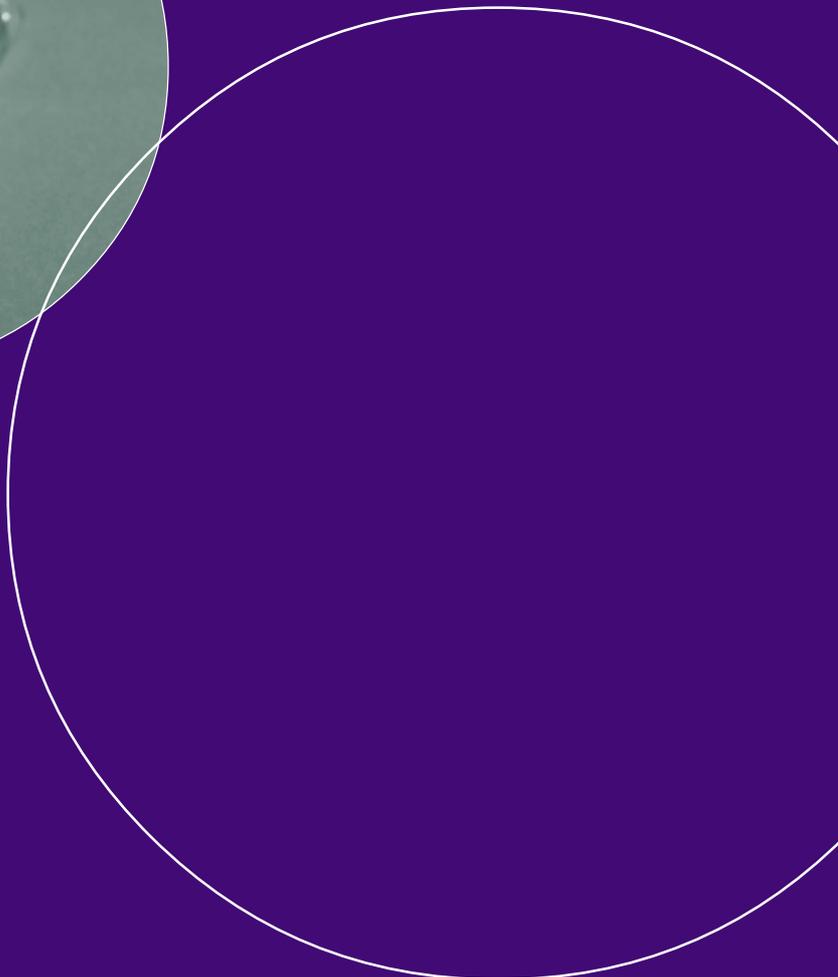
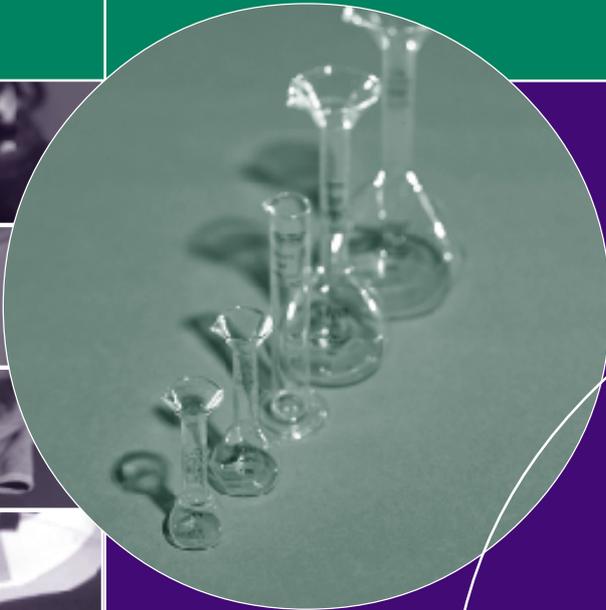


PERFORMANCE AUDIT

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 1999/2000

# Regulatory services

Comparing the performance of Scottish councils



## Introduction

Each year, councils publish a range of information to show people how well they are providing their services and how they compare with other councils.

This leaflet contains information on six indicators relating to services which councils provide in order to regulate the quality of activities undertaken by other people. The indicators show:

- the proportion of food hygiene inspections undertaken within target time
- the proportion of noise complaints dealt with within target time
- the time taken to process building warrants and completion certificates
- the proportion of trading standards complaints and enquiries undertaken within time
- the proportion of planning applications processed within target time
- the proportion of planning appeals found in favour of the appellant.

