

**ANIMAL HEALTH AND VETERINARY
LABORATORIES AGENCY**

FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT

APRIL 2011

Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency: Framework Document

FOREWORD BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE



I am delighted that the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency has been created and will reinforce the delivery of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy.

It offers a timely opportunity to enhance the resilience and effectiveness of our animal health and welfare scientific and regulatory activities. It also delivers our commitment to simplify the delivery network. Integrating these activities more closely will be of key interest and benefit to all the Agency's customers especially across Great Britain.

As Secretary of State for Defra, I wish the staff and their Chief Executive every success in delivering their services which are crucial to the health of our economy and rural communities.

The Rt. Hon Caroline Spelman MP

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Title

1. The Agency's formal title is the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency.

Status

2. The Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) was originally launched as an Executive Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF, now Defra) on 2 April 1990, under the then title of the Central Veterinary Laboratory (CVL). Prior to this the Laboratory was part of the State Veterinary Service (SVS) within the Ministry.
3. On 1 October 1995 CVL merged with the Veterinary Investigation Service in England and Wales, (also part of the SVS) to form an enlarged Agency under the new name of the Veterinary Laboratories Agency.
4. The remainder of the SVS was created as an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) with effect from 1 April 2005 and it was renamed Animal Health on 1 April 2007 following the merger of the SVS, Dairy Hygiene Inspectorate, and Egg Marketing Inspectorate and the Wildlife Licensing and Registration Service.
5. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency was created on 1 April 2011 from a merger of VLA and Animal Health. At inception it employed around 2,700 staff and had an annual turnover of around £217m.

Legal framework

6. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ("the Secretary of State") established the Agency to fulfil its legal obligations to provide a UK reference laboratory function and operate in the field as a GB-wide organisation providing agreed services to the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government as well as throughout England. The operations of the Agency throughout Great Britain are subject to the relevant law(s) pertaining to either that Administration or across GB as a whole.
7. Relationships between the Agency and the Devolved Administrations come within, and are subject to, the principles and procedures enshrined in wider concordats and agreements that exist between the different Administrations.

8. The specific services provided by the Agency to each Administration are detailed in the Agency's annual agreed Business Plan. Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Ministers' interests are also reflected by their officials who are members of the Agency Strategic Board, set up to advise the Secretary of State.

Description

9. At inception, the Agency had two head offices in Worcester and Weybridge and a senior management team distributed between the two sites.
10. In March 2011, the VLA comprised a regional network of laboratories (surveillance centres) in England, Wales and Scotland, with a central facility near Weybridge in Surrey, which includes five farms. It also operated two additional surveillance centres via sub-contracts with the Liverpool and London veterinary colleges.
11. Animal Health also had a regional presence over about 60 sites throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Further information on locations is shown in Annex A. An early task for the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency will be a reassessment and possible rationalisation of this position.

Policy responsibilities

12. The research and the surveillance work done by the Agency both form an important input to the evidence base used to support policy making throughout Great Britain and abroad. The Agency is also a key adviser to policy decisions taken within Defra and the Devolved Administrations.

Regulatory responsibilities

13. The Agency is the national regulator in GB responsible for the delivery of the policies of Defra and the Devolved Administrations for Scotland and Wales on the prevention, control and eradication of notifiable disease, upholding public health on farms and maintaining the welfare of farmed livestock. The Agency is designated as the UK Management Authority under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and works on behalf of the Food Standards Agency in relation to Food Hygiene Regulations.

14. The Agency undertakes regulatory activities including registering keepers, approving premises, licensing animal movements, inspections and surveillance/testing. It also works collaboratively with the Procurator Fiscal and local authorities, via a Framework Agreement, to deliver animal health and welfare enforcement action.

Aim and objectives

15. A key aim of Defra and the Devolved Administrations in Scotland and Wales is to maintain a sustainable farming industry. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency is central to that as it helps protect public and animal health, animal welfare and standards of production in the farmed animal sector. These activities help support the economic viability of the industry, as well as producing public benefits in respect of all kept livestock that would otherwise not be obtained.
16. The Agency's mission, vision and objectives are kept under review and regularly published in its annual business plan and longer-term corporate plan. However, the general aim above is supported by the Agency through the following activities:
 - Implementing and coordinating the enforcement of national and EU legislation on disease control, animal welfare and international trade – including the UK reference laboratory role and licensing, registration, certification and investigation activities in Great Britain;
 - Supporting knowledge creation and evidence-based policy by undertaking research, providing consultancy and helping to design and deliver surveillance and, on the basis of these, providing expert balanced advice to policy makers;
 - Providing laboratory and research services to other public and private bodies in the UK and across the world;
 - Managing outbreaks of exotic disease, in accordance with the Departmental contingency plan(s), maintained by the Agency, in place at the appropriate time.

Relationships within Defra

Secretary of State

17. The Secretary of State as Departmental Owner of the Agency, and in consultation with colleagues in the Devolved Administrations, is responsible for

the overall policy and financial framework within which the Agency operates. The relevant Defra Minister (“the Minister”) normally acts on behalf of the Secretary of State in all ownership matters related to the Agency.

Minister

18. The Minister’s role is to:

- agree annual performance targets for the Agency, and agree the corporate and annual business plans;
- nominate an individual (usually a member of the Departmental Management Committee and always a member of the Senior Civil Service) to act on behalf of the Minister in all ownership matters – the Corporate Owner and Chief Executive’s line manager. The Minister does not normally get involved in the day-to-day running of the Agency, but in exceptional circumstances, where they judge action to be required, they may issue such directions or instructions to the Chief Executive as appropriate;
- nominate an individual (always a member of the Senior Civil Service) to act on behalf of the Minister in all Defra customer matters – the Defra Corporate Customer;
- determine, in consultation with colleagues in the Devolved Administrations and acting on advice from the Corporate Owner, the extent of any suspension of ‘normal’ services or temporary relief to required service levels during an emergency or during the application of a recovery plan; and
- make strategic decisions for the long-term viability and sustainability of the organisation in the light of wider Defra and Government strategies, including the overall funding position.

19. The Minister also aims to meet the Chief Executive of the Agency in person, on behalf of the Secretary of State, at least annually to discuss the Agency’s strategy, its performance and how risks can best be managed.

Defra Supervisory Board

20. This body will be chaired by the Secretary of State and the Department’s senior non-executive director (appointed by Cabinet Office Ministers) and the Department’s Management Committee will also be members. Ministers will remain responsible for policy and Departmental and Agency accounting officer roles will remain the same. However, this body will review performance across the Department and its network on finance, risk management and delivery of the Department’s Business Plan.

Permanent Secretary and Management Committee

21. In practice, the Minister's nomination of individuals to be the Corporate Owner and the Defra Corporate Customer is delegated to the Permanent Secretary. The Permanent Secretary nominates two members of the Defra Senior Civil Service to carry out these roles. Both nominations may change from time to time in the light of any Departmental reorganisations.
22. Informed by the Statement on Internal Control, the Defra Management Committee remains collectively responsible for delivery by the Agency. The Permanent Secretary as Accounting Officer remains accountable to Ministers for the Agency's delivery.
23. The Permanent Secretary and Senior Appointments Board will appoint the Chief Executive, usually after open competition and in accordance with the rules on public appointments.

