Public Health Nutrition and misinformation.

5 Identification of risks and issues

- 6 The strategy positions communications to manage risks associated with:

- misinformation (using a risk-based, proportionate model),
- reduced visibility caused by AI-driven changes in information behaviour,
- misunderstandings of regulatory reform,
- and lack of awareness of Board-approved PHN recommendations.
- This approach aligns with FSS's Risk Appetite Statement.

7 Equality Impact Assessment and Fairer Scotland Duty

- 7.1 Communications activity will continue to apply inclusive design principles and maintain accessibility standards (WCAG compliance, BSL provision, translation where needed).

8 Conclusion/Recommendations

8.1 The Board is asked to:

- **Discuss and provide a view on** the updated strategic direction.

Please direct queries to:

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