

Law and Administration

Service Plan

2008 – 2011

1. Introduction

1.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE

The Law and Administration Service provides:

- a range of backroom services supporting the delivery of Council services.
- a range of services direct to the public.

This Service Plan further contributes to:

- Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership

Community Planning is the overarching framework for the provision of public services in Aberdeenshire; Aberdeenshire Council is the lead Community Planning Partner.

Law & Administration is the primary provider of legal advice and related professional services to Aberdeenshire Council, its Councillors, Officials and employees. Law & Administration thus supports the delivery of the key Community Planning principles (Community Plan 2006-2010) and the Community Planning Themes.

- The Aberdeenshire Vision

Law & Administration underpins the Council's democratic decision-making process at the highest level and throughout the formulation and implementation of Council Policy.

- Aberdeenshire Council: Strategic Priorities 2007-2011

The new Strategic Priorities Document was a priority for the new Council elected in May 2007; Law and Administration was and remains fully committed, from co-ordinating the election process, through managing the democratic decision-making process to providing professional services to the Council.

2. The Context

2.1 OVERVIEW OF SERVICE

2.1.1 SERVICE VISION

Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

Corporate Improvement

Aiming to provide high-quality legal advice and excellent professional support to all client Services and (where appropriate) relevant partner organisations by:

- rolling out a fully operational performance management system
- service level agreements
- efficient use of current technology
- working with our partners in the North East and beyond
- always looking to the future

Working together for the best quality of life for everyone in Aberdeenshire

The Service is committed to the principle of **Inclusion** –

- by ensuring that our actions improve all Aberdeenshire citizens' ability to access our services
- by working to eradicate all factors that create a barrier to this
- by observing any national requirements on these.

Commitment to Equalities

The Service is aware that certain groups or individuals may be more disadvantaged or vulnerable for reasons such as

- age,
- disability,
- gender,
- race or ethnicity,
- religious or political beliefs
- sexual orientation.

Service will strive to ensure that the Council does not discriminate for any of the above reasons.

2.1.2. CORE ACTIVITIES

LA 1. District Court Administration

Transfer of this function to Scottish Courts Service will be completed on 2 June 2008.

LA 2. Conveyancing

The Service carries out all transactions relating to the sale, purchase and lease of property, and provides advice to client services on all legal matters related to land and property.

Although the Housing Service leads the overall 'Right to Buy' process under the Housing (Scotland) Acts 1987 and 2001, Law and Administration is closely involved in the procedures, and influences the statutory Performance Indicator.

LA 3. Liquor and Civic Government Licensing

Liquor Licensing: the Service is responsible for the complete administration and legal work arising from Aberdeenshire Council's three divisional Licensing Boards.

Civic Government Licensing: the Service administers the statutory licensing schemes under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act for taxis, private hire cars and drivers, second hand dealers, metal dealers, boat hire, street traders, market operators, public entertainment, late hours catering, window cleaners, and sex shops.

These activities are administered through the offices in Banff, Inverurie, and Stonehaven.

LA 4. Monitoring Officer

The Director of Law and Administration is the designated monitoring officer for Aberdeenshire Council under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and in that capacity vets decisions of the Council, its Committees (including any joint committees on which it is represented) and the actions of Officers for compliance with the law and other relevant rules of propriety.

Since the introduction of the Councillors' Code of Conduct in 2003 the Monitoring Officer has had an increasing role in conducting internal investigations in to alleged breaches of the code and in assisting the Standards Commission in their investigations.

LA 5. Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages

The Service manages the statutory arrangements for registering births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships and for conducting civil marriages and civil partnership ceremonies. Since 2002, these ceremonies may now be facilitated at authorised venues outwith Registration Offices. The Service also has the responsibility of arranging and officiating at Citizenship Ceremonies within the Aberdeenshire Council area.

All new applicants for British Citizenship must participate in the Ceremonies.

The Registration Service is administered from the Law and Administration Service offices at Banff, and delivered from the 15 Registrars' Offices throughout Aberdeenshire, in partnership with The General Register Office for Scotland (GROS).

