

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – 15 FEBRUARY 2007

2005/06 STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (SPIs) COUNCIL PROFILES

Report by Chief Executive

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with summary information relating to the Council's relative position in respect of the 2005/06 Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) as reported by Audit Scotland.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Audit Scotland published full details of all 2005/06 Statutory Performance Indicators in December 2006. Whilst in previous years, individual pamphlets on specific service areas were published, as with last year it has again been decided that the information will only be available on Audit Scotland's website. Once again, this provides much earlier information than previous years when full results were not usually available until around March of the following year.
- 2.2 SPI data has been produced in the form of profiles for all Scottish councils, showing trends in performance against the SPIs specified by the Accounts Commission. In view of the reporting arrangements put in place by Audit Scotland, the Corporate Management Team, in considering a report on this matter at its meeting on 8 January 2007, agreed that a report on East Ayrshire's relative performance should also be submitted to this Committee for consideration.

3. COUNCIL AND SERVICE PROFILES

- 3.1 The Council and Service profiles published on Audit Scotland's website give a summary of each council's position over the 3 financial years 2003/04 to 2005/06 and an indication of each council's relative position for each SPI when compared with all other councils. The Profiles highlight the extent to which councils recorded a significant decline or improvement in their level of performance over the three years between 2003/04 and 2005/06. Not all SPI measures were applicable throughout this period because some SPI's have been deleted, some have been modified, and a number of new SPI's have been introduced. Of the 78 measures in the Profiles, 50 allow comparison of relative performance over time.
- 3.2 The Profiles are based on 78 measures, and exclude a small number of SPI's where national standards are largely being met, problems are very rare, reported numbers are very small, or where a large number of councils are not providing robust information.

4. CONTEXTUAL SETTING

- 4.1 All councils have a statutory requirement to collect and report on their performance against SPI's. However, it should be recognised that Statutory Performance information forms only a limited part of East Ayrshire Council's wider Performance Management Framework. Members, through the respective Committees on which they serve, receive regular reports throughout the year on the Council's wider performance. The figures published in relation to SPI's provide a retrospective picture of how the Council performed during 2005/06.
- 4.2 It should also be recognised that some of the indicators are more useful in performance measure terms than others and that the percentage improvement parameters determined by Audit Scotland for reporting purposes may, for some indicators, be very difficult to achieve. As a consequence, any subsequent analysis and comparison across all 32 councils can at times be of limited value. Nonetheless, SPI's are clearly important as they allow for a comparison of East Ayrshire's performance within the wider national picture and there is an expectation that all councils will seek to continually improve their performance against SPI's.

5. EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 The Profile information indicates a ranking out of 32 for each measure considered, as set out at Appendix 1. East Ayrshire Council has 23 measures in the first quartile (best in class), 26 measures in the second quartile, 12 measures in the third quartile and 17 measures in the bottom quartile. Analysis by Council service reveals a number of high-performing services that have significant numbers of their indicators appearing in the upper two quartiles, particularly in Adult Social Work, Housing, Education & Children's Services, Protective Services and Roads & Lighting.
- 5.2 Appendix 2 shows trend information on the number of indicators within the top quartile. Year-on-year performance in this area has also improved significantly. In 2005/06, 23 of our measures were in the first quartile, compared with 19 in 2004/05 and 16 in 2003/04. It is also worth noting that, relative to our comparator authorities (see Appendix 9), East Ayrshire Council has the highest number of indicators appearing in the top 2 quartiles.
- 5.3 Under the duty of Best Value, there is a requirement to demonstrate continuous improvement in performance. Audit Scotland produces a summary report which looks at overall performance across Scotland's 32 councils and highlights key trends. The 2005/06 report shows that in terms of the overall ratio of improvement to decline between 2003/04 – 2005/06, East Ayrshire is ranked as the best improving council in Scotland. As Appendix 3 shows, over this period, the Council's performance in 26 indicators improved by more than 5%, with just 8 indicators declining by the same amount. This means that the overall ratio of improvement to decline was 3.25, compared to the Scottish average ratio of 1.41. As Audit Scotland explains in its report, "*East Ayrshire, with a ratio of 3.25:1, has the best record (of all councils) in this regard*".