### Other pamphlets published by the Commission cover:

- Fire and Police services
- Social work services
- Housing services
- Leisure and Library services
- Education services
- Environmental services
- Benefits, Finance and Corporate issues

The Commission also publishes:

- a comprehensive compendium of the information for all the services for which there are performance indicators
- council 'profiles' analysing indicators on a council-by-council basis.

## Using the information

For each activity we have set out why some of the differences in performance may have arisen. We also highlight particular features of the information - for example, the range in performance achieved by different councils or the overall change in councils' performance over time.

Several factors affect the way a council performs its activities. You need to be aware of these in order to understand why results may vary. Some of these factors are outwith the control of the council - for example, population size and density, geographical area, and the mix between urban and rural settlements. Others may be specific to a particular service or the groups of people it serves. These **local factors may mean that a council with a performance which, at first sight, appears to be worse than that of another has, in fact, done better** given the circumstances it faces.

In this pamphlet we have shown information for councils for 1999/2000, and where appropriate made comparison with previous years.

## Key

Auditors appointed by the Accounts Commission have reviewed councils' arrangements for producing the performance information. In the tables and charts shown in this pamphlet, an asterisk (\*) against a council's name indicates that the auditor expressed doubts about the reliability of the council's arrangements for producing the information.

Overall, councils reported that nearly nine out of every ten food hygiene inspections for premises in the two higher risk inspection categories were undertaken within target times.

see indicator 1

In 1999/2000, Scotland's councils received 7,185 noise complaints that required to be investigated. Of these, they dealt with just over 94% within three days.

see indicator 2

It is encouraging that since 1997/98, there has been an overall reduction in the average time taken to process building warrant and completion certificate applications.

see indicator 3

Most consumer enquiries are dealt with on the day they are received. The proportion of consumer complaints dealt with within 30 days has risen to nearly nine out of ten and, as in previous years, nearly all business advice requests are dealt with within 30 days.

see indicator 4

It is a matter of concern that only six councils met the government's target for dealing with householder planning applications within two months and that overall, Scotland's councils still only deal with just under 64% of all planning applications within the target time. Only two councils met the government target for determining at least 80% of all applications within two months.

see indicator 5

Overall, only 851 (less than 2%) of the nearly 45,000 planning applications determined by Scotland's councils in 1999/2000 went to appeal for determination by Scottish Ministers. It is encouraging that of these only just over a quarter (222) was successful, indicating that councils' determinations of planning applications were largely in accordance with up-to-date development plan policy.

see indicator 6

## INDICATOR 1: FOOD HYGIENE INSPECTIONS

The number of establishments in each of three risk categories requiring inspections during the year, and the percentage of inspections which were undertaken within the prescribed period.

Food hygiene inspections confirm that the processing, cooking, handling and storage of food at business premises meet the requirements of the *'Food Safety Act 1990'* and identify potential risks to the health of the public.

Business premises dealing in food are categorized according to the frequency with which they should be inspected, depending on their level of risk to food safety. The higher the level of risk, the more often inspections are carried out.

The indicator specifies three categories of premises according to the target time between inspections:

- within 6 months – premises with the highest risk of food hygiene problems, requiring the most frequent inspection visits
- between 6 and 12 months – premises with an intermediate level of risk
- more than 12 months – premises which have the lowest risk and require fewest visits.

For each risk category, the indicator reports councils' planned food hygiene inspection workload and their success in achieving their inspection targets.

### Points to bear in mind

Factors that influence a council's decision on the required number of inspections are:

- the likely risk according to the type of food
- the extent to which food is handled, and the risk of cross-contamination where a process involves both raw and cooked food
- the method of processing – particularly where conditions may favour the growth of food poisoning organisms, eg canning, vacuum packing and any process where temperature is a controlling factor
- the number of consumers likely to be put at risk if there is a failure in food hygiene and safety procedures
- the cleanliness, layout, lighting, ventilation and structural condition of the premises
- the attitude and technical knowledge of the management on hygiene and safety matters.

Some premises, particularly those in the 'within 6 months' risk category, may be visited more frequently due to their high level of risk but these additional visits are not reflected in the indicator.

