

## DELOITTE FSS INCIDENT PREPAREDNESS REVIEW AND FSS INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

### 1 Purpose of the paper

1.1 The Board is asked to:

- **Note** progress on incident management and comment on on-going work being undertaken to develop FSS's non-routine incident communications capability and response.
- **Discuss** the Deloitte Incident Preparedness Review report and the recommendations made (Annex A).
- **Note** the proposed Incident Management Structures being developed to address the key recommendations identified in the Deloitte Incident Preparedness Review report (Annex B).
- **Note** the progress being made against each of the review report recommendations (Annex C) and the executive's intention to provide regular updates on progress.
- **Discuss** FSS's new Incident Communications Plan (Annex D).
- **Agree** a revision to FSS's risk appetite during incident management.

### 2 Strategic Aims

2.1 This work supports FSS Strategic Outcomes: 1 – Food is safe, 2 – Food is authentic, 4 – Responsible Food Businesses Flourish, 5 – FSS is trusted and 6 – FSS is efficient and effective.

### 3 Background

- 3.1 The contract for Food Standards Scotland's 2016 -2018 Emergency Exercise Programme, designed to rehearse Non routine Incident Management Plans & processes, was awarded to Steelhenge (now Register Larkin by Deloitte) in May 2016. A desktop exercise, Exercise Leven, was scheduled for December 2016 as a precursor to a larger command post/simulation exercise, Exercise Loch Rannoch, scheduled for March 2017.
- 3.2 In December 2016, having already managed several non-routine incidents since FSS's establishment, SMT agreed there was more merit in identifying lessons learned from a number of previous non-routine incidents when compared with an artificial simulation exercise.
- 3.3 Hence in January 2017, the Emergency Exercise Programme was amended & Register Larkin by Deloitte were tasked to undertake a review of FSS's incident management preparedness, with particular focus on the effectiveness of existing incident management structures, plans and procedures. Separately, the Executive has also undertaken a review of incident communications and has developed a new Incident Communications Plan.

- 3.4 The Incident Preparedness Review itself was informed by a desktop review of relevant documentation (including Incident Situation Reports, timelines, meeting minutes, media reports, the lessons learned we shared with the Board etc), in-depth discussions and workshops with staff involved in incidents. The lessons identified would then inform the development of new Incident Management structures/processes as required, followed by a training phase for staff. Project Redstart was established to deliver these combined elements of work.
- 3.5 Further, we have not waited for the final report to be agreed before making any changes, in particular in communications. The executive is conscious that high-level incidents can carry an associated high level of reputational risk, and it was agreed that the existing approach, protocols and plans would be reviewed.

#### **4 Project Redstart Development**

- 4.1 The development of the Incident Management documentation set consisting of an Incident Management Framework, Policy and Plan are almost finalised and reflect the Incident Management Structures outlined in Annex B.
- 4.2 Staff training on the new Incident Management structures and roles, and on the new Incident Communications Plan, took place w/c 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018.
- 4.3 The Board will wish to note Annex C in particular which demonstrates progress by the executive against the Deloitte recommendations. The approach is similar to that we reported to the Board in relation to the Scudamore Report following horsemeat. It is the intention of the Executive to provide regular updates to the Board on progress against these recommendations. The Board will also wish to note that these revisions will be tested to ensure they are robust and effective. Some changes have already been implemented for live incidents, for example the introduction of an Incident Assessment Team is already in place.
- 4.4 Finally, in terms of incident review, the Board should note that this report doesn't alter our intention to carry out our standard internal lessons learned approach to individual incidents. These will of course be shared with the Board as appropriate.