Corporate Owner

24. The Corporate Owner role is separate and distinct from the Corporate Customer role as there are ownership risks and responsibilities that are wider than, and different from, customer interests and may sometimes conflict with them. The Corporate Owner is responsible with the Chief Executive for the strategic direction of the Agency and for corporate performance monitoring.
25. At a high level, the Corporate Owner is responsible for the strategic direction of the Agency and corporate performance monitoring. This includes:
 - Agreeing a strategy suitable for the needs of Defra, the Devolved Administrations and the Agency;
 - Aligning the Agency's capacity and capability with delivery of policy objectives and outcomes;
 - Ensuring that the Chief Executive delivers Agency efficiency and corporate performance targets;
 - With the Chief Executive, ensuring that the Defra funding and that of other Customers is sufficiently robust to meet the requirements of the agreed agency strategy;
 - Defra funded strategic investment decisions;
 - The level of risk in the Agency business plan;
 - The commercial growth targets, and the approach to gaining commercial work avoids potential conflict of interest with Defra funded work.

The Agency Strategic Advisory Board

26. The role of the Agency Strategic Advisory Board is to advise the Corporate Owner on all aspects of their role. It will typically meet four times a year. In addition to advising on the roles set out above, the Strategic Advisory Board will also advise the Corporate Owner on agreeing or updating:
- Reports from the Agency's Audit and Risk Committee;
 - The terms of reference for the Strategic Advisory Board;
 - The Agency's Framework Document;
 - The Agency's Corporate Plan; and
 - The Agency's annual Business Plan.
27. The membership of the Strategic Advisory Board may change from time to time to reflect changes in organisation and other circumstances. However, the interests represented by the members of the Strategic Advisory Board will normally be as set out at Annex B.

Relationship with Defra

28. The Agency's relationship with Defra and its strategic direction is captured in a number of key documents:
- this Framework Document;
 - the Agency's strategic direction and objectives as detailed in its Corporate Plan; and
 - the annual targets as detailed in its annual Business Plan.
29. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency cannot make material changes to these documents without Defra's or the Minister's agreement as appropriate.
30. The Chief Executive will submit to the Corporate Owner for agreement by the Minister any proposition that involves a material change to previously agreed Corporate and Business plans. This includes changes to strategic investments in the organisation.

Corporate Customer

31. It is the responsibility of the Agency's Chief Executive to seek to reconcile the different demands on it from the various Government and Devolved Administration customers and to advise the Corporate Owner accordingly. To

facilitate this, the Chief Executive will normally nominate a senior member of the management team to chair the Agency Customer Board to discharge that function.

32. A single senior level Corporate Customer is the high level coordinator of the collective customer requirement (corporate 'contract') from a customer body of the Agency. The Defra Corporate Customer will coordinate the customer requirement from across the Defra network. Devolved Administration representatives on the Customer Board will perform a similar function for their Administrations.
33. The role of the Corporate Customer for a customer body is to:
- Make decisions on priorities across different policy areas if conflicts arise which affect the Agency's operations
 - be the high level interface with the Agency on all matters relating to the overall purchase, delivery and quality of services provided to by the Animal Health and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency;
 - coordinate the collective customer requirement across the customer body and its network and make proposals as necessary to senior management and Ministers; and
 - look ahead in framing the customer requirement in order to clarify the body's commitment to the Agency (to be set out in its business and corporate plans), and the funding of long term strategic assets.

The Agency Customer Board

34. The role of the Agency Customer Board is to advise the Agency's Chief Executive on the implications of, and priorities between, future customer requirements and performance in delivering those requirements. It will have a key role in helping to conclude service level agreements between the Agency and its customers for its services, agreeing the overall impact of those on the Agency and advising on how that should be captured and presented in the annual Business Plan. This role applies to UK functions as well as services provided at a GB or national level.
35. The membership of the Customer Board may change from time to time to reflect changes in organisation, the degree to which different organisations are customers, and other circumstances. However, the interests represented by the members of the Customer Board will normally be as set out at Annex C and currently include, in particular, the Devolved Administrations.

Chief Veterinary Officer

36. The UK Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO (UK)) is Veterinary Head of Profession for the UK Government and the Scottish and Welsh Governments (not Northern Ireland). This includes advising on career development, succession planning and other matters involving veterinary surgeons in the Agency. The CVO (UK) has full professional responsibility for official veterinary certification and in turn for quality control of veterinary evidence and advice.
37. The CVO (UK) is the primary UK competent authority under many pieces of EU legislation on animal health. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency has functions under that authority and the Chief Executive of the Agency is responsible for ensuring their delivery. For example, core Defra agrees with importing countries the conditions for exports. The Chief Executive of the Agency is responsible for delivering certification of exports in compliance with those conditions.
38. The CVO (UK) agrees CVO Exchanges of Letters setting out how and in what circumstances vets may be loaned to or borrowed from other countries, under such arrangements as the International Animal Health Emergency Reserve. The Chief Executive of the Agency is responsible for invoking such arrangements in the event of an emergency in Great Britain and for providing vets in response to a request from another country.

Defra Chief Scientific Advisor

39. The Defra Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) is:
 - Responsible for independent challenge to the scope, content and quality of Defra's scientific activities, including its investment plans for science, its programmes and its specialist resources;
 - The formal head of Profession for Science, Engineering and Technology specialists working in Defra and its laboratories; and
 - A key communicator and champion of the science underpinning Defra policies (including science provided by the agencies) to the public and the science community, helping the Department engage with the public in a two way dialogue on scientific issues.
40. To help deliver this role the CSA meets with the Chief Executive of the Agency on a regular basis.

Chief Executive

41. The Agency is headed by a Chief Executive who is responsible for the management and leadership of the Agency in accordance with this Framework document and the Corporate and Business Plans agreed with Defra. The Chief Executive is advised by the Defra Corporate Owner to ensure on-going alignment with Defra and Scottish and Welsh Devolved Administration objectives. The Chief Executive:

- Is the accounting officer for the Agency;
- is required to actively manage the Agency's strategic direction and, in generating proposals, to ensure the Agency's future and long term sustainability;
- is directly accountable to Ministers for the operation of the Agency within the policy framework set by the Minister, and to the Permanent Secretary, as Principal Accounting Officer, for the financial management of the Agency, for performance against key targets and for reporting any significant difficulties in meeting such delivery targets to the Corporate Owner;
- is directly accountable to Devolved Administration Ministers for Scotland and Wales for delivery of services in their countries;
- within the limits of their assigned authority, is responsible for making such changes to the organisation as they consider necessary to maintain and improve the operating efficiency and overall performance of the Agency;
- will take personal responsibility for the performance of the Agency; and
- is a civil servant employed by Defra. They are, at all times, subject to the prevailing rules that govern the conduct and propriety of civil servants, including the Civil Service Code and any central guidance that may from time to time be given to Agency Chief Executives; and
- During an outbreak of a notifiable exotic disease, the Chief Executive of the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency is responsible for leading the delivery of the operational response in GB and, through the Disease Emergency Response Committee (DERC), for ensuring that laboratory capacity is optimised. The Chief Executive is also responsible for briefing Ministers on disease control operations and takes the lead on operations at the National Security Council sub-committee on Threats, Hazards, Resilience and Contingencies.

