



Agency Board Meeting 12 February 2013

Board Report Number: SEPA 09/13

Chief Executive's Report

Summary:	This paper highlights areas of environmental achievement and concern, enforcement action, and major partnership activities, as well as business related issues in respect of corporate performance and activity, since the Board meeting on 13 November 2012.
Risks:	N/A
Financial Implications:	N/A
Staffing Implications:	N/A
Environmental and Carbon Impact:	N/A
Purpose of the report:	For information
Report Author:	James Curran, Chief Executive Karen Cochrane, Executive Officer
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – 2012 Communications summary

Chief Executive's Report

INTRODUCTION

We're now well into 2013, and last month I took the opportunity to send a message to staff reviewing what we'd achieved in 2012 and looking forward to 2013 and beyond.

The coming year is going to be another busy one, as evidenced by the Annual Operating Plan and, I hope, just as successful. As you know, we've set up our single change programme, which this year will begin in earnest to shape our future legislative framework and funding model, and their implications for how we do business. We'll also be making a step change in access to Scotland's environmental data and information through Scotland's Environment Web, as well as publishing a suite of flood risk and flood hazard maps for Scotland. And we'll move around 350 people and two laboratories into the Angus Smith Building in the summer.

More widely, we'll also be playing our part in the developing [Hydro Nation](#) programme, making the most of Scotland's expertise in water management on national and international stages, and to that end I've been asked to participate in the Scottish Government's Hydro Nation Forum. We'll also be further exploring the benefits and opportunities of environmental and clean technologies; growing public participation through Citizen Science; supporting delivery of the infrastructure requirements of a Zero Waste Scotland; addressing the very pressing need to reduce Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions; and continuing as a key member of the Scottish Government's review of the public sector environmental landscape.

In addition to all of this, the Agency continues to deliver to the highest standards on "business as usual", for example sampling, planning responses, licence determinations and enforcement actions.

This year will also see a particular focus on our people, including the launch of the People Strategy, and will present the opportunity for a lot of changes.

As Board colleagues are aware, one of these key changes is that, after 15 years' service, our Director of Finance & Corporate Services, John Ford, has decided to move on and will be leaving SEPA within the next couple of months. John joined us as Director of Finance in 1998. Since then he has consistently balanced SEPA's budget, often in very challenging circumstances, as well as developing and overseeing the delivery of a range of corporate services including IS, programme management, resilience, administration, and information management. I'm sure you'll all wish to join me in thanking John for his service over the years, and in wishing him all the very best for the future.

As David mentioned in his report, we are working with other partner bodies within the Environment and Forestry Division of Scottish Government on a policy and landscape review, and we attended the first meeting of the Review Reference Group in mid January.

After the last Board meeting, he and I undertook a series of partner and stakeholder meetings in Inverness, as he has detailed in his report, and together we have attended a number of other meetings since then.

In November, Calum MacDonald and I met with Eleanor Emberson who has taken over as Scottish Government's Head of Revenue Scotland; and then in December we met together with the Chief Executive and Leader of North Lanarkshire Council to discuss a range of issues. I was pleased, also in December, to have the opportunity to meet with Professor Brian Pack and his expert panel to discuss their review of the regulatory burden on farming. There were also meetings of the 2020 Climate Change core group, and regular meetings

with Scottish Government Sponsor Team colleagues and, of course, the Minister, Paul Wheelhouse.

So 2013 is the Chinese Year of the Snake, starting on 10 February. The year is destined, apparently, for steady progress and attention to detail, requiring focus and discipline to achieve what is desired. Actually, that feels rather like last year. However, more specifically, 2013 is the year of the Water Snake, supposedly fortunate for finances. Now that would be very welcome but, as an evidence-based Agency, we'll just wait and see.

1. THE ENVIRONMENT

1.1 Hydrology/Water

1.1.1 Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 (FRM Act)¹

At the end of December, the FRM Act Programme launched [Flood Risk Management Planning in Scotland: Statement of consultation arrangements](#). This outlines the engagement activity we will undertake to prepare the FRM Strategies, including a consultation on the draft documents in December 2014, and provides an opportunity for the wide range of stakeholders involved in FRM to comment on the approach. The consultation is primarily aimed at our stakeholder organisations, which includes local authorities and Scottish Water as responsible authorities, but is also open to members of the public and will close on 22 March.