Direct comparison with councils' performance in previous years is not possible for premises within the 'within six months' risk category. The indicator previously identified the proportion of premises for which the two scheduled inspections were undertaken within target time. However, it now measures the proportion of individual inspections undertaken within target time.

### Commentary

Across Scotland, the overall number of premises identified as being subject to food hygiene inspections has reduced by over 4,000 since 1996/97 to just over 29,500 in 1999/2000. Of these, slightly less than one in seven (4,175) – a decrease from over 5,700 in the previous year – falls within the highest risk 'within six months' category (Table 1a).

**Overall, councils reported that nearly nine out of every ten inspections for premises in the two higher risk categories were undertaken within target times.** However, there was wide variation between councils.

In the 'within six months' risk category, West Dunbartonshire undertook only 44% of inspections within target time, while five councils (East Renfrewshire, City of Edinburgh, Highland, Midlothian and West Lothian) reported that they undertook at least 98% of inspections within target time (Table 1b).

In the '6 - 12 months' risk category two councils (Shetland Islands and West Dunbartonshire) both reported that they undertook less than 50% of inspections within target time. However seven councils reported that they undertook at least 98% of inspections within target time. Overall, the proportion of inspections undertaken within target time is similar to that achieved in the previous year.

In the 'more than 12 months' risk category, seven councils reported that they undertook less than half of their inspections within target time. Four councils (Dundee City, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and Orkney Islands) reported that they undertook at least 98% of inspections within target time. However, the overall proportion of inspections undertaken within target times was just under 64%.

**Table 1a: The number of premises requiring food hygiene inspections**

	Number of premises in each risk category			
	1999/2000	1998/1999	1997/1998	1996/1997
Within 6 months	4,175	5,706	3,049	2,332
Between 6-12 months	8,764	8,637	8,068	10,249
More than 12 months	16,585	18,069	19,668	21,044
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,524</b>	<b>32,412</b>	<b>30,785</b>	<b>33,625</b>

**Table 1b: The proportion of inspections conducted within the target time**

COUNCIL	Inspection risk category					
	Within 6 months		6-12 months		Less than once a year	
	Number of premises	% of inspections made within target	Number of premises	% of inspections made within target	Number of premises	% of inspections made within target
Aberdeen City	96	95.8	246	94.7	636	97.6
Aberdeenshire	139	85.6	382	72.3	488	71.9
Angus	146	84.6	235	69.4	359	39.3
Argyll & Bute *	58	84.5	323	67.2	919	39.9
Clackmannanshire	34	80.9	49	71.4	175	73.7
Dumfries & Galloway	141	89.4	325	82.8	717	85.5
Dundee City	60	96.7	177	99.4	532	99.2
East Ayrshire	45	97.8	110	99.1	435	95.4
East Dunbartonshire	61	94.3	158	92.4	191	62.8
East Lothian	95	81.1	207	91.3	283	88.3
East Renfrewshire	142	99.3	102	100.0	89	100.0
Edinburgh, City of	183	98.4	1,109	99.6	1,372	13.0
Eilean Siar	9	61.1	78	71.8	102	88.2
Falkirk	26	89.4	70	87.1	303	81.2
Fife	27	88.9	346	86.4	1,100	78.1
Glasgow City	1,474	86.8	1,033	89.0	1,384	53.0
Highland	65	100.0	489	99.4	1,606	58.8
Inverclyde	62	96.6	249	98.0	112	99.1
Midlothian	31	98.4	80	100.0	215	67.9
Moray	87	71.3	139	71.2	317	38.2
North Ayrshire	126	91.3	477	91.0	337	87.5
North Lanarkshire	307	96.9	545	95.2	629	92.1
Orkney Islands	16	93.8	69	78.3	82	100.0
Perth & Kinross	23	93.5	154	94.2	1,361	47.8
Renfrewshire	256	89.5	259	91.5	208	74.5
Scottish Borders	111	68.5	307	79.5	420	76.2
Shetland Islands	3	83.3	33	33.3	93	67.7
South Ayrshire	50	68.0	200	71.5	494	15.4
South Lanarkshire	173	97.4	450	96.2	744	91.7
Stirling	27	85.2	107	95.3	499	86.0
West Dunbartonshire	45	44.4	161	43.5	280	22.9
West Lothian	57	98.2	95	95.8	103	96.1
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>4,175</b>	<b>88.7</b>	<b>8,764</b>	<b>88.4</b>	<b>16,585</b>	<b>63.6</b>

## INDICATOR 2: NOISE COMPLAINTS

The proportion of noise complaints requiring investigation, that were dealt with within three days.