Relationships with others

Devolved Administrations

42. Defra and the Devolved Administrations have agreed a series of concordats that cover, amongst other things, coordination of policy, communications and other more detailed governance arrangements to which the Agency will adhere. In the event of an outbreak, the Agency will also comply with the operational procedures established within the Great Britain and Northern Ireland Contingency Plan.
43. Devolved Administration officials are represented as appropriate on the Agency's Strategic Advisory Board and Customer Board. The Chief Executive is responsible to the Minister in each respective Devolved Administration for delivery of UK functions and direct services in that country.

Other parts of Defra, WAG and SG networks

44. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency works collaboratively with other executive agencies and public bodies across the Defra network and similarly the Devolved Administrations.

Central Departments

45. In the exercise of the Agency's responsibilities, the Chief Executive may make direct formal contact with central Departments (including H. M. Treasury), informing the Corporate Owner and, where appropriate, relevant representatives of the finance function in Defra, of the scope and nature of discussion. The Corporate Owner and Defra finance staff will similarly ensure that the Chief Executive is kept informed, in a timely and prompt manner, about issues relevant to the Agency emanating from central Departments.
46. The Chief Executive shall provide the Department and the Devolved Administrations with timely and suitable information that is required to draw up coordinated returns to central Departments. The Department and Devolved Administrations will, wherever possible, give reasonable notice of their requirements for such information.

Other Government Departments

47. The Agency works more broadly across Government scientific laboratories within the context of Interlab, a collaborative agreement between six public sector research establishments (PSREs) to promote the sharing of best practice, support in emergencies and service continuity planning.

48. The Agency also carries out work for the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The Agency's Dairy Hygiene and Egg Marketing inspectors carry out inspections to monitor and improve compliance with the Food Hygiene Regulations in force in England and Wales. The Laboratories' work for the FSA is mainly in surveillance activities, primarily on the environmental levels of radioactivity in the food chain, farm food safety incidents and trichinella.

Other customers

49. The Agency delivers evidence-based scientific advice, manages related data and information, conducts world-class scientific research and facilitates collaborative action for a broad range of customers in the UK and internationally. This includes:
- other UK Government departments and regulatory bodies, including the Food Standards Agency, Devolved Administrations, other executive agencies and non departmental public bodies;
 - local government;
 - the European Commission;
 - the World Health Organisation;
 - the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation;
 - the OIE;
 - non-governmental organisations; and
 - industry, both in the UK and internationally.
50. These services are delivered alone or in partnership with others, as determined by the most effective way of meeting customer needs.

Commercial activity

51. The Agency has an increasing focus on exploiting its scientific capabilities and facilities in wider (non-Defra) markets. The Agency will meet customer needs in the most effective way. It will not be determined by administrative boundaries; i.e. it will not be bound by being in the Defra network.
52. To this end, the Agency may enter into licensing arrangements or joint ventures with other organisations in the public or private sector and may set up and run appropriately incorporated state-owned companies. Such activities are subject to any central rules or conditions applying to service provision from time to time, and the Agency's principles for providing services to other customers, set out later in this document.

Stakeholders

53. In the course of its work for the Government, the Agency engages with industry, representative organisations, bodies of experts and other bodies around the world. The Agency will manage these contacts in a manner appropriate to its position as an executive agency of Defra.

Category 1 and 2 responders

54. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency works with a number of Government Departments and category 1 and 2 responder organisations as detailed in the Civil Contingencies Act, to provide emergency capability, veterinary and scientific evidence and advice. The Agency does not normally have an operational delivery role over and above its normal commercial, regulatory or enforcement responsibilities in incidents or emergencies not involving exotic notifiable animal diseases.
55. However, the Agency's staff will attend Local Resilience Forums or Strategic Coordinating Groups and provide advice and expert opinion on animal welfare and the management of farmed livestock when required. The Agency will also provide advice on animal by-product issues and help trace farmed livestock that may have moved from an incident/affected area and which may need to be identified and located. Where appropriate, the Agency will also provide representation on the local Science and Technical Advice Cell (STAC).
56. The Agency works with a number of Departments, local authorities and other central and local government organisations to provide emergency capability, scientific evidence and advice.
57. In helping to respond to and manage any emergency situation, the Agency will work with other Government Departments and responsible authorities and report directly to the lead Department and/or Devolved Administration and to relevant Ministers as required. (Where Defra is not the lead Department, the Chief Executive and Corporate Owner will report independently to the appropriate lead Minister and will keep Ministers, Management Committee and officials informed.)

Relationship with Parliament

Ministers

58. The Secretary of State is accountable to Parliament on all matters concerning the Agency.

Accounting Officers

59. The Permanent Secretary of the Department (as Principal Accounting Officer) is the principal adviser to the Minister on matters affecting the Department as a whole, including expenditure allocation and finance, and is responsible for ensuring a high standard of financial management.

60. The Principal Accounting Officer will write to the Chief Executive designating him or her as Agency Accounting Officer of the Agency and setting out his or her responsibilities, which will include:

- Ensuring a high standard of financial management and the value for money of the Agency's operations;
- Ensuring that the Agency has adequate financial systems and procedures in place to promote the efficient and economical conduct of its business and to safeguard financial propriety and regularity;
- The timely production of data for the Resource Estimates, for in-year monitoring of financial performance including resource, cash and capital expenditure requirements, and for the Agency resource accounts;
- The provision of any other financial data required by the Department's Finance officials;
- Establishing proper systems and procedures for securing the efficient and economical conduct of business;
- Maintaining propriety and regularity throughout the Agency;
- Ensuring that the requirements of Government Accounting are met;
- Observing any general guidance issued by H. M. Treasury or the Cabinet Office;
- Putting into effect any recommendations, accepted by the Government, of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), the Select Committee for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, or other Parliamentary authority.

Appearance at Public Accounts Committee or Select Committee hearings

61. The Agency Chief Executive and the Defra Permanent Secretary may be required to appear before the Public Accounts Committee. At Select Committee hearings, Ministers will normally ask the Chief Executive to

represent or accompany them if the Committee is concerned with the day-to-day operations of the Agency.

62. In relation to functions implemented by the Agency on behalf of the Devolved Administrations, which are referred to their respective Parliament or Assembly, similar arrangements will apply.

Support to the Department's accountability

63. The Chief Executive will provide the Secretary of State or Minister with any information needed to deal with Parliamentary Questions or other Parliamentary business about matters for which the Agency is responsible. If Members of Parliament wish to raise a matter bearing on the Agency's operations, they will be encouraged to write to the Chief Executive.
64. The Chief Executive will refer to the Minister any matter which is raised with the Agency but which is not wholly concerned with the management of its affairs. The Minister will usually ask the Chief Executive to write to MPs in response to written Parliamentary Questions and letters about matters assigned to the Agency. The Chief Executive's letter in reply to Parliamentary Questions will be published in the Official Report.