- 5.4 East Ayrshire Council's performance has improved by 15% or more on 18 measures, as Appendix 4 illustrates. Of the 18 measures demonstrating this level of improvement, 7 had improved by at least 50%, as shown in Appendix 5. Conversely, our performance worsened by 15% or more on 5 measures, as shown in Appendix 6. Details of these indicators, together with Audit Scotland's comments on potential influencing factors and an explanatory note from the appropriate Executive Director (*in italics*) on the reasons for the improvement or decline in performance are provided within Appendices 5 and 6 respectively.
- 5.5 When Audit Scotland's SPI data was published in December 2006, the Council's Press Office secured some positive press coverage recognising the Council's improving SPI performance position. Further efforts to secure positive coverage on the improving service areas set out at Appendix 4 is now planned. The intention is to seek to gain positive and topical human interest press coverage spread over the next two months or so, over the following service categories:
- Residential Care Issues
 - Home Care Issues
 - Children's Services
 - Sport/Leisure/Libraries
 - Learning Centre Opportunities
 - Housing – Voids/Rent Arrears
 - Housing - Homelessness
 - Noise Complaints.
- 5.6 The Profiles also draw attention to four specific indicators, which in 2003/04 were ranked in the bottom quartile (25th – 32nd) and, by 2005/06 had not improved by at least 5%. Again, details of these indicators, together with Audit Scotland's comments on potential influencing factors and an explanatory note from the appropriate Executive Director (*in italics*) are summarised in Appendix 7.
- 5.7 It should be noted that East Ayrshire Council has had no indicators classified as failure to report (FTR) and no indicators where there was found to be unreliable data in 2003/04, 2004/05 or 2005/06.
- 5.8 The Profiles also contain a table indicating the extent to which councils have improved in poorly performing service areas. East Ayrshire had a total of 15 indicators ranked 25 (out of 32 Councils) or lower in 2003/04 and 11 of these had shown improvement by 2005/06. The table at Appendix 8 shows the extent to which all councils have improved in poorly performing service areas between 2003/04 and 2005/06.

- 5.9 In some service areas for certain performance information, the Scottish Executive often group councils into 'Family Groups'. In preparation for the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning in 2006, Professor Arthur Midwinter was engaged by the Council as a 'critical friend' to assist in undertaking the strategic self-assessment of the Council's performance. During this process, Professor Midwinter, based on a comparison of certain demographic factors such as population size, rural settlement patterns and poverty, suggested that an appropriate family grouping for East Ayrshire would be Inverclyde, Clackmannanshire and North Ayrshire Councils.
- 5.10 Clearly, comparison of our own performance against the identified councils within our Family Group provides more meaningful information than national comparison with all Councils. As a consequence, Appendix 9 shows how we are ranked against our family grouping in terms of a quartile-breakdown of SPI results. In order to provide further analysis for the purpose of this report, our 'extended' family grouping has been used. This includes the Family Group as well as South Ayrshire, our neighbouring authority, and West Lothian and East Renfrewshire Councils, both of whom were recognised in their Best Value Audit reports as being well managed and strongly performing councils.
- 5.11 Analysis of our performance against our comparator councils reveals that East Ayrshire has the highest proportion of its indicators appearing in the top two quartiles (49 out of 78 possible indicators are in the top two quartiles, representing 63% of all indicators). In this regard, this performance is significantly better than any of the other councils who make up our 'extended' family grouping.

6. LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The collection and publication of this information is a statutory requirement. The publication of this data by Audit Scotland enhances the Council's accountability and facilitates comparisons between the standards of performance achieved by this Council and other Scottish councils between 2003/04 and 2005/06.
- 6.2 There are no financial implications associated with this report.
- 6.3 There are no implications for the East Ayrshire Community Plan arising from this report.
- 6.4 The Council's Corporate Management Team has considered and approved the contents of this report.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (i) note East Ayrshire Council's relative improving performance in the 2005/06 Statutory Performance Indicators, as reported in Audit Scotland's SPI Council Profiles document;
- (ii) request that Executive Directors take appropriate management and performance improvement related action designed to drive up third and fourth quartile SPIs into the upper and second quartiles for 2006/07 and beyond, whilst maintaining our 49 SPIs currently in the upper/second quartile, and to report progress in this area to service committees; and
- (iii) otherwise, to note the contents of this report.

