

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW
COMMITTEE ON SERVICE PERFORMANCE– 6 FEBRUARY 2008**

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1. Overall summary of performance

- 1.1 This report covers key performance indicators for Environmental Services and covers the third quarter reporting period between 1 September 2007 and 31 December 2007.
- 1.2 The Environmental Services performance is presented across 22 areas of activity and involves 59 indicators. At this stage in the year 38 are regarded as performing well, 5 require close monitoring and 16 require action if the target is to be met.

Service	No. of Indicators	Green Performing Well	Amber Close monitoring	Red Action Required	Annual PIs
Development Services					
Building Standards	5			5	
Development Control	2	1	1		
Environmental Health	2	1	1		
Planning & Development	3	1	2		
Trading Standards	1	1			
Total	13	4 (31%)	4 (31%)	5 (38%)	

Direct Services					
Emergency Planning & Business Continuity	3	2		1	
Flood Alleviation Management & Maintenance and Coastal Protection	3	3			
Engineering Design Services	3	3			
Property Services	3	2	1		
Waste Management	3	3			
Lands and Parks; Countryside Amenities; Access	1	1			
Building Cleaning & Catering	1	1			
Dredger	3	1		2	
Car Parks					
Harbours	3	2	1		
Statutory and General Transportation	6	4		2	

Direct Services	Number of indicators	Green performing well	Amber close monitoring	Red action required	Annual PIs
Traffic Management	6	4	1	1	
Public Transport Unit	3	1		2	
Fleet Services	4	3		1	
Roads General and Planned Maintenance	2	2			
Street Lighting	1	1			
Winter Maintenance & Emergency Works	1	1			
Total	46	34 (74%)	3 (6%)	9 (20%)	

Environmental Services Total	59	38 (64%)	7 (12%)	14 (24%)	
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2. Areas of good performance

2.1 Environmental Health

Indicator 1 - 'Food Safety - percentage of high-risk (categories A and B) premises inspected within time during quarter'

It is the aim of the Environmental Health Service to improve the public health within Moray by carrying out the Council's food safety enforcement responsibilities in a consistent planned and accountable manner by implementing and maintaining a documented programme of food hygiene and food standards inspections. Premises posing a 'high risk' to the consumer (known as category A and B) are inspected more frequently than those posing a 'low risk' (categories C, D and E). A new strategy has been introduced during the quarter to engage with the lowest risk (category E) food businesses. This alternative strategy consists of a food safety questionnaire, which requires completion by the operator. A total of 246 premises are involved. The questionnaire will be assessed and will be followed up by an inspection where necessary and is intended to allow resources to be focussed on the inspection of high-risk premises.

2.2 Environmental Health

Indicator 2 – 'Health & Safety - percentage of high-risk premises inspected within time during quarter'

All submitted licence applications for skin piercing and tattooing activities were issued during the quarter. The public should be confident that operators of such businesses are now complying with strict hygiene procedures and practitioners must display their licence and photographs of suitably trained staff.

- 2.3 Waste Management
Indicator 1 – ‘Cleanliness index following inspection’
The waste management service is continuing to deliver a high standard of cleanliness across Moray as demonstrated by the scores from the independently assessed inspections.
- 2.4 Statutory General and Transportation
Indicator 3 – ‘Applications for Closures/Skips/Scaffolding processed within target time.’
The service is maintaining good service and has processed all applications within target consistently through the year.
- 2.5 Winter Maintenance & Emergency Works
Indicator 1 - % Priority 1 Carriage Way treatments completed as scheduled by 8.30am.
The service has achieved the target and also achieved a rate of 99.3% of treatments completed by 8.45am with 99.8% by 9.00am.

3. Areas of performance identified for improvement and how this will be achieved

- 3.1 Building Standards
Indicator 1 – ‘Percentage of completion certificates responded to within 10 working days during quarter’
Indicator 2 – ‘Percentage of building warrant applications falling within the Fast Tracked criteria responded to within 10 working days during quarter’
Indicator 3 – ‘Percentage of building warrant applications falling within the Mid Range criteria responded to within 25 working days during quarter’
Indicator 4 – ‘Percentage of building warrant applications falling within the Major criteria responded to within 25 working days during quarter’
Indicator 5 – ‘Percentage of amended plans responded to within 15 working days during quarter’
Performance for processing new applications has decreased for all five indicators as a result of the Service working to clear a sizeable backlog of applications accumulated during quarters 1 and 2.