Support to the accountability of Devolved Administrations to their elected bodies

65. In respect of matters carried out by the Agency on behalf of the Devolved Administrations, the relevant Minister shall remain accountable to his or her respective Parliament or Assembly. The Chief Executive will provide the relevant Minister with any information needed to deal with Parliamentary/Assembly Questions or other Parliamentary/Assembly business about matters for which the Agency is responsible.
66. If members of the Parliament or Assembly wish to raise a matter bearing on the Agency's operations, they will be encouraged to write to the Chief Executive. The Minister will usually ask the Chief Executive to write to Parliamentary or Assembly Members in response to letters about matters assigned to him or her.
67. The Chief Executive will refer to the relevant Minister any matter which is raised with the Agency, but which is not wholly concerned with the management of its affairs.

Public comments and complaints (including handling ombudsman cases)

68. The Agency handles comments, suggestions and complaints in accordance with a clear procedure, publicly accessible and published on the Agency's website.
69. Members of Parliament have the right to refer complaints from the public to the Parliamentary Commissioner of Administration ('the Ombudsman') where an individual claims to have suffered injustice through maladministration. The activities of the Agency are subject to review by the Ombudsman. The Permanent Secretary, as the Principal Accounting Officer, asks the Chief Executive to reply to the Ombudsman about complaints of maladministration in the Agency.

Financial arrangements

Financial control regime

70. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency operates as an agency under the Net Control Accounting Regime. As an on-vote agency, it is included within the Annual Report and Consolidated Accounts that Defra prepares for all entities within its boundary.
71. Defra will aim to agree, ahead of the year in question, a rolling three-year budget, fixed for at least the first year and with indicative amounts for subsequent years, subject to the limitations of Treasury Spending Reviews.
72. The Agency is required to recover the full costs of its services. This includes the cost of internal programmes to ensure the Agency's scientific expertise, and investment to maintain and develop appropriate infrastructure and capability.
73. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency will be funded partly from Defra's Parliamentary Supply Vote and by external organisations both public and private. The Chief Executive will submit a business plan to the Corporate Owner, and ultimately to Ministers, that includes annual plans for resources set against estimated income for the next financial year. The estimated income will reflect already committed funding agreed by Defra, the Devolved Administrations, and income from other sources.
74. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency is consulted in principle on its annual allocation but is not involved directly in the spending review discussions with H. M. Treasury. Defra will take the advice of the Animal

Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency in any Spending Review discussions with H. M. Treasury mainly or wholly concerning the Agency. At the conclusion of the Spending Review Defra will inform the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency of allocations agreed for the Spending Review period.

Roles of Departmental and Agency Accounting Officers

75. The Permanent Secretary of Defra (as Principal Accounting Officer) is the principal adviser to the Secretary of State on matters affecting Defra as a whole, including expenditure allocation and finance and is responsible for ensuring a high standard of financial management.
76. The Chief Executive is responsible for assuring the Principal Accounting Officer that the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency has adequate financial systems and procedures in place to promote the efficient and economical conduct of its business and to safeguard financial propriety and regularity. The Principal Accounting Officer designates the Chief Executive as Agency Accounting Officer by letter. To support the Chief Executive, an Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency Director has been appointed to carry prime responsibility for strategic financial planning, and the day-to-day management of the Agency's finances, accounting and budgetary systems.
77. As provided for in the Accounting Officer Memorandum, the Chief Executive, as Agency Accounting Officer, will be responsible for ensuring that the requirements of 'Managing Public Money' are met and that proper procedures are followed for securing the regularity and propriety of the public funds administered by the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency.
78. The Chief Executive is responsible for the timely production of data required by Defra for in year monitoring of its accounts. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency observes any general guidance issued by H. M. Treasury or the Cabinet Office, and for putting into effect any recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), other Parliamentary Select Committees or other Parliamentary authority insofar as they are accepted by the Government.

Financial delegations to the Agency Accounting Officer

79. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency Chief Executive has delegated authority as recorded in the Defra Delegated Authority document, summarised as follows:

- primarily responsible for securing financial authority, for preparing budgets and exercising budgetary control, and for general financial matters;
 - ensuring that authorised, sub-delegated authorities are properly used; and
 - ensuring that, within the delegated authorities system, important or unusual cases will be detected and referred to Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency senior management or the Chief Executive, as appropriate, for authorisation.
80. At all times, the delegations are subject to the general requirements set out in the Defra Finance Manual and other departmental guidance. In addition, the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency will consult the Defra Corporate Customer and ultimately the Defra Corporate Owner, before making financial commitments not covered by these requirements.
81. The Agency is free to conduct its financial affairs within the Corporate and Business Plans, as approved by the Minister, and taking account as necessary of such other guidance as H. M. Treasury may from time to time publish. The Principal Accounting Officer will delegate to the Agency Accounting Officer those financial authorities that are delegated to him or her by H. M. Treasury, subject to any limitations the Principal Accounting Officer may attach to them, such as the delegations relating to losses, special payments and gifts. The Principal Accounting Officer will notify the Agency Accounting Officer of any limits on his or her delegation.
82. Details of the initial delegations are contained in Annex D to this Framework Document. The Agency Accounting Officer may delegate these authorities in writing to appropriate, named individual Agency staff.

Charged services and approach to setting charges

83. The Agency will negotiate, agree and implement charging or levy arrangements in furtherance of the policies of Defra and/or the Devolved Administrations. The Chief Executive is authorised to maximize the utilization of the Agency's assets by examining the potential for selling services (and, where appropriate, products) to wider markets in both the public and private sectors.
84. Any such activity must:
- Be within the bounds of H. M. Treasury guidance concerning the exploitation of assets and the pursuit of wider markets in accordance with usual Government practice;

- Not be pursued if it is likely to be detrimental to the Agency's reputation, its delivery of its core commitments or its ability and capacity to respond to emergency outbreaks of animal disease;
 - Not be pursued if it incurs excess risk or creates a conflict of interest.
85. The treatment of any revenue generated by such activity will be agreed with the Department in the context of its annual supply, in keeping with H. M. Treasury guidance.

Compliance with instructions and guidance

86. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency shall comply with government guidance and instructions, including the following:
- Managing Public Money (MPM), including in particular the Accounting Officer requirements for Agencies (MPM Chapter 3);
 - Government Internal Audit Standards, issued by H. M. Treasury;
 - Managing the Risk of Fraud, issued by H. M. Treasury;
 - Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM);
 - the Fees and Charges Guide, (Chapter 6, MPM);
 - Departmental Banking: A Manual for Government Departments, issued by H. M. Treasury;
 - relevant 'Dear Accounting Officer' (DAO) letters, issued by H. M. Treasury;
 - Regularity and Propriety, issued by H. M. Treasury;
 - the Consolidation Officer memorandum, issued by H. M. Treasury;
 - relevant 'Dear Consolidation Officer' (DCO) letters, issued by H. M. Treasury;
 - the H. M. Treasury Green Book;
 - Resource Accounting & Budgeting Implementation Group (RABIG) letters;
 - Consolidated Budgeting Guidance from 2008-09 issued by H. M. Treasury and updated annually; and
 - Executive Agencies – A Guide for Departments issued by the Cabinet Office.