Fiona Lees
Chief Executive
18 January 2007

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The full SPI Profiles document can be accessed at:
www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/performance/profiles

Any person wishing to inspect the above background papers or seeking further information on this report should contact John Clayton, Head of Corporate Development and Communication (Tel: 01563 576165) or Martin O'Rourke/Jim Farrell, Best Value and Performance Manager (Tel: 01563 576223)

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: Head of Corporate Development and Communication

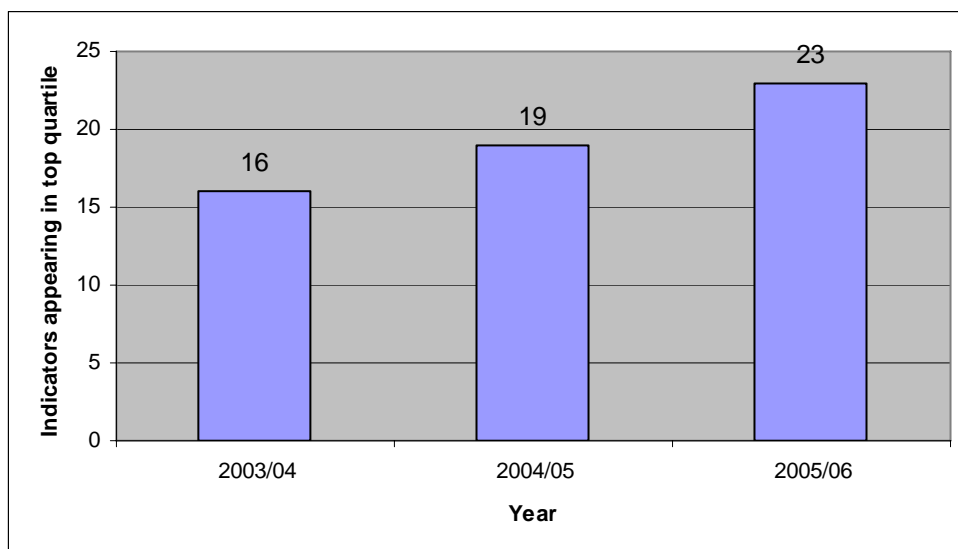
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Quartiles Table of SPI Data 05/06 – East Ayrshire Council

Service	No of Indicators	First Quartile 1-8	Second Quartile 9-16	Third Quartile 17-24	Fourth Quartile 25-32	Total
Adult Social work	21	8	9	2	2	21
Benefits Admin	3	0	2	1	0	3
Education and Children's Services	10	4	2	1	3	10
Corporate Management	11	3	1	3	4	11
Cultural and Community Services	8	1	3	0	4	8
Development Services	2	0	0	0	2	2
Housing	8	3	3	2	0	8
Protective Services	6	2	3	0	1	6
Roads & Lighting	4	1	2	1	0	4
Waste management	5	1	1	2	1	5
Totals	78	23	26	12	17	78

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Indicators where East Ayrshire Council is ranked in the top quartile (1st – 8th out of 32 Councils) – Improvement since 2003/04



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Performance Change in Councils

	Performance change between 2003/2004 and 2005/2006		
	Total number that declined by >5%	Total Number that improved by >5%	Overall ratio of improvement to decline
East Ayrshire	8	26	3.25
North Lanarkshire	9	26	2.89
Dundee City	9	22	2.44
City of Edinburgh	9	20	2.22
Orkney Islands	9	19	2.11
North Ayrshire	11	21	1.91
West Dunbartonshire	10	19	1.90
Fife	12	21	1.75
Falkirk	12	20	1.67
Renfrewshire	12	20	1.67
East Renfrewshire	12	20	1.67
South Ayrshire	10	16	1.60
Glasgow City	11	17	1.55
Stirling	13	19	1.46
West Lothian	11	15	1.36
East Dunbartonshire	14	19	1.36
East Lothian	14	19	1.36
Dumfries & Galloway	11	15	1.36
Aberdeen City	12	16	1.33
South Lanarkshire	15	20	1.33
Inverclyde	15	20	1.33
Highland	14	18	1.29
Moray	14	16	1.14
Perth & Kinross	12	13	1.08
Angus	17	18	1.06
Midlothian	18	19	1.06
Argyll & Bute	16	16	1.00
Shetland Islands	9	9	1.00
Aberdeenshire	15	14	0.93
Scottish Borders	20	18	0.90
Clackmannanshire	19	16	0.84
Eilean Siar	15	9	0.60
Scotland	408	576	1.41