The indicator shows the number of complaints where, following an initial investigation, a council has confirmed the existence of a problem for which it has a responsibility to take action. It also shows the proportion of these complaints where a response was provided to the complainer within three days in order to explain the nature of any action taken, and conclusions reached.

### Points to bear in mind

Factors that may influence this indicator include:

- the level of service the council provides (eg 24 hours a day for seven days a week, office hours for only five days a week)
- the volume and complexity of complaints that are received.

Complaints that the council passes on to other agencies, such as the police, are not recorded.

Only three years' information is available because the indicator was first introduced in 1997/98.

### Commentary

**In 1999/2000, Scotland's councils received 7,185 noise complaints that required to be investigated. Of these, they dealt with just over 94% within three days, a proportion similar to that of the previous year (Table 2).**

Seventeen councils reported that they dealt with over 95% of complaints requiring investigation within three days. However, four smaller rural and islands councils (Argyll & Bute, Clackmannanshire, Eilean Siar and Orkney Islands) each reported that they dealt with less than three-quarters of their complaints within three days.

**Table 2: Noise complaints requiring further investigation**

COUNCIL	Number of complaints requiring investigation	Percentage completed within three days		
		1999/2000	1998/1999	1997/1998
Aberdeen City	499	87.6	95.5	85.5
Aberdeenshire	289	96.5	86.0	86.0
Angus	56	89.3	97.7	99.2
Argyll & Bute	68	67.6	70.3	99.0
Clackmannanshire	24	66.7	91.7	97.6
Dumfries & Galloway	38	100.0	97.5	96.7
Dundee City	323	100.0	98.7	100.0
East Ayrshire	31	93.5	90.6	83.8
East Dunbartonshire	109	100.0	100.0	99.4
East Lothian	124	90.3	94.4	88.7
East Renfrewshire	67	100.0	100.0	100.0
Edinburgh, City of	590	89.0	88.5	93.5
Eilean Siar	9	11.1	0.0	100.0
Falkirk	172	88.4	87.3	73.5
Fife	574	97.9	97.3	94.5
Glasgow City	1,374	99.2	99.1	99.4
Highland	128	94.5	91.0	91.3
Inverclyde	83	97.6	92.7	97.3
Midlothian	67	100.0	98.0	98.1
Moray	30	96.7	78.6	86.2
North Ayrshire	236	96.2	97.6	98.0
North Lanarkshire	473	96.4	95.2	94.8
Orkney Islands	7	71.4	100.0	14.3
Perth & Kinross	154	93.5	98.5	92.7
Renfrewshire	417	96.6	97.2	93.8
Scottish Borders	140	100.0	98.5	97.8
Shetland Islands	8	100.0	100.0	100.0
South Ayrshire	166	97.6	92.8	95.9
South Lanarkshire	384	83.6	84.9	44.9
Stirling	158	88.6	95.2	97.2
West Dunbartonshire	162	96.3	92.3	85.3
West Lothian	225	90.2	98.0	96.3
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>7,185</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>94.8</b>	<b>91.1</b>

### INDICATOR 3: BUILDING WARRANTS AND COMPLETION CERTIFICATES

The average times for processing applications for, and issuing, building warrants and completion certificates.

The indicator shows the time that it takes to:

- process a request for – and issue – a building warrant, once any concerns that the application raises have been dealt with
- respond to a request for – and issue – a completion certificate once the council is satisfied that the building work has been completed in accordance with the warrant.

A building warrant is issued when a proposed development complies with the building regulations, which specify the required standard of construction.

A completion certificate is issued when a development has been completed in accordance with the building warrant and authorises the occupation of the development.

The indicator does not report the time for an applicant to deal with any requests for further information from a council.

#### Points to bear in mind

Only three years' information is available because the indicator was first introduced in 1997/98.

#### Commentary

In 1999/2000, Scotland's councils processed about 54,400 building warrant applications and just over 49,500 completion certificates (Figure 3).

**It is encouraging that since 1997/98, there has been an overall reduction in the average time taken to process an application for, and issue:**

- a building warrant – down from 24 days to 20 days in 1999/2000 (Table 3a).
- a completion certificate – down from 9 days to 7 days in 1999/2000 (Table 3b).