Machinery for Accounting, Audit, Monitoring and Reporting

Annual report and accounts

87. The Chief Executive will prepare and sign each year an Annual Report and audited Accounts and will submit them to the Minister for presentation to Parliament before the start of the summer recess. The Annual Report will

publish details of the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency's performance against its Ministerial targets.

88. The Accounts will be produced under an Accounts Direction issued by H M Treasury under Section 7(2) of the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000. The annual accounts will be produced, so far as practicable, in accordance with Defra's accounting policies. The Chief Executive will submit an audited consolidated return in the format supplied by Defra and to the timetable agreed.

External audit

89. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency will be subject to external audit. This will be conducted by the Comptroller and Auditor General in respect of finance and value for money audits required by Parliament, and by other bodies appropriate to the audit of technical ability, service delivery, quality and standards.

Internal audit and management inspection

90. The Chief Executive will be responsible for commissioning the internal audit and management inspection services required to ensure the proper and efficient conduct of the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency's affairs and to discharge his or her responsibilities as Agency Accounting Officer. These services will comply with the objectives, standards and practices laid down by H. M. Treasury. The Principal Accounting Officer has the right to receive copies of all internal audit and management inspection reports.
91. The Chief Executive will also be required to contribute to the Defra annual Statement of Internal Control.
92. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency will continue to be subject to such financial and management scrutiny by Defra as is necessary in order to satisfy the Principal Accounting Officer's responsibilities. This scrutiny will include assessments of the quality of the Agency's internal audit in meeting standards laid down in the Government Internal Audit Standards. The Chief Executive will be consulted before Departmental audit or management scrutiny inspections are undertaken.
93. The Chief Executive must have a robust framework for consistent financial reporting of the Agency's performance to Defra. They are required to provide Defra with regular and consistent performance information throughout the year using the performance targets and outcomes set out in the business plan.

Risk Management

94. The Chief Executive has a responsibility to develop a comprehensive risk management strategy for the Agency. The plan is to be made available to Defra. The leadership of the Agency will meet regularly to consider the plans and strategic direction of the Agency. The leadership team will review the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency Risk Register regularly and delegate corporate risks to appropriate senior managers within the business to manage.

The role of the Audit and Risk Committee

95. The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) is a formally constituted committee, which advises the Chief Executive and reports to the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency Strategic Advisory Board. The committee is chaired by a non executive member. Relevant members of the executive management team, including the Chief Executive, attend meetings as required. The purpose of the ARC is to give advice to the Chief Executive and the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency Strategic Advisory Board on the adequacy of internal and external audit arrangements, and on the implications of the assurances provided by the arrangements for internal control and risk management within the Agency.
96. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency receives regular internal audit reports, to Government Audit Standards, which includes the Head of Internal Audit's independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Agency's system of internal control, together with recommendations for improvement.
97. The Chief Executive decides how to deliver the internal audit service. The work of internal audit is informed by an analysis of the risks to which the Agency is exposed and annual audit plans are based on this analysis. Findings from audit are presented to, and discussed by the ARC.
98. The ARC advises the Chief Executive and the Agency's Strategic Advisory Board on the implications of any findings from audit, risk assessment or other relevant review activities.

In-year monitoring

99. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency will be required to provide the Strategic Advisory Board with a quarterly report on performance.

Monitoring quality of scientific outputs

100. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency will appoint a member of its senior management team to be responsible for ensuring that science delivered by the Agency is of high quality and relevant. That person will be supported by the Science Programme Managers and a Research and Development Committee.
101. They shall support an ethos of continuous improvement and, where relevant, accreditation or certification against internationally recognised quality systems. This includes ensuring that the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency's science policies take account of the principles specified in the Joint Codes of Practice and that science is conducted in a manner consistent with the Universal Ethical Code for Scientists.
102. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency may be subject to periodic review of science quality by Defra and the Chief Executive is responsible for providing information to Defra and its reviewers in a timescale agreed to be reasonable. They will also work with the Defra Chief Scientific Advisor to agree and implement cost effective mechanisms that will allow them to assess and challenge the relevance and quality of the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency's scientific activities.

Business and corporate planning

General approach to managing and reporting agency performance

103. In line with the conclusions of Defra's Capability Review and governance of delivery review in 2006/07, the Defra Management Committee will review delivery performance across the Defra network. In addition, the Corporate Owner will review performance of the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency with the Chief Executive at least annually using a process involving an appropriate combination of:
- review of past performance;
 - agreement of annual targets (with auditable measures) and performance review process and schedule;
 - sign off of the corporate or business plan before submission to the Minister for approval; and

- agreement of the framework for any further engagement with the Defra Management Committee/Ministers as appropriate during the year, taking account of the constitutional status of the Agency.

104. The Chief Executive will submit, for ultimate consideration and approval by the Minister, a Corporate Plan and a Business Plan at agreed intervals. The Government and Devolved Administrations will help the Agency's corporate and business planning by providing information about likely policy developments or other known or likely changes that could impact upon it.

Requirement to produce corporate plan

105. The Agency will update annually its rolling three year Corporate Plan to reflect its Spending Review allocations which in turn will form the basis for the Agency's detailed planning. The Corporate Plan will provide a framework for monitoring progress against longer term objectives and targets. It will be published on the Agency's website.

Requirement to produce (annual) business plan

106. The Business Plan will set out the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency's annual work plans, including plans to meet any key performance targets. In particular, in the first year of operation of the new Agency, that Business Plan will set out the further work required to bring together the two predecessor bodies into an integrated new Agency.

107. The Business Plan will be a key document against which the Agency's and the Chief Executive's performance will be assessed. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency will consult key Government partners as part of its business planning process.

108. During this process the policy customers' forward delivery needs and priorities will be set out and the Agency will assess the effort and resources needed to meet those requirements. The Customer Board is likely to be an important part of that process and the subsequent agreement of the resulting Service Level Agreements.

109. Once reviewed and adjusted as necessary by the Strategic Advisory Board and approved by the Minister, the agreed Business Plan and associated Service Level Agreements with the Department and the Devolved Administrations, will constitute the formal basis against which delivery and the use of resources are measured and monitored throughout the year.

How annual targets will be set

110. Annual key performance targets will be set by the Minister and may be included in the Business plan and published. These targets may be varied only by agreement between the Minister, the Corporate Owner and the Chief Executive. In addition key internal performance indicators will be produced in order to support the overall objectives of the organisation.

Management information systems

111. The Chief Executive will be responsible for the development and operation of accounting and management information systems that enable Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency management to review actual performance against the agreed key performance targets. These systems must be capable of producing information on the Agency's performance in the form and to the timescale reasonably required to meet the needs of the Minister. Any request for information relating to a Devolved Administration shall be dealt with in accordance with agreements with that Administration.

Commissioning of services by the Government and Devolved Administrations

112. Defra will continue to fund the UK functions of the Agency. For other functions and services, Defra, other Government Departments, and Devolved Administrations, as customers of the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency, are responsible for commissioning and paying for the services required from the Agency and for assessing compliance with agreed time, cost and quality standards.

