

REPORT TO: DEVELOPMENT QUALITY COMMITTEE: 25 APRIL 2005

REPORT ON: PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR DEVELOPMENT QUALITY 2003/2004 AND 2004/2005

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION

REPORT NO: 211-2005

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report outlines aspects of Development Quality performance for the years 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 in relation to Scottish Executive targets and Key Performance Indicators from the Planning and Transportation Service Plan 2004-2007.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee
- a Notes the trends in performance of the Development Quality service.
 - b Reaffirms the approach to quality of planning decision making as its predominant requirement while at the same time seeking the adoption of any measures which will increase the speed of decision and otherwise further improve the standard of service to customers and the service.
 - c Remits the Director of Planning & Transportation to report back on possible refinements to the Councils Scheme of Delegation relative to planning applications.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no Local Agenda 21 implications associated with this report.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equal opportunities implications of relevance to this report.

6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 Reference is made to Article III of the Minutes of the Development Quality Committee of 26 April 2004 (Report 245-2004 refers) and to the reports to be found elsewhere on the agenda relating to planning appeals, enforcement and tree preservation performance.
- 6.2 This report outlines performance trends in relation to key performance targets drawing on 6 monthly returns made to the Scottish Executive and to the 2003/04 annual Audit Scotland Report on performance indicators for environmental and regulatory services.

- 6.3 Separate reports have been prepared for Committee in relation to appeals, enforcement and tree preservation activity. These reports should be read in conjunction with this report.

7 COMMENTARY ON PERFORMANCE AND TRENDS

- 7.1 Annex I tabulates performance trends against the various relevant key indicators over the period 2001/2002 - 2004/2005. For comparative purposes, where available, the Scottish average for each indicator is provided. Activity trends are also illustrated with reference to statistics for planning and related applications received and determined.

- 7.2 The main issues which have impacted from the performance trends are as follows:

- a Increasing caseloads of applications received. Over the period 2001/2002 - 2002/2005 there has been a progressive increase in application workloads as indicated in the annex. This is a welcome reflection of investment activity in the City and the desire by householders to extend and improve their houses. Members will be aware from Committee agendas of the increasing numbers of major investment projects which come before them particularly in the categories of housing, healthcare, retail and academic sectors. Of particular note is Dundee's excellent performance in relation to the determination of major applications compared to national trends.

The emphasis which the Council (supported by national planning policy) places on the importance of design quality is now a significant and increasingly prevalent factor in development quality workloads.

- b Pre-application activity and provision of advice to customers. The service operates a 'One Stop Shop' facility service for any citizen, agent or developer seeking free independent advice without the need for appointment during normal working hours. Increasing demand on this service reflects growing public awareness of the planning system, the desire to participate and the need for advice in support of financial and legal transactions.
- c Balance to be achieved between delegated and Committee referred applications. The Council's Scheme of Delegation under its standing orders allows the majority of straightforward applications to be determined under powers delegated to the Director of Planning & Transportation. Committee referred applications take considerably longer to determine than delegated applications. It is considered that efficiency can be achieved through a refinement to the Scheme of Delegation without prejudice to the role of Members in decision-making. It is recommended that a separate report on this matter be brought to Committee as soon as possible.
- d Staffing Changes. Overall staffing levels have remained constant over the period covered by this report. The release of the Team Leader on secondment to the Scottish Executive, the introduction of a new Conservation Officer; the secondment of a case officer to full time E-Planning duties (see below); complementary staff rotation and the integration of the enforcement officers into the area teams have had some implications on performance.

- e Introduction of E-Planning. Since January 2004 a structured programme of work in pursuit of on-line development quality functions has been implemented, and continues to be undertaken. The full impact of these changes will be felt later in 2005 as the team and customers adjust to the advantages that this will bring.
- f Planning Appeals and Inquiries. A separate Committee report outlines recent appeal performance against key departmental performance indicators. The preparation work for the five consecutive superstore inquiries (all subsequently abandoned) placed unusual pressure on the team particularly over the period November 2004-February 2005.
- g Road Construction Consents. Annex 2 outlines recent performance together with influencing factors.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The performance figures are set against consistently increasing application and non-application workloads, an indication of investment trends throughout the City. Regardless of the influences noted above and, in particular, the Council's acknowledgement of the importance of quality of decision and the need to maintain a high level of service delivery offered to citizens, developers, applicants, agents, the Council consistently maintains levels of performance comparable to Scottish average standards.

9 CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 6 monthly Performance Indicator Returns to Scottish Executive 2001/2002-2004/2005.
- 10.2 Planning & Transportation Department Service Plan 2004-2007.
- 10.3 Environmental & Regulatory Service Performance Indicators 2003/2004.

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ANNEX I

Performance Indicator	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
% Householder applications determined <2 months SE Target: 90% Service Plan Target: 85%	83% (83%)	85% (84%)	79% (81%)	77% (N/A)
% all applications determined <2 months SE Target: 80% Service Plan Target: 60%	61% (65%)	64% (67%)	61% (64%)	62.5% (N/A)
% Householder applications determined <3 months SE Target: 95% Service Plan Target: 95%	96% (93%)	95% (94%)	95% (93%)	90.9% (N/A)
% All applications determined <3 months SE Target: 85% Service Plan Target: 85%	83% (81%)	83% (83%)	82% (81%)	82.2% (N/A)
% Major applications determined <4 months SE Target: 80% Service Plan Target: N/A	67% (57%)	75% (57%)	81% (49%)	74% (N/A)
Applications received	769	834 (+8.5%)	942 (+ 13%)	969(+2.8%)
Applications Determined	658	727 (+10.5%)	857 (+18%)	919(+7.2%)
Service Plan Performance Measure % of road construction consent applications determined in 12 weeks Target: 90%	100%	80%	77.3%	78.9%

Source: Scottish Executive 6 Monthly Statistical Returns 2001/2002-2004/2005

Note: () = Scottish Average

ANNEX 2**Road Construction Consent Performance Indicators**

Year	Total No of RCC Applications	Average Processing Time (weeks)	% of applications processed in 8 weeks	% of applications processed in 12 weeks
2000-2001	24	10	45.8	70
2001-2002	21	6	80.9%	100%
2002-2003	20	10	45%	80.0%
2003-2004	22	9	59.1%	77.3%
2004-2005	19	10	38.8%	78.9%

The Service Plan Performance target for the processing of Road Construction Consent (RCC) applications is to have 90% processed within 12 weeks.

The above figures indicate that this target has not been achieved in three of the last five fiscal years.

It should be noted, however, that there are overriding factors which contribute to this pattern. The applications that took an unusually long time to process were held up due to matters outwith the RCC process. For example, it should also be noted that with such a low number of applications, statistically if one or two applications are delayed, this can have a disproportionately adverse effect on the figures.

Another influencing factor in all years is the need for some applications at a completed stage to await Committee approval.

Most Local Authorities in Scotland work to a 12 week cycle for processing RCC applications and do not submit the RCCs to Committee for approval.