LA 6. Committee Support

This key element of the Law and Administration Service administers and provides a wide range of functions:-

- Management of the Council's decision-making processes and procedures;
- Advice on Council procedures, particularly the Scheme of Delegation and Standing Orders;
- Upkeep of Registers of Declarations of Members' Interests;
- Compliance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, including the Internal Review Panel.
- Management of the local and national elections process for the Council;
- The Members' Support Unit, providing support to Councillors in meeting the demands of their distinct roles.
- The Children's Panel Advisory Committee and Training Advisory Committee, secretarial support to the Children's Panel Chairman and the annual recruitment of new Children's Panel members.

LA 7. Litigation

The Service represents the Council's interests in a wide variety of Appeals, Inquiries, Court Actions and Tribunal cases.

Legal Advice is also directly provided to the Council, Committees, client Services and Officers, and also to Grampian Police under a Service Level Agreement.

The Service is also responsible for processing statutory Orders and the legal procedures underlying these, including maintenance of records.

The Service provides an effective and responsive debt recovery service, to the Finance and other client Services.

LA 8. Printing and Reprographics

The Law & Administration Service provides the Council's Printing and Imaging requirements as a joint operation with Aberdeen City Council.

LA 9. Planning Gain

The Service fulfils essential support to the Planning Service in co-ordinating the Council's use of powers available under

Section 75, both in fulfilment of the planning gain function and for more general development control purposes.

Joint Working with Aberdeen City Council is developing common methodologies for assessing planning gain contributions across North-East Scotland.

2.1.3. **KEY PARTNERSHIPS**

The Service plays a supportive role in these partnership organisations:

- Emergency Service Project Board
- Corporate Asset Management Information Systems Board
- Community Planning Group
- Grampian Joint Emergencies Executive Committee
- Aberdeenshire Alcohol & Drugs Action Team (AADAT).

The Planning Gain Co-ordinator's joint working with the City of Aberdeen has undergone considerable development in the last year.

Law and Administration staff contribute to the partnership considering and implementing Anti Social Behaviour Order policy.

Staff make significant contributions to the work of professional bodies such as COSLA, SOLAR and the Law Society of Scotland in the fields of legal services, licensing, freedom of information, elections, registration, PFI/PPP, members' services and committee administration.

2.1.4. **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

As a support service, Law and Administration is principally committed to the Corporate Improvement Theme of the Strategic Priorities. Its activities nevertheless support all six themes either through the provision of professional support or by direct service provision, such as Licensing.

2.2. **DEVELOPMENT OF PLAN**

The following factors have informed the development of the plan:

- Self-assessments. The Service has undertaken a comprehensive AIM self-assessment, which is nearing completion at the time of writing this Plan.
- Audit or inspection outcomes
- Analysis of the previous service plan's progress
- Next steps arising from the previous year's action plan
- Analysis of performance indicators
- Analysis of resident/employee survey outcomes
- Feedback from councillors, Area and Service Committees
- New national policy initiatives
- New legislation

3. **Significant Achievements in the Past year**

District Court -

- Full implementation of transfer of District Court function to Scottish Courts Service as at 2 June 2008.

Conveyancing –

- Substantial progress towards implementation of Project Management software: project specification agreed and put to tender.

Licensing -

- New Licensing Boards were appointed and successfully undertook the statutory Licensing Board Members' Qualification. Licensing staff also undertook this exercise, and one officer scored 100% in the exam.
- Successfully implementing the transition stage of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.
- Establishment of three Local Licensing Forums, each of which has already met 4 times. The Forums represent a wide range of stakeholders and inform Licensing Board Policy under the 2005 Act.

Registration –

- Long-standing Health & Safety issues at Huntly Area Office successfully addressed.

Committee Support –

- Post of Records Manager established; corporate Records Management Policy initiated.
- The 2007 Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government Elections were successfully and timeously concluded in Aberdeenshire, despite widely-publicised problems elsewhere in Scotland.
- The statutory accessibility review of polling places and polling districts (Electoral Administration Act 2006) has been successfully concluded.

Planning Gain

- The average Planning Gain income secured to the Council is £2.4m per annum, plus 140 or so Affordable Housing units worth an additional £3.5m per annum.

