

Pest-Specific Contingency Plan

Yellow-Legged Asian Hornet (*Vespa velutina nigrithorax*)



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Contents

Introduction	3
Legislation	3
Scope	4
Objectives	4
Command and control	4
Background Information	5
Official Action on Suspicion	6
Operational activity	7
External Communications and Correspondence	15
Review	16
Recovery	16
Evaluation and Review of Contingency Plan	17
Annex A: How to Spot an Asian hornet	18
Annex B Flowchart	19
Annex C Legislation	20
Annex D Glossary	24

Scottish Government Yellow-Legged Asian Hornet (*Vespa velutina nigrithorax*)

Pest- Specific Contingency Plan

Introduction

1. The yellow-legged Asian hornet (hereafter referred to as “the Asian hornet” in this document) is a highly aggressive non-native predator of pollinating insects, including honey bees. Any incursion of the Asian hornet in Scotland requires immediate action to prevent establishment and significant harm to our population of bees and other pollinators.
2. This plan sets out the role of the Scottish Government in response to a suspected or confirmed incursion of the Asian hornet within Scotland: the actions to be taken as well as governance, roles and responsibilities. This plan also describes how the ongoing response will be reviewed as well as the transition to business as usual, either after eradication, or following the introduction of an Asian hornet management plan which will manage and mitigate the impact of Asian hornet populations in Scotland if eradication is not deemed possible.
3. The response steps to a possible, negated, and confirmed sightings are:
 - Alert
 - Triage
 - Search
 - Identification
 - Confirmation
 - Co-ordination and response
 - Post-incident management
4. The plan is for the use of staff from the Scottish Government, SASA, NatureScot and affiliated organisations in the event of a potential or confirmed incursion.

Legislation

5. The Asian hornet is not a notifiable pest of bees, so it is not covered by ‘The Bees Act 1980’, ‘The Bee Diseases and Pests Control (Scotland) Order 2007 (as amended)’.
6. The Asian hornet is an invasive non-native species and as such, it may be subject to the powers and controls in ‘The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (sections 14 to 14P)’. It is also considered a ‘species of special concern’ under retained **EU Regulation 1143/2014** on Invasive Alien Species. This Regulation prohibits certain activities relating to species of special concern and places duties on Scottish Ministers to establish a surveillance system and apply eradication measure to remove any that are detected.
7. Legislation pertinent to the identification, surveillance, movement, management and if appropriate, destruction of non-native invasive species are set out in **Annex C**.

Scope

8. This plan describes how the Scottish Government, SASA, NatureScot and affiliated organisations will respond if the Asian hornet is discovered in Scotland. Each UK administration has agreed to address non-native species incursions under the auspices of their individual Honey Bee Health portfolios, and therefore Asian hornet contingency plans for England, Wales and Northern Ireland are available from those respective administrations.
9. The National Disease Control Centre (NDCC) is responsible for planning and coordination of actions determined at a UK-wide level. In the event of a confirmed incursion there are a number of activities which are required to inform NDCC and align with the UK-wide approach to surveillance, action and reporting.
10. This plan addresses any incursion of the Asian hornet occurring in Scotland. In the event that the radius of any surveillance zones crosses the border to England, Scottish and English Honey Bee Health Teams will co-ordinate to manage the surveillance, share intelligence, and agree course of action.

Objectives

11. The aim and objectives of this plan are to protect insects and particularly pollinators such as the honey bee from the Asian hornet by:
 - a. Detecting its presence as soon as possible;
 - b. Intercepting and preventing its establishment;
 - c. Eradicating any incursion if considered practical;
 - d. Containing and controlling an incursion, if field evidence suggests that it is well established in a defined but limited geographical area;
 - e. Establishing long term management where eradication and control are no longer possible due to the number and extent of incursions; and
 - f. Aiding the beekeeping industry, pest controllers and local authorities in the form of training on pest and disease control

Command and control

12. The response to Asian hornet incursion will be controlled using a Strategic, Planning and Operational Command structure:
 - **Strategic Command:** Asian Hornet Strategic Oversight Group (Oversight Group), led by the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO). The Oversight Group is responsible for overall policy of command and control;
 - **Planning Command:** In the event of a credible Asian hornet sighting, an Asian Hornet Incident Management Team (Incident Management Team) will be convened and will be responsible for planning and co-ordination of actions determined at a strategic level by the Oversight Group.

- **Operational Command:** An Asian Hornet Operational Response Team (Operational Response Team) will be established and led by the Honey Bee Health Delivery Lead (Operational Response Team Lead). The Operational Response Team is responsible for developing and implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), implementing inspections in the field and overseeing the destruction of any insect and nest material.

13. Flexibility and proportionality in the execution of the response is important. For a small incursion it may not be necessary to establish all the structures required for a major outbreak. Most of the activities and functions described in the response structures will still need to be delivered, but there may be variations in the way this is achieved.