#### **5 Incident Communications**

- 5.1 The Incident Preparedness Review Recommendation 16 advised that FSS should develop an updated Crisis Communications Plan, delineating roles and responsibilities and containing a suite of tools and templates to support the communications team's response during a non-routine incident. The new Incident Communications Plan (ICP) under discussion is at final draft stage. It is likely it will undergo further amendment following training with the Communications team, for whom it is primarily intended, alongside all those who may be involved in incidents within FSS. We will also seek views from stakeholders. The ICP contains high level guiding principles for incident communications and drills down to specifics, providing guidance and tools. It is an off-the-shelf manual to be picked up and referred to by the Communications team throughout a non-routine incident and is considerably more comprehensive than the plan it replaces.
- 5.2 The Board will also note that there are a number of templates included within the plan. The purpose of this is to ensure consistency of approach in incident communications as well as support "roll on, roll off" procedures during an incident,

and will allow the communications team to act quickly and focus on content rather than form. Effectively, we are introducing a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for communications.

- 5.3 In the interests of transparency, and subject to Board comments, before finalising the plan, we will engage with key stakeholders to raise awareness of our communications approach during an incident. It is our experience that in incidents, businesses do focus on managing reputational risk, and being clear about our communications approach, especially where there is uncertainty, would be important in ensuring businesses understand our intentions before incidents occur.
- 5.4 It is worth noting that whilst there are certainly improvements to be made to FSS's response to incidents, the reputational impact that was perhaps anticipated following some high profile incidents does not appear to have come to fruition. The most recent wave of FSS's Food in Scotland Consumer Tracking Survey, carried out independently by Kantar TNS amongst a representative sample of the Scottish population, indicates that levels of trust in FSS are at an all-time high of 78%. The survey was conducted in December 2017 and shows trust levels have risen significantly from 70% in December 2015.

## 6 Risk Appetite

- 6.1 When the Board reviewed the FSS Strategic Risk Register in [November 2017], it confirmed the risk appetite statement that had previously been agreed. However, in light of a number of recent incidents, the Board may wish to reconsider its risk tolerance and whether that should change during an incident. Of particular importance is the retention of confidence by consumers in FSS as the regulator to ensure food is safe. Currently, the risk tolerance for public health is low, while on the issue of reputation, the Board agreed a medium tolerance. Public bodies are, rightly, expected to have 'broad shoulders' when it comes to criticism. However, it is vital that FSS retains consumer confidence so that we are trusted during non-routine incidents. At the moment, it could be argued that the public's receptiveness to messages we give about protection of public health could be adversely impacted if we are prepared to accept misinformation and/or misrepresentation of FSS and its actions during an incident.
- 6.2 The review of the Incident Management Plan provides an opportunity to review of the risk tolerance for reputation during an incident. Currently, this is set at medium at all times. However, during incidents (at levels 2 to 4) the reputational risk tolerance could be set at low to ensure consistency with the low tolerance applied when it comes to protection of public health. This change would ensure the executive operated within this revised appetite and would reinforce our position with other organisations involved in any incident.
- 6.3 **The Board is therefore invited to agree that an additional sentence should be added to the current risk statement to say :**

*During Level 2, 3 & 4 incidents, the risk appetite for reputation should be low to align with the low tolerance risk appetite in relation to protection of public health.*

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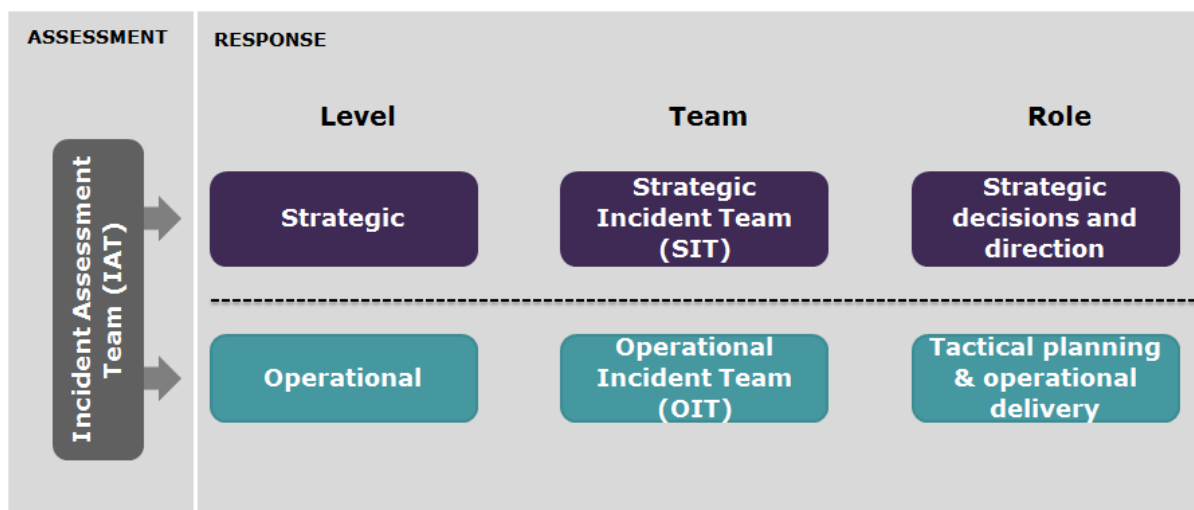
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**ANNEX A**