### Building warrants

In 1999/2000, the average time taken to process and issue building warrants ranged between eight days (Angus) and 38 days (Orkney Islands). Five councils took more than 28 days compared to six councils the year before.

### Completion certificates

The average time taken to process an application for, and issue, a completion certificate varied between four days (Angus, East Ayrshire, City of Edinburgh and Renfrewshire) and 15 days (East Lothian and Perth & Kinross). Thirteen councils took more than seven days, compared to 15 councils in 1998/99.

**Figure 3: Average time taken to process building warrants and completion certificates**



**Table 3a: The average time to respond to a request for, and to issue, a building warrant**

COUNCIL	Number of building warrants issued	Average number of days taken to process a building warrant		
	1999/2000	1999/2000	1998/1999	1997/1998
Aberdeen City	2,250	26	29	33
Aberdeenshire	3,461	17	19	17
Angus	1,462	8	9	16
Argyll & Bute	1,490	15	17	22
Clackmannanshire	676	18	24	25
Dumfries & Galloway	2,143	32	33	32
Dundee City	1,293	12	17	35
East Ayrshire	937	11	15	16
East Dunbartonshire	946	28	30	32
East Lothian	779	29	16	15
East Renfrewshire	956	26	25	17
Edinburgh, City of	5,810	19	24	24
Eilean Siar	606	25	39	47
Falkirk	1,204	22	21	24
Fife	3,860	16	17	15
Glasgow City	3,813	14	14	15
Highland	3,526	20	23	25
Inverclyde	556	21	21	24
Midlothian	835	23	25	31
Moray	1,610	22	25	27
North Ayrshire	1,183	16	11	11
North Lanarkshire	2,379	17	20	17
Orkney Islands	320	38	28	28
Perth & Kinross	2,109	30	28	27
Renfrewshire	1,169	13	15	20
Scottish Borders	1,791	35	35	36
Shetland Islands	375	14	9	9
South Ayrshire	1,384	18	20	21
South Lanarkshire	2,662	18	31	34
Stirling	785	17	22	38
West Dunbartonshire	449	24	25	18
West Lothian	1,554	16	18	25
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>54,373</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>

**Table 3b: The average time to respond to a request for, and to issue, a completion certificate**

COUNCIL	Number of completion certificates issued	Average number of days taken to process a completion certificate		
		1999/2000	1998/1999	1997/1998
Aberdeen City	2,080	11	13	13
Aberdeenshire	3,051	6	6	8
Angus	1,236	4	5	7
Argyll & Bute	918	6	7	9
Clackmannanshire	349	12	13	15
Dumfries & Galloway	1,327	8	9	7
Dundee City	1,242	6	6	14
East Ayrshire	1,403	4	5	5
East Dunbartonshire	637	5	8	12
East Lothian	910	15	9	6
East Renfrewshire	881	6	7	7
Edinburgh, City of	5,783	4	13	8
Eilean Siar	359	10	11	13
Falkirk	887	7	5	6
Fife	3,743	6	6	9
Glasgow City	5,237	6	8	9
Highland	2,460	7	7	13
Inverclyde	532	8	10	13
Midlothian	730	7	8	8
Moray	1,143	8	8	9
North Ayrshire	1,037	8	6	7
North Lanarkshire	1,871	6	6	6
Orkney Islands	234	12	12	12
Perth & Kinross	1,338	15	13	12
Renfrewshire	1,449	4	6	7
Scottish Borders	1,371	6	7	9
Shetland Islands	190	9	6	6
South Ayrshire	1,121	9	9	9
South Lanarkshire	2,385	7	12	9
Stirling	857	10	7	6
West Dunbartonshire	298	7	7	6
West Lothian	2,485	7	7	12
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>49,544</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>

#### INDICATOR 4: TRADING STANDARDS ENQUIRIES, COMPLAINTS AND BUSINESS ADVICE REQUESTS

The percentage of trading standards enquiries dealt with on the day of receipt and the percentage of complaints and business advice requests completed within 30 days.

Dealing with enquiries, complaints and business advice requests is one of the most significant of the trading standards services provided by councils. This assistance is provided to two separate groups – consumers (ie the general public) and businesses. Enquiries are requests for information from a consumer about any aspect of consumer law or an unfair trading practice.

Complaints are requests to the council to investigate the activities of a trader or traders. Both enquiries and complaints relate to goods or services which the consumer suspects or believes have been poor, unfair or based on illegal trading practice by a trader – for example, selling faulty, dangerous or wrongly described goods, or setting unreasonable conditions of sale.

