

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE - 28 AUGUST 2001

STATISTICAL RETURNS TO THE ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

Report by Director of Development Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the statistical returns made to the Accounts Commission on some aspects of the performance of particular services within the department.
- 1.2 To inform the Committee of performance trends over time, and of comparisons with other local councils identified for benchmarking purposes.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 1992 requires the Accounts Commission to issue an annual Direction to local authorities to "publish such information relating to their activities in any financial year as will facilitate the making of appropriate comparisons between different authorities and in different financial years".
- 2.2 The areas within Development Services covered by the Direction are:
- Development Promotion
 - Building Control
 - Roads and Lighting
- 2.3 As part of the ongoing exercise of ensuring the indicators become more relevant to the service and meaningful to the general public, some indicators have been simplified, others have been changed, and new indicators have been introduced. Changes are indicated below.

3 PLANNING - DEVELOPMENT PROMOTION

3.1 INDICATOR 1 - HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATIONS

3.1.1 Performance Trends

% of householder applications determined in the following timescales	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01
a) up to 1 month	31*	35*	36*	53	30
b) 1 month to 2 months	50**	48**	38**	35	41
Totals	81	83	74	88	71

* was "less than 4 weeks"

** was "4 - 8 weeks"

% of householder applications determined in the following timescales	99/00	00/01
c) 2 months to 3 months	6.8***	14.1
d) More than 3 months	5.9***	14.8

*** new indicator

- East Ayrshire held 11th place in the National Ranking for householder applications dealt with in less than two months for the year 1999/2000.
- Staff vacancies adversely affected performance during 2000/2001. The division has been re-structured and now has a full compliment of eight Development Promotion Officers. Recent statistics show an improved performance of 91%.

3.2 INDICATOR 2 - NON-HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATIONS

3.2.1 Performance Trends

% of non-householder applications determined:	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01
a) up to 2 months	61*	56*	48*	57	49

* was "within 8 weeks"

% of non-householder applications determined:	99/00	00/01
b) 2 to 3 months	15**	20
c) more than 3 months	28**	30

** new indicator

- The comments appended to indicator one, apply in equal measure to indicator two.

3.3 INDICATOR 3 - APPEALS

3.3.1 Performance Trends

Appeals	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01
a) Percentage of planning applications which went to appeal	0.3	1.5	0.8	1.1	1.3
b) Percentage of the total number of planning applications which went to appeal and were successful	0.0	0.0	57.1	44	30.0

- The Planning Division strives through negotiation to secure amendment to applications rather than giving applicants an immediate refusal. The percentage of applications refused is therefore low as is the number of appeals received. The variance in the "success" rate on appeal is therefore artificially high due to the small figures involved. Nevertheless a lesser percentage of appellants were successful in overturning planning authority decisions than in previous years.

3.4 INDICATOR 4 - DEVELOPMENT PLANS

3.4.1 Performance Trends

Percentage of population covered by local plans adopted within the last 5 years which were:	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01
a) adopted within the last 5 years	22.0	11.3	0.0	0.0	0.0

- The Council has an up-to-date Finalised Plan. A decision was taken not to proceed to adoption of the Finalised Plans for the former district councils but to replace them with a single integrated plan for the new area. A provisional date of 3 December 2001 has been set for the East Ayrshire Local Plan (Finalised Version with Modifications) to go to public local inquiry following which it may be adopted (modified as necessary).

4 BUILDING CONTROL

4.1 INDICATOR 1 - BUILDING CONTROL WARRANTS AND COMPLETION CERTIFICATES

4.1.1 Performance Trends

Building Control & Completion Certificate Applications	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01
a) Average time taken to respond to a request for:					
i) a building warrant (working days)	n/a	11	12	8	16
ii) a completion certificate (working days)	n/a	3	2	2	4
b) Average time taken to issue:					
i) a building warrant (working days)	n/a	5	3	3	6
ii) a completion certificate (working days)	n/a	2	3	2	3
c) Number of building warrants issued					
	n/a	1074	1085	937	817
d) Number of completion certificates issued					
	n/a	671	980	1403	1256

- The performance of the Building Control section was affected by staff vacancies throughout the year. The staffing levels are now back to full compliment and performance has improved.
- Although the unit has performed less well in 2000/01 in comparison with previous years, East Ayrshire compares favourably nationally up to 1999/00, holding 1st equal place for time taken to issue building warrants and 2nd place for time taken to issue completion certificates, and even the poorer performance in 2000/01 stands comparison with other councils.