Kaizen

- The Service contributed to these Kaizen Blitzes:
 - Corporate Plans.
 - P&ES EDRMS. This was to provide a system and model for other Services in the Council to adopt. The EDRMS project has been expanded to include T&I.

Management

- The Service Management Team was expanded to include the third tier of management.

4. **External factors impacting on the Plan**

- The removal of the District Court function from Local Authorities - transfer of the function and staff will be complete by 2 June 2008.
- Changes introduced by the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. The new Licensing Board members have been trained under the current and new systems following the elections in 2007. The transition to the new system is under way and applications are being processed under both regimes until September 2009. This is having resource implications.
- All aspects of Electoral Administration will be under review following publication of the Gould Report.
- Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments.
- Other legislative changes, generally.

5. **Performance Management**

5.1. **Service Plan Monitoring**

The Policy and Resources Committee has the opportunity to discuss progress against the Service Plan on two occasions during each annual plan cycle – in September and January.

5.2. **Performance Indicators**

The Service has no Statutory PI's, but L&A2.1 (Conveyancing) does influence the Housing Right-to-Buy PI.

Performance indicator information is reported to the Service Management Team and to the Policy & Resources Committee every quarter:-

District Court Administration

Performance Indicator L&A1.1 - % of letters issued within 3 days following courts.

- This Performance Indicator will terminate on transfer of the District Court function.

Conveyancing

Performance Indicator L&A2.1 - % of offers to lease, purchase or sell other properties within fourteen days of receiving full instructions (including plans) from appropriate service.

- Current results indicate an improvement – last year's average was 84.75%. The latest available result is 95.10%
- This indicator from the start of 2007/8 includes council house sale offers. This is showing an improvement – outsourced deed plan preparation is getting better.

Liquor and civic government licensing

Performance Indicator L&A3.1 - % of licences and certificates issued within 14 days of first date they can competently be issued.

- Current results 96.33%.
- This indicator refers to the quarterly meetings of the Licensing Boards. The indicator has been affected by poor performance at the Inverurie office caused by continuing staff recruitment problems coinciding with the requirement to meet deadlines imposed under the 2005 Licensing legislation. A recent recruitment exercise has proved successful and this should help address the situation from March 2008.

Monitoring Officer

Performance Indicator L&A4.1 - Number of successful challenges to council decisions through (a) judicial review, (b) ombudsman references, (c) complaints procedure.

- No successful challenges have been recorded.

Registration of births, deaths and marriages

Performance Indicator L&A5.1 - The accuracy rate within registration of births, deaths and marriages offices as assessed by the General Register Office District Registration Examiner.

- Current Indicator = 94%. Aberdeenshire average last year (i.e. calendar year 2005) 93.17%; national average 95.28%
- This is an annual indicator. The information is the most recent provided by the Registration Examiner and relates to the calendar year 2006.

Committee support

Performance Indicator L&A6.2 - % of draft minutes of meetings issued for approval within five working days

- This indicator replaces L&A 6.1.
- Current indicator = 86%.

Litigation

Performance Indicator L&A7.1 - % of recovery of possession cases where proceedings are raised within 21 days of receipt of full instructions from Housing.

- Current indicator = 95.6%.

Printing and reprographics

Performance Indicator L&A8.2 - %of work completed on or by customer required date

- This indicator replaces L&A8.1.
- Current indicator = 84%.

Planning Gain

Performance Indicator L&A9.1 - % of reports on application appraisal to the Planning Service within 14 days of receipt of request.

- Current Indicator = 74.4%. Average last year = 62.8%.

5.3. **Self-assessments**

The Service supports the use of the Aberdeenshire Improvement Model as the preferred tool for driving continuous improvement in order to meet statutory obligations to provide Best Value.