Business advice is given in response to enquiries by individual businesses. It includes approaches made in person and enquiries received by letter and telephone, but excludes advice given as part of a routine inspection of trading premises.

The time taken covers the period between:

- the date the council receives all the information necessary to allow action (eg advice or investigation) to commence,
- the date on which the council's contact with the consumer and/or the trader concerned finished, ie the council provided the information requested, or the outcome of an investigation was reported to the consumer or business making the complaint.

#### Points to bear in mind

The indicator does not provide information on the quality of any advice or investigation, or on its usefulness to the consumer or business.

The number and complexity of enquiries and complaints will affect the indicator. Many enquiries can be dealt with speedily, often on the same day or within a few days, but the investigative work involved in some complaints means that they often take longer to complete.

As a result of advice received from the Office of Fair Trading, a number of councils have reclassified a proportion of consumer enquiries as customer complaints. Therefore, the ability to make direct performance comparison with previous years' information is limited.

### Commentary

In 1999/2000 Scotland's councils reported that they dealt with just over 66,000 consumer enquiries, nearly 60,000 customer complaints and 8,000 business advice requests (Table 4a). The number of enquiries and customer complaints together (about 126,000) has fallen each year since 1996/97 when they stood at 208,000. The drop in overall numbers may suggest a deterioration in the availability of the service and the public's awareness of it.

Generally, enquiries are processed within a day or two of receipt. Table 4a shows that **the proportion of complaints dealt with within 30 days has continued to rise**, perhaps in part as a result of the reclassification of a significant number of enquiries, and that, as in previous years, **nearly all business advice requests are dealt with within 30 days**. There was, however, wide variation among councils, particularly in the proportion of complaints dealt with within 30 days.

Four councils (East Dunbartonshire, Glasgow City, North Ayrshire and Stirling) all dealt with less than 70% of complaints within 30 days while five councils (Dundee City, East Lothian, Perth & Kinross, Shetland Islands and West Lothian) all reported that they dealt with more than 95% (Table 4b).

**Table 4a: The overall processing of consumer enquiries, complaints and business advice requests**

	Consumer enquiries		Customer complaints		Business advice requests	
	Number	% dealt with on the day of receipt	Number	% dealt with within 30 days	Number	% dealt with within 30 days
1999/2000	66,354	97.4	59,828	85.6	8,052	97.7
1998/1999	106,016	98.5	42,617	82.0	11,522	98.4
1997/1998	124,184	99.1	45,942	82.0	9,968	97.8
1996/1997	163,996	99.1	44,024	79.8	9,373	97.8

**Table 4b: The processing of consumer enquiries, complaints and business advice requests 1999/2000**

COUNCIL	Consumer enquiries		Customer complaints		Business advice requests	
	Number	% dealt with on the day of receipt	Number	% dealt with within 30 days	Number	% dealt with within 30 days
Aberdeen City	1,212	98.1	3,028	93.4	273	99.3
Aberdeenshire	610	98.9	1,710	89.0	254	99.2
Angus	311	85.2	903	78.9	264	97.7
Argyll & Bute	2,875	99.4	620	71.0	329	96.9
Clackmannanshire	44	100.0	673	86.3	28	100.0
Dumfries & Galloway	400	94.8	2,200	91.5	537	99.6
Dundee City	443	95.9	2,988	98.2	352	99.7
East Ayrshire	15	100.0	952	72.6	224	98.2
East Dunbartonshire	1,297	99.9	539	54.7	57	100.1
East Lothian	65	98.5	593	98.5	119	96.6
East Renfrewshire	93	98.9	351	74.7	48	97.9
Edinburgh, City of	1,909	50.6	5,595	90.4	1,207	92.3
Eilean Siar	12	91.7	352	94.1	20	100.0
Falkirk	978	99.9	2,359	73.4	356	100.0
Fife	248	97.6	6,256	93.1	279	100.0
Glasgow City	25,569	100.0	2,948	53.8	233	99.1
Highland	482	85.9	3,162	91.1	466	98.1
Inverclyde	3,295	100.0	1,864	92.7	106	99.0
Midlothian	74	93.2	418	94.5	39	100.0
Moray	328	98.8	1,515	87.7	317	98.1
North Ayrshire	827	93.2	1,153	64.8	7	71.4
North Lanarkshire	17,719	99.9	2,333	74.1	47	97.9
Orkney Islands	52	96.2	354	92.1	308	99.0
Perth & Kinross	636	95.3	1,579	96.4	439	99.3
Renfrewshire	Not reported	Not reported	2,045	90.4	187	97.3
Scottish Borders	82	82.9	1,147	82.7	557	98.9
Shetland Islands	15	66.7	96	95.8	45	100.0
South Ayrshire	4,096	95.0	3,430	85.5	272	98.1
South Lanarkshire	360	84.4	4,346	79.7	224	95.5
Stirling	1,111	89.8	645	68.1	242	97.9
West Dunbartonshire	324	100.0	1,542	85.5	38	100.0
West Lothian	872	91.9	2,132	98.2	178	100.0
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>66,354</b>	<b>97.4</b>	<b>59,828</b>	<b>85.6</b>	<b>8,052</b>	<b>97.7</b>