Incident Preparedness Review Report - Deloitte

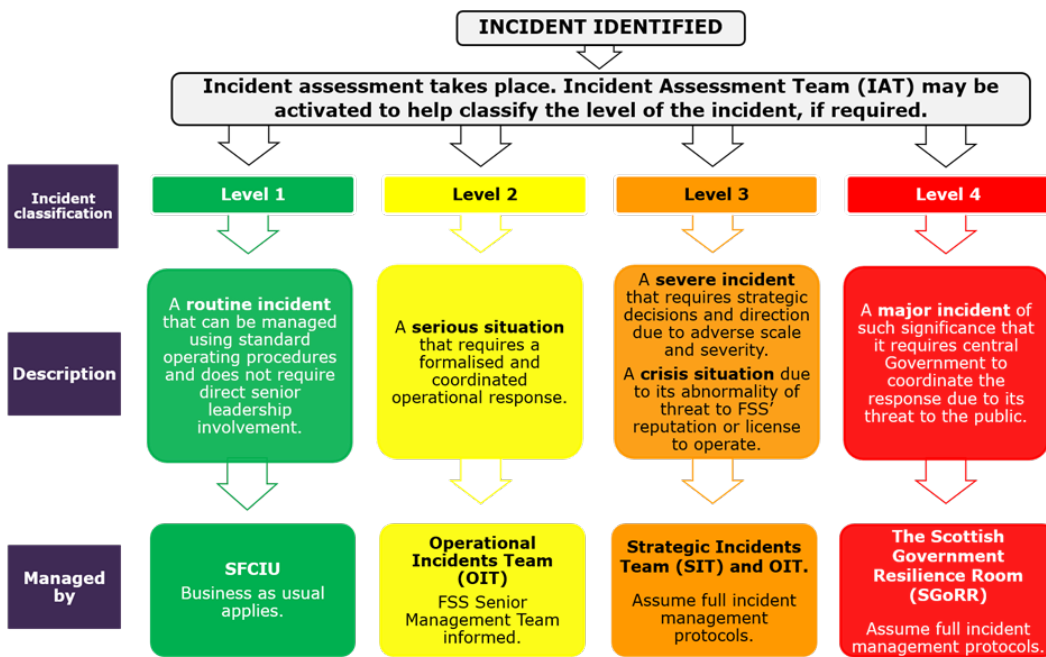
**ANNEX B**

1. The report clearly recognises that the existing FSS Non routine Incident Management plan (May 2015) contains a considerable amount of useful information & is aligned to the Food Standards Agency's equivalent plan to facilitate joint working, as necessary. The current plan outlines the establishment of an Operational Delivery Team (OIDT), responsible for the operational aspects of the incident management response, and the Senior Incident Team (SIT) responsible for both the tactical and strategic elements of the response.
2. The report clearly identifies the need to align the Incident Management processes and structure to the size & structure of Food Standards Scotland. To address this a clear delineation is being proposed between the tactical and strategic involvement throughout the incident process.

