

Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy Update: May 2016



**Economy, Planning &
Employability Services**

This document updates our previous Strategy Reviewⁱ published in 2010 and Updateⁱⁱ from 2013. All of the changes that have taken place in the last three years are additions or improvements so this reduced-format strategy update is considered appropriate. Original section numbers have been retained throughout this update for ease of cross-reference.

1.1 Corporate Visions and Goals

The team has re-branded itself “Land & Air Quality” to emphasise the positive aspects of our work and to acknowledge our increased scope of expertise and responsibility in active participation with our colleagues in Development Management, Building Standards, Vacant & Derelict Land, Economic Development, Affordable Housing and Parks & Open Spaces.

The team actively promotes integration with key council policies:

Our work contributes in some way towards each of Fife Council’s five Council Planⁱⁱⁱ aims:

- Growing a vibrant economy
- Increasing opportunities and reducing poverty and inequality
- Improving quality of life in local communities
- Promoting a sustainable society
- Reforming Fife’s public services

Our work links with Fife Community Plan^{iv}

- Reducing inequalities
- Increasing employment
- Tackling climate change

And it links with Reforming Public Services^v

- Improving performance of council services to meet changing demand
- Shifting services to prevention and early intervention
- Decentralising services and enabling employees
- Empowering local communities in delivering locally valued services
- Working together and integrating services

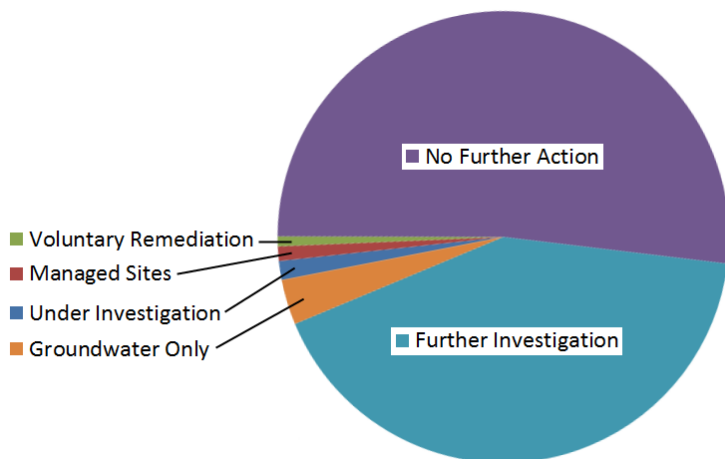
Our award winning ‘Resource Sharing Group’ is an example of best practice in this regard.

Working in partnership with the Affordable Housing team, we have helped to ensure the safe redevelopment of several former factory sites to provide hundreds of new homes in Fife. Our colleagues in Economic Development have made good use of our expertise when making decisions about the council’s portfolio of land assets and the Vacant & Derelict Land team has been successful in securing government funding for projects to regenerate disused land.

1.3 The Risk Assessment Process

The Statutory Guidance has not changed but the number and quality of available risk-assessment tools has. Research commissioned by the Scottish Government and Health Protection Scotland will recommend the adoption of benchmark dose methodology in risk assessment, providing justification for another line of evidence that should be considered admissible in investigative work. And there is a new set of assessment criteria entitled “Suitable for Use Levels” published by LQM / CIEH in 2015 which, although not intended for use in strategic risk assessment, are a useful additional line of evidence in the risk assessment process for our own strategic investigations.

