

Delivering with less (impact on Environmental Health Services) – Action plan up date to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 25th February 2016

What are we trying to achieve, the outcome	Provide sustainable environmental health services which meet the Council’s statutory duties in terms of public health
Why we need to do it:	Councils have a range of statutory environmental health duties that they are required to deliver. These range from tackling overcrowding and poor housing conditions to testing for air pollution and checking the quality of food premises. However, because of reductions in UK government funding for the Welsh Government and councils, local authorities have less money to maintain these services and support delivery of national improvement priorities.

A copy of the full Wales Audit Office report can be accessed by clicking here:

http://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/delivering_with_less_environmental_health_report_2014_english.pdf

Actions taken that will address the WAO recommendations contained in ‘Delivering For Less – The Impact on Environmental Health Services’		Update	Next Steps	Delivery Date	Responsible Member/ Officer
WAO DWL 01	Revise the best practice standards to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •align the work of environmental health with national strategic priorities; •identify the wider contribution of environmental health in delivering strategic priorities of the Welsh Government; and •identify the benefit and impact of environmental health services on protecting citizens. 	The Best Practice Standards were developed by the Wales Heads of Environmental Health Group (WHOEHG), under direction from Directors of Public Protection Wales. Following the WAO Report recommendation, a comprehensive review of the standards has been started with a view to this work being completed by April 2016. In view of the financial challenges faced by Local Government Environmental Health Services, the revised standards will no longer refer to "good" or "best" practice and will identify required standard and the higher standard that may be achieved at local discretion. Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC is actively contributing to this work through the network of Expert Panels established by WHOEHG. The revised standards will clearly identify the strategic links with WG priorities.	Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC is actively contributing to the development of the revised Practice Standards for Environmental Health in Wales.	1.4.16	Louise Davies

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WAO DWL 02	Provide scrutiny chairs and members with the necessary skills and support to effectively scrutinise and challenge service performance, savings plans and the impact of budget reductions.	The Council has taken action to improve the effectiveness of the scrutiny and overview procedures. This is supported by elected Member training and development programmes. In addition, a new process of Service Self Assessment has been introduced in 2015-16 which actively facilitated Cabinet member challenge and review of the Environmental Health Service performance and this will inform the Delivery Plan for the Service going forward.	Following changes to the scrutiny procedures of the Council, Environmental Health falls within the remit of the new Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee. The work programme of that Committee for 2016 includes areas of Environmental Health and Licensing work.	Ongoing	Paul Mee

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WAO DWL 03	<p>Improve engagement with local residents over planned budget cuts and changes in services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •consulting with residents on planned changes in services and using the findings to shape decisions; •outlining which services are to be cut and how these cuts will impact on residents; and •setting out plans for increasing charges or changing standards of service. 	<p>The Council has transparent decision making procedures for any planned service changes or cuts and where appropriate this includes open consultation with residents and service users. The service cuts made in Environmental Health in 2014-15 did not have a direct impact on frontline services and were not subject to formal consultation. Any further service changes or cuts to the service will be fully considered and will be subject to resident engagement where necessary.</p>	<p>Where it is deemed necessary, the Council will take appropriate action to consult with residents over any changes to Environmental Health Services that may be proposed in the future.</p>	Ongoing	Paul Mee and Louise Davies

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<p>WAO DWL 04</p> <p>Improve efficiency and value for money by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the statutory and non-statutory duties of council environmental health services. • Agreeing environmental health priorities for the future and the role of councils in delivering these. • Determining an 'acceptable standard of performance' for environmental health services (upper and lower) and publicise these to citizens. • Improving efficiency and maintaining performance to the agreed level through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – collaborating and/or integrating with others to reduce cost and/or improve quality; – outsourcing where services can be delivered more cost 	<p>The Council completed a whole service review of its Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services in 2014. This clearly identified the statutory and non statutory services provided and on the basis of the standard of service currently being provided, the Cabinet took decisions to prioritise some service areas and reduce or cut others in response to local needs and priorities. Performance targets have been set for 2015-16 to reflect the service changes and resource reductions decided by Cabinet and in some areas this means the target is to maintain rather than improve on performance achieved in 2014-15. Charges were introduced for pest control services and other income generating opportunities continue to be explored. These service changes were implemented from April 2015-16.</p>	<p>The Service Standards for Regulators which are provided by Environmental Health will be published on the Council website by the 31st December 2015 in accordance with the Regulators Code of Practice.</p> <p>Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC is actively contributing to the development of the revised Practice Standards for Environmental Health in Wales.</p>	<p>31.12.15</p> <p>1.4.16</p>	<p>Louise Davies</p> <p>Louise Davies</p>

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<p>WAO DWL 05</p> <p>Improve strategic planning by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •identifying, collecting and analysing financial, performance and demand/need data on environmental health services; •analysing collected data to inform and understand the relationship between 'cost: benefit: impact' and use this intelligence to underpin decisions on the future of council environmental health services; and •agree how digital information can be used to plan and develop environmental health services in the future. 	<p>The Council introduced a process of Service Self Assessment for 2015-16 which requires services to critically appraise their current performance to identify areas of good practice and improvement priorities that inform the Delivery Planning Process for 2016-17. The process for Environmental Health Services involved robust and open challenge by the Cabinet member. The priorities for the service going forward include improved use of digital technology to enable residents and service users to 'self serve' their needs.</p>	<p>Ongoing process of service challenge and delivery of service priorities</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Louise Davies</p>