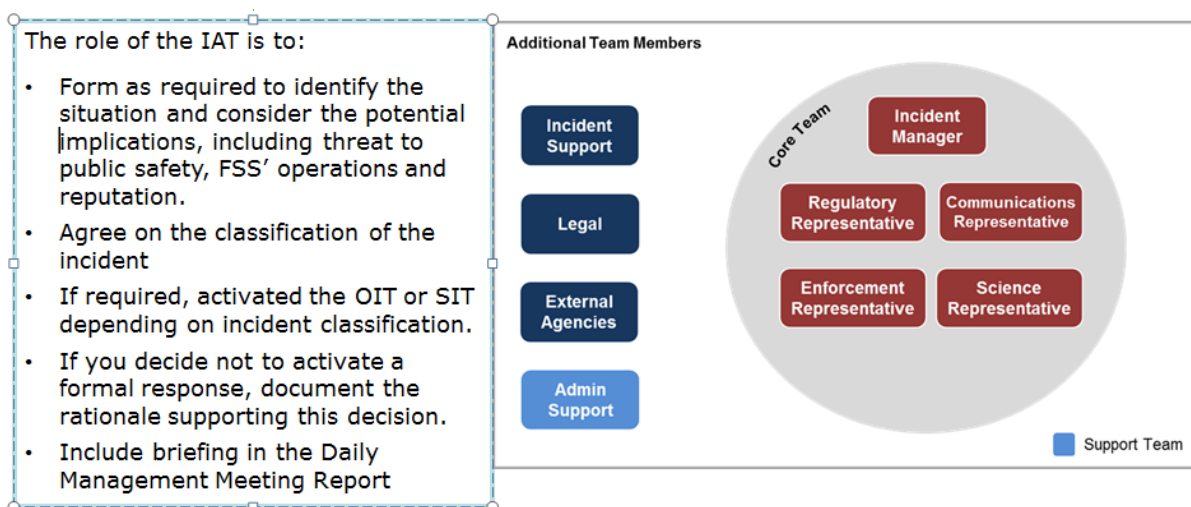


The new structure allocates the responsibility for operational delivery and tactical planning to the newly titled **Operational Incident team (OIT)**, allowing the Strategic decisions and directions to be determined by the **Strategic Incident Team (SIT)**.

3. Every incident that is reported to FSS is currently classified using a Classification Matrix which identifies incidents as Low, Medium or High based on a range of different criteria including Health effects, Numbers of consumers affected, scale of foodchain distribution etc. This is now being updated to incorporate new criteria such as reputational risk to FSS, along with a clear expectation of the associated response required dependant on the level of incident .



4. The introduction of a new **Incident Assessment Team (IAT)** will ensure a structured approach to the classification of incidents where there is any uncertainty about the potential risk to public safety and/or FSS's operations and reputation. This will ensure there is a consistent approach to all incidents from the beginning & provides the ability to 'triage' incidents as they are reported.



5. The role of the **Operational Incident Team (OIT)** in the initial stage of the incident will be to support and manager the tactical response of the incident, including information gathering, tactical planning and stakeholder engagement