One officer has been on long-term sick leave since mid-October and a second officer left the Authority during December. The workloads of these officers have been re-assigned as necessary to ensure that the standard of service provided to the public is maintained as far as this is possible. This action has however increased the burden on all staff and has contributed to the present poor level of performance.

As a result of prioritising the backlog of applications over 100 delayed applications have been cleared from the system, although it was realised that this would likely impact on performance figures for the quarter. However, since the majority of the backlog cases have now been completed, it is considered that, barring any further issues,

steady progress will be made during quarter 4 to improving response times for new applications.

Although the post that became vacant in December has been advertised, no qualified Building Standards Officers were attracted to the vacancy. However, interviews will be carried out in the week commencing 21 January for this post but the successful candidate, if appointed, may require training.

A seminar has been scheduled for the end of January with local agents to discuss and raise awareness of the current situation and planned solutions.

3.2 Emergency Planning

Indicator 3 – ‘Prepare Business Continuity Plans for all critical activities, % Plans completed’

The Business Continuity Post has been frozen pending a review of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity arrangements across ex Grampian Region Councils. The justification for the post will be submitted to Corporate Management Team and Service Development Group in February 2008.

3.3 Dredger

Indicator 1 – ‘% fee earning days against available days’

Indicator 3 – ‘Number of days working for external Port Authorities’

There were 31.5 days lost in the third quarter (including 2 days due to poor weather and 3 for emergency repairs to the hull). The remaining days were lost due to other repairs including a repair to both the dredge suction engine and the crane. Internal work (i.e. in Moray Council harbours) has been delayed to allow external works delayed in third quarter to be carried out. Projected income is still on budget.

3.4 Statutory and General Transportation

Indicator 4a – ‘% of Category 2 (minor developments) planning applications returned to planning department within target time of 28 days of receiving all relevant information’

Indicator 4b – ‘% of Category 3 (major developments) planning applications returned to planning department within target time of 28 days of receiving all relevant information’

The targets have not been achieved as there continues to be a long-term staff vacancy, out of a team of two, which process these applications. The post was advertised in December 2007 however a poor response was received. The section manager is therefore considering options on how to resource the critical staffing problem in this area. As part of this process, Consultant Engineers have been appointed to deal with part of the backlog and with this assistance, figures should begin to show some improvement in performance during Q4.

3.5 Traffic Management

Indicator 4 – ‘Response time to Traffic Enquiries, (i) 1st Stage – initial investigation within 14 days’

27 enquiries have been made this quarter. 6 are still open, and a number have involved arranging meetings with the parties involved and have therefore not been completed within 14 days. However, the average length of time for the initial investigation of all the enquiries is 14 days. This section has 3 vacant posts and in the circumstances this performance is better than expected. Re-advertisement of vacancies to be carried out in February.

3.6 Public Transport Unit

Indicator 2a – ‘Vehicle Utilisation, % use against availability (peak 8-10.30 and 14.30-16.30)’

Indicator 2b – ‘Vehicle Utilisation, % use against availability (off peak – all other times)’

Performance has been well below target due to vehicles being off the road awaiting parts for repairs. New buses supplied to the Council are more complex than previous vehicles, and the supply of some spare parts has proved difficult to source. This is the first quarter the data has been collated and processed for the indicator and it is felt that further development work is required to make the intention of the indicator clearer and more robust.

3.7 Fleet Services

Indicator 2 – ‘% Vehicles passing Department of Environment test first time, Light vehicles’

This quarterly figure is below target due to the small number of vehicles that were presented for MOT this quarter. This is therefore a sampling error. The annual figure to date remains above target.

3.8 Car Parks

No indicators have been submitted for Car Parks following discussions at the informal meeting of Audit and Performance Committee on 5 October at which the proposed indicators were considered inappropriate. Discussions are ongoing to try to identify a meaningful and robust indicator and the outcome will be presented to the next informal meeting of Audit and Performance Committee on 8 February for consideration.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Recruitment is a major concern for the Department and is suppressing performance in several services where performance targets have been based on full staff compliments. This relates in particular to performance in Building Standards, Development Control, Traffic and Statutory and General Transportation. Vacant positions have been advertised during the quarter but have so far failed to attract sufficient numbers of suitably qualified candidates.

It is intended to advertise all vacant posts during the next quarter.

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Background Papers: Held by authors

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