

REPORT

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE		Subject: ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT CENTRAL SERVICES DIVISION AREA/REGISTRATION SERVICE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING FOLLOW UP AUDIT
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 28 May 2003	Ref: JAF/BN	

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise the Committee that Audit Scotland have completed a Performance Management and Planning Follow Up Audit of the Area/Registration Service.

2. Background

2.1 This service was selected for a Follow Up Audit in 2002/2003 by agreement between the Council and Audit Scotland to review progress made in implementing the framework set out by the Best Value Task Force.

2.2 A key requirement of the PMP audit is that it is evidence based. As part of the follow up Audit Scotland checked a range of evidence to verify that progress was being made in implementing actions in the Improvement Action Progress Report (See Appendix). Evidence presented included the Area/Registration Service Performance Report for 2002.

2.3 The PMP follow up audit had the following objectives:

- to identify the extent to which planned improvements have been implemented
- to provide independent, external assurance that the audited service is making progress in implementing Best Value and its PMP framework.

3. Summary of Audit Scotland's Findings

3.1 Audit Scotland considered the evidence presented to be of a high standard, relevant in scope and properly referenced.

3.2 Of the total of seventeen planned improvements, fourteen have been implemented in full and three have made some progress albeit there has been slippage. Where slippage in implementation has occurred further follow up dates have been agreed as to when the service expect to achieve actual implementation. The slippage in implementation has occurred due to the Cabinet Office's decision to revise the Charter Mark criteria requirements and the re-submission dates. In line with these changes revised implementation dates have been agreed for the re-submission of the Charter Mark.

3.3 The service has achieved a number of tangible service improvements since the introduction of Best Value, some of which were documented in the Audit Scotland 2001/02 report. The department continues to review its operations and has achieved a number of improvements during 2002. These include:

- achieving Investors in People status in December 2002. This is a National Standard that sets a level of good practice for the training and development of staff
- undertaking annual customer surveys to identify any areas where improvements could be implemented
- introducing a new Licensing System for Civil Marriages outwith Registration Offices in response to the Civil Marriage (Scotland) Act 2002. A new brochure was also produced to promote the choice of venues for Civil Marriages within North Lanarkshire
- participating in Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland (SOLAR) Administration Services Benchmarking Group activities with other Scottish Registration Authorities with a view to ensuring continuous improvement and the setting and maintaining of quality standards.

3.4 Audit Scotland highlighted that the Area/Registration Service Performance Report

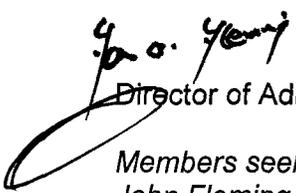
- identifies, in a number of instances, trends that have occurred over recent years to ensure users are given an overall picture of the progress that has been made
- summarises the broad service level achievements that have been accomplished during the year
- examines the results obtained from the customer consultation survey and identifies the action taken to address any improvements suggested by the general public
- outlines the priority actions that they are hoping to address over the coming year

and suggested that in future the service may wish to consider linking the areas outlined within the Performance Report to the Corporate Plan in order to demonstrate how the service fits within the overall authority 'picture'.

3.5 The overall conclusion from Audit Scotland is that the Area/Registration Service "has made good progress in implementing their planned PMP improvements. The Performance Report highlights a number of tangible improvements achieved by the service during the year that demonstrate the service's commitment towards continued improvement and the principles of Best Value".

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee note the position.


Director of Administration

Members seeking further information on the contents of this report should contact John Fleming, Head of Central Services on Extension 2228.

Improvement Action Progress Report

Council: North Lanarkshire Council

Service: Area/Registration Services

1. Agreed Improvement Action from the 2001/2002 PMP audit.	2. Agreed key milestones dates from the 2001/2002 audit	3. Brief description of what the improvement was intended to achieve.	4. To what extent has the improvement action been implemented? Please describe and allocate a letter A-C or N/A as per Exhibit 1	5. Evidence that can be made available to the auditor to support the assessment	6. Dates for further follow up work agreed with auditor
1. Performance Information established but requires further development, trends are monitored but not reported to Committee	1. Continue to develop KPIs with SOLAR and Local Authorities Benchmarking Groups October 2002 2. Report to General Purposes Committee - October 2002 3. Publish comparative information - August 2002	Performance indicators which reflect the range of information we now have access to in particular inter-authority comparison. Performance reporting will show not only current performance but also whether the service is improving Improved reporting to Committee.	A KPI data collected from all North Lanarkshire Area/Registration Offices. 2002 Performance Report prepared - new style includes trend information and GRO benchmarking tables which provide inter authority comparison for registration. KPI data being collected from other authorities by lead authority in SOLAR Admin Benchmarking Group. When this is available further analysis will be possible.	2002 Performance Report prepared for issue to stakeholders and available from receptions GP Committee Report February 2002 Reception Posters	N/A
2. Footwear and clothing grants process has been reviewed annually however this could be done more systematically	Completion of process mapping of Footwear and Clothing System May 2002	Introduction of Process mapping	A Process Map for Footwear and Clothing Grants produced. This identifies what has to be done, who does it and when. IT Services have been requested to amend computer program to automate requests for cheques (currently downloaded to disc and physically taken to creditors). This will remove the necessity for cheque requests to be hand delivered to Creditors. Note: Corporate considerations. The request for program changes was delayed pending confirmation that Integrated Benefits were not in a position to take on Footwear and Clothing Grants Payments in 2003/4 due to changes being implemented as a result of tax changes.	Process map of Footwear and Clothing System	N/A