1.1.2 Flood warning and informing

- i Firths of Forth and Tay Coastal Flood Warning Schemes Launch: SEPA launched 28 new coastal flood warning areas to the public at the end of January. These cover the coastline of the Firths of Forth and Tay from Arbroath to Eyemouth. A marketing campaign is being delivered to encourage sign up to the new coastal warnings, and includes direct mail to almost 12,000 properties, targeted advertising through radio and in newspapers, as well as proactive media relations to highlight the launch. Meteorologist and TV weatherman Sean Batty helped SEPA to launch the new campaign at Portobello beach with Paul Wheelhouse, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, on 28 January. This has already resulted in significant positive media coverage.
- i Significant flooding events: The reporting period saw significant flood events affecting many communities across Scotland. On 19 November, Comrie was flooded for the second time in three months, with over 100 properties and businesses affected. At the same time over 20 properties were flooded in Newton Stewart. On 14/15 December, a major coastal storm impacted on the east coast which resulted in severe damage in Peterhead and Stonehaven, and extensive damage to waterfront infrastructures all along the east coast. During the night of 22/23 December, Stonehaven was flooded again requiring the evacuation of residents in the town centre. Statistics recently published by the [Met Office](#) highlighted that the December 2012 rainfall for Eastern Scotland was 171% of the long term average December monthly rainfall (1981-2010).

¹ [Flood Risk Management \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#)



Damage caused by flooding at Peterhead – northern end of port.



The Ruchill Water leaving the channel at the eroding riverbank to flow over a field and into the village of Comrie.

- i Floodline statistics and registration target: In December our Floodline service issued 659 Flood Alerts and Warnings (out of a total of 2,270 for the entire year). The total number of registered customers to Floodline is now >14,000, exceeding our KPI target.
- i Flood Warning Strategy: On 14 December we published SEPA's [Flood Warning Strategy](#) which explains how we are planning to maintain and further develop our existing flood forecasting and warning services for the period 2012-2016. The document is aimed at responsible authorities designated under the Act, and other stakeholders with an interest in flooding issues across Scotland.

1.1.3 [River Basin Management Planning \(RBMP\)](#)

- i As David mentioned in his report, he and I were delighted to attend the Ministerial launch in November of a draft plan to improve the physical condition of Scotland's water environment.
- i Diffuse pollution priority catchments: One of the most challenging aspects of delivering the RBMP objectives is the mitigation of rural diffuse pollution, with over a third of water bodies impacted. SEPA's action plan to work in 14 diffuse pollution priority catchments in the first RBMP cycle (2009 – 2015) is well underway. The evidence gathering and awareness raising phases are largely complete and specially trained officers are currently undertaking the 1:1 farm visits. Repeat 1:1 visits are now taking place in the Ugie, Ayr and South Esk priority catchments to assess uptake and implementation of mitigation measures. Initial indications are very encouraging and demonstrate that land managers are taking on the board the advice given. A total of 282 revisits have been completed to date and of these 73% of land managers had either carried out the mitigation required or were in the process of carrying out

remedial work. This significant step has been received positively by the Diffuse Pollution Management Advisory Group, the stakeholder group for this work area.

1.2 **Planning**

1.2.1 **Review of National Planning Framework (NPF) and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)**

The Scottish Government is currently preparing Scotland's third [NPF](#) and is using this as an opportunity to simultaneously review planning policies contained in the [SPP](#). In December, we responded to a call to identify new candidate national developments, the purpose of which is to establish the basis for need in order to facilitate the developments through the subsequent consenting processes. In our response, we identified that, in addition to our ongoing support for many of the existing 14 national developments, three further proposals should be considered:

- (i) a national waste infrastructure network;
- (ii) a national heat demand and supply network; and
- (iii) Scotland's National Renewables Infrastructure Plan (N-RIP) manufacturing and cluster support sites located outwith the low carbon/renewables Enterprise Areas.

In January we also provided views on the key elements of SPP which need to be kept or changed. We were clear that many parts of the core parts of the existing SPP provide strong protection of the environment; however we also stated that the review offers new opportunities.

1.3 **Climate Change**

1.3.1 **Climate Change Plan review**

Following the successful Board workshop on reviewing our Climate Change Plan, a series of similar workshops were hosted with staff through December and January, together with a workshop for external stakeholders. These, along with the output from the Board workshop, will be used to provide direction for the revised climate change plan into the next stage of plan preparation. A draft plan for internal consultation is due to be ready in March.