Source: Audit Scotland

Note: The higher the ratio = greater level of Improvement

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East Ayrshire Council: 18 measures have improved by more than 15% since 2003/04 and these were:-

	Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
1	Adult Social Work –Privacy – the percentage of residential care places occupied by older people that have en-suite facilities	13	60.6	63.2	70.1
2	Adult Social Work –Privacy – the percentage of residential places occupied by other adults that have en-suite facilities	27	6.5	13.6	23.3
3	Adult Social Work – Home care – number of home care clients aged 65+ receiving personal care as a percentage of clients	8	70.0	76.4	81.4
4	Adult Social Work – Home care- number of home care clients aged 65+ receiving care at weekends as a percentage of clients	6	54.1	61.0	63.9
5	Adult Social Work – Probation – the proportion of new probationers seen by a supervising officer within one week	15	65.7	81.2	81.9
6	Education & Children’s Services – Privacy – percentage of residential places occupied by children that have en-suite facilities	10	12.5	15.8	27.0
7	Corporate Management – Sickness absence – the percentage of working days lost through sickness absence for teachers	2	3.8	3.3	2.9
8	Corporate Management – Equal opportunities policy – percentage of highest paid 2% of earners among council employees that are women	27	17.2	23.3	26.1
9	Cultural and Community Services – Sport and Leisure Management – the number of attendances per 1,000 population for all pools	28	2,183	2,179	2,568
10	Cultural and Community Services – Stock turnover – the percentage of the national target met for replenishing lending stock for adults	14	57.3	73.1	66.2
11	Cultural and Community Services – Learning centre and learning access points – number of users as a percentage of the resident population	30	3.6	4.7	5.1

12	Housing – Tenancy changes – the percentage of rent loss due to voids	14	3.10	1.90	1.80
13	Housing – Rent arrears – the percentage of current tenants owing more than 13 weeks' rent at the year end, excluding those owing less than £250	1	1.3	0.9	0.8
14	Housing – Council house sales – the percentage of sales completed within 26 weeks	16	36.0	56.0	62.2
15	Housing – Homelessness – percentage of cases reassessed as homeless or potentially homeless within 12 months of previous case being completed	23	23.0	20.3	9.2
16	Protective Services – Noise complaints – the percentage of cases settled on first contact that were dealt with on day of receipt	16	55.6	83.9	85.1
17	Protective Services – Noise complaints – the percentage of cases needing further action, completed within 14 days of receipt	13	32.1	45.6	82.0
18	Roads & Lighting – Carriageway condition – percentage of network that should be considered for maintenance treatment	12	53.8	49.2	42.7

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East Ayrshire Council: 7 measures have improved by more than 50% since 2003/04:-

Of the 18 measures highlighted in appendix 4 that have improved by more than 15% since 2003/04, 7 of them have recorded improvements of at least 50%. These represent significant and ongoing improvements. These 7 measures are detailed below along with an explanation of the indicators, Audit Scotland's comments on potential influencing factors and supporting contextual analysis (written at time of submission of SPI figures).

1					
	Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
	Adult Social Work – Privacy – the percentage of residential places occupied by other adults that have en-suite facilities	27	6.5	13.6	23.3
<p>The indicator measures one aspect of the quality of residential services commissioned by councils.</p> <p>Audit Scotland explains that the measure is likely to be affected by a number of factors. Firstly, councils and the owners of homes have limited capital resources with which to improve homes by increasing the number of single rooms or by providing en-suite facilities. Furthermore, the physical layout of an existing home may limit the scope for creating single rooms. Lastly, greater provision of privacy is often built into the design standards of new homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The variance report explains that the ability to place people in units with single rooms and en-suite facilities is influenced by the availability of units, suitability of the unit according to the persons needs and the person's right to exercise choice in where they wish to reside.</i> • <i>The variance report also explains that the Council is fully committed to providing modernised services to meet the needs of service users. Ross Court has recently undergone major refurbishment, and now provides 10 ensuite rooms within an assessment and rehabilitation care home facility.</i> 					