Background Information

14. The yellow-legged or Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina nigrithorax*) is an exotic predator of several insect species, including honey bees.
15. It is native to Northern India, China, the Indo-Chinese peninsula, and the Indonesian archipelago. As such, the climatic conditions of its native environment resemble those of Southern Europe. Several studies have indicated, however, that parts of the United Kingdom would have a suitable climate for the Asian hornet to establish, including parts of the Scottish lowlands.
16. Globalisation and international trade in diverse commodities around the world have increased the risks of importing exotic honey bee pest threats into the UK.
17. Asian hornets were first officially recognised in France in 2004. It is believed to have been accidentally imported with merchandise from Asia.
18. Between 2016 and 2022, there have been 23 confirmed Asian hornet sightings in the United Kingdom. In 2023 there was a significant increase in confirmed sightings: 72 nests in 56 locations, located in the south of England. All nests were destroyed. Up to November 2023 there has only been one credible incursion of Asian hornet in Scotland: an Asian hornet was discovered in a supermarket distribution centre in the central belt, the insect died on site and a confirming sample was not conserved.
19. Asian hornet is one of thirty invasive non-native species identified as having a high risk of arriving, establishing and impacting biodiversity and ecosystems in Scotland in the next 10 years (Roy et al, 2023¹).

¹ [Spread of invasive species into Scotland: study - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/collections/documents/Spread-of-invasive-species-into-Scotland-study.pdf)

Official Action on Suspicion

Identification Information

20. Information on how to identify an Asian hornet is available on the following websites/apps:

- a. [Scottish Government](#) (also via RuralPayments.org)
- b. [SRUC](#)
- c. [BeeBase](#) ²
- d. [Non-Native Species Secretariat](#)³
- e. Asian Hornet Watch App available for [Android](#) and [iPhone](#)

21. Information on how to identify an Asian hornet is contained in Annex A.

22. A flowchart of the process to be followed from initial report to recovery is contained in Annex B.

Suspected sightings/alerts and initial triage

23. Suspected sightings/alerts may be generated from several different sources and, therefore, suspected sightings/alerts might be received through a variety of different routes.

24. Suspected sightings can be reported directly to the NNSS via free Asian Hornet Watch app (for Android and iPhone), an [online reporting form](#) or by emailing alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk. Sightings reported via the NNSS will be triaged initially by the NNSS and then forwarded to the Scottish Government's Bees mailbox at bees_mailbox@gov.scot .

25. The preferred mechanism for reporting a potential sighting is to use the Asian Hornet Watch App because it provides clear guidance on species differentiation and records location and contact detail information. If the app cannot be used, the beekeeper or member of the public should be encouraged to report it via the Non-native Species Alert on the UKCEH website or via alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk In exceptional circumstances reports can also be made to the Bees Mailbox. bees_mailbox@gov.scot.

² [BeeBase](#) is the Animal and Plant Health Agency's (APHA) National Bee Unit website, supporting Defra, Scottish Government and Welsh Government Bee Health Programmes and providing information for beekeepers across the UK. It [contains information](#) dedicated to identifying and reporting potential incursions of the Asian hornet to the Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS).

³ The [Non-Native Species Secretariat](#) has responsibility for helping to coordinate the approach to invasive non-native species in Great Britain. The NNSS is responsible to a Programme Board which represents the relevant governments and agencies of England, Scotland and Wales. It has a [species alert page](#) for the Asian hornet on its website containing an identification sheet as well as instructions for reporting sightings.

Official action on Suspicion

26. On receipt of a reported sighting, the Honey Bee Health Delivery Lead will liaise immediately with the Honey Bee Health Policy Team, Honey Bee Health Veterinary Advisor, and SASA Senior Entomologist to confirm whether (a) inspectors should be despatched immediately to the site or (b) further information needs to be gathered from the reporting individual before deciding whether an inspection is needed (see 29. below)

Official Action on Credible Sighting

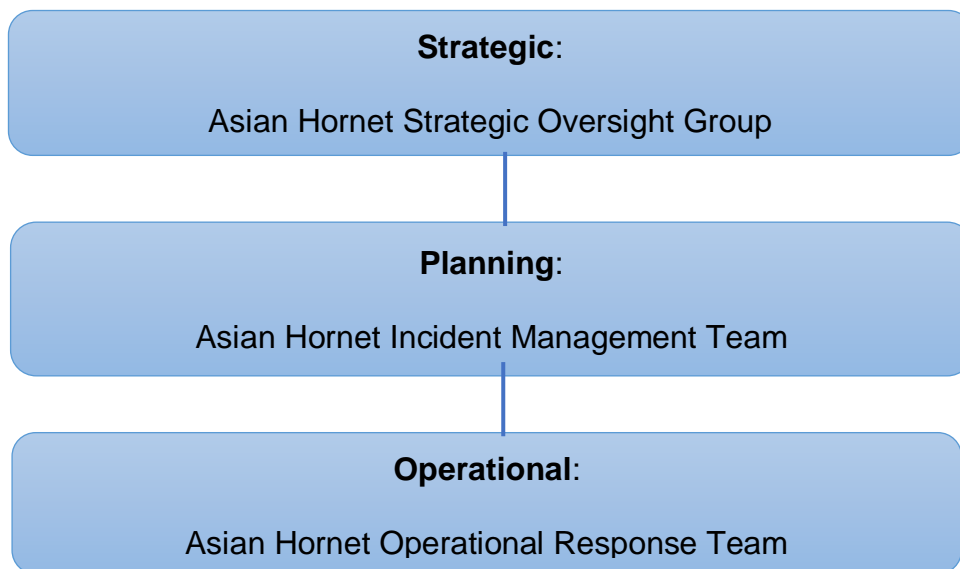
Determining a “credible sighting”:

27. Sightings are considered credible if there is a clear photograph of an Asian hornet included taken from the site, or if there is strong supporting evidence such as information on the characteristics and behaviour of the insect. Many instances of suspect Asian hornet are reported each year but the vast majority are sightings of wasps and other similar insects. It is therefore crucial to determine whether further investigation is in fact warranted.
28. In the first instance, if not available with the report, further information should be gathered to determine the likelihood of the sighting being an Asian hornet. The Honey Bee Health Delivery Lead or a member of the inspection team will complete the initial investigation report template, and then contact the person who reported the sighting, either by email or phone (depending on the mode of contact indicated by the reporting individual) and ask for additional information to help identify the insect including where the insect was found (e.g., in luggage, packaging, grocery item, or came from a container or vehicle originating outwith Scotland or the wider UK) and, if safe and possible, a photograph or video confirming the sighting.
- 29. Photographs of nests or downloaded pictures from the internet do not constitute “credible sighting” and will not be taken further.**
30. If sufficient evidence is provided to satisfy the criteria of a credible suspicion of the insect’s presence, the Honey Bee Health Delivery Lead will initiate operational next steps on this Contingency Plan, including despatching bee inspectors to undertake an immediate investigation and establishing an Operational Response Team on standby.

Operational activity

31. This next section of the Contingency Plan sets out an overview of the processes and governance of the search, identification, confirmation, co-ordination and response, and post-incident management.
32. It is triggered by an assessment that the information provided constitutes a credible sighting, or credible evidence of the presence of, the Asian hornet and requires further investigation.

33. SG Honey Bee Health Team will follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure that operational activities are undertaken consistently and in line with agreed process.
34. Immediately on agreement that the information or evidence confirms or strongly suggests presence of an Asian hornet incursion in Scotland, the following governance will be implemented to manage and deal with the incident.



Strategic

Asian Hornet Strategic Oversight Group

35. In the event of a credible or confirmed sighting of an Asian hornet, the SG Honey Bee Health Policy Team will convene the Asian Hornet Strategic Oversight Group (Oversight Group) and arrange an urgent meeting.
36. The Oversight Group will be chaired by the Senior Responsible Officer, in this case the Chief Veterinary Officer. Membership will include:
- i. Honey Bee Health Senior Veterinary Advisor;
 - ii. SG Honey Bee Health Policy Lead in their capacity as Incident Commander
 - iii. SG Comms;
 - iv. NatureScot Terrestrial Invertebrates Adviser (and senior manager where appropriate);
 - v. Senior Entomologist at SASA
 - vi. SG Plant Health lead;
 - vii. SG Animal Disease lead;
 - viii. others deemed appropriate.

37. The Honey Bee Health Policy Lead (hereafter referred to as the Incident Management Lead) will be responsible for collating and preparing material for the Oversight Group meetings, and for acting on the recommendations arising and managing all strategic activities relating to the incursion. The SRO for the incursion will attend any ministerial meetings required.

38. Specific activities for the Oversight Group will include:

- Determining a “battle rhythm” for the incursion including frequency of Oversight Group meetings
- Developing recommendations as necessary for Ministers on the strategic direction of response and control policies based on the advice of the Incident Management Team and scientific advice from SASA and NatureScot’s Terrestrial Invertebrates Adviser.
- Considering the impacts of the incursion
- Agreeing communication and stakeholder engagement plans.

Planning

Asian Hornet Incident Management Team (Incident Management Team)

39. An Asian Hornet Incident Management Team (Incident Management Team) will be established, led by the Honey Bee Health Policy Lead acting as Incident Management Lead.

40. The Incident Management Team will comprise:

- i. Scottish Chief Veterinary Officer (or Deputy)
- ii. the Honey Bee Health Veterinary Advisor
- iii. Honey Bee Health Delivery Lead
- iv. Senior Entomologist and Entomology Lab Manager in SASA
- v. Deputy Heads of Area Offices
- vi. NatureScot Terrestrial Invertebrates Adviser (and/or Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Manager as appropriate)
- vii. National Bee Unit representative

41. The Incident Management Team is responsible for developing specific actions to deal with the incursion, as directed by the Oversight Group.

42. The functions of the Incident Management Team include:

- Gathering intelligence about the incursion and providing advice on management and recommended actions to the Oversight Group
- Identifying and securing additional resources as required to manage incident
- Maintaining outbreak records/documents (e.g. action list, core briefing, event briefing, lessons identified);
- Engaging with stakeholders per the Communications Plan
- Set up and provide secretariat to the Oversight Group meetings

43. The Incident Management Team will be convened immediately when a credible sighting has been confirmed to initiate the initial actions as set out in the Operational section of this Plan.
44. The Incident Management Team will convene daily or at such other frequency as is determined by the Oversight Group.
45. The Incident Management Team will note and distribute agreed actions from each Incident Management Team meeting allowing attendees to prepare appropriate comms and plan for next steps.
46. The Incident Management Team will notify Ministers that a credible sighting is being investigated and prepare press lines in readiness, and will update Ministers throughout.
47. The Incident Management Team will liaise with other Devolved Administrations to apprise of the credible sighting and actions being taken.