1.4 **Greening SEPA**

- 1.4.1 In December, we published our [Greening SEPA Report for 2011-2012](#) which presents a full, frank and externally verified picture of our performance in reducing our own environmental impacts as a business. For the first time, it also includes an assessment of wider elements of sustainability, in line with the public sector sustainability [reporting guidance](#) issued last February by the Scottish Government. In many areas, we can be very proud of our achievements. We strive to be an exemplar of good environmental practice and, in doing that, we certainly understand the difficulties. We have well exceeded our own targets for reducing travel mileages; we have delivered beyond expectations on reducing the impacts of our waste generation and water usage; and we have encouraged biodiversity around our own buildings and helped local communities. But we have missed our target on overall carbon emission reductions. Despite concentrating our efforts in the last couple of years, we had set ourselves a challenging goal, particularly given the expansion of staff and premises in the early part of the period. Acknowledging this, we have nevertheless reduced our emissions by 19% from their peak in 2008-2009 and will continue to challenge our greenhouse gas emissions with a new and stretching target. With this in mind, we are developing a greenhouse gas roadmap that will help us to understand the actions we

need to take to deliver our long term aim of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 42% by 2020 from 2006 levels.

1.5 **Ecology**

1.5.1 **Development of genomics based tools for biological assessments – environmental DNA**

In the last few years, genetic techniques in environmental monitoring have started to be used in SEPA to help solve real life problems. Our microbiology unit has developed the capability for Microbial Source Tracking² to determine sources of bacterial contamination in bathing waters and shellfish waters. However, the equipment they use is not constrained to this purpose and with the appropriate development can be used for other organisms. Recently, exciting developments in the use of environmental DNA (eDNA) have brought about the possibility of significantly changing the way we assess fish populations – particularly in lochs. Our fish specialists and genomics experts have been drawing up a project specification which would combine our internal development work with work from external research partners. This will test and develop these methods for use in Scottish lochs. Ultimately, the goal would be to develop a full Water Framework Directive (WFD) classification method using this technique, but we also anticipate other uses, such as detecting alien species or confirming the presence of rare species.

1.6 **Air, Industry and Carbon Reduction**

1.6.1 SEPA will be hosting an event called “Air pollution – out of sight, out of mind” at this year’s [Edinburgh International Science Festival](#). Colleagues are working closely with a number of external partners to develop the programme for the event which will consider the state of air quality in Scotland, the impact of air quality on health, and the action that is being taken and could be taken (both by government and the public) to reduce air pollution in our urban environments. The event will be held at Edinburgh University from 5:30-7:00 pm on Tuesday 26 March. It will include a series of short talks, an interactive session with the public, and some practical demonstrations (e.g. videos) of air quality monitoring, assessment, and management, and will be chaired by Dr Richard Dixon. Building on this partnership, we will also be holding an informal air quality management seminar at our Edinburgh Office during the day on 26 March which will allow the science festival contributors (and a few complementary speakers) to present aspects of their work in more detail

1.6.2 **EU Emissions Trading Scheme Phase III**

The [EU Emissions Trading System](#) (EU ETS) Phase III came into force on 1 January. Our officers have been working continuously with the other UK regulators, the Department of Energy and Climate Change and the Department for Transport to ensure a smooth transition from Phase II to III. The rules for allocation of allowances have been completely reformed for Phase III, and work has been ongoing since 2010 to assess operator activity and calculate the correct number of allowances for each installation. The changes in the legislation have led to 17 additional installations requiring an ETS permit, and the existing ETS operators all needed to be reassessed and re-permitted for Phase III. In addition, 11 aircraft operators were transferred from the Environment Agency to be regulated by SEPA in Phase III. In total 110 ETS permits/plans were issued by SEPA on 1 January this year.

² Microbial source tracking (MST) is a sub-discipline of environmental microbiology that has emerged and grown in response to the inability of conventional fecal indicator bacteria (such as *Escherichia coli* and enterococci) to discriminate among the many possible sources of fecal pollution in environmental waters.

1.6.3 Industrial Emissions Directive (IED)

The [Pollution Prevention and Control \(Scotland\) Regulations 2012 \(PPC 2012\)](#) came into force on 7 January. The PPC 2012 regulations implement the requirements of the [Industrial Emissions Directive \(IED\)](#) as well as consolidating the Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2000 (PPC 2000). The changes mainly affect Part A permit holders as there are very few changes affecting PPC Part B permit holders. The new PPC regulation will also bring some new activities within the food and drink, waste and wood preserving sectors into the PPC regime.

1.6.4 Regulatory guidance on coal bed methane and shale gas

On 27 November the Minister for Energy, Enterprise & Tourism, Fergus Ewing, promoted the launch of SEPA's Regulatory Guidance on coal bed methane and shale gas. The document summarises our role and the regulatory tools that apply to this emerging industry, including the process of fracturing (aka fracking) and the guidance is available on [our website](#). The development and launch of the guidance has played a crucial role in setting out clarity on what environmental regulatory tools are available to protect the environment.