113. Detailed arrangements for the delivery by the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency of its services will be negotiated between the Agency and its individual customers and set out in Contracts, a Research Framework Agreement, Memoranda of Understanding or Service Level Agreements as appropriate. Where these cover services provided to Defra and the Devolved Administrations, they will formally be negotiated with the relevant Corporate Customer.

114. In entering into such arrangements, the agency will ensure that the work delivered meets the necessary standards agreed between it and the respective customer. Such arrangements will include, as appropriate, agreed quality and performance measures and targets and the agency will provide all customers with the information to enable them to evaluate compliance with these standards. The customer will treat this information in confidence and will not release it without the agreement of the Agency.

Principles for providing services to other customers

115. Within the context of its overall aims and objectives, including the continuing importance of a strong strategic partnership with its Defra and other governmental customers, the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency will give appropriate priority to work funded by Defra and the Devolved Administrations. The detailed balance of programmes and customers, public and private, shall be a matter for the Chief Executive.
116. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency's commercial activities may involve work for public bodies other than Defra or the Devolved Administrations, including other Government Departments or the European Union, or for the private sector. It may sub-contract commercial work in accordance with H. M. Treasury guidelines on selling services to the wider market.
117. In accepting work in the wider markets, the Chief Executive must satisfy himself that:
- it will not prevent the Agency meeting agreed commitments to Defra or other Government or Devolved Administration customers;
 - it will not conflict with the statutory obligations of Defra or its Ministers, fetter the Ministers' discretion, or otherwise conflict with any other statutory or regulatory role that the Agency undertakes;
 - neither the work itself nor the way in which it is published or exploited will represent an abuse of any monopoly position;
 - the price agreed for the work is consistent with the overall objective of recovering the full cost of the operation;
 - the customer and the work are appropriate to an institution owned by the Government and that there will be no prejudice to wider national interests.
118. The Agency shares the Defra commitment to customer-focused delivery and will maintain mechanisms for measuring customer satisfaction as a component of its overall performance. The periodic results will contribute to a Department-wide assessment of customer satisfaction and must thus be gathered and submitted in a suitable format.

Confidentiality

119. Defra recognises that the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency is entitled to respect normal professional standards of commercial confidentiality

in relation to any work which it undertakes for customers, subject to any overriding consideration of public interest.

Civil Service Code

120. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency's staff operate within the guidelines of the Civil Service code. This includes, for example, a responsibility to uphold the administration of justice. They would, therefore, disclose any unlawful activity discovered through the course of the Agency's work, they would take account of the public interest in making decisions, and would cooperate with relevant authorities during any subsequent investigation or legal proceedings.

Obtaining support services

121. The Chief Executive is responsible for purchasing the support services required by the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency within the constraints of central Government requirements, and in compliance with Public Procurement regulations. In particular, it may be that, in the light of the need for public sector cost savings, either Defra or central Government requirements are such that a particular service should be provided centrally either across the Defra network, or across the whole of central Government. Security services will, further, be subject to Defra Departmental standards.

122. Where such services are provided by Defra, they will be described in detail in, and provided under, service level agreements between the Agency and the service providers and the cost of those services will be identified and reflected in the Agency accounts. Either party may, from time to time, review the provision of these services and discuss with the other any proposed changes.

123. Should the arguments for wider value for money conflict with the operational imperatives of the Agency, a judgement should be sought from the Principal Accounting Officer. The Agency must obtain its legal advice in accordance with any guidance given from time to time by the Attorney General (in England and Wales) or by the Lord Advocate (in Scotland).

Business continuity and contingency plans

124. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency has in place robust, up to date, fit for purpose

and flexible business continuity management (BCM) arrangements that are supported by competent staff that allow them to maintain, or as soon as possible resume provision of, key products and services in the event of disruption. These arrangements must follow industry best practice (BS25999 or equivalent standard) and AHVLA must be able to clearly evidence alignment to this level. BCM arrangements must be tested and reviewed at least annually or following significant organisational change.

125. The Chief Executive must ensure that key staff and contractors are familiar with the plans and related procedures. They must also be informed of business continuity and contingency plans of providers of centralised services to the Agency.

Media

126. The Chief Executive may deal directly with the media on the Agency's activities subject to any arrangements agreed with the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency's customers in relation to particular work. The Agency will refer enquiries about policy issues to the appropriate part of Defra. Where Ministers are involved, the Chief Executive will agree the approach to media work with Defra Communications Directorate.

Freedom of Information

127. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency is responsible for complying with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR). It will ensure that the public can, on request, be given access to information, in accordance with these statutory obligations.
128. The Agency will manage official records as required by the Public Records Act (PRA). It will also comply fully with the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations (RPSIR) which deal with licensing documents for re-use on application under non-exclusive agreements.

Data security

129. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency must ensure that any personal data are gathered and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA). Particular care must be taken to ensure that personal data is not disclosed inappropriately (i.e. insecurely or to any persons not authorized to see the data). Staff must also ensure that they handle data in accordance with Defra's and the Executive Agencies' Information Charters (also known as the Public Service Guarantee on Data Handling). The Agency will comply with the

Defra Information Risk Policy which sets out the framework and appropriate procedures for managing information risk.

130. In addition, the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency will handle Protected Personal Data (e.g. any information, regardless of the number of people to whom it relates, that links an identifiable individual with information which if released would put them at significant risk of harm or distress) in accordance with the DPA and policies and procedures adopted by Defra and the Executive Agencies, particularly those from the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Justice.

Customer satisfaction

131. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that there are appropriate mechanisms for measuring customer satisfaction as a component of Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency's overall performance. The annual results contribute to the Department-wide assessment of customer satisfaction and are thus gathered and submitted in a suitable format.

Recruitment, pay and other personnel issues

Status of staff and conditions of service

132. AHVLA staff are employees in the service of the Crown, working for the Agency as part of Defra. They are employed subject to the Civil Service Management Code and are eligible to move between the Agency and the Department, other Agencies in the Department or to other Government Departments.
133. Members of the Senior Civil Service are directly employed by Defra and will have the status, pay arrangements and other conditions of service that are common to the Senior Civil Service, except where their contracts state otherwise. Issues affecting posts within the Senior Civil Service will be decided by the Chief Executive in consultation with Defra and/or the Cabinet Office as required.

Organisation development and HR responsibilities of chief executive

134. The Chief Executive has responsibility for all human resource (HR) matters, subject only to any limitations set out in this framework document or resulting from the centralisation of any such arrangements in Defra or across the civil service. His or her responsibilities will include developing leadership, managing

planned change in a flexible manner and promoting high performance, productivity and continuous improvement.

135. When exercising any HR functions described in this document the Chief Executive will take account of guidance and regulations issued by the Central Departments (including the Civil Service Commissioners, Cabinet Office and H. M. Treasury) and the terms of any Departmental agreements and arrangements all of which may be subject to change over time. The Chief Executive will have the authority to shape the HR strategies and manage resources flexibly to enable the agency to deliver its services, subject to those central requirements.
136. The Chief Executive may further delegate these functions to other senior managers of the Agency.
137. The Chief Executive will consult Defra on matters where responsibilities are not fully delegated, and Defra will then obtain any necessary clearances from H. M. Treasury and/or the Cabinet Office as required. Similarly, it is expected that the Department will consult the Chief Executive before making any changes to matters where responsibilities are not fully delegated.