Operational

Asian Hornet Operational Response Team

48. The Honey Bee Health Delivery Lead will take on the role of Operational Response Team Lead in the event of any credible sighting and confirmed incursion, and will initiate actions rapidly to establish whether the incursion is isolated or widespread and to establish an Asian Hornet Response Team (Response Team).
49. The Operational Response Team Lead will set out specific actions for the outbreak, taking into account where the hornet was found (urban, rural, wooded), responsibilities for taking forward the action and local 'battle rhythm' (taking into account the 'battle rhythm' set by Oversight Group). The actions will be agreed by the Incident Management Team and signed off by the Oversight Group.
50. Specific activities of the Operational Response Team Lead will include:
 - Identifying, securing, co-ordinating and deploying the necessary SG, SASA and NatureScot Response Team personnel, equipment, facilities and any correspondence and licences that may be required;
 - Collating daily sit reps from field inspectors and if necessary, beekeepers providing assistance in the search, and providing an overview of daily activities and recommended next steps to the Incident Management Team;
 - Co-ordinating information about the incursion and dissemination of technical and advisory material to stakeholders and beekeeping associations and other relevant parties who may be able to contact keepers to facilitate inspection arrangements;
 - Liaising with SRUC to ensure that the required training is developed.
51. Specific activities of the Response Team will include:

- “track and tracing” activities and surveillance in order to locate potential nests and to monitor the presence of Asian hornets in the area.
- Providing daily sit reps and technical advice to the Response Team Lead as the situation develops
- the destruction and disposal of insects and nests

52. On receipt of the report(s) from the field inspectors, and based on advice from the Operational Response Team Lead, the Incident Management Team will make an assessment on whether it is an isolated outbreak which may be contained. It will then make a recommendation for the Oversight Group meeting to take place to obtain necessary authorisation to attempt eradication of the pest.

53. N.B. ‘Isolated’ means that Asian hornets have only been found in a very limited number of sites in a restricted geographical area and that the data produced from follow up searches shows a high probability of success of eradication.

Initial investigation and reporting

54. Honey Bee Health Inspectors will be despatched to confirm or rule out the identification of Asian hornet.

55. At the end of the initial day of investigation, the Honey Bee Health Inspectors will have a sit rep call with the Operational Response Lead to provide an update.

56. If adult insects are found to be present, these will be used to confirm or rule out the identification of Asian hornet, initially by the Honey Bee Health Inspectors and confirmed by the diagnostic team at SASA. If a partial nest, larvae and/or dead insects are found, these will be sent to SASA, if necessary by courier, for next day delivery.

57. If no insects or nests are present at the time of arrival on site, the inspector will conduct a survey of the immediate vicinity of the sighting (radius 500m) to seek out suspect insects on the wing and/or nest.

58. If the sighting is deemed to be a credible one based on the information provided, but there are no insects or nests present at the time of arrival on site and the advice of the Honey Bee Health Inspectors, NatureScot Terrestrial Invertebrates Advisor, Veterinary Advisor and SASA Senior Entomologist, National Bee Unit, and any other specialists whom the Operational Response Lead may contact for advice, is that it is not possible to confirm or negate the presence of the insect, the Operational Response Team Lead will discuss the next course of action with the Incident Management Team. If appropriate, the Operational Response Team Lead may be requested to liaise with the Deputy Head of Area Offices to draft in additional Honey Bee Health Inspectors to assist in surveillance.

59. Following initial investigation, the Honey Bee Health Inspectors despatched to determine the status of potential incursion will provide a Nest Location Proforma and/or AH1 Inspection Update to the Response Team Lead, following which Response Team Lead will update the Incident Management Team within one (1)

day, triggering the appropriate actions depending on the outcome of the investigation.

60. The Operational Response Team Lead, under approval from the Oversight Group, will consider setting open bait stations or monitoring traps for surveillance purposes according to the RPID's Standard Operating Procedures.
61. To consider circumstantial evidence that the suspect sighting is likely to be genuine, RPID will use data from BeeBase and their register of beekeepers to establish proximity of the suspect sighting to beekeeping activities and proximity to risk points (e.g. freight depots, airports, seaports). A note of caution would be that, based on some previous outbreaks in other parts of the UK, and on the "hitch-hiking" behaviour and seasonal biology of this insect, introductions of the pest are likely to be linked to final destination and reports should not be discounted solely on the absence of an entry risk point.
62. The Operational Response Team Lead will liaise with the Scottish Beekeepers Association to alert local beekeeping associations and ask its members to be extra vigilant for possible sightings and provide information on how to identify and report any possible sightings, and to provide local knowledge to field inspectors if required.
63. On confirmation of an Asian hornet finding, the following actions described will be undertaken and the following command structures and procedures will be put in place.