1.7 Radioactive Substances

1.7.1 Dalgety Bay

The inspection at Dalgety Bay is continuing, but delays to the Ministry of Defence (MoD)'s work mean that it is likely the projected May 2013 end date will be delayed by around six weeks. In the interim period, however, management arrangements remain in place to offer the public an appropriate level of protection. The completion of this phase will be a major milestone in understanding the contamination, and we expect the first results of the "intrusive" work, which was audited on site and undertaken to our satisfaction, to be available shortly. Stakeholder engagement via the Dalgety Bay Forum, Community Council and Fife Council continues.

Our RS Team continues to follow due process to ascertain who may be the appropriate person with respect to this site, which work we expect to be complete in May. This will involve investigation of all the potential parties in order to determine liability.

1.7.2 Almondbank

The [Defence Infrastructure Organisation](#) (DIO) (part of the MoD) is planning a remediation of its former Defence Aviation Repair Agency (DARA) establishment, now privately run as Vector Aerospace, at Almondbank near Perth. Although this is a private site, public access is available around exterior of the fence boundary. In order to provide public reassurance that the onsite contamination does not pose a risk for the public we have monitored this area and found nothing of concern. Separately, Perth and Kinross Council is planning an investigation of potential offsite contamination.

1.7.3 NORM³ Strategy

UK Government and the Devolved Administrations have agreed to produce a strategy for the management of wastes containing Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials (NORM). The aim of the strategy is to ensure that there are safe, sustainable and resilient NORM waste management arrangements in place in the UK in the long term. We have been asked to co-ordinate the collection of relevant data from industries that produce NORM waste and those that provide waste treatment and disposal services for NORM containing wastes. Following data collection, Government are proposing to issue a public consultation and organise technical workshops with the aim of agreeing a strategy by the end of 2013.

1.8 Waste

1.8.1 Zero Waste update

In November the Scottish Government published two documents relevant to delivering Scotland's Zero Waste Plan; the '[Duty of Care Code of Practice](#)' and '[Waste Hierarchy Guidance](#)'. Our Waste Unit drafted the Code of Practice on behalf of the Government and also had a significant role in reviewing the Waste Hierarchy Guidance, which provides comparative assessment of different waste treatment options.

The Duty of Care Code of Practice sets out the actions that those involved in waste production, collection or management must take in order to meet their legal obligations to present key materials for recycling. This will be an important document for regulatory staff from January 2014 when the requirement to recycle is implemented. Under the Duty of Care, SEPA shares regulatory powers with local authorities and productive discussions have been held with CoSLA as to how to most effectively implement regulation of the new requirements.

1.9 Enforcement action

1.9.1 Doonin Plant Limited and Gary Doonin

Following the convictions on 12 September 2012 of Doonin Plant Limited and Gary Doonin for contraventions of sections 33(1)(c) and section 33(1)(b)(i) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, at a sentencing diet on 13 December 2012, Doonin Plant Limited was fined £200,000. Sentencing of Mr Doonin was deferred for one year, with the Sheriff warning that any further offences during that time could lead to a custodial sentence. It is understood that appeals against conviction and sentence are likely.

Details of other enforcement action taken during the period covered by this report can be found on our website [here](#), including:

- i Airdrie businessman given 155 hours community service for continuing to illegally store waste tyres.
- i Dumfries farmer fined for silage effluent leak.

³ NORM is an acronym for Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material, which potentially includes all radioactive elements found in the environment. However, the term is used more specifically for all naturally occurring radioactive materials where human activities have increased the potential for exposure compared with the unaltered situation. Concentrations of actual radionuclides may or may not have been increased; if they have, the term Technologically-Enhanced (TENORM) may be used.

2. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

2.1 Scottish/National Engagement

2.1.1 Work with partner agencies on Metal Theft Initiative

A Scottish Metal Theft Forum has been established by the Scottish Police Forces to share best practice and participate in multi agency 'days of action', as it is recognised that metal theft is a threat to the country's economic infrastructure. SEPA is an active member of this forum that includes HMRC⁴, VOSA⁵, UKBA⁶ and DWP⁷, and our Enforcement Support Team has now provided specialist training to over 225 police and other agency staff on environmental waste metal and licensing issues. Our National and Local Operations staff have further participated in national 'days of action' throughout the country visiting scrap metal dealers as well as undertaking joint roadside and port inspections.

2.2 European engagement

2.2.1 European Union recognition for SEPA's transformational change

In December, at the invitation of the [European Union Environment Department](#) (DG Env), SEPA's Chief Officer, Allan Reid, was invited to Brussels to present information on our recent transformational change success, and our proposals for taking forward a more integrated, risk-based approach to environmental regulation and enforcement. Allan made the presentation to a high level conference considering better implementation of EU law, which will be a key feature of the EU [7th Environment Action Programme](#). The event was co-hosted by the European Commissioner for the Environment, Janez Potocnik, and the Committee of the Regions (COR) Vice President, Mercedes Bresso, both of whom were also launching proposals for improved joint working between COR and DG Env. We were invited to speak at this event because it is one of only a very small number of organisations across the EU that is recognised for demonstrating best practice in the implementation of EU environmental law.