## INDICATOR 5: PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The percentage of planning applications dealt with within two months.

The 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 which need permission
- non-householders such as developers – seeking approval for a wide range of generally larger developments.

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.

### Points to bear in mind

Householders 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 these applications are straightforward and result in permission being granted. However, applications other than those by householders are generally more complex and the time to deal with them may require to be extended where:

- the council needs to undertake an analysis of the impact on either the environment or the local economy
- an application requires an agreement between the council and the applicant, regulating the future use of the land or development
- the application is contrary to the approved local or structure plan.

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 (eg 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.<sup>1</sup>

Direct comparison with performance in previous years is not possible since the target time against which the indicator measures performance has changed from eight weeks to two months, in line with information reported by councils to the Scottish Executive.

In 1994, the then Scottish Office published the National Planning Policy Guideline 1 in which it established that:

*“all authorities should aim to determine at least 80% of applications within the two month statutory period.”*

In addition, the government has set a target of 90% of householder applications to be determined within two months.

### Commentary

Scotland’s councils determined nearly 45,000 planning applications in 1999/2000, of which just over 18,000 were householder applications (Table 5). Four out of every five householder applications were dealt with within two months. However, it is a matter of concern that:

- **only six councils (Angus, Eilean Siar, Inverclyde, Moray, Shetland Islands and West Lothian) met the government’s target for dealing with householder applications within two months**
- **overall, Scotland’s councils still only deal with 63.6% of all planning applications within the two month target time**
- **only two councils (Orkney Islands and West Lothian) met the government target for determining at least 80% of all applications within two months.**

The proportion of applications dealt with within target time varied widely among councils. City of Edinburgh council (see note 1 below) reported that it dealt with less than 60% of householder applications within two months while six councils reported that they dealt with over 90%.

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided by the Scottish Executive Planning Services Audit Unit indicates that in 1999/2000, the proportion of listed building and conservation area determinations expressed as a proportion of all determinations (ie in relation to non-householder as well as householder applications) was 10% or higher in Dundee City, East Lothian, City of Edinburgh, Fife and Glasgow City.

The proportion of non-householder applications dealt with within two months was much lower and varied from 31.5% in East Dunbartonshire to over 78% in Orkney Islands.

**Table 5: The processing of planning applications 1999/2000**

COUNCIL	Householder applications		Non-householder application		All applications
	Number of applications	% dealt with within two months	Number of applications	% dealt with within two months	% dealt with within two months
Aberdeen City	1,373	74.2	855	43.0	62.2
Aberdeenshire	1,419	83.4	1,856	49.5	64.2
Angus	505	91.9	597	67.5	78.7
Argyll & Bute	450	84.0	1,144	58.3	65.6
Clackmannanshire	159	89.3	250	65.6	74.8
Dumfries & Galloway	670	81.2	1,235	53.2	63.0
Dundee City	280	82.5	540	50.7	61.6
East Ayrshire	307	87.3	547	56.9	67.8
East Dunbartonshire	564	68.3	222	31.5	57.9
East Lothian	590	88.7	545	46.2	68.3
East Renfrewshire	470	79.0	205	45.4	68.8
Edinburgh, City of	1,734	59.2	2,302	34.1	44.9
Eilean Siar	93	90.3	269	71.4	76.3
Falkirk	304	85.2	537	52.9	64.6
Fife	1,504	81.1	1,696	53.6	66.5
Glasgow City	598	72.8	2,457	51.0	55.3
Highland	1,124	83.0	2,591	60.2	67.1
Inverclyde	177	92.1	201	58.2	74.1
Midlothian	358	77.6	293	37.2	59.4
Moray	392	92.9	655	65.3	75.6
North Ayrshire	301	73.4	484	35.1	49.8
North Lanarkshire	658	84.5	868	56.5	68.6
Orkney Islands	133	87.2	269	78.4	81.3
Perth & Kinross	708	86.6	1,027	57.9	69.6
Renfrewshire	373	87.1	572	58.4	69.7
Scottish Borders	569	75.0	947	47.4	57.8
Shetland Islands	112	92.9	217	61.3	72.1
South Ayrshire	495	78.6	828	46.1	58.3
South Lanarkshire	770	88.7	956	51.4	68.0
Stirling	388	85.5	594	44.4	60.6
West Dunbartonshire	156	89.1	347	54.8	65.4
West Lothian	382	93.4	570	74.7	82.2
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>18,116</b>	<b>80.2</b>	<b>26,676</b>	<b>52.3</b>	<b>63.6</b>