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3. Lack of third party accreditation	<p>Achievement of Investors in People Award</p> <p>Completion of PDP Interviews April-June 2001</p> <p>Implementation of agreed tasks. April 2001/March-2002</p> <p>Evaluation of results March/April 2002</p> <p>Submission of Investors in People Application July 2002</p>	<p>Achievement of Investors in People Award</p> <p>Potential Benefits included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Performance • Reduced Absenteeism • Reduced Turnover • Improved Working Environment • Improved Evaluation of benefits of training and Development • Increased Job Satisfaction • Improved Morale 	<p>A</p> <p>IIP Action Plan Implemented. IIP Accreditation (achieved November 2002)</p> <p>All employees have personal development Plans and review meeting at 6 month intervals</p> <p>Revised Induction Procedures introduced</p> <p>All employees issued with Record of Training and Development</p> <p>Administration Performance Report produced.</p>	<p>IIP Action Plan</p> <p>PDP Records</p> <p>Records of Training and Development</p> <p>Administration Department Performance Report</p> <p>Area/Registration Performance Report</p>	N/A
4. Charter Mark due for renewal December 2003	<p>1. Collect, monitor and record improvements implemented against each criteria Ongoing process</p> <p>2. Submission of Charter Mark application October 2003</p>	<p>Charter Mark retained</p> <p>Address feedback from Charter Mark Assessor</p>	<p>B</p> <p>Cabinet Office have revised Charter Mark Criteria resulting in changes being introduced. 2003 is being used to 'bed in Assessors'. Area Registration Service has been advised resubmission should be made in 2004 under new criteria. Staff have been issued with new criteria. Charter Mark Resubmission Action Plan will commence in April 2003.</p>	<p>Charter Mark Status Maintained</p> <p>New Charter Mark Criteria has been issued to all staff</p> <p>List of Charter Mark Evidence currently available</p>	December 2004
5. Civil Marriage Survey - Results have only been publicised in Customer Newsletter	<p>1. Publish Civil Marriage Questionnaire in Receptions</p> <p>2. Publish Civil Marriage Questionnaire on Website</p> <p>September 2002</p>	<p>Publication of results of Civil Marriage Surveys for 2001 and 2002</p>	<p>A</p> <p>Process reviewed to ensure wider availability of survey questionnaire and publication of results</p>	<p>See Website:</p> <p>Revised Questionnaire Website Publication</p> <p>Reception Posters</p>	N/A

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6. Increase access to Customer satisfaction survey	1. Discuss feasibility with IT Services August - Sept 2002 2. Review Content August-Sept 2002 3. Publish on website - September 2002	Increase prominence of Customer Satisfaction Survey results within redesigned website	A Website redesigned and content reviewed. Customers can now download survey forms. Usage currently being monitored.	See Website	N/A
7. Cost effective, systematic consultation with stakeholders	1. Establish team March 2002 2. Design Survey Form May 2002 3. Issue Survey June/July 2002 4. Summarise and analyse results End of August 2002	Design of Form Issue Survey form to Stakeholders Analyse/Publicise Results	A Survey Form Redesigned Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey Undertaken Results published	Survey Form Results Publication of Results and action taken	N/A
8. Increased involvement of Elected Members in Charter Mark resubmission	1. Establish timetable 2002 2. Arrange meetings 3. Progress actions August - December 2003	Involve relevant elected members in preparation of resubmission of Charter Mark application	B Charter Mark resubmission delayed until 2004 It has been agreed that Charter Mark Resubmission Team will be formed by April 2003. Thereafter Resubmission Action Plan will be created and implemented. Monthly progress meetings to be held. Convener and Vice Convener of GP Committee to invited to participate	New Charter Mark Criteria issued to Convener and Vice Convener of General Purposes Committee for information at this stage	December 2004
9. Consider fully Charter Mark Assessor's recommendations	Formally record decision on each suggestion/ actions agreed and where appropriate targets for completion September 2002	Improved service provision	B Carried forward due to changes in charter mark criteria and timescale for resubmission	New Charter Mark Criteria	December 2004