The Service Management Team has completed a comprehensive AIM self-assessment exercise, and this evidence base is undergoing analysis with a view to agreeing an Improvement Plan. Actions carried over from the previous Service Plan are:-

	Action	Due date
1	Establish a formal system for recognising staff achievements	Ongoing
2	Establish Service Level Agreements with clients/customers through a rolling programme	Ongoing
3	Reinforce Statement of Aims throughout the Service through the Team Briefing route.	Ongoing
4	Introduce case management software to allow better planning in management of employee resources.	Ongoing
5	Use EDRS system to develop these areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify units of specialism for staff;• Integrated Training Plan to include Equalities;• Align core policies & procedures with the Six Strands of Equalities.	Ongoing
6	Regular review of Service strategy/policy with clients/customers to be incorporated in Service Level Agreements (see above) with feedback from customers on their future needs being built into the Service Plan.	Ongoing

7	Communication of Service policy/strategy to be formalised and assimilated through Team Briefing system.	Ongoing
8	Efficient Government initiative to be actively pursued to identify methods of optimising use of resources through sharing/partnership.	Rolling programme
9	The possibility of using Paralegals to be examined.	Ongoing
10	Performance indicators to be reviewed once case management software is in place in order to allow information collected thereby to be used to make more relevant to management of Service delivery.	On installation of case mgt software.

5.4. **Kaizen**

Kaizen is the key tool within the Council for bringing about sustainable improvements as quickly and effectively as possible. It enables the key people involved in a process to come together for a week to resolve critical business issues. It empowers staff to determine the best solutions by giving them the means and the management support to implement their outcomes.

The Service has a joint Continuous Improvement Service Champion (Kaizen Specialist) shared with Chief Executive's Service. This post is vacant at the time of writing this Plan.

5.5. **EDRS**

Staff reviews continue to be timetabled in the light of the Modernisation Review.

Otherwise as Self-Assessment Action 5 above.

6. **Risk Management**

The service is represented on the corporate groups which are driving improvement in this area.

The service contributed to the Corporate and Service-based exercises facilitated by Marsh Consultants which led to the creation of the current Corporate and Service Risk Registers. Progress against the actions identified in these is regularly reported to the Service Management Team

The Risk Register current at the time of writing this Plan is as undernoted. These risks are being assessed by the Service Management Team.

Risk	Type	Potential Impact	Current Status	Priority
1. Loss of Accommodation	Physical	Inability to deliver Service	No contingency plans in place	B
2. Loss of Records	Physical	Inability to deliver Service in specific areas; may result in litigation.	No contingency plans in place	B
3. Loss of IT Support	Techno-logical	Inability to deliver Service in specific areas; may result in litigation.	No contingency plans in place	A
4. Loss of Communication Systems	Physical	Inability to deliver Service in specific areas; may result in litigation.	No contingency plans in place	B
5. Loss of Key Staff	Human Resources	Inability to deliver Service in specific areas; may result in litigation.	Some contingency plans in place	C
6. Printing Failure	Techno-logical	Potential delays in delivering service.	Contingency agreement with private sector.	B
7. Lack of External Income	Financial	Budget Deficit	Ongoing monitoring; management of income outwith Service control.	D

An Emergency Plan specific to the Service has been drafted and is under consultation at the time of writing this Plan.

7. Resources required to fulfil the plan

7.1.1 Staff

Neil McDowall: Director of Law & Administration (Based at Woodhill House)

Sinclair Lamb: Head of Service (Legal) (Based at Woodhill House)

Gordon Davidson: Head of Service (Administration & Regulatory Services) (Based at Gordon House)

Staffing complement:

Regulatory Services:

Legal Manager (1)
P/A to Head of Service (J/S) 1 FTE
Printing (22)
Catering (5)
Planning Gain (5)
Solicitors (6)
Office Support (10)
Reception (5)
Caretaker (1)

Administration (including Registrars):

Legal Manager (1)
Office Manager (1)
Committee Officers (4 FT + 1 PT)
Trainee Committee Officer (vacant)(1)
Registrars (32)
Solicitors (5)
Legal Trainee (1)
Office Support (7)
Reception (2)
Caretaker (1)
Children's Panel (1)

Legal Services

Legal Manager (2)
Office Manager (1)
P/A to Head of Service (1)
Members Support (2)
Office Support (12)
Solicitors (9)
Legal Trainee (2)

7.1. Property and Assets

Being a Support Service, Law and Administration does not directly hold any capital assets.

