

Corporate Services Standing Sub Committee  
2 October 2003

**Irvine, 2 October 2003** - At the Adjourned Meeting of the Corporate Services Standing Sub Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

**Present**

Tom Barr, Jack Carson, John Moffat and David Munn.

**In Attendance**

B Devine, Chief Executive; I MacKay, Assistant Chief Executive and K. Thomas, Manager Protective Services (Legal and Protective); and R Forrest, Principal Planner (Development and Promotion).  
J Montgomery, Principal Performance Review Officer; A. Osborne and A Little, Corporate & Democratic Support Officers (Chief Executive's).

**Chair**

Councillor Barr in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Gordon Clarkson, Margaret McDougall, Elizabeth McLardy, Robert Rae and Ian Richardson.

The Sub Committee resumed consideration of Agenda Item 3 from the adjourned meeting of Wednesday 1 October 2003.

**3. Public Performance Reporting Statutory Performance Indicators 2002/03**

The Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective Services) reported on the statutory indicators in Appendices 6 - 10 of the report and the Principal Performance Review Officer on the statutory indicator in Appendix 11; details of which together with the question and answer session which followed are attached at Appendix 1.

The meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

### Corporate Services: Statutory Performance Indicators 2002/2003

I. MacKay, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective)

R. Forrest, Principal Planner

K. Thomas, Manager Protective Services

<b>Planning</b>
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There are 4 performance indicators to the Council's function of planning. Of the 842 planning applications received approximately 75% were determined under delegated powers and did not require to be presented to Committee.

#### Householder Applications

The Scottish Executive's target for each Council to deal with applications within 2 months of receipt is 90% and 95% to be determined within 3 months. The number of householder planning applications received during 2002/03 increased by 17%. The Planning Service achieved 82.3% of applications determined within 2 months and is working towards the 2003/04 target of 87%.

#### Non-Householder Applications

Non-householder applications are generally more complex and in some cases the Government's target period of 2 months is extended to 4 months for those applications involving an Environmental Statement. North Ayrshire determined 40% of non-householder applications within 2 months, as against the Scottish Executive target of 80%.

**Q: Can the process be shortened for industries interested in investing in North Ayrshire?**

**A:** The Planning Service are developing a pre-application discussion process which would enable applicants to discuss various aspects of their proposed application with the Planning Service.

**Q: Could the Council adopt a cut-off date for consultations?**

**A:** The Scottish Executive Planning Unit carried out a Planning Audit and produced an Action Plan. Part of this Action Plan recommends speeding up the consultation process with agencies such as SEPA, Scottish Water etc. A fast track process for certain industrial applications requests agencies to respond within 10 days.

**Q: What recommendations did the audit make?**

**A:** The Action Plan produced by the Scottish Executive Planning Unit made a number of recommendations including a change to the structure of the planning team, implementing documented procedures for both the planning and administrative functions of the service and increasing accessibility of information to the public.

**Q: How much of the Action Plan has been achieved?**

**A:** Approximately 75% of the actions identified in the Action Plan have been implemented.

**Planning Appeals**

The Council determined 842 planning applications in 2002/03. Of these, 8 proceeded to appeal and 2 were successful, representing 25% of determinations that went to appeal and 0.2% of all determinations. The Scottish average in 2001/02 for successful appeals as a percentage of all determinations that went to appeal was approximately 30%.

**Q: What is the position of the Council in relation to others in Scotland?**

**A:** North Ayrshire Council is consistently below the Scottish average of successful appeals.

**Development Plans**

Both the Replacement Plan for mainland North Ayrshire and the Replacement Plan for Arran were finalised in February 2003, achieving the target of 100% for 2002/03. Both plans will go to a Public Inquiry prior to adoption. At present Local Plans are devised within the statutory framework of Structure Plans which are not developed by individual Councils in Scotland. However there are a number of new proposals/directives in progress including a Scottish Executive proposal of incorporating strategic planning into the Local Plan with Structure Plans remaining only for the cities, and a European Directive on Strategic Assessment of Development Plans.