2					
	Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
	Education & Children's Services – Privacy – percentage of residential places occupied by children that have en-suite facilities	10	12.5	15.8	27.0
<p>Definition and context as above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The variance report explains that improvement in performance in this area is directly attributable to the opening of East Ayrshire Council's Intensive Support Unit in March 2005. All single rooms in this establishment have en-suite facilities.</i> 					

3				
Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
Corporate Management – Equal opportunities policy – percentage of highest paid 2% of earners among council employees that are women	27	17.2	23.3	26.1
<p>This indicator provides a picture of the current gender balance in more senior posts. This will help councils to identify areas of potentially unfair or discriminatory practices as well as providing a baseline for measuring improvement over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The variance report explains that the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures were updated during the year to take account of new legislation and reflect best personnel practice.</i> 				

4				
Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
Housing – Council house sales – the percentage of sales completed within 26 weeks	16	36.0	56.0	62.2
<p>The indicator measures the overall performance of a council in processing council house sales against the national target time of 26 weeks.</p> <p>Audit Scotland explains that the period after the council makes an offer to sell is included in the indicator and, therefore, applicants' responses to offers is a factor that affects the time taken. However, it is the council's own management processes (resting primarily with legal staff), and the level of resources devoted to this activity which are the more significant in determining performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The variance report explains that a change to the Council's internal accounting practices to allow for funds to be treated as received on entry irrespective of later title transfer has had a positive impact on overall performance reporting. Furthermore, a review of staffing responsibilities in Legal Services linked to a reduction in application volume and consequential review in procedures both internally and with client departments/divisions has allowed for a streamlining of resources and more targeted performance delivery which has had an overall positive impact on performance. A further significant improvement in performance is anticipated for financial year 2006/2007.</i> 				

5				
Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
Housing – Homelessness – percentage of cases reassessed as homeless or potentially homeless within 12 months of previous case being completed	23	23.0	20.3	9.2
<p>The indicator shows the effectiveness of the council in fulfilling its responsibility to those who are assessed as homeless or potentially homeless, and reducing repeat homelessness.</p> <p>Audit Scotland explains that the ability of councils to improve both their efficiency and their effectiveness will be affected by, for example, the availability of appropriate accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The variance report explains the very significant improvement in repeat homelessness is due largely to successes in establishing more enduring tenancies with the assistance of Tenancy Support, but it should also be noted that clarification on the definition for inclusion within this category has proved favourable to this authority.</i> 				

6				
Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
Protective Services – Noise complaints – the percentage of cases settled on first contact that were dealt with on day of receipt	16	55.6	83.9	85.1
<p>The indicator measures the noise complaints settled on first contact with the complainant i.e. those settled as a result of initial discussion or correspondence between the council and the complainant without the requirement for further investigation.</p> <p>Audit Scotland explains that influencing factors include the level of service provided by councils, the volume and complexity of complaints and the extent to which councils use formal notification procedures against those found responsible for noise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The variance report explains that whilst there has been a significant increase in the actual number of noise complaints since 2004/05 as a result of the newly established ‘out of hours’ system, the creation of the Ayrshire Antisocial Behaviour Night Noise Unit has enabled the Council to provide a rapid response to out of hours noise complaints. Improved management methods have also been introduced to provide the same efficient response to noise during office hours.</i> 				

7				
Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
Protective Services – Noise complaints – the percentage of cases needing further action, completed within 14 days of receipt	13	32.1	45.6	82.0
<p>Definition, context and variance report as above.</p>				

APPENDIX 6

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East Ayrshire Council: 5 measures worsened by more than 15% - 2005/06. These are detailed below along with an explanation of the indicators, Audit Scotland's comments on potential influencing factors and supporting reports contextual analysis (written at time of submission of SPI figures).