5 ROADS AND LIGHTING

5.1 INDICATOR 1 - MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE

5.1.1 Performance Trends

Maintenance Expenditure	96/97 £	97/98 £	98/99 £	99/00 £	00/01 £
a) Structural maintenance					
Expenditure per carriageway kilometre	1,352	1,226	1,066	1,123	941
b) Routine maintenance					
Expenditure per carriageway kilometre	1,116	1,339	1,466	1,586	2,372
c) Winter maintenance					
Expenditure per carriageway kilometre	709	561	999	1,113	2,220
d) Maintenance surveys and inspections					
Expenditure per carriageway kilometre	30	34	36	40	71
e) Footway Maintenance (urban)*					1,840

* new indicator

- No comparisons can be made with previous years due to the fact that:
 - a) Footway Maintenance has been separated out for the first time this year (It was previously included in Structural and Routine Maintenance); and,
 - b) the figures include an additional £2.9 million for overheads and capital charges (35% of the total cost), which relate to historic new road building, not to maintenance costs.
- Cost comparisons within the other councils are problematic since the figures alone do not take account of:
 - a) council policy;
 - b) departmental budgets; and,
 - c) the severity of the winter in each part of the country.

5.2 INDICATOR 2 - NETWORK MAINTENANCE

5.2.1 Performance Trends

Network Maintenance	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01
a) Percentage of road network resurfaced	2	3	1	1	1
b) Percentage of road network surface dressed	3	3	2	1	1
c) Percentage of road network resurfaced or dressed (a+b)	5	6	3	2	2

- Comparisons take account of neither the quality nor the quantity of materials used (ie the depth to which resurfacing / surface dressing is carried out).

- Departmental policy in 96/97 and 97/98 led to more of the network being resurfaced or dressed ((c) above). This was driven by the condition of the roads network, particularly in rural areas.

5.3 INDICATOR 3 - REPAIRS RESPONSE TRAFFIC LIGHTS

5.3.1 Performance Trends

Traffic Light Failure	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01
a) Category 1- within 6 hours					
i) Target repair time	n/r	6	6	6	6
ii) Average repair time	n/r	50	8	7	7
b) Category 2 – within 20 hours					
i) Local target time	n/r	20	20	20	20
ii) Average repair time	n/r	48	17	22	22
c) Percentage completed within 48 hours					
	n/r	86	68	54	71

- The traffic light repair service was subject to a business review during the first half of 2000. Problems were identified due to jobs being passed between two contractors, and weak contractor management information systems. These problems were reflected in the Council's position nationally (30th out of 31). The work was repackaged and put out to tender. Since winning the contract, Peek has significantly improved on the above performance figures for the second half of the reporting year (see below).

Category of fault	Full year PI	Second six months (new contract)
Average time - Urgent	7 hrs	4 hrs
Average time - Non-urgent	22 hrs	16 hrs
Average time - All Faults	59 hrs	37 hrs
Completed within 48 hours	71%	82%

5.4 INDICATOR 4 - REPAIRS RESPONSE STREET LIGHTS

5.4.1 Performance Trends

Street Lights Failure	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01
a) Average repair time (days)	n/r	3	3	3	3
b) Percentage completed within 7 days	n/r	95	98	96	97

- Performance has improved over the last year and is moving towards the high of 1998/99. East Ayrshire is ranked 4th equal nationally in 1999/2000 for percentage repairs carried out within 7 days.

5.5 INDICATOR 5 – STREET LIGHTS (COST PER LAMP)/LIGHTING COLUMN REPLACEMENT

5.5.1 Submission 2000/01

REPLACEMENT OF STREET LIGHTS/ COLUMNS	00/01
a) Gross cost of street lighting per lamp*	£88.28
b) Lighting columns replaced expressed as a percentage of the total number of columns*	2.95

* new indicator

- This new indicator includes overheads and capital charges in calculating "gross cost". The capital charge does not reflect the cost to East Ayrshire accurately as its allocation is based on historical charges inherited from Strathclyde Regional Council. These charges were allocated equally across the new councils, rather than according to *actual* charges incurred through capital investment in the particular council area. This has resulted in East Ayrshire assuming a greater proportion of the street lighting capital charges than historical *actual* investment would have allowed.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There is no new policy implication arising from this report.

7 FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no financial or legal implications.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the contents of the report.

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SC/JF
21 August 2001

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Performance Information Return To The Accounts Commission

For further information on the contents of this report contact Jim Farrell. Tel 01563 576144.

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AGENDA