A report will be submitted to the Planning Sub Committee detailing the implications of the proposals/directives.

<b>Building Control</b>
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This performance indicators has 4 sub elements. Elements 1,3 and 4 are new indicators and as yet untested. Building Control received 1,500 applications in 2002/03, an increase of 10%. The Scottish Executive has set an 80% target for sub

elements 1,3 and 4.

Targets were not achieved for elements 1 and 2 relating to the time taken to respond to requests for building warrants and completion certificates, as a result of staff shortages coupled with an increase in the number of applications processed during the year. Targets were however achieved for elements 3 and 4 (93.5% of building warrants were issued within 6 days and 97.4% of completion certificates were issued within 3 days).

**Q: Can information be broken down to show commercial and domestic applications?**

**A:** This breakdown of information is not currently collected and is not required within the performance indicators.

### **Council House Sales**

The indicator has 3 new elements, reflecting a more detailed assessment of performance. These show the percentage of sales within different time bands. The performance continues to improve, with 85% of all sales completed within the statutory period of 26 weeks and almost one third of all sales completed within 20 weeks.

**Q: How many sales were achieved in total?**

**A:** 549 sales were achieved in North Ayrshire in 2002/03, as compared to 486 sales in East Ayrshire and 260 in South Ayrshire in 2002/03.

### **Environmental Health**

#### **Workplace Safety Inspections**

The 5 areas within the Workplace Safety Inspections indicator shows the efficiency of the Council in establishing a safety inspection programme to cover all the places for which it has an enforcement responsibility. North Ayrshire achieved 100% in risk categories 1, 2 and 3, and 99% and 95% in risk elements 4 and 5.

#### **Noise Complaints**

This indicator has 2 elements which show the recorded incidents of noise complaints for which the Council accepts the responsibility to seek resolution. 100% of relevant noise complaints were dealt with in one day and 99.6% of those requiring further investigation were dealt with within 3 days.

#### **Food Safety**

The indicator shows the planned inspection of premises within three frequency categories. Set against the targets of 100% in all categories the service has achieved 98.1% of inspections within the 6 month frequency, 97.6% of inspections within the 12 month frequency and 96% of inspections within the greater than 12 months frequency.

## **Pest Control**

Pest Control is a discretionary service provided for the treatment and eradication of infestations of rats, mice, feral cats and insects. The indicator relates to the response to requests for high priority pest control services within 2 days and low priority pest control services within 5 days. Target response times were set at 100% for both high and low priority categories. The service achieved 97% for responses within 2 days and 99% for responses within 5 days.

<b>Trading Standards</b>
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## **Enquiries, Complaints and Advice**

The 3 categories within this indicator relate to consumer enquiries completed on the same day of receipt, consumer complaints completed within 14 days of receipt and business advice requests dealt with within 14 days. Of the 61 consumer enquiries, 95% were completed on the same day of receipt. Of the 2080 consumer complaints, 80% were completed within 14 days of receipt and of the 110 business advice requests, 96% were dealt with within 14 days.

## **Inspection of Trading Premises**

This indicator provides information on the extent of the Council's programme of inspection of trading premises in low, medium and high risk categories against the 100% target. 90% of high risk premises, 98% of medium risk premises and 80% of low risk premises were inspected on time.

<b>Ombudsman Complaints</b>
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There are 2 categories within this Council-wide indicator relating to Ombudsman complaints, complaints resulting in offers of settlement and complaints resulting in maladministration. Of the 30 complaints received in 2002/03, the Ombudsman dismissed 10 complaints without enquiry and 4 complaints were closed by the Ombudsman. Of the remaining 16, the Ombudsman decided not to investigate 10 complaints after enquiries to the Council and 6 resulted in offers of settlement by the Council. There were no findings of maladministration.