1	Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
	Education & Children's Services – Primary schools - the percentage of schools in which the ratio of pupils to available places is between 61% and 100%	29	54.3	41.3	41.3

The indicator reflects the extent to which each council's primary schools are properly occupied.

Audit Scotland explains that councils have some discretion in the way they measure occupancy levels and there may, therefore, be minor differences between them. Some of the factors that may be important are: how non-teaching rooms are treated, how rooms used for only part of the curriculum are treated, whether surplus accommodation is given over to community and other use and is no longer treated as available for school use, whether or not gymnasiums are counted as teaching rooms. Occupancy rates may vary between years due to a range of factors, including changes in the number of children starting primary school each year. A school may be considered viable despite low occupancy levels for a number of reasons, including: the lack of suitable alternative provision locally, the desirability of maintaining a school within a given community, the effect of closure on travelling time for pupils.

- The variance report explains that East Ayrshire Council continues to closely monitor occupancy levels in all primary schools. The council recognises the need for the ongoing rationalisation of surplus spaces through a range of innovative measures, which includes the implementation of the schools PPP project. This project is nearing contract completion and will see a significant reduction in surplus spaces in Primary schools.*

2	Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
	Corporate Management – Litigation claims – number of claims per 10,000 population	28	35.3	25.0	43.9

The indicator measures the number of claims incurred by councils stemming from employers liability, public liability, officials indemnity and motor third party liability.

Audit Scotland recognise that improvements in both the number of claims and the value of those claims indicate that the council is actively seeking to control and (where possible) eliminate avoidable losses.

- The variance report explains that the incidence of claims is outwith our control and varies from year to year. The figures for East Ayrshire Council are within the range of those reported by other authorities.*

APPENDIX 6 cont.

3				
Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
Cultural and Community Services – Use of libraries – the number of borrowers as a percentage of the resident population	29	22.1	20.3	18.7
<p>The indicator shows the number of people who actively borrowed books and other items of media during the year, expressed as a percentage of the resident population. The average is calculated by dividing the total number of items of all forms of media issued on loan during the year by the number of borrowers.</p> <p>Audit Scotland explains that the percentage of the population who actively use library loan facilities is affected by a number of factors: the marketing policy of the council; the ability of the council to supply the stock which its users want; the loan period and the number of items that may be borrowed; the location of libraries; the demand for library stock; and levels of investment in the lending stock.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The variance report explains that Bellsbank and Netherthird community libraries closed in March 2005. Despite alternative services in nearby libraries and a mobile library, a considerable number of active borrowers from the closed libraries were lost. However, a number of reader development and promotional activities have proved successful in increasing issues per borrower. It should also be noted that the position in East Ayrshire reflects national trends.</i> 				

4				
Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
Housing – Homelessness – average time between presentation and completion of duty by the council for those cases assessed as homeless or potentially homeless	6	6.3	9.3	11.4
<p>This indicator shows the efficiency of the Council in fulfilling its responsibility to those who present as homeless or potentially homeless and are subsequently assessed as being so.</p> <p>Audit Scotland explains that the ability of councils to improve both their efficiency and their effectiveness will be affected by, for example, the availability of appropriate accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The variance report explains that the increase in time for completion of duty reflects the decreasing availability of stock to provide permanent accommodation for increasing numbers of homeless people in the area. It is anticipated that this will decrease in future years with the withdrawal of the test of Priority Need.</i> <i>East Ayrshire Council has recently amended the Allocations Policy to address the changing demands with regard to Homeless People and stock availability. However, this has not impacted on the indicator for this year.</i> 				

5				
Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
Waste Management – Refuse collection – the number of complaints per 1,000 households	21	13.2	27.3	33.4

This indicator shows the recorded incidence of complaints to the Council arising from its refuse collection service. These may be due to missed collections or other matters such as spillage of refuse or complaints about an operative's attitude. Complaints relating to council policy on, for example, type of containers, collection frequency, no public holiday collections, are not included.

- *The variance report explains that East Ayrshire Council has completed the introduction of kerbside recycling throughout the authority and met with the first of the landfill diversion targets as required in the EC Landfill Directive 1999/31/EC. Therefore, due to the increased demand placed upon staff, service levels have been stretched, resulting in an increased number of complaints. The Council is concentrating its efforts on improving performance in this area.*

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The Profiles draw attention to four specific indicators in which East Ayrshire Council, in 2003/04 had a ranking of 25 (out of 32 Councils) or below and, by 2005/06 had not improved by at least 5%. These are detailed below along with an explanation of indicators, Audit Scotland's comments on potential influencing factors and variance reports contextual analysis (written at time of submission of SPI figures).