Pay and grading

138. The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency does not have pay delegation.

Staff resourcing, recruitment and development

139. The Chief Executive is responsible for establishing and keeping under review the management and organisational design of the Agency.
140. The Chief Executive has delegated responsibility for resourcing, deployment and development arrangements for staff below the Senior Civil Service in the Agency (subject to any centrally required rules and processes) and has the freedom to create and re-grade posts (subject to evaluation criteria) and to make appointments to such posts (including temporary, substantive or personal promotions).
141. In the Senior Civil Service, all appointments (including temporary, substantive and personal promotions) and transfers to and from posts within the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency will be carried out observing the requirements and processes imposed by the Civil Service Commissioners and in consultation with Defra and/or the Cabinet Office as required.

142. Agency staff are eligible for selection boards in Defra and vice versa.
143. Agency staff will normally be offered the option of participating in career development schemes in which Defra has the lead. Such schemes may be funded jointly or by other agreement. Defra departmental arrangements for career development and planning will apply to all Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency staff within the Senior Civil Service.

Grievances and appeals (to the Chief Executive or senior officers in core Defra)

144. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that all cases involving personal grievances from staff below the Senior Civil Service are properly and reasonably considered in line with the Agency's staff procedures.
145. For grievances made by the Chief Executive or managers in the Senior Civil Service core Defra's procedures will apply. In these cases, or for other senior managers where the Chief Executive has been directly involved procedurally at an earlier stage, core Defra's HR team will ensure that an independent manager of a suitable grade is identified, which may include an individual from elsewhere within the network, or another Government Department.
146. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that all cases involving personal grievances from staff below the Senior Civil Service are properly and reasonably considered in line with the Agency's staff procedures.
147. For grievances made by the Chief Executive or managers in the Senior Civil Service, core Defra's procedures will apply. In these cases, or for other senior managers where the Chief Executive has been directly involved procedurally at an earlier stage, core Defra's HR team will ensure that an independent manager of a suitable grade is identified, which may include an individual from elsewhere within the network, or another Government Department.

Exit policies

148. The Chief Executive has delegated authority for early retirement and redundancy of staff including the overall numbers and grades of staff concerned. Such action will be planned in consultation with Defra. The Chief Executive will approve individual cases for members of the Senior Civil Service in consultation with Defra and the Cabinet Office.
149. Pre-redundancy measures will be handled across Defra as a whole with a view to minimising the need for compulsory redundancies.

HR records

150. The Chief Executive is responsible for maintaining accurate personnel records, including a staff database, for the Agency's staff within his or her delegated authority and will make available to Defra (and Shared Services Directorate) such information as it reasonably requires.

Staff relations

151. The Chief Executive is responsible for maintaining good staff relations and engagement within the Agency. In exercising this responsibility, he or she will set up suitable arrangements in consultation with representatives of the staff which may include an agreement on the facilities to be made available for trades union representation.

152. The Chief Executive will co-operate with management in Defra and may participate in relevant Departmental consultations with representatives of the staff on matters of mutual interest.

Equal opportunities and diversity

153. The Chief Executive will ensure that the Agency develops a programme of action on equal opportunities and valuing diversity which is consistent with central guidance and Defra's own programme of action.

Health & safety and biosecurity

154. The Chief Executive is accountable for all matters of health and safety associated with the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency's business activities and will ensure that resources, organisation design, and arrangements are adequate for delivering effective performance and compliance. This includes both compliance with the relevant health and safety legislation and ensuring that the Agency's health and safety policy takes account of the principles specified in Defra's equivalent document.

Consultation between the Department and Agency

155. There will be full and timely consultation between the Agency and the Department on all HR matters of mutual interest. Where appropriate, the Agency will participate in and contribute to Departmental activities on developments in HR.

Appointment and remuneration of chief executive

156. The Agency's Chief Executive is appointed for a fixed term, determined when the appointment is made usually following open competition. The appointment is to be cleared with the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners where this is a new Senior Civil Service appointment. There is an element of performance related pay built into the employment contract. In common with other civil servants, the Chief Executive's appointment can be terminated on grounds of poor performance.

Arrangements for changing the framework document

157. The Framework Document and its operation will be reviewed by the Strategic Advisory Board, in consultation with the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency, at intervals of not more than three years. The review should include an assessment of the Agency's track record in achieving its objectives.
158. Proposals for further freedoms will be considered in the light of evolving policy and operational factors and the track record of the Agency itself. The guiding principle will be that the extent of flexibility and freedom given to the Agency should reflect the need for the best possible value for money from public expenditure, the effectiveness of the Agency's delivery, the level of risk, and the Agency's overall capability, the quality of its internal controls and its operational needs.
159. Defra or the Agency may propose changes to this Framework Document at any time. Defra will be responsible for consulting all those concerned about any proposals for amendments, including the Devolved Administrations, the Cabinet Office and Treasury.
160. The Framework Document and any subsequent amendments or supplements will be published and copies placed in the libraries of the Houses of Parliament and Devolved Legislatures. It will also be published on the Agency's website at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla/> and may be obtained in printed form from Corporate Office, AHVLA, Block C, Government Buildings, Whittington Road, Worcester, WR5 2LQ.

ANNEX A

ANIMAL HEALTH AND VETERINARY LABORATORIES AGENCY LOCATIONS

ex-VLA Headquarters (Weybridge)