2.2.2 Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

Carolyn Vannan and Andrew Botting attended the European Environment Protection Agencies' CCS Interest Group Meeting on 22 and 23 January in Norway. SEPA led and chaired this group from 2008 until mid 2011 when the chair passed to the Norwegian Environment Agency, [KLIF](#). Carolyn Vannan has been a member of the Interest Group since its inception, and we remain at the forefront of work in CCS amongst Europe's environment agencies. Following recent technical papers and our inputs to the BREF⁸ process on CCS, this Interest Group will provide a platform for building on the exchange of information on current and future developments. .

2.2.3 EU Committee of the Regions on soil policy

Last year our Land Specialist, Mark Aitken, was appointed as expert to the EU [Committee of the Regions](#) (CoR) to help their Rapporteur, Councillor Corrie

⁴ HMRC – [Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs](#)

⁵ VOSA – [Vehicle and Operator Services Agency](#)

⁶ UKBA – [UK Border Agency](#)

⁷ DWP – [Department for Work & Pensions](#)

⁸ BREF – European Commission's Best Available Technology Reference guidance

McChord⁹, prepare a CoR Opinion Paper on the Implementation of the EC [Soil Thematic Strategy](#). Our involvement included participation at various meetings in Belgium and Italy with CoR, EC officials, regional and local government and other stakeholders, and Mark led in the drafting of the Opinion for Cllr McChord, including responding to amendments from CoR members.

At the CoR Plenary Assembly on 30 November, the Opinion paper was voted by a large majority of the 345 CoR members for adoption. The Opinion concluded that further policies and regulations are required to protect soil because of the crucial functions and ecosystem goods that soils provide for the European economy, society and environment. The Opinion is now the official position of the CoR on soil, and has been forwarded to the other EU Institutions, and was published in the [Official Journal of the European Union](#). The EU CoR also published a [news article](#) about this Opinion, including an acknowledgement of SEPA's role.

2.2.4 Clean Air conference

To mark the launch of DG Environment's "[Year of Air](#)", Principal Policy Officer, Graham Applegate, participated in the European Environmental Bureau [conference](#) in Brussels on 8 January on "*Clean Air Everywhere: Blowing the Winds of Change into European Air Policy*". This event was attended by Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik, Climate Commissioner Connie Hedegaard and the Irish and Swedish Environment Ministers. SEPA intends responding to the Commission's consultation on the review of EU Air Quality legislation in time to meet the deadline of 4 March.

3. **SEPA BUSINESS**

3.1 **Annual Operating Plan (AOP)**

An update on achievement against targets for the 2012/13 AOP is covered under the Q3 Corporate Performance Report which will be discussed later on today's agenda.

3.2 **Freedom of Information (FOI)**

Between 19 October and 18 January, 91 requests were formally logged and 102 requests were completed. Ten Formal Reviews were logged during the reporting period, of which three are still ongoing, and nine Formal Reviews were completed.

The [Environmental Information Regulation](#) (EIR) enquiries received related to coal bed methane and shale gas, monitoring reports for Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 fish farms, details of hydropower schemes, abstraction licences, and sea-lice chemicals. The [Freedom of Information \(Scotland\) Act 2002](#) (FOISA) requests received were varied and related to SEPA's use of external organisations to undertake surveillance, information relating to ethnicity data, voluntary redundancy, secondments, legal costs incurred in responding to FOISA requests, IS staff structure, Job Evaluation and contact with specific named individuals.

The Decision Notice for the ongoing appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner relating to Dalgety Bay was issued on 20 November, and the outcome found in favour of SEPA. The requestor asked for information relating to radium in particles found at Dalgety Bay. We advised that such information was available on our website, however the requestor did not accept that we had identified any information that we

⁹ Cllr Chorrie McChord is the leader of Stirling Council, was previously a member of SEPA's Board, and he was also Chairman of SEPA's former East region Board.

held within the scope of the request. Following an investigation, the Commissioner found that we had provided the requestor with web links to all relevant, recorded information that it held. A copy of the Decision Notice available [here](#).

3.3 Customer Service Complaints

During the reporting period, five Stage 1 Customer Service Complaints were logged, and three Stage 1 complaints were completed. In each case, the complaints were not upheld.

During the reporting period, we were notified of one new referral made to the [Scottish Public Services Ombudsman](#) (SPSO). The SPSO Investigating Officer determined she was not persuaded that there is a supportable claim of maladministration or a claim of personal injustice that would entitle SPSO to investigate the complaints. SEPA and the complainant were notified that there would be no further investigation.