7.2. Budget

Law & Administration Base Budget

(Figures in parenthesis represent net income)

	2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000
Administration	1,009	1,032	1,055
Children's Panel	110	111	112
Legal Services	2,051	2,101	2,152
Printing	(148)	(140)	(132)
Registrars	488	505	523
Licensing	(200)	(202)	(204)
District Courts	(10)	(10)	(10)
Gordon House Canteen	19	19	19
Civil Defence	92	94	96
Joint Boards	29,666	30,804	31,414
Totals	33,077	34,314	35,025

8. Community Plan/Strategic Priorities

This table demonstrates the links between the service's core activities and the Community/Strategic Priorities themes

Core Activity		Community Plan link	Strategic Priority Theme
LA 2	Conveyancing	<i>Our Principles – page 5</i>	<i>Corporate Improvement</i>
LA 3	Liquor and Civic Government Licensing	<i>Our Principles – page 5</i>	<p><i>Community Wellbeing - Community Safety Actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the safety and environment for those living in our communities. • Continue to identify and tackle anti-social behaviour, particularly vandalism, neighbour difficulties, and disorder in public places. • Continue to identify and tackle issues caused by and the misuse of alcohol and drugs.
LA 4	Monitoring Officer	<i>Developing Our Partnership</i>	<i>Corporate Improvement</i>
LA 5	Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages	<i>Our Principles – page 5</i>	<i>Corporate Improvement</i>

LA 6	Committee Support	<i>Our Principles – page 5</i>	<i>Corporate Improvement</i>
LA 7	Litigation	<i>Our Principles – page 5</i>	<p><i>Community Wellbeing – Community Safety Action:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to identify and tackle anti-social behaviour, particularly vandalism, neighbour difficulties, and disorder in public places. <p><i>Corporate Improvement</i></p>
LA 8	Printing & Reprographics	<i>Our Principles – page 5</i>	<p><i>Sustainable Environment</i></p> <p><i>Corporate Improvement</i></p>
LA 9	Planning Gain	<i>Sustainable Environment</i>	<p><i>Community Wellbeing – Quality Housing Action:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is a wide enough range of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet the changing needs of Aberdeenshire's residents. <p><i>Sustainable Environment</i></p> <p><i>Corporate Improvement</i></p>

9. Service Action Plan

Theme	Quality Services
Core Activity	LA 1. District Court Administration
Objective	Transfer of District Court function from Local Authorities to Scottish Courts Service.
Action Plan	LA.1.1 Summary Criminal Court Unification
Outcome sought	Implementation of summary court unification; identify staff who will transfer to SCS.
Current Position	Staff forums and job shadowing exercise conducted; implementation teams established.
Risk if action is not taken	Breach of TUPE Regulations; Employment Tribunal claims. Failure of administration of justice.
Actions 08/09	Full Implementation 2 June 2008
Actions 09/10	N/A – Action deleted as function will have transferred.
Actions 10/11	N/A
Responsible person(s)	Head of Service (Administration and Regulatory Services)
Resource Implications	Resources dedicated to the District Court function will transfer to SCS; surplus resources will be released.
Performance Measures	Transfer of function

Theme	Quality Services
Core Activity	LA 2 Conveyancing
Objective	Continuous improvement of Right-to-Buy Sales.
Action Plan	LA.2.1 Right to Buy Sales
Outcome sought	Following Kaizen Blitz of the RTB, further improvement in achieving Scottish Executive target.
Current Position	95.1%
Risk if action is not taken	Adverse PI's reported to the Executive. Failure to process capital receipts timeously.
Actions 08/09	Monitor progress with Housing Service
Actions 09/10	Monitor progress with Housing Service
Actions 10/11	Monitor progress with Housing Service
Responsible person(s)	Head of Service (Legal) with Conveyancing Manager
Resource Implications	Conveyancing Team. No additional budgetary implications.
Performance Measures	% of sales completed within the Scottish Executive's target of 26 weeks.