4.3 Progress to Date

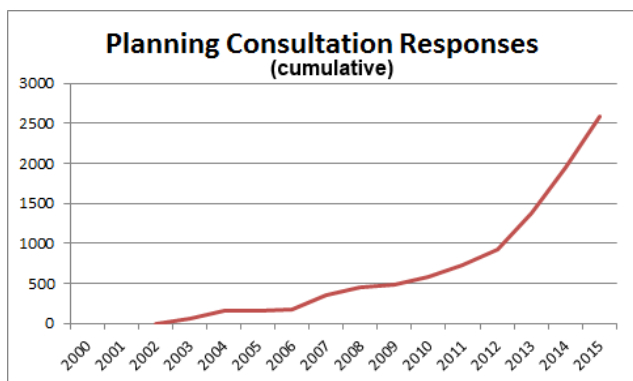
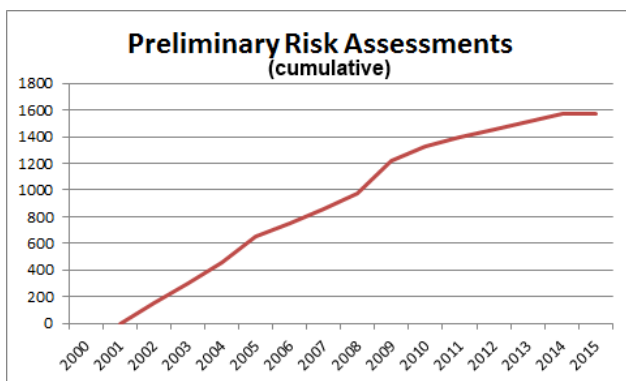


Seventy five percent of high and medium priority sites have been inspected in the last fifteen years.

Of those 1590 sites, more than half have been assessed to require no further action under our strategy.

At the other extreme, eleven have been the subject of voluntary remedial action by the Council. Some sites are considered suitable for their current use although a final decision is needed on groundwater.

As the team’s focus has shifted towards preventative action through development management, the number of new strategic site inspections temporarily plateaued. The team is returning to its usual target of sixty new preliminary risk assessments this year.



The latest figures for progress on contaminated land inspections and consultations (May 2016) are:

- Employed a team of **4** full-time equivalent staff to implement this Strategy
- Completed a total of **1590** desk studies that include risk assessments for reprioritisation
- Carried out intrusive investigations with chemical analyses at **152** high and medium priority sites
- Instigated or overseen voluntary remedial action at **11** contaminated sites under this strategy
- More than doubled the number of sites consulted upon through the planning process (now **2948!**)

4.4 Remedial Projects

Fife Council was successful in obtaining a grant of £985k from the Scottish Government in the final round of flexible funding. This was for a remedial project where water emerging from a former mining spoil heap is adversely affected by iron ochre, leading to localised flooding near Auchterderran. The project originally aimed to treat the water quality issue but, after the exhaustive evaluation of a dozen options, no technical solution could be found. The council instead adopted a strategy of removing the accumulated silt, tree debris and fly tipping to reclaim the original capacity of the watercourses and the pond. Local residents and elected members expressed their gratitude for the environmental improvements.





Remedial work was recently completed on a project to facilitate the safe future use of a former iron foundry site that has lain derelict for twenty years. Now that our work is complete, this 1.2 hectare former metal works located in a residential area of Tayport will be taken on by a community group. Fife Council's Vacant & Derelict Land team decided to use part of its £1.78m government grant to remove metal contaminated soil from the site, supporting its target (and ours) that land with development potential should be brought back into beneficial use, particularly in locations where market forces are unlikely to drive such work.

The Land & Air Quality team was awarded £1.4m in grant funding by the Investment Strategy Group of the Council to deal with contamination encountered at several former gasworks sites in Fife. One such site at Pittenweem presented particular difficulties because of the absence of road access to the site. Contractors used a number of innovative solutions to minimise the volume of material that had to be moved during these remedial works, necessary to protect public health along a section of the Fife Coastal Path and in areas of residential garden ground. Work on this major project was completed on schedule and under budget.