3.4 Office Accommodation

3.4.1 Angus Smith Building, Maxim 6, North Lanarkshire

Completion of the fit-out works by Bowmer Kirkland remains on target for early July, with migration of the business commencing shortly thereafter and programmed for completion in October. The project to fit out the related off-site storage facility is also in progress. Occupation will take place to suit operational requirements, in advance of the completion of the Angus Smith Building.

3.4.2 Lochgilphead

Following receipt of approval to share an office in Lochgilphead, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) is currently developing the Memorandum of Terms of Understanding, (MOTU), for agreement with SEPA. The design has been agreed by staff and the works will be progressed through February and March, with migration planned for April.

3.4.3 Aberdeen

Planning approval has now been received for the external draught lobby at the front entrance of Inverdee House, which has been designed to address the wind and draught issues currently being experienced. Works are programmed for completion by the end of March.

3.4.4 Dingwall

The proposed internal alterations to enhance security and operational requirements at Dingwall have now been agreed with staff and are programmed for completion in late February. Further works to enhance the heating of the building have also commenced and will be completed before the end of the Financial Year

3.5 Organisational Development (OD)

Activity levels across OD have remained high with staff focussing on a range of business as usual work and other activities to support organisational change and the development of our people. Key activities during the period have included:

3.5.1 Equalities

As I updated the Board in my November report, OD has been working on the implementation of the [Public Sector Equality Duties](#) which came into effect on 27 May 2012. This new piece of legislation places a range of “general” and “specific” duties on public bodies such as SEPA. The “general” duties require all public authorities to consider Equality in exercising their functions, including decision-making, designing internal and external policies, delivering services and how we shape the major changes to operational services which arise from new Bills. The “specific” duties require public bodies to publish a report on the progress made in integrating or “mainstreaming” the general Equality duties into the exercise of functions, and this report must be published no later than 30 April 2013. Production of the mainstreaming report is underway and a draft will be presented to the Agency Board at our Strategy Meeting in March.

I can also advise that we have secured external specialist resource from Scottish Enterprise for one day per week over the next six months. Scott Reid-Skinner, who is the SE lead on Equality and Diversity and has over ten years experience in this field, will be assisting in producing an Equalities framework and mainstreaming process within SEPA.

3.5.2 Improving Performance – interim appraisals

I am delighted to confirm that the submission rate for completed 2012-2013 interim appraisals was 97.5%, which exceeded our target of 95%. Agency Management Team will discuss continuing improvements in the appraisal system at a future AMT meeting.

3.5.3 Pay and benefits

Negotiations are continuing with UNISON on the 2012-13 pay award and changes to the business expenses scheme which resulted from recent audit recommendations. Management will shortly be making a revised offer to UNISON.

3.5.4 Voluntary Severance (VS)

OD has been administering the targeted Voluntary Severance scheme which was launched on 26 November. 14 offers of VS were made and 12 offers have been accepted, with the majority of staff involved leaving SEPA on 28 February. This round of VS will enable us to make further structural changes, as well as reaching our target of ongoing cost reductions of around £400k per year, to contribute to the achievement of our projected £1.6m savings target.

3.5.5 Health, Safety and Wellbeing

- i Work is continuing on our approach to Healthy Working Lives. As part of the process of identifying health, safety and wellbeing needs in the workplace, a Health Needs Questionnaire will be sent to all staff. This is an anonymous and independent questionnaire, provided by the [Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives](#), and the findings of the report derived from the questionnaire will help identify issues and priorities which will form the basis for a more detailed action plan.
- i I chaired a meeting of the National Health and Safety Committee (NHSC) on Wednesday 19 December. There was discussion about the Corporate and directorate Health and Safety plans, and the Committee also agreed to establish a short-life working group – involving both management and UNISON representation -

to review the selection of personal protective equipment (PPE) relevant to the Agency. An update on the Health & Wellbeing strategy, including the corporate report on stress, was also presented, and UNISON presented their findings from the Stress Audit they recently conducted with their members.

- i The Health and Safety team have integrated the Health and Safety for Managers training course to form part of the Management Development Programme. There has been significant progress in take up of this, with over 100 managers having attended the one day training events.

3.5.6 Learning and Development

- i Phase 2 of our Management Development Programme 'Coaching Programme' continues to support the People Strategy, reinforcing its main aim of developing a coaching style of leadership and management. 174 managers and supervisors have volunteered to attend this phase of the programme, from grades A-D across all directorates, and 30% have now completed the whole programme. Initial indications from managers attending all courses show a high level of commitment to coaching as a style of management and leadership, with medium to high levels of confidence using coaching in the workplace.