Surveillance and Inspection

64. Based on intelligence from the Operational Response Team to establish the extent of the outbreak and, if possible, its source, as well as whether there are further nests in the restricted area and the likelihood of any nests further afield, the Operational Response Team Lead will recommend the size of the surveillance areas and priorities to the Incident Management Team Lead for confirmation from the Strategic Oversight Group.
65. Where possible, a triangulation method for locating potential nests will be used. In many cases, however, the triangulation approach for locating nests will not be appropriate due to the speed of flight, behaviour of the hornet, and viable sightlines. The initial response is likely to concentrate on visiting food sources (apiaries for protein and nectar forage sites such as ivy). To gauge the extent of the incursion and narrow the search for the nest(s), traps may be left. Inspectors should provide a record of the placement of bait stations and trap placement using Google Maps via email to the Honey Bee Health Delivery Lead at the end of each working day.
66. If an Asian hornet is located and trapped, Honey Bee Health Inspectors may deem it appropriate to apply a track and trace procedure to locate its nest and the potential for other nests and hornets to be sited in the vicinity. Section 16(4)(c) The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Scotland) permits the licensing for certain activities, including keeping and releasing a non-native species such as the Asian

hornet for the purpose of supporting an eradication measure. NatureScot are the licensing authority in this instance.

67. Follow-up inspections will be completed based on any information gathered by this process, based on expert assessment by the Incident Management Team of potential spread from the point of entry in order to assist with targeted inspections.
68. A Nest Location Proforma and/or AH1 Inspection Update Template will be submitted by the field inspectors to the Honey Bee Health Delivery Lead after each inspection of the site. Each nest, when identified and destroyed, will be notified to the Operational Response Team Lead via the Nest Location Proforma, and the Operational Response Team Lead will update the Incident Management Team.

Establishment of Demarcated Areas (Surveillance Area)

69. On confirmation of an incursion, an area around the location of the original incursion site will be agreed by the Oversight Group. The boundaries of the surveillance area will be precisely defined by the Honey Bee Health Team and will be published on the SG website's Honey Bee Health page and other sites as thought appropriate.
70. Based on current knowledge of the dispersal of Asian hornet, the surveillance area will initially cover a minimum 2km radius and may be altered and enlarged as circumstances change. Surveillance activities will initially be prioritised within a radius of two kilometres from the sighting.
71. To aid detection of any or further nests following a positive sighting, all beekeepers with apiaries within 20 kilometres of the credible sighting will be notified through a BeeBase alert.
72. Additionally, the Incident Management Team will liaise with the Scottish Beekeepers Association to alert local beekeeping associations and ask its members to monitor for Asian hornet.
73. The Operational Response Team Lead will arrange for the affected areas to be revisited and place apiaries and other sites where Asian hornets may be seen under close surveillance. This surveillance will comprise of monitoring traps being in place until the end of the season. Volunteer beekeeper resource from nearby keepers and local beekeeping associations may be utilised as part of this. The length of time under which affected areas will remain under increased surveillance, and the level of surveillance required, will be highly dependent on the time of the year that the initial incursion was detected:
 - a. If a nest is found and destroyed early in the year (e.g. May) when Asian hornet nests are extremely unlikely to have released queens, then the likelihood that eradication will have been successful is high. Therefore, the timescale for post-eradication surveillance could be reduced.

- b. If a nest is found and destroyed later in the year (e.g. October) when Asian hornet female queens are likely to have been released into the environment, then the likelihood that undiscovered nests and overwintering queens will exist is high. In this situation, it is therefore vital to continue to monitor for new nests throughout the rest of the year, as well as into the following spring, summer, and autumn in order to support the eradication objective.

74. The period of continued surveillance following destruction of the nest must be long enough to confirm continued freedom from the Asian hornet. The period of surveillance will be confirmed by the Oversight Group as advised by the Operational Response Lead and will be appropriate to the specific circumstances of each incident.

75. The lifting of surveillance area(s) will be based on advice by the Incident Management Team and signed-off by the Chief Veterinary Officer. In the event that surveillance areas are cross-border, the Scottish Government's Honey Bee Health Policy Team will co-ordinate with their English counterparts to agree the lifting of the surveillance area(s) and both countries' Chief Veterinary Officers will sign off the decision.

Decontamination/Disposal

76. On discovery of an Asian hornet and/or nest, this will be destroyed and removed within 5 days. SG Honey Bee Health Inspectors will be responsible for overseeing the process. Contractors identified by NatureScot (who have been trained in Asian hornet nest destruction and who are equipped with necessary specialist equipment including long poles to access nests at height and thermal imaging devices to reveal active nests in concealed locations) will be responsible for the chemical destruction of each nest and its subsequent removal.

77. The Operational Response Team Lead will liaise with NatureScot to ensure that, where the owner or occupier of the premises does not give their permission, the appropriate Emergency Species Control Order is made to provide the legal authority for the pest and nest eradication. An emergency order can be made where action is urgently necessary and expires 49 days after it is made.⁴ A warrant should be obtained if entry to carry out work on the premises is likely to be refused or the premises is unoccupied.

78. Powers of entry are available to RPID officers and NatureScot staff and those they nominate under Section 14M of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Authorised staff are not required to give any notice before taking access to determine whether or not to make an Emergency Species Control Order, i.e. look for an Asian hornet nest. These powers of entry cover a wide variety of premises including gardens, out buildings and commercial premises. They do not allow authorised staff to enter dwellings or break any lock barring access without a warrant.