4.5 Programme and Timescale

The team has to divide its time between reactive work (comprising consultations from Development Management and Building Standards as well as property enquiries) and strategic work (the subject of this document). Officers take turns to spend one week responding to consultations and enquiries, although in practice some consultations can be very time-consuming where substantial reports require to be commented upon. Strategic work is divided into phases of investigation:

1. In fulfilling its statutory obligations (Part IIA EPA 1990), the team commits to inspect and risk assess sixty high and medium priority sites each year. If this inspection phase shows no significant risk, the site is considered suitable for use and no further action is needed.
2. Where the next phase of investigation is required, up to a dozen sites are tested for actual contamination each year. Each officer takes on one in-house intrusive investigation using our innovative shared-services agreement with neighbouring councils (Resource Sharing Group).
3. In some cases, the need for remedial action means a site enters a third phase, which is extremely resource-intensive for the case officer, and the whole team is likely to be involved at some point. External consultants are used for their high-level experience in undertaking these.

What	Who	When
Set out Year 13 Inspection Programme	Land & Air Quality Team	April 2014
Completed Tenth Remedial Project	Land & Air Quality Team	October 2015
Completed Eleventh Remedial Project	Land & Air Quality Team	January 2016
Completed Inspection Strategy Update [this ed.]	Land & Air Quality Team	May 2016
Set out Year 15 Inspection Programme	Land & Air Quality Team	April 2016

5.1 Internal Management Arrangements

Recognising the progress that has been made in the preliminary risk assessment of sites, the team opted to take a year out from its programme of (currently) sixty new inspections in 2015 and instead focussed on ensuring that its sources of information were accurate and effective. To this end, the team was successful in securing the services of a specialist in Geographical Information Systems, recently graduated from University of Glasgow. Tasks that were completed included:

- Merging **4** lists of mixed-quality source data into a single “historical land use” layer, removing duplicate entries and buffering points and lines to simplify display in GIS
- Comparing the newly created historical land use layer with approximately **4300** sites identified for this strategy to ensure all sites have been appropriately prioritised in GeoEnviron
- Researching the locations of **1322** derelict tanks from Trading Standards’ records, digitising the points and linking them to the archived files
- Scanning **192** sets of District Council landfill licensing records, plotting and linking documents and re-locating records where they have been misfiled
- Scanning of team records, linking the files to the relevant work package or site and freeing up approximately **6** linear metres of cabinet space

7.2 Inspection Design

In the last three years the Contaminated Land Resource Sharing Group—which enables the team to pursue its statutory inspection programme at no extra cost to the council whilst at the same time increasing the skills and experience of team members—has earned the following accolades:



9.6 Contact Points in the Authority

The Contaminated Land team can be contacted in the following ways:

Telephone: 01592 583141

Send us an e-mail: contaminated.land@fife.gov.uk

Or for more information visit: www.fifedirect.org.uk/contaminatedland

Developing best-practice in land quality investigation and assessment in Scotland

ⁱ Fife Council, 2010, “Fife Council Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy Review May 2010”, www.fifedirect.org.uk/topics/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&p2sid=F21043B7-1CC4-E06A-52FA98F544DE8CF6

ⁱⁱ Fife Council, 2013, “Fife Council Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy Update March 2013”, www.fifedirect.org.uk/topics/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&p2sid=F21043B7-1CC4-E06A-52FA98F544DE8CF6

ⁱⁱⁱ Fife Council, 2013, “Fife Council Plan 2017”, www.fifedirect.org.uk/topics/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&p2sid=1620A6AA-B760-D61B-66695EBB90C20853

^{iv} Fife Council, 2013, “Fife’s Community Plan 2011-20”, www.fifedirect.org.uk/topics/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&p2sid=0F6FA564-1CC4-E06A-5224BB63FBB15BCE&themeid=2B892409-722D-4F61-B1CC-7DE81CC06A90

^v Fife Council, 2016, “Reforming Fife’s public services”, www.fifedirect.org.uk/topics/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&pageid=A909A2F3-9F6C-1810-435A4755BEEA03F0&subjectid=F321F66A-74A8-4D27-BDF9-388400212892