3.5.7 People Strategy

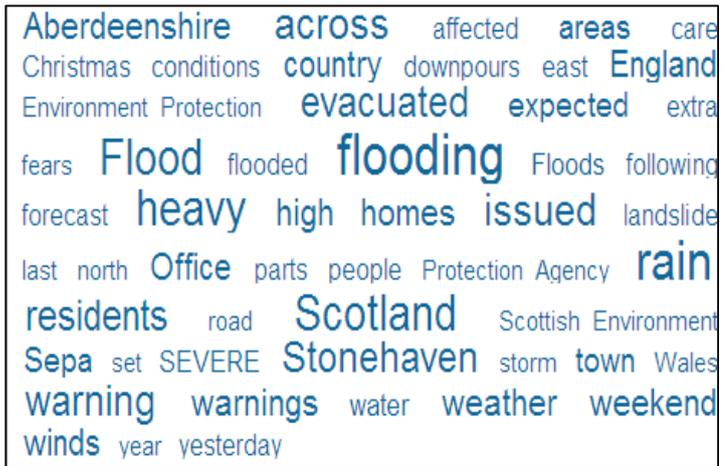
Earlier in January we published the People Strategy which was approved by the Agency Board in November. In addition to the full report, we've committed to produce a summary version which we think will be informative and helpful for all existing and prospective staff. As Board colleagues will remember, the Strategy sets the direction for our people and outlines our commitments to and expectations from them.

3.6 Communications

3.6.1 Media coverage

- i Our communications department has confirmed that between 1 October and 31 December there were 3,223 articles mentioning SEPA. There were also 250 media enquiries during this time from various print, broadcast and online media. The most covered topic in this time frame was flooding with 2,601 mentions (64% of the coverage), - 2,160 of these in December alone.
- i Over the three months 17 media releases were issued by SEPA, 13 of which resulted in coverage, and there were 195 articles as a direct result of this proactive work. There were also 11 update statements made about flooding, which were uploaded to our website and signposted on Facebook and Twitter. It is always difficult to tell how many articles have been as a result of media enquiries or statement updates during a flooding incident, so these figures are not included in the proactive figure.
- Other stories which gained a lot of coverage included:
 - a record fine for waste operator referred to the Procurator Fiscal by SEPA;
 - household recycling rates;
 - discussions around unconventional gas exploration in Scotland;
 - Dalgety Bay;
 - dredging rivers and clearing burns;
 - SEPA rainfall volunteers receiving awards for long service.

- There were 2,869 supportive articles (89%), 318 neutral or balanced articles (10%) and 36 critical articles (1%). Coverage was predominantly online (2,576 articles) with significantly higher national (1,654) than Scottish local sites (886). For print the majority was local coverage (281 articles) with 233 in national media. There were 133 broadcast pieces (10 national, 87 local).



The word cloud above shows the most commonly used words in media articles about SEPA. The bigger the word, the more times it has occurred.

- The chart below shows the amount of coverage over the three months. The large spike in December is due to bad weather and flooding.



3.6.2 Social media

- SEPA's communications team also monitors mentions on social media sites (such as Facebook and Twitter) and online blogs. The chart below shows the number of mentions about SEPA which occurred during October, November and December. The spikes in coverage are due to flooding incidents and increased social network activity

3.6.3 2012 Summary

The communications team have produced a useful summary of activity throughout 2012 which is included here for Board members information at Appendix 1.

4. ACTION

4.1 The Board is asked to note this report. Updates will be provided at the meeting.

**James Curran
Chief Executive
5 February 2013**

2012 Communications summary

Between 1 January and 31 December 2012 there were 7,205 articles mentioning SEPA. 1,699 of these contained direct quotes from SEPA staff, 42 of these were broadcast interviews.

The media team dealt with 798 enquiries over the 12 months, with the greatest number in December.

In total there were 56 media releases issued by SEPA, 47 of which were used by the media achieving 441 pieces of coverage. When statements, letters and articles are included in the figure, SEPA's communications department generated 873 pieces of proactive coverage.

The most covered releases were the result of prosecutions, with 252 pieces of coverage. Household recycling rates achieved 108 pieces of coverage over the year.

The ten most covered releases for 2012 were:

16 July	Fine for Invergordon distillery operator following spill to Cromarty Firth	80
13 December	Record fine for waste operator following major environmental crime	71
21 December	Household waste - January to December 2011	46
30 July 2012	Household waste - October to December 2011	32
27 November	Emergency measures for agricultural spreading	26
17 September	Even with the wet summer, Scotland's bathing waters are making good progress	25
27 February	Official statistics - Household waste - July to September 2012	20
28 June	SEPA warns against gypsum bedding at Scottish farms	19
19 January	Perthshire landowner and contractor fined total of £9,900 for allowing illegal water works	17
23 October	SEPA volunteers are winning in the rain	16

The top five subjects covered over the year were:

- flooding – 3,510;
- radioactivity – 1,080;
- planning – 456;
- enforcement and operations – 285;
- waste – 281.