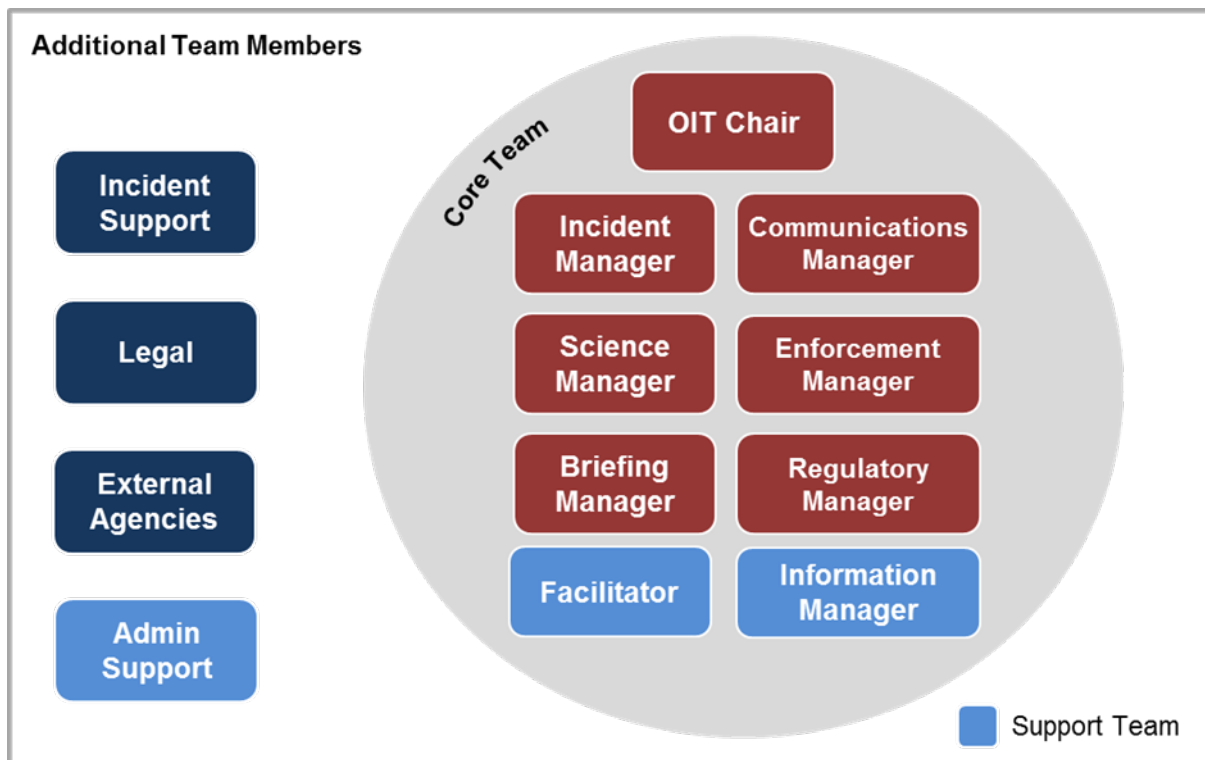
During a level 2 incident, the OIT's responsibilities are as follows:

- Establish the OIT to coordinate the response.
- Hold an initial meeting to understand the situation, set team objectives and identify the salient issues.

- Formulate a plan of how to manage the incident.
- Inform the Senior Management Team (SMT) that the OIT has been mobilised and why.
- Set the 'battle rhythm' for the response and communicate this to the team (i.e. when meetings will take place and when updates are expected).
- Carry out operational tasks to manage the incident i.e. traceability mapping, liaising with Food Business Operators, Local Authorities and retailers as appropriate.
- Coordinating stakeholder engagement and consider communication materials required.
- Capture and manage information using CLIO.
- Provide high quality updates and briefings to the SMT throughout the response.
- Continue to assess the incident throughout the response to determine if more senior involvement (i.e. SIT to be mobilised if it is not already)
- Continue to assess the incident throughout the response to determine whether the classification has changed and FSS remain the lead organisation
- Decide when to stand down the response and communicate to the team and wider business.

Additionally, in the event of a level 3 or 4 incident, the OIT should also:

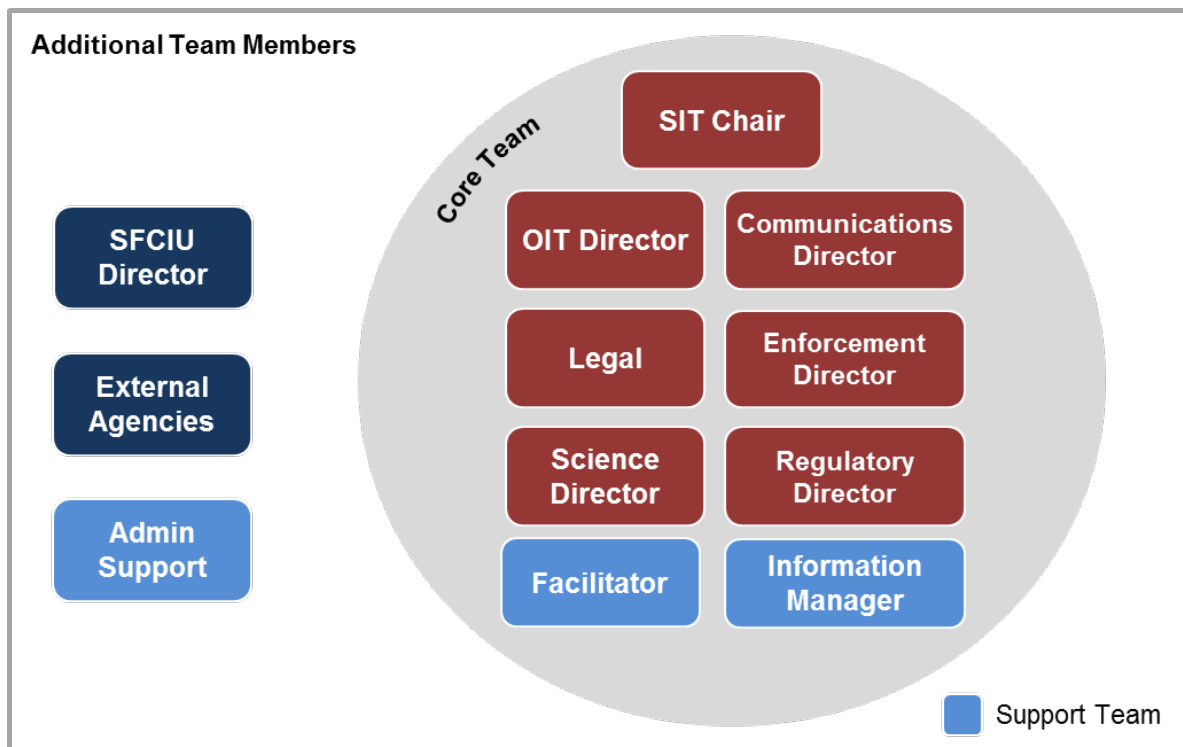
- Ensure an Incident Director has been established to act as the link between the OIT and SIT.
- Complete the actions as directed by the SIT.
- Identify appropriate people to attend externally led incident meetings, if required i.e. HPS or FSA





6. The **Strategic Incident Team** is primarily formed by the Senior Management Team members and where necessary, representatives from the relevant stakeholder groups. The SIT provides high-level strategic leadership and direction to the operational team, evaluating future risks and ensuring appropriate action. The SIT supports the OIT in managing their response including incident communications, reputation management, senior stakeholder engagement, responding to ministerial concerns, preparing for any legal implications, leading the recovery and horizon scanning to identify any upcoming potential risks.

- *Leadership*: Provide leadership and direction in the effective and timely response and management of a Level 3 or 4 incident.
- *Issues*: Identify strategic issues (i.e. reputation, political, industry etc.) and establish any key areas where further information is needed.
- *Worst case planning*: Conduct scenario planning in order to establish any worst case options and possible remediation.
- *Strategy*: Develop response strategy based on issues identified.
- *Agree communication strategy* and sign off key messages.
- *Strategic direction*: Provide strategic direction to the OIT.
- *Stakeholders*: Identify strategic stakeholders and develop stakeholder engagement strategy.
- *Briefing*: Review briefing materials i.e. ministerial briefings, Board briefings
- *Resources*: Ensure the OIT is performing and sufficiently resourced to respond effectively.
- *BAU*: consider impacts of incident on BAU activity and take decision about how this will be managed
- *Stand down*: Decide when to stand down the response and communicate to the team and wider business.



## **ANNEX C**

Progress towards completion of Deloitte Incident Management Report recommendations.

**ANNEX D – FSS Incident Communications Plan**