1				
Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
Adult Social Work – privacy – percentage of residential care places occupied by older people that are in single rooms	31	71.3	71.3	73.8
<p>This indicator is a measure of one aspect of the quality of residential care and is generally accepted as a reasonable indirect measure of quality. Research in relation to the preferences of residents in residential establishments confirms that privacy is of particular importance. However, it is desirable for councils to use some double rooms to accommodate, for example, married or cohabiting adults. Therefore, it may not be possible or desirable for 100% of occupied places to be in single rooms.</p> <p>Audit Scotland explains that the measure is likely to be affected by a number of factors. Firstly, councils and the owners of homes have limited capital resources with which to improve homes by increasing the number of single rooms. Furthermore, the physical layout of an existing home may limit the scope for creating single rooms. Lastly, greater provision of privacy is often built into the design standards of new homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The variance report notes that the ranking shown refers to private sector care homes – all East Ayrshire's care homes have 100% single room accommodation. The variance report also explains that the ability to place people in units with single rooms and ensuite facilities is influenced by the availability of units, suitability of the unit according to the persons needs and the person's right to exercise choice in where they wish to reside.</i> <i>The variance report explains that the Council is fully committed to providing modernised services to meet the needs of service users. Ross Court has recently undergone major refurbishment, and now provides 10 ensuite rooms within an assessment and rehabilitation care home facility.</i> 				

2				
Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
Council Tax – the percentage of council tax income for the year that was collected in the year	27	90.1	91.3	92.0
<p>This indicator shows the proportion of the council tax (net of council tax benefit) due in the financial year that was collected by 31 March at the end of the year. This is a measure of how effective councils are at collecting the council tax due to them.</p>				

Audit Scotland explains that the variation in collection levels of council tax between councils can be explained in part by factors such as social deprivation and population density that are mainly outwith their control. However, other factors such as the accuracy of the records and the speed with which recovery procedures are initiated are directly within councils' control. Much of the tax uncollected by the end of the financial year will be collected in later years because councils continue to pursue debts. However, early collection reduces a council's borrowing and increases the amount ultimately collected.

Audit Scotland also concedes that it is more difficult to improve if performance is already relatively high.

- *The variance report explains that the increase in % received is in line with the council's target to improve collection rates year on year.*

3				
Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
Development Services - Planning Processing Times – the percentage of householder applications dealt with within 2 months	25	72.9	75.6	70.1

This indicator provides information on how long it takes each council to deal with planning applications by householders seeking approval to build extensions to their homes, or to make other alterations to their properties that need permission. In dealing with planning applications, councils: take a number of steps to consult on and assess the application, decide whether to approve the application, notify the applicant of the decision. People have to notify their neighbours that they have submitted an application and councils are usually required to carry out only limited consultations before a decision is reached. Many of the applications are straightforward and result in permission being granted. This indicator does not deal with applications by builders and developers.

Audit Scotland explains that the time taken to deal with an application will be affected by: the extent to which councillors delegate responsibility for approving applications to staff (greater delegation will generally allow applications to be processed more quickly), whether there are any objections to the application (e.g. from neighbouring property owners), the proportion of cases where an applicant needs to submit amended plans before the planning officer feels able to recommend approval. Some cases, particularly those in conservation areas or affecting listed buildings, may take longer to deal with because of the need for additional advertising and consultation. The proportion of such applications varies between councils.