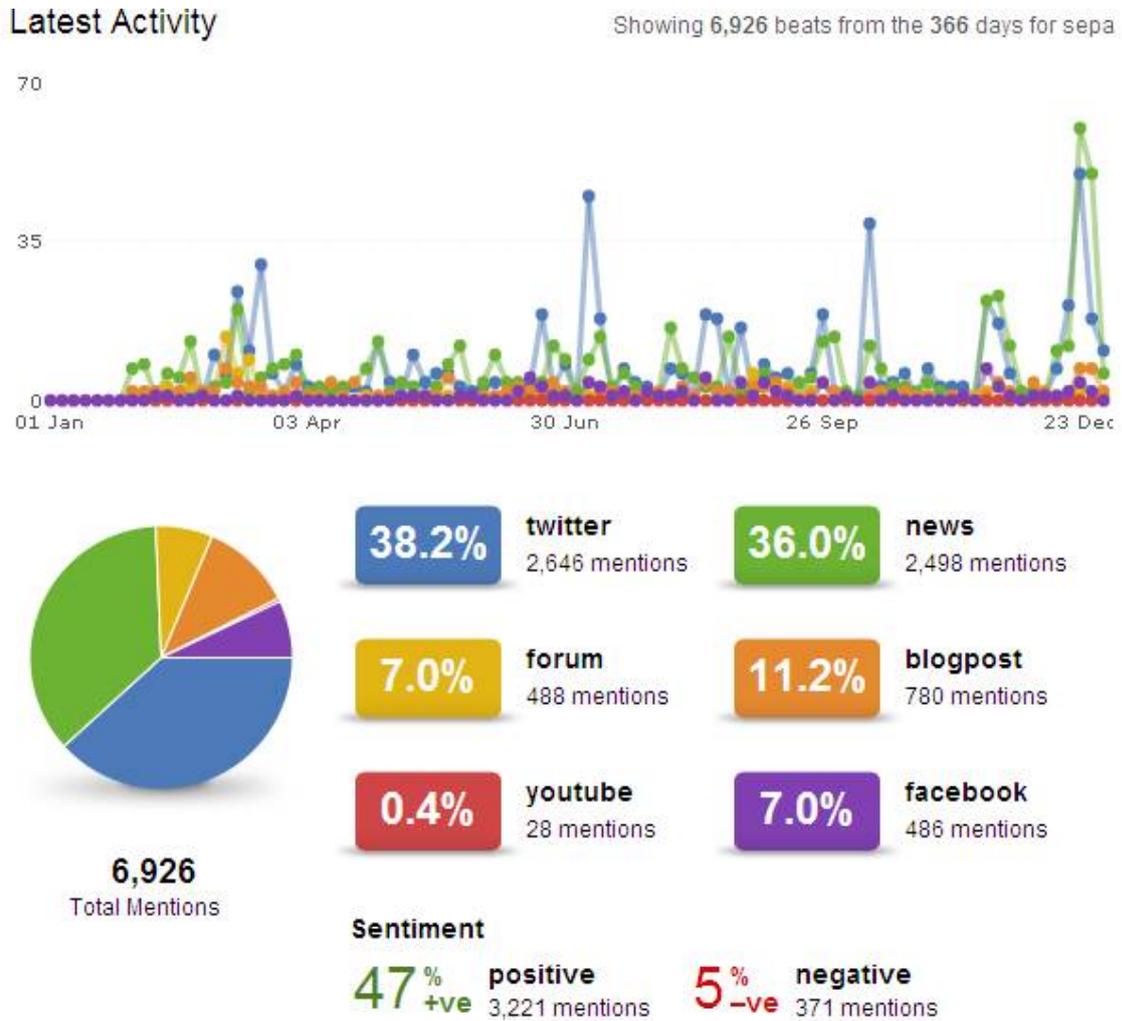
When looking at the tone of the coverage for 2012, 55% was supportive of SEPA, 43% was balanced or neutral and 2% was critical.

Our coverage was mostly split between national (43%) and local (56%) outlets, but 71 articles (1%) were from international outlets.

Social media

SEPA’s communications team has also been monitoring mentions on social media sites (such as Facebook and Twitter) and online blogs since February.

The chart below shows the number of mentions about SEPA which occurred during October, November and December. The spikes in coverage are due to flooding incidents and increased social network activity

