

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

DA ITEM No 12

To: PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE	Subject: PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT 2004/5 YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT	
Date: 14 th September 2005	Ref: 15/14 KMCL

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 In line with Best Value, Planning and Environment performance is being reported to members of the Planning and Environment Committee on a six monthly basis. This is the 2004/5 Year End report covering Planning and Environment Departments performance for the period April 2004 – March 2005. Performance Indicators are shown for year end.

2. Background

- 2.1 Under the Local Government Act 1992, statutory performance indicator information is reported annually to the Accounts Commission for Scotland. This information, which is requested for five of the Department's services (Building Control, Planning, Roads and Transportation, Trading Standards and Environmental Health), is also reported corporately via the Corporate Management Team to the Service Delivery and Performance Scrutiny Panel.

3. Current Performance

- 3.1 A detailed report showing the information relevant to the Audit Scotland Return is available in the members' library and the Intranet at/ Planning & Environment/Sections Info/Quality & Performance/Q2 Performance Report.

- 3.2 The detailed report compares performance for this year 2004/5 with the performance for 2003/4.

3.3 Planning and Development

Building Standards indicators (previously Building Control), parts A & B have increased by 14% and 9% respectively on the previous year, and exceeded the targets. Parts C & D have maintained the excellent standard achieved, met one target and exceeded the other. This level of performance has been achieved even with the large increase in building warrant numbers.

Planning indicator one, % of householder applications dealt with within two months has increase by 4% on the previous year. Indicator 2, non-householder applications is down 2% on last year, however it should be noted that the total number of planning applications decided is up 15% on the previous year.

3.4 Roads and Lighting

Both Street Lighting and Traffic Light repairs are maintaining an excellent standard, and both have improved on last year's performance.

The indicator on Bridges is new this year, therefore no comparisons can be made, however a new bridge-strengthening programme has been funded from Capital, and assessments will continue. We have been unable to supply any information for Roads indicator one – carriageway condition and Roads indicator four - The proportion of lighting columns that are 30 years. The Department is currently working towards producing an up to date inventory, which will allow this figure to be reported next year.

3.5 Protective Services

Food Hygiene PI remains high.

Workplace Safety PI performance matches the previous years. This years programme included partnership working with HSE for the first time.

Noise Complaint PI has increased compared to last years figures.

Even though 2004/5 was the worst year for wasp requests since 2000/01, the Environmental Health Service achieved response performance of 97% & 98%.

Trading Standards Consumer Complaints PI has improved since last year, and the target met. The introduction of Consumer Direct in July 2004 resulted in the authority dealing with a higher proportion of complex consumer complaints.

4. Strengths and Areas for Improvement

4.1 Strengths

A Service Planning process has been devised to ensure that our Service Improvement Plan is produced in a timebound and structured way, involving staff at all levels. On alternate years, the EFQM (European Foundation Quality Model) self assessment model is used across the Department to precede the Service Planning Process, and resulting information used in the development of Key and Planned Improvement Actions, which are monitored and reported to committee. During the months of May & June a total of 17 events were held in services across the Department, including the Departmental Management Team.

Our Service Improvement Working Group comprises representatives from all Departmental services. All service improvement initiatives are fed through this group, which plays an active role in setting the agenda for the Department.

The Department's second staff conference took place on 27th, 28th and 29th of October, with the theme of Customers Count. Our third Employee Survey was issued during the event, results are now available and have been distributed to all staff. Results of this and previous surveys are available on the Intranet.

The pilot of an enhanced Complaints, Comments & Compliments (CCC) process named HARVEST commenced on 4th August 2004. The pilot was undertaken within two Services, Environmental Health and Roads & Transportation. Environmental Health then piloted the in-house database for managing the process. Data will be reported to the Department Management Team and the Chief Executives Department at regular intervals. This project is an excellent example of joined up working, with the help of Environmental Health and Roads & Transportation, and the development work of the Systems staff, we are now in a position to roll the database out to all other services in the Department, during July - October. The CCC process was also part of the Lean Management Thinking Programme (LMT) run by Scottish Enterprise, which was a six-month project. North Lanarkshire Council was the only Local Authority represented on the LMT programme.

During the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005, the External Funding Team secured funding for a total of 22 North Lanarkshire Council led European applications. As a result of these applications, £6,029,639 European funding has been secured and will be drawn on by the Council. The grants approved include 10 Objective 2 applications, 9 Objective 3 applications, and approval for the 3 Actions of the Round 2 EQUAL Access.

4.2 Areas for Improvement

Although Customer Consultation is well underway for those services, which are ISO 9001:2000 accredited, the need for a robust Customer Consultation Framework for the Department, is apparent. There are some areas of the Department where no Customer Consultation is taking place.

During the EFQM events held throughout the department, the need for increased Customer Consultation was highlighted as a Key Action, and will now be taken to the Department Management Team for consideration in the next Service Planning process.

5. Service Improvement

All Service Improvement Activity within the Department is monitored by the Service Improvement Working Group and reviewed by this group on a regular basis. During 2004/5 Planning and Environment were concentrating on various projects. Currently one Best Value Review is underway, for Trading Standards and is scheduled for completion September 2005.

6. Accreditation's/Awards

6.1 Charter Mark

Planning and Environment successfully achieved two Charter Marks, one for Pest Control, and one for Trading Standards Consumer and Money Advice Service.

6.2 ISO 9001:2000

Planning & Environment were successful in extending the scope of our ISO 9001:2000 accreditation to include the Development Control function within Planning, during February 2005. Enforcement process has an accreditation visit scheduled for 31 August 2005. North Lanarkshire Council are the first Local Authority in Scotland to gain ISO Accreditation for Planning Appeals.

6.3 IIP

Full assessment for IIP Accreditation took place 2nd – 5th August 2005, and the Department has been advised that they will be strongly recommended for IIP accreditation. The Assessor advised that this was one of the strongest applications she has ever assessed and she indicated that she felt many of our practices are "outstanding".

6.4 Miscellaneous

The Roads & Transportation Service received a 'Celebration of Volunteering Awards – Certificate of Recognition', for the Kerbcraft Team, in recognition of the work they have done in giving practical roadside training to primary school children.

Protective Services, Environmental Health were awarded a runners up award for the 'Best New Good Dog Campaign 'Bag It and Bin It' in February 2005, from the National Dog Warden Association.

Planning & Development were awarded a Scottish Executive and RTPI Award for Airdrie Town Centre Improvements in March 2005.

Policy and Economic Development gained a commendation from the Scottish Accident Prevention Awards for Safer Homes.

7. Sustainability Implications

The Department, at its Fleming House HQ has implemented an office recycling scheme, covering, office paper, cardboard, steel and aluminium cans and glass. This has resulted in a real financial saving to the authority. In addition to this it is proposed to set up a group to implement further environmental management operations.

The service performance information is recorded and monitored to assist staff to become more effective and efficient. All information is produced and managed electronically, thus reducing the waste of natural resources. This information supports local agenda 21 activities.

8. Recommendations

That the Planning and Environment Committee note the Content of this report.



David M. Porch
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information about this report, please contact Kathleen McLoughlin, Senior Quality & Performance Officer on 01236 616483.