Theme	Quality Services
Core Activity	LA 3 Liquor and Civic Government Licensing
Objective	Elect and train the new Licensing Board members as required under the new Act.
Action Plan	LA.3.1 New Liquor Licensing System
Outcome sought	By the statutory meeting following the May 2007 Elections, elect the new Licensing Board members and provide training under the current and new systems following upon the new Act.
Current Position	Secondary legislation laid before the Parliament bringing the relevant provisions into force as at 1 May 2007. Transition period commences February 2008
Risk if action is not taken	Failure to provide a statutory regulatory service; civil claims by licence-holders for loss of revenue.
Actions 08/09	Process new applications; assess Operating Plans etc.
Actions 09/10	Full implementation September 2009.
Actions 10/11	Monitor progress.
Responsible person(s)	Head of Service (Administration and Regulatory Services), with Licensing Teams
Resource Implications	Budget to be identified for any additional staffing resource required.
Performance Measures	Licence applications actioned timeously

Theme	Quality Services
Core Activity	LA 4 Monitoring Officer
Objective	Provide support and guidance to Councillors and Council Officers to achieve compliance with relevant legal and policy requirements, with a view to preventing illegal actings or maladministration.
Action Plan	LA.4.1 Monitoring Officer
Outcome sought	A robust early warning of potential illegality or maladministration to enable appropriate intervention and, if appropriate, preventive steps.
Current Position	No successful challenges to council decisions.
Risk if action is not taken	Adverse findings by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Indefensible judicial reviews. Civil claims.
Actions 08/09	0 exception Reports
Actions 09/10	0 exception Reports
Actions 10/11	0 exception Reports
Responsible person(s)	Director, with Head of Service (Administration and Regulatory Services)
Resource Implications	Redeployed resources, following Modernisation review of Service.
Performance Measures	Number of (exception) Monitoring Reports to full Council.

Theme	Quality Services
Core Activity	LA 5 Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages
Objective	Implement Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Act 2006
Action Plan	LA.5.1 Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages
Outcome sought	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Registration of any birth or death in any registration office in Scotland; 2. Improved notification and exchange of electronic information to private and public sector agencies; 3. Further improved opportunities for family history research in partnership with GRO(S); 4. All-Scotland web-site list of forthcoming marriages; 5. E-registration by individuals of births and deaths.
Current Position	<p>Implementation of the Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Act, 2006, on 1 January, 2007, resulting in:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Registration District Boundaries conform to Local Authority boundaries with effect from 1 January, 2007. 2. Registration of any birth or death in any Registration Office in Scotland with effect from 1 January, 2007. 3. Local specific re-registration of births with effect from 1 January, 2007. 4. Locally improved family history research facilities. Enhanced staff training. Additional dedicated PCs for assisted searches and enhanced website links to other associated Council services. 5. Introduction of non-statutory Baby-Naming Ceremonies with effect from 1 January, 2007.
Risk if action is not taken	<p>Failure to comply with legal requirements to effect the statutory registration of Births, Deaths & Marriages.</p> <p>Failure to meet the aspirations of customers.</p>

Actions 08/09	E-Registration of births. Permit individuals to register births from home with nominated Registration Office assistance. (Requires joint working with Health Boards and pending appropriate IT security measures to be put into place).
Actions 09/10	-Registration of deaths. Permit individuals to register deaths from home. (Pending appropriate IT security measures etc). Electronic notification of death entries to third parties. (Awaiting GRO(S) consultation with interested parties and pending appropriate IT security measures).
Actions 10/11	Actions complete
Responsible person(s)	Head of Service (Administration and Regulatory Services), with Registration Manager.
Resource Implications	To be monitored but currently envisage within existing staffing resources.
Performance Measures	Annual GRO(S) examination report accuracy rate figures.