## INDICATOR 6: PLANNING APPEALS

The number of appeals against council planning determinations, and the proportion of these that were successful.

The indicator shows the number of appeals against council planning determinations that were decided by Scottish Ministers during the year, and the proportion of these appeals that were determined in the applicant's favour.

The percentage of appeals that are sustained by ministers may be regarded as an indication of the quality of decisions taken by a council in those cases that have gone to appeal. That is, the lower the percentage of appeals sustained, the better the quality of decisions taken by the council in relation to the other cases going to appeal.

### Points to bear in mind

Among other reasons, a council may have an appeal upheld against it as a result of:

- basing its decision on an outdated local plan policy
- taking a decision contrary to up-to-date local plan policy
- taking a decision inconsistent with previous decisions
- taking a decision which did not take into account any special circumstances of the case.

### Commentary

**Overall, only 851 (less than 2%) of the nearly 45,000 planning applications determined by Scotland's councils in 1999/2000 went to appeal for determination by Scottish Ministers. It is encouraging that of these only just over a quarter (222) was successful, indicating that councils' determinations of planning applications were largely in accordance with up-to-date development plan policy.**

There was some variation among councils in the proportion of determinations going to appeal. However, the number of successful appeals was very small, varying from 28 in City of Edinburgh where there were over 4,000 planning applications, to none in Orkney Islands where there were just 402 applications.

**Table 6: Appeals against planning determinations 1999/2000**

COUNCIL	Number of planning applications	Number of appeals	% of applications that went to appeal	Number of appeals that were successful
Aberdeen City	2,228	61	2.7	19
Aberdeenshire	3,275	40	1.2	8
Angus	1,102	21	1.9	2
Argyll & Bute	1,594	15	0.9	5
Clackmannanshire	409	12	2.9	9
Dumfries & Galloway	1,905	15	0.8	6
Dundee City	820	17	2.1	2
East Ayrshire	854	9	1.1	4
East Dunbartonshire	786	8	1	3
East Lothian	1,135	16	1.4	1
East Renfrewshire	675	10	1.5	2
Edinburgh, City of	4,036	96	2.4	28
Eilean Siar	362	2	0.6	1
Falkirk	841	6	0.6	1
Fife	3,200	91	2.8	18
Glasgow City	3,055	89	2.9	17
Highland	3,715	30	0.8	8
Inverclyde	378	14	3.7	3
Midlothian	651	13	2	3
Moray	1,047	18	1.7	8
North Ayrshire	785	10	1.3	1
North Lanarkshire	1,526	37	2.4	8
Orkney Islands	402	3	0.7	0
Perth & Kinross	1,735	46	2.7	12
Renfrewshire	945	28	3	13
Scottish Borders	1,516	21	1.4	7
Shetland Islands	329	9	2.7	3
South Ayrshire	1,323	18	1.4	1
South Lanarkshire	1,726	48	2.8	13
Stirling	982	27	2.7	10
West Dunbartonshire	503	15	3	4
West Lothian	952	6	0.6	2
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>44,792</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>222</b>

## Contacts

If you have any specific queries about the performance information, you may wish to contact your council. A contact person for each council is given below. If you have general queries about this pamphlet, you may wish to contact Alec Taylor or Jim Lakie at Audit Scotland.

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ISBN 1 903433 31 2