

**REPORT TO: AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE 6 FEBRUARY 2008**

**SUBJECT: AUDIT SCOTLAND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 This report is submitted to the Committee to highlight areas of The Moray Council performance that have been ranked within the bottom quartile of all Scottish Councils, and to provide an explanation of how this performance can be improved.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section I of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to reviewing how performance information can be used to improve performance.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee considers and approves the areas for improvement as identified by the service (Appendix 1).**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 It was agreed that when Audit Scotland performance information was published that any areas of performance ranked within the bottom quartile of all Scottish Councils be reported. This was to identify areas of performance that could be improved and how the services propose that this could be achieved.
- 3.2 The results for 2006/07 show that The Moray Council have 44% (36 of 82) of performance indicators in the top quartile, 5 of which are ranked first, but 12% (10 of 82) in the bottom quartile when compared with all Scottish Councils. Of the ten indicators four are related to Environmental Services and these have been identified and analysed to highlight any areas for improvement **(Appendix 1)**.

**4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan**

Performance measures and Service Improvement Plan priorities are linked to the Corporate Development Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

None.

**(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

None.

**(d) Consultations**

The relevant Officers have been consulted to identify how the service proposes to improve performance.

**5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers and approves the areas for improvement as identified by the service.**

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Background Papers: Shona Leese, Performance Management & Quality Assurance Officer

Ref:

## Appendix 1

**Department** - Environmental Services – Development Services, Environmental Health

**Indicator Title** - Food Hygiene - the percentage of premises with a minimum inspection frequency of 12 months or less, that were inspected on time.

**Description of Indicator** - This indicator provides some measure of the efficiency of the service in terms of national standards. Following a risk assessment, premises are prioritised by level of potential risk. The national target for this indicator is 100%.

<b>Results</b>	<b>05/06</b>	<b>06/07</b>
PI Measurement	71.8%	83.3%
Ranking (25 - 32)	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>

**Background** – The Section recognised the low levels of inspection and advised the Council that there was a need for an additional two food safety enforcement officers. The Food Standards Agency Scotland reported following their last core audit in April 2006 that "the Moray Council has not appointed a sufficient number of authorised officers to carry out the work set out in the approved Service Delivery Plan." This matter is again being considered as part of the budget for 2008/11.

**Actions for Improvement** - The Service has been prioritising the inspection of high-risk food safety (category A & B) premises over the inspection of premises which fall into the "more than 12 months" category and will continue to do so. A number of premises have been reduced in risk category (from A to B = 28, from A to C = 6, from B to C = 42), which has led to a continued upturn in results for high-risk inspections (quarter 1 2007/08 performance = 100%, quarter 2 = 98%, quarter 3 = 100%).

**Department** - Environmental Services – Development Services, Development Control

**Indicator Title** - Processing time – the percentage of all applications dealt with within two months.

**Description of Indicator** - This indicator provides some measure of the efficiency of the service in terms of national standards. The national target for this indicator is 80%.

<b>Results</b>	<b>05/06</b>	<b>06/07</b>
PI Measurement	55.7%	47.5%
Ranking (25 - 32)	<b>26</b>	<b>29</b>

**Background** – The Service was understaffed by two officers between October 2006 and June 2007 and has been understaffed by one officer since mid-October 2007.

**Actions for Improvement** – The Service is subject to numerous external factors which are outwith the control of the case officers but which can impact significantly on processing times. These include the response times from statutory consultees, from applicants and agents and the increasing number of issues to address in each application. A programme has been put in place to analyse and address these issues.

Staff vacancies caused by long-term sick leave and general staff turnover have impacted upon performance. Advertisements for vacant posts have repeatedly failed to attract suitably qualified and experienced applicants. This has led to posts either remaining unfilled or else being filled with applicants who are required to undergo lengthy training periods. Three new members of staff were recruited and trained during 2006/07 and 2007/08 but all three have since left the Service.

Performance has shown a slight improvement over 2007/08 (quarter 1 = 44%, quarter 2 = 47%, quarter 3 = 49%).

**Department** – Environmental Services – Direct Services, Roads Maintenance Street Lighting

**Indicator Title** - Traffic Light Repairs – The percentage of repairs completed within 48 hours

**Description of Indicator** – This indicator is based on the time between the time between receipt of a failure report by the council and completion of the repair. It is not just the period between notification by the council to any contractor and completion.

'Failure' is where there is one or more aspects not working regardless of cause. 'Repairs' means work carried out to restore the signal to use and reinstate the service (this can be by either temporary or permanent repairs).

<b>Results</b>	<b>05/06</b>	<b>06/07</b>
PI Measurement	100	85.7
Ranking (25 - 32)	1	27

**Background** – Moray Council is responsible for only four sets of traffic lights which are situated at Main Road Kinloss, Reiket Lane, Elgin, Tarmore Railway Bridge, Keith and Blackfriars Road, Elgin. During 2006/07 there were 14 instances of repair being required, 12 of which were completed within target. Of the remaining two instances, one was repaired within 4 days and the other 5 days. On both occasions the delay was caused by having to wait for parts.

Due to the small number of incidents involved any failure to meet target has a significant impact on the percentage and this has resulted in the major drop in the ranking.

**Actions for Improvement** – All traffic light incidents, where safety is of paramount importance, are treated as urgent so are actioned within 48 hours and this will continue to be the standard for service delivery.

**Department** – Environmental Services – Direct Services, Environmental Protection Waste Management

**Indicator Title** - Refuse Collection – The net cost per property (£) of refuse disposal

**Description of Indicator** - This indicator shows how much it costs the Council to collect refuse from domestic and commercial premises, and domestic bulky uplifts. It includes the treatment of waste collected by the Council and destined for final disposal in landfill.

<b>Results</b>	<b>05/06</b>	<b>06/07</b>
PI Measurement	80.66	86.22
Ranking (25 - 32)	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>

**Background** - Refuse Disposal costs continue to be high due to the following: a) The high capital investment to provide continued capacity and the cost of the Council's self funded recycling initiatives.

b) The success of the Council's recycling initiatives has led to a higher unit cost per tonne for landfilling as less waste is being landfilled.

c) Additional high costs per tonne for disposal of items like wood have also pushed the unit cost up.

Although the unit cost has increased on the previous year the ranking has improved by two places. The high unit cost should be viewed against the recycling performance which has exceeded both the Council's own targets and those set nationally by the Scottish Government together with current compliance with waste diversion targets set by the Scottish Government which have avoided potential fines.

**Actions for Improvement** – Monitoring/Reviewing operations to improve efficiencies where possible will continue. It is unlikely that there will be significant changes to the overall cost of the collection/disposal service provision whilst the Council's focus is on increasing its recycling and diversion rates in accordance with the aspirations and national targets of the Scottish Government, and in complying with associated waste management legislation.

A review of the accounts has been undertaken in 2007/08 to facilitate more accurate apportionment of costs of recycling. It is anticipated that this will result in the unit cost of refuse collection increasing and the unit cost of refuse disposal decreasing, but this will not be shown until 2008/09.