⁴ Sections 14D to 14O of the [Wildlife and Countryside Act](#) set out the provisions of Emergency Species Control Orders. Information about Emergency Species Control Orders can also be found on the Scottish Government [website](#).

Apiary Movement Restrictions

79. Asian hornets will not spread within Scotland, or the United Kingdom, from movements of honey bees during the beekeeping season, and as the Asian hornet is not notifiable under Bee Health legislation in Scotland, or throughout Great Britain, no restrictions will be placed on apiaries or beehive movements.

External Communications and Correspondence

Notification

80. Asian hornet is notifiable under Regulation (EU) 1143/2014: The Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS) will make the required notification on Scotland's behalf as it is a Member State (UK wide) obligation.
81. Communicating effectively with stakeholders is key to preventing a significant incursion of Asian hornet in Scotland.
82. A detailed Communications Plan accompanies this Contingency Plan and will be owned by the Honey Bee Health Policy Team who will be responsible for ensuring that it is implemented at the appropriate points.

Beekeepers and related Stakeholders

83. Local beekeeping groups and associations and the Scottish Beekeepers Association will be informed and consulted for advice as required by the Oversight Group meeting. Other stakeholders will be kept informed of developments. Academic institutions, specialist pest control experts or government departments overseas with specific expertise in Asian hornet, will also be consulted if necessary.
84. In the event of a confirmed Asian hornet incursion, the SG Honey Bee Health Policy Team will trigger its communication plan which includes notification to registered beekeepers within 20km via BeeBase and advice/guidance with the wider stakeholder community (e.g. Bee Farmers Association (BFA), Scottish Beekeepers Association (SBA), animal health field officers, veterinary officers, allotment associations, garden centres, pest control companies, local authorities/councils, ports authorities etc.) to raise awareness.

UK devolved administrations

85. For cross-border outbreaks, all relevant UK Government departments will be included in the Oversight Group meeting, but otherwise will be kept informed of any outbreaks in Scotland. Regular updates will be provided to Defra, Welsh Government and DAERA.

General public

86. Information on the outbreak will be made available on the SG and NatureScot websites.

Immediate area of outbreak

87. RPID will work in partnership with the Local Authority environmental health colleagues who will provide information to people within the immediate area of the outbreak, including information from NHS Scotland and Public Health Scotland. As there has now been a human toxic shock incident confirmed in GB, after an Asian hornet sting, warnings to the public in this area must be highlighted

Media

88. External communications will be coordinated through the SG Press Office. The official spokesperson for interviews with the media will be agreed at the first meeting of the Oversight Group meeting. Any request for a press interview will be sent to the SG Press Office.

Review

89. As the situation develops, the Response Team will re-assess the viability of eradication of the Asian hornet and make a recommendation to the Oversight Group for decision as to whether the pest-management approach requires to change from eradication.

Recovery

90. Response procedures laid down in this plan will continue until the Asian hornet is eradicated or the decision is taken that the hornet cannot be eradicated and a management plan, which aims to contain the hornet, is introduced.

Post-eradication: Surveillance

See Paras 63 – 69.

Moving from Eradication to Containment

91. If an incursion proves to be established and widespread, the Asian Hornet Response Group, taking advice from the NDCC, may advise Ministers that eradication as a control method no longer remains practical. If Ministers agree, a policy of containment and long-term management will be implemented.
92. Depending on the extent of the incursion, the decision to shift from a policy of eradication to containment may be taken quickly. If this shift were to occur, the focus would be on training Honey Bee Health inspectors and providing technical advice and training services to Honey Bee Health inspectors, beekeepers, pest controllers and local authorities to recognise Asian hornet and put in place pest management methods. Training for bee health inspectors would be developed and delivered by the Honey Bee Health Delivery Lead in conjunction with the wider Honey Bee Health Team. Training and awareness raising for external stakeholders would be developed and delivered by SRUC.