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10. Undertake audit of service Equalities impact assessment	Complete audit of Area/Registration Service October 2002	Confirmation of mainstreaming of Equalities in Service	A Audit undertaken Results compared with Benchmarking data gathered from other authorities	Audit Results	N/A
11. Service Plan not currently issued to Stakeholders	1. Publication of Service Plan on Intranet February 2002 2. Issue Customer Update which contains details of progress on key service plan activities to stakeholders August 2002	Improved communication Increased information and involvement of stakeholders	A Customer Update issued from Receptions June 2002 2002/2005 Service Plan has been published on the Internet via the MARS System. Copies of the Service Plan issued to Stakeholders	Customer Update Service Plan is available via website Stakeholders Distribution List from each Office	N/A
12. Financial and Performance Information Booklet due for update	1. Collation of updated information April - June 2002 2. Review style and content April - June 2002 3. Incorporate comparative information GRO. 4. Publication and distribution of booklet to receptions and stakeholders August 2002	Publication of updated trend information and incorporation of comparative data	A Performance Report for 2002 produced. Style and content revised. Includes trend and comparative information. Also includes feedback form. Available from Receptions, issued to stakeholders February 2003	Area/Registration Performance Report Report to General Purposes Committee	N/A
13. First year of operation of new procedures will be completed in April 2002. Employee feedback requires to be collated and analysed	Hold PDP Interviews April - June 2002 Collection of Feedback and analysis of results September 2002	Collate feedback from Personal Development Interviews and analyse results	A PDP Interviews held with staff. Following feedback received from staff it was agreed that future PDP meetings would be held each March and review meetings held in September. This will ensure vital data is available for inclusion in Departmental Training Plan	PDP Records Notes of team meetings	N/A

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14. Increased % of Employees working towards or holding certificate in the Law and Practice	1. Amend personnel specification and internal procedures to ensure this - or a commitment to do so - is an essential requirement for new recruits to the Area/Registration Service. 2. Use new personnel specification in future recruitment processes February 2002	Increased % of Employees working towards or holding certificate in the Law and Practice of Registration.	A In 2002/03 1 post (0.27%) has been filled (Cumbernauld) and 2 posts advertised (0.54%) (Motherwell and Coatbridge) to which the new criteria apply which represents 0.81% increase when the posts are filled. An existing member of staff (Coatbridge) is scheduled to sit the examination in March 2003.	Revised Personnel Specification Job Advertisement Record of No of posts to which the new criteria applies	N/A
15. Identify alternative location for Coatbridge Area/Registration Office	Determine Specification March Site Search September 2002 Complete Project Brief March 2003	Improved Access to Service	A An ideal site for the relocation of the Coatbridge Office has been identified in Main Street Coatbridge. The feasibility of this proposal is currently subject to corporate considerations and a report on the outcome will be the subject of a further Committee report.	Report to General Purposes Committee	N/A
16. Improved links to General Register Office in Edinburgh required	1. Link to GSX 2. Identify local infrastructure Improve links to take full advantage of new GRO systems FER and DIGROS 3. Update infrastructure to meet requirements of FER and DIGROS April 2003	1. Commitment to link for FER and DIGROS 2. Update Office IT Equipment to ensure full compatibility	A Link to GSI Established Replacement IT Equipment ordered Target installation dates set FER CD issued to all offices for initial training of all staff	General Purposes Committee Report 3 Staff nominated to attend GRO Training Courses to lead roll out FER Interactive Training CD Notes of meetings with IT Services and Area/Registration Staff	N/A

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17. Explore alternative methods of consultation	1. Determine feasibility of User Group March 2002 2. If No User group established identify alternative means of consultation September 2002	Improved consultation and involvement of Customers	<p>A</p> <p>Following unsuccessful attempts to establish an Area/Registration User Group it has been agreed that in future consultation and involvement will concentrate on establishing groups to deal with specific topics. Examples of this in 2002 are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ consultation with schools and school children in respect of Employment Permits and ❖ participation in Civil Marriage Networking Group led to consultation with other Councils on Licensing Proposals, fees and staff conditions. In addition, consultation with South Lanarkshire Council to ensure cross boundary issues were effectively resolved e.g. where SLC issue licence and NLC staff perform the civil marriage ceremony are dealt with effectively; ❖ Consultation with Falkirk Council to effect boundary changes beneficial to the public 	<p>Area/Registration Newsletter</p> <p>Employment Permit Information Pack</p> <p>Civil Marriages outwith North Lanarkshire Registration Offices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ New Licensing System ❖ Subject to availability of staff Couples can get married weekday evenings, Saturdays, Sundays (including Public holidays) <p>Committee Reports</p> <p>Notes of meetings</p>	N/A

KEY TO EXTENT OF ACTION IMPLEMENTATION

<p>A The council manager can demonstrate that implementation has progressed as planned in the original improvement action template i.e. action complete or planned milestones met and on target.</p>	<p>C Progress is less than intended in the original improvement action template. The council manager cannot demonstrate they have plans in place to complete the action.</p>
<p>B Progress is less than intended in the original improvement action template. The council manager can demonstrate they have plans in place to complete the action.</p>	<p>N/A The council no longer intend implementing the original improvement action. Reasons should be given for not implementing the original action.</p>