Theme	Quality Services
Core Activity	LA 6 Committee Support
Objective	Administer and advise policy committees
Action Plan	LA.6.1 Committee Support
Outcome sought	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure accurate agendas, action sheet and minutes are issued on time. 2. Adequate and accurate information given to committee
Current Position	86% of draft minutes of meetings issued for approval within five working days
Risk if action is not taken	<p>Failure to comply with requirements of Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.</p> <p>Failure to comply with Standing Orders.</p>
Actions 08/09	Revised PI implemented
Actions 09/10	Monitor implementation
Actions 10/11	Monitor implementation
Responsible person(s)	Head of Service (Administration and Regulatory Services), with Principal Committee Officer
Resource Implications	No additional resource implications
Performance Measures	As revised PI

Theme	Quality Services
Core Activity	LA 6 Committee Support
Objective	Administer Freedom of Information Review Panel and respond to Scottish Information Commissioner
Action Plan	LA.6.2 Freedom of Information
Outcome sought	Timeous compliance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.
Current Position	The total number of FOI requests received by the Council is now approaching 1500. There have been 17 appeals to the Commissioner to date. In 7 of these the Commissioner upheld the Council, in 7 he found against the Council (one of which was successfully appealed to the Court of Session), and in the other 3 he took no action as the applicants did not pursue their appeals. Where there have been adverse findings, these have been carefully studied, and appropriate action, such as training, taken.
Risk if action is not taken	Adverse findings by Commissioner. Statutory sanctions, ultimately enforceable by Contempt of Court proceedings.
Actions 08/09	100%
Actions 09/10	100%
Actions 10/11	100%
Responsible person(s)	Principal Committee Officer
Resource Implications	Principal Committee Officer, with support from Litigation Team.
Performance Measures	% of decision notices upheld by the Commissioner.

Theme	Quality Services
Core Activity	LA 6 Committee Support
Objective	Management of the local and national elections process for the Council
Action Plan	LA.6.3 Elections
Outcome sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct any Council by-elections which may arise. ▪ Consult on Boundary changes.
Current Position	Boundary Commission consultation under way.
Risk if action is not taken	Elections not validly administered. Challenges to outcomes.
Actions 08/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consult on Boundary Commission for Scotland 1st Periodical Review of Scottish Parliament Constituencies. ▪ Conduct any by-elections which may arise. ▪ Prepare for the conduct of European Parliamentary Elections in 2009. ▪ Complete Return of Accounts for the 2007 Scottish Parliamentary Elections. ▪ Implement Elector Scan software system (including staff training and system rollout to modernise the management of postal vote returns. ▪ Preparations for a Westminster General Election
Actions 09/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare for a Westminster General Election. ▪ Provision of financial and registration data for the introduction of National Election Performance Measurement Standards.
Actions 10/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparations for the next Scottish Parliamentary Elections. ▪ Contribution to consultations on reform of electoral administration in Scotland, arising from the Gould Report.
Responsible person(s)	Elections Co-ordinator
Resource Implications	Elections Co-ordinator with Election Team.
Performance Measures	Elections concluded.

Theme	Quality Services
Core Activity	LA 8 Printing and Reprographics
Objective	Rolling programme to replace out of date equipment (especially in relation to Computer to Plate and general binding requirements); Provision of standard design platforms across Aberdeenshire's Services.
Action Plan	LA 8.1 Printing Equipment replacement
Outcome sought	Committee reports produced with 0% error rate in transfer
Current Position	The Printing Service maintains competitiveness with the in-house provision of services using developing technology.
Risk if action is not taken	Inaccurate committee reports; Democratic process not effectively supported.
Actions 08/09	Re-evaluate and review Actions in the light of progress made to date.
Actions 09/10	Rolling programme.
Actions 10/11	Rolling programme.
Responsible person(s)	Office Manager (Printing)
Resource Implications	Budget allocated
Performance Measures	Equipment replaced

Theme	Jobs & the Economy
Core Activity	LA 9 Planning Gain
Objective	Secure Planning Gain appropriate to development
Action Plan	LA 9.1 Planning Gain
Outcome sought	Effective Councillor and community involvement in the Planning Gain process.
Current Position	74.4%
Risk if action is not taken	Infrastructure implications of major planning developments not properly assessed and Planning Gain not adequately quantified.
Actions 08/09	90%
Actions 09/10	90%
Actions 10/11	90%
Responsible person(s)	Planning Gain Co-ordinator
Resource Implications	Planning Gain Co-ordinator
Performance Measures	% of reports on application appraisal to the Planning Service within 14 days of receipt of request