- *The variance report explains that the Council delivers a Development Promotion (Development Control) service from two decentralised offices in accordance with a scheme of delegation that placed 16.5 % of applications during this period before a Committee. This figure is only marginally higher than that for the previous year reflecting the Council's emphasis on delegation of powers to Officers, to address performance concerns. During 2005/06, these measures continued to be offset, however, by a further increase in the number of applications received; 1110 (2005/06) compared to 1067 (2004/05); and, for information, 799 (2000/01).*
- *Of particular significance, is that performance is still impacted by difficulties in attracting and retaining staff. A Senior post in our second office in Lugar has been vacant since May 2005 despite repeated advertising both at Senior level and at Planner level. That*

post will at last be filled at Planner level later this month. Two other Planners have left during the last 6 months, although their posts will also be filled towards the end of this month. As previously mentioned, a Senior post in the Kilmarnock office is currently being filled with a Planner as a result of failure previously to attract suitably experienced staff. Staff in-house may shortly be suitable for promotion to this Senior post. Additionally, two Principal Planning Officers took maternity leave beginning September 2005. An analysis of post vacancy rates reveals that the Development Promotion section has 'lost' more person hours over the last two years than over the preceding four years, whilst application numbers have risen.

- The continuing emphasis on Development 'Promotion' reflects the Council's desire to enable appropriate development and as a consequence solutions are sought to render applications acceptable rather than early 'refusals' issued. It remains the case that replacing officers is not readily achieved at present and securing experienced staff is still particularly challenging.

4				
Measure	05/06 1 to 32 Rank	03/04	04/05	05/06
Development Services - Planning Processing Times – the percentage of all applications dealt with within 2 months	28	55.3	57.7	49.5

This indicator provides information on how long it takes each council to deal with all planning applications including those from householders, builders & developers. In dealing with planning applications, councils: take a number of steps to consult on and assess the application, decide whether to approve the application, notify the applicant of the decision.

Audit Scotland explains that the time taken to deal with an application will be affected by: the extent to which councillors delegate responsibility for approving applications to staff (greater delegation will generally allow applications to be processed more quickly), whether there are any objections to the application (e.g. from neighbouring property owners), the proportion of cases where an applicant needs to submit amended plans before the planning officer feels able to recommend approval. Some cases, particularly those in conservation areas or affecting listed buildings, may take longer to deal with because of the need for additional advertising and consultation. The proportion of such applications varies between councils.

- The details from the variance report given above apply here.

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The extent to which councils have improved in poorly performing service areas

The extent to which problem areas have improved varies among councils. The figures in brackets show the number of indicators that were ranked 25 or lower in 2003/04 and the number of these that had improved in 2005/2006.

Improvement in at least 75%	Improvement in between 50 and 75%	Improvement in fewer than 50%
East Lothian (5 of 6) Midlothian (9 of 12) North Lanarkshire (12 of 15) Orkney Islands (8 of 8) Renfrewshire (8 of 10)	Aberdeen City (7 of 10) Aberdeenshire (6 of 10) Angus (8 of 13) Argyll & Bute (4 of 6) Dumfries & Galloway (5 of 10) Dundee City (8 of 12) East Ayrshire (11 of 15) East Renfrewshire (5 of 8) City of Edinburgh (8 of 15) Falkirk (3 of 5) Fife (6 of 9) Highland (5 of 9) Inverclyde (8 of 16) Moray (4 of 7) North Ayrshire (5 of 7) Perth & Kinross (6 of 11) Scottish Borders (7 of 12) South Ayrshire (5 of 8) South Lanarkshire (5 of 8) West Dunbartonshire (5 of 10)	Clackmannanshire (5 of 11) East Dunbartonshire (4 of 11) Eilean Siar (2 of 10) Glasgow City (6 of 16) Shetland Islands (3 of 14) Stirling (3 of 7) West Lothian (1 of 4)

Source: Audit Scotland

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'Extended Family Group' Comparisons

	No of indicators reported on (out of possible 78)	Upper Quartile 1-8	Second Quartile 9-16	Third Quartile 17-24	Fourth Quartile 25-32	Explanation of missing results
East Ayrshire	78	23	26	12	17	
		49		29		
West Lothian	78	31	13	17	17	
		44		34		
East Renfrewshire	76	21	23	21	11	76 (2 No Service)
		44		32		
North Ayrshire	78	16	26	27	9	
		42		36		
South Ayrshire	78	18	23	24	13	
		41		37		
Clackmannanshire	76	25	14	20	17	76 (1 No Service and 1 unreliable data)
		39		37		
Inverclyde	75	13	17	20	25	75 (2 No Service and 1 unreliable data)
		30		45		