

To: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE	Subject: Consultation Document Review of Food Related Scientific Services in Scotland
From: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	
Date: 26th May, 1998.      Ref: GB/MC	

**PROPOSED DECISION**

To note the change of Service Provider for microbiological examinations and to agree the comments at the Appendix to this Report and thereafter advise the Scottish Office.

**REPORT**

The Scottish Office have issued a Consultation Document with regard to the provision of Food Related Scientific Services in Scotland.

This Department with other Council Departments currently makes use of the service provided by Glasgow Scientific Services for all its requirements with the exception of microbiological examinations of food which are provided by the food laboratory at Monklands and Bellshill Hospital Trust.

This will change next month when this latter service will also be undertaken by Glasgow Scientific Services as the Hospital Trust could not afford the costs of NAMAS accreditation as a food laboratory. These costs would have to have been borne solely by its only two customers for this service, North and South Lanarkshire Councils and would have made the cost of the services too expensive.

The Scottish Office Consultation Document seeks the views of the Council with regard to the future provision of the service and comments in answer to this question are made in the Appendix to this Report.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee note the position with regard to the change of service provided for microbiological examinations and send the Comments listed in the Appendix to the Report to the Scottish Office.

*M'Kenzie L. Hutton*

- A** i) & ii) Full chemical and microbiological NAMAS accredited laboratories strategically sited throughout Scotland capable of providing the services required by all local authority departments to a reasonable timescale and at reasonable cost.
- B** i) & ii) This service with regard to North Lanarkshire is about to change, the existing service being provided by Lanarkshire Health Board who for reasons of cost, mainly due to the cost of accreditation to NAMAS, have decided not to continue to provide a food examination service. The service will in future be provided by Glasgow Scientific Services.
- iii) The existing service is provided by Glasgow Scientific Services and the costs are shared by all the participating Councils, particularly those within the area of the former Strathclyde Regional Council. The service works well.
- The only criticism to be made is that there is no organised emergency service for out of hours and weekends and such a scheme requires to be considered.
- iv) The terms here are addressed by the laboratory particularly the joint working in that all participating councils are represented on a liaison committee which meets regularly to consider new ideas and sampling regimes.
- v) There is obviously a role for SCIEH with such chemical and microbiological laboratories and as at present they should act in a monitoring and co-ordinating role with regard to surveillance for signs of food borne disease throughout Scotland.
- C** i) As stated at **B** iii above the main improvement required is the provision of an out of hours emergency service to provide information on any incident which may occur as soon as possible. Such a service is provided by Glasgow Scientific Services to Strathclyde Fire Brigade and appears to work extremely well.
- ii) The existing arrangements appear from the view point of North Lanarkshire to work very well albeit the microbiological examination aspect of the service is yet to be experienced but assuming there is no major problems the only other alternative to the provision of such a service in Scotland would be the provision of all laboratory services under one umbrella to ensure consistency of service throughout Scotland. Such provision could be administered via a system of a joint board of local authority members organised via COSLA.
- D** No further comment.