93. An update to stakeholders and the general public on the change of strategy will be provided.

Evaluation and Review of Contingency Plan

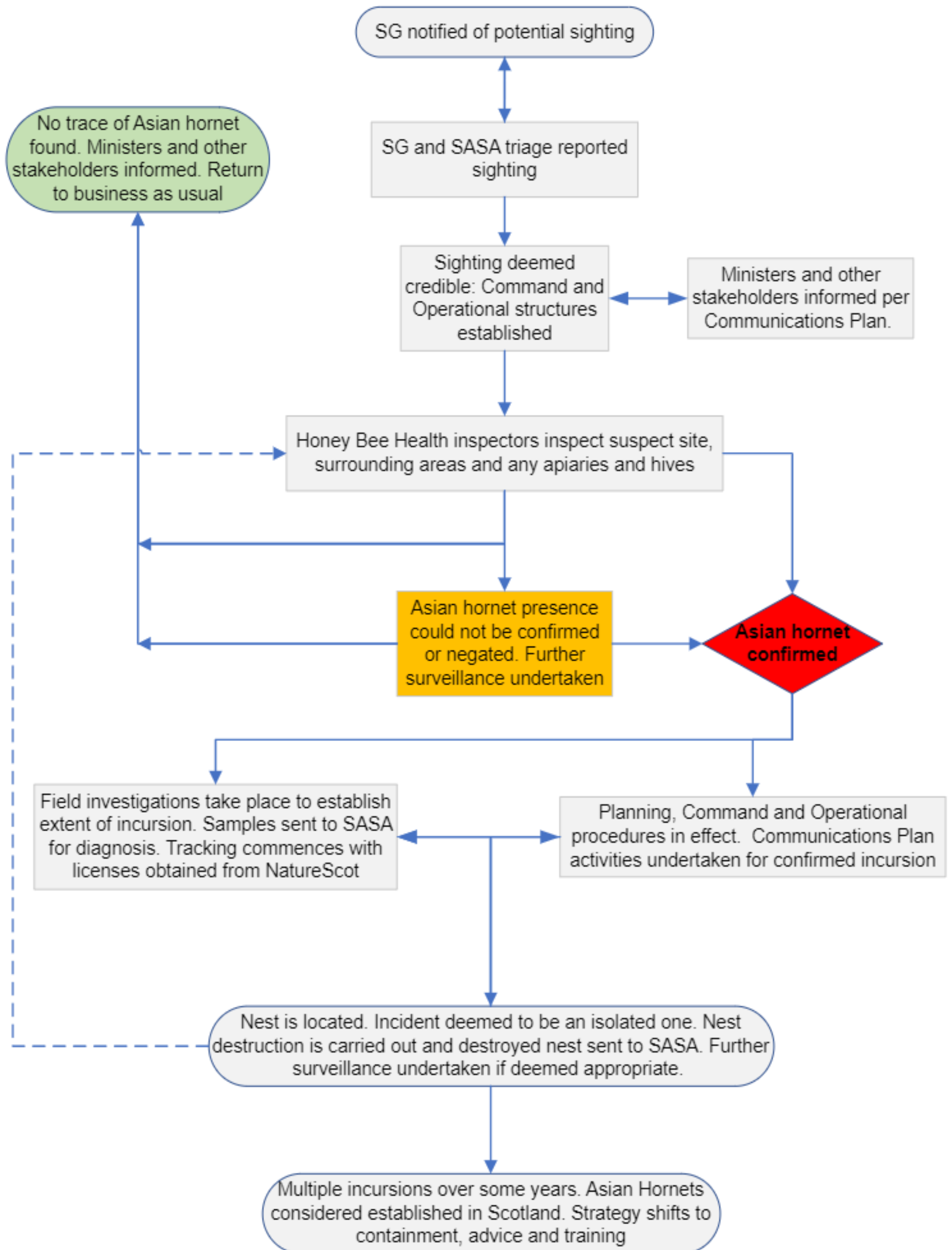
94. This Contingency Plan will be tested every second year with a mock exercise, and the Plan reviewed and updated following each one.

Annex A: How to Spot an Asian hornet

[ID Sheet for *Vespa velutina* Asian Hornet](#)

[Link to further information on the non-native species website](#)

Annex B Flowchart



Annex C Legislation

LEGISLATION RELEVANT TO NON-NATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES IN SCOTLAND

EU Regulation (1143/2014) on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species.

[EU Regulation 1143/2014](#) was retained in Scots law under the [European Union \(Withdrawal\) Act 2018](#) (“the Scottish Retained EU Regulation”). In Scotland, EU Regulation (1143/2014) was amended through the [Invasive Non-native Species \(EU Exit\) \(Scotland\) \(Amendment etc.\) Regulations 2020](#) (“the 2020 Regulations”) to ensure operability following the UK’s exit from the EU. It applies to Scotland only.

The Scottish Retained EU Regulation adopts the EU list of invasive species of Union concern as the Scottish list of species of special concern. These are species whose adverse impacts across Scotland are such that particular action is required in order to effectively prevent, minimise or mitigate those adverse impacts in a cost efficient manner. These species cannot be brought into Scotland, kept, bred, transported, placed on the market, used or exchanged, allowed to reproduce, be grown or cultivated, or released into the environment. However, there are some limited exceptions to these restrictions.

Permits and licences issued in Scotland

NatureScot can issue licences for releasing, keeping or transporting live Asian hornets in relation to an eradication measure under section 16(4)(c) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. A licence is not required for killing an Asian hornet, destroying a nest, keeping or transporting dead specimens.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

The [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) (Sections 14 to 14P) is the principal legislation dealing with non-native species in Scotland.

Section 14(1) of the Act makes it illegal to release, allow to escape from captivity, or otherwise cause an animal to be at a place outwith its native range.

It is a defence to an offence in section 14(1) if the accused can show that they took all reasonable steps and exercised all due diligence to avoid committing the offence. Offences under section 14 carry a maximum penalty of a £40,000 fine and/or 12 months imprisonment on summary conviction and an unlimited fine (i.e. whatever the court feels to be commensurate with the offence) and/or 5 years imprisonment on indictment.

Section 14AA creates offences for the contravention of the 2020 Regulations where such activities do not already constitute an offence under the WCA, (breeding, transporting, using or exchanging, and permitting to reproduce). A person who commits an offence under section 14AA is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a maximum term of 12 months or a fine of up to £40,000 (or both).

On conviction on indictment a person would be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or a statutory maximum fine.