New Haw, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 3NB

Regional laboratories

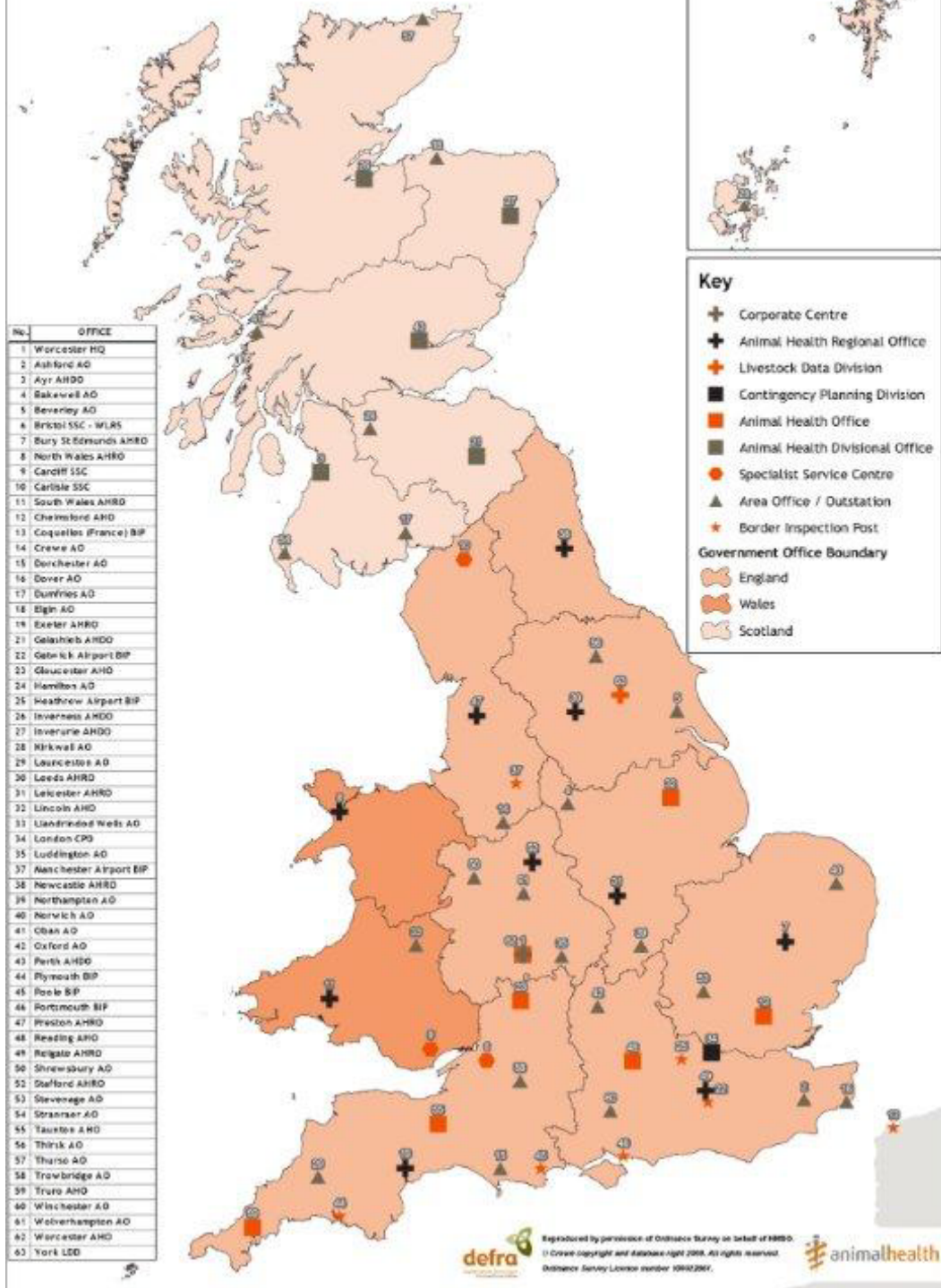
Aberystwyth	Y Buarth, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 1ND
Bury St. Edmunds	Rougham Hill, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 2RX
Carmarthen	Job's Well Road, Johnstown, Carmarthen, SA31 3EZ
Langford	Langford House, Langford, Bristol, BS40 5DX
Lasswade	International Research Centre, Pentlands Science Park, Bush Loan, Penicuik, Midlothian, EH26 0PZ
Luddington	Luddington, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 9SJ
Newcastle	Whitley Road, Longbenton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 9SE
Penrith	Merrythought, Calthwaite, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 9RR
Preston	Barton Hall, Garstang Road, Barton, Preston, PR3 5HE
Shrewsbury	Kendal Road, Harlescott, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 4HD
Starcross	Staplake Mount, Starcross, Exeter, Devon, EX6 8PE
Sutton Bonington	The Elms, College Road, Sutton Bonington, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE12 5RB
Thirsk	West House, Station Road, Thirsk, N. Yorkshire, YO7 1PZ
Truro	Polwhele, Truro, Cornwall, TR4 9AD
Winchester	Itchen Abbas, Winchester, Hants, SO21 1BX

Regional surveillance centres

Veterinary Surveillance Centre
Department of Veterinary Pathology
Liverpool University
Leahurst
Neston
South Wirral
CH64 7TE

Veterinary Surveillance Centre
Department of Veterinary Pathology
Royal Veterinary College
Hawkshead Campus
Hawkshead Lane
North Mymms
Hatfield
Hertfordshire
AL9 7TA

Animal Health Locations



ANNEX B

Scheme of membership for the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency Strategic Advisory Board

(Corporate Owner and Chair) A representative (usually the relevant Director-General) of Defra's Accounting Officer

Chief Veterinary Officer (UK)

Chief Executive Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency

Finance Director (or similar) from Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency

CVO Scotland or nominee

CVO Wales or nominee

CVO Northern Ireland or nominee

Defra Corporate Customer

3 non-executive members as determined by the Board's Chair, one of whom may be the Chair of the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency Audit & Risk Committee

Head of Food and Farming Group Business and Financial Management

Secretariat drawn from Food and Farming Group Agency Relationship Team

Scheme of membership for the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency Customer Board

Chief Executive or Agency senior manager nominated by Chief Executive (Chair)

Chief Veterinary Officer (UK) (or nominee)

Defra corporate customer

Finance Director (or similar) from Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency

CVO Scotland (or nominee) as Scots corporate customer

CVO Wales (or nominee) as Welsh corporate customer

CVO N Ireland (or nominee) as N Irish corporate customer

Head of Food and Farming Group Business and Financial Management

Head of the Defra Agency Relationship Team

Secretariat drawn from the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency

Financial Delegations to the Agency Accounting Officer

The Agency Accounting Officer may exercise the following financial delegations (subject to treatment in full accordance with Departmental delegations and the provisions of Government Accounting):

- Commit expenditure, including all contractual commitments **Unlimited**
- Certify expenditure **Unlimited**
- Authorise payments **Unlimited**
- Accept receipts **Unlimited**
- Write-offs and/or losses:
 - a. Theft, fraud, arson, sabotage, gross carelessness **£100,000**
 - b. Physical loss of cash due to fire, accident or similar cause **£100,000**
 - c. Unvouched or incompletely vouched payments **£100,000**
 - d. Failure to make adequate charges for public property or services (sub-letting below market value) **£25,000**
 - e. Accountable stores **£100,000**
 - f. Overpayments of pay, pensions and allowances **£100,000**
 - g. Under-deduction of social security **£100,000**
- Fruitless payments & constructive losses **£100,000**
- Extra contractual & Ex-gratis payments to contractors **£100,000**
- Other ex-gratia and special payments **£100,000**
- Gifts:
 - a. Stores and official property **£10,000pa**
 - b. To visiting dignitaries **£500pa**
 - c. Rewards; e.g. for return of stolen property **£10,000pa**
 - d. Received by Agency **Unlimited**
- Claims and Compensation payments:
 - a. For loss or damage:
 - 1) to personal property of Agency staff on official business **£15,000**
 - 2) to third party property in course of Agency activities **£100,000**
 - b. For personal injury:
 - 1) in respect of Agency employees on official business **£25,000**
 - 2) to third parties on Agency premises **£100,000**
 - c. Other **£100,000**

- Extra-statutory & extra-regulatory payments **£15,000**
- Lease property above market rate (NPV+costs) **£5 million**
- Dispose of Agency assets **£1 million**
- Capital expenditure
 - a. Building – per project **£5 million**
 - b. Equipment – per project **£1 million**
 - c. IT systems hardware & software – per project **£5 million**
 - d. Management and IT consultancy – per project **£1 million**