Part 2 of Schedule 9B lists defences to a charge of committing an offence under section 14ZC, 14A or 14AA, of the WCA where the activity to which the charge relates contravenes the 2020 Regulations. Schedule 9B also contains provision for granting a licence (under section 16(4)(c) of the WCA) permitting an activity which contravenes the 2020 Regulations for the purpose of supporting an eradication or management measure.

Species control agreements and orders

Sections 14D to 14O of the WCA deal with species control orders. A species control agreement is a voluntary agreement between a relevant body and the owner or occupier of a premise(s) to control or eradicate invasive animals or plants outwith their native range. Section 14D enables a relevant body to make a species control order in respect of premises where it is satisfied of the presence of an invasive animal or plant at a place outwith its native range. The relevant body must first offer a species control agreement before it makes a species control order and it takes a minimum of 70 days before a species control order comes into force. Powers of entry related to species control agreements require that the authorised person gives one day's notice before taking access, and 14 days' notice to carry out work required under a species control order.

An emergency species control order may be made when the relevant body considers that action to control or eradicate an invasive non-native species is urgently necessary. The Act leaves it up to the relevant body's discretion to decide what constitutes 'urgently necessary'. An action can be described as urgently necessary, if delaying by 70 days would defeat the purpose of the action. For example, to prevent fertile queens leaving an Asian hornet nest and establishing new colonies elsewhere, the nest needs to be destroyed and the queens killed as soon as possible. An emergency species control order comes into effect once notice is given and remains in force for 49 days. The owner or occupier has 28 days to lodge an appeal. A sheriff may suspend the order pending an appeal.

Power of entry related to emergency species control agreements do not require notice to be given before taking access. These powers do not include access to dwelling or breaking a lock to gain access to lockfast premises without a warrant.

Further guidance is available on species control orders and emergency species control orders in Scotland in the [Code of Practice on Non-Native Species](#) .

Keeping and Release and Notification of specified invasive animals and plants

Section 14ZC of the WCA prohibits the keeping etc. of invasive animals or plants as the Scottish Ministers may specify by order. However, it is a defence to an offence in section 14ZC if the accused can show that they took all reasonable steps and exercised all due diligence to avoid committing the offence.

Part 2 of Schedule 1 of the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 \(Keeping and Release and Notification Requirements\) \(Scotland\) Order 2012](#) (as amended by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Keeping and Release and Notification Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2019) specifies types of animals for which it is an offence for a person to keep, have in their possession or have under their control under section 14ZC(1)(a) of the WCA. Part 2 of Schedule 1 specifies types of invasive animals for which it is an offence for a person to keep, have in their possession or have under their control under section 14ZC(1)(b) of the WCA. This means that it is technically an offence to live-trap an Asian hornet or keep a live specimen for identification purposes.

A person found guilty of an offence under section 14ZC will be liable on summary conviction to a maximum of 12 months imprisonment and/or a fine not exceeding £40,000; and on conviction on indictment, to a maximum of 2 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

Section 14B gives Scottish Ministers the power to make provision (by order) about the notification of the presence of invasive animals or plants at any specified place outwith their native range where persons are, or become, aware of the presence of such animals or plants. It is an offence to fail to make such a notification without having a reasonable excuse. This offence carries a penalty on summary conviction of a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or a maximum of 6 months imprisonment.

Article 4 of the 2012 Order requires that an occupier of land must notify NatureScot without delay if they become aware of any invasive animal listed in Part 3 of Schedule 1. Asian hornet is not currently listed on the Schedule.

Enforcement Powers

Section 14L gives the relevant body powers to step in and carry out operations required under a species control order. Under an emergency species control order the relevant body is not required to provide notice before taking access to carry out work, but cannot reclaim the costs of the operation from the owner or occupier. A warrant should be obtained if entry to carry out work if access to the premises is likely to be refused, if the premises are unoccupied, or if access is to a dwelling is required to carry out the work.

The Bees Act 1980

The Bees Act 1980 (as amended) gives Scottish Ministers the powers prevent the introduction into, or spread within, Scotland of pests and diseases affecting bees. They include measures such as regulating the importation of bees and combs, bee products, hives, containers and other appliances and apparatus used in connection with the keeping or transporting of bees which has or may have been exposed to infection with any pest or disease specified by an Order. In Scotland, a number of orders have been made under the Bees Act 1980 including [the Bee Diseases and Pests Control \(Scotland\) Order 2007](#) , [the Bee Diseases and Pests Control \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2011](#) and [the Bee Diseases and Pests Control \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2021](#). (For the avoidance of doubt, the Asian hornet is

not a notifiable pest of bees and is not covered by any of the Orders under the Bees Act 1980).

Annex D Glossary

Abbreviation	Description
AH	Asian hornet
APHA	Animal and Plant Health Agency
BFA	Bee Farmers Association
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs
Defra	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
EU	European Union
GB	Great Britain
NBU	National Bee Unit
NDCC	National Disease Control Centre
NHS	National Health Service
NI	Northern Ireland
NNSS	Non-native Species Secretariat
RPID	Rural Payments and Inspections Division
SASA	Science & Advice for Scottish Agriculture
SBA	Scottish Beekeepers Association
SG	Scottish Government
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SRO	Senior Responsible Officer
SRUC	Scotland's Rural College
UK	United Kingdom



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-83521-971-3 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, March 2024

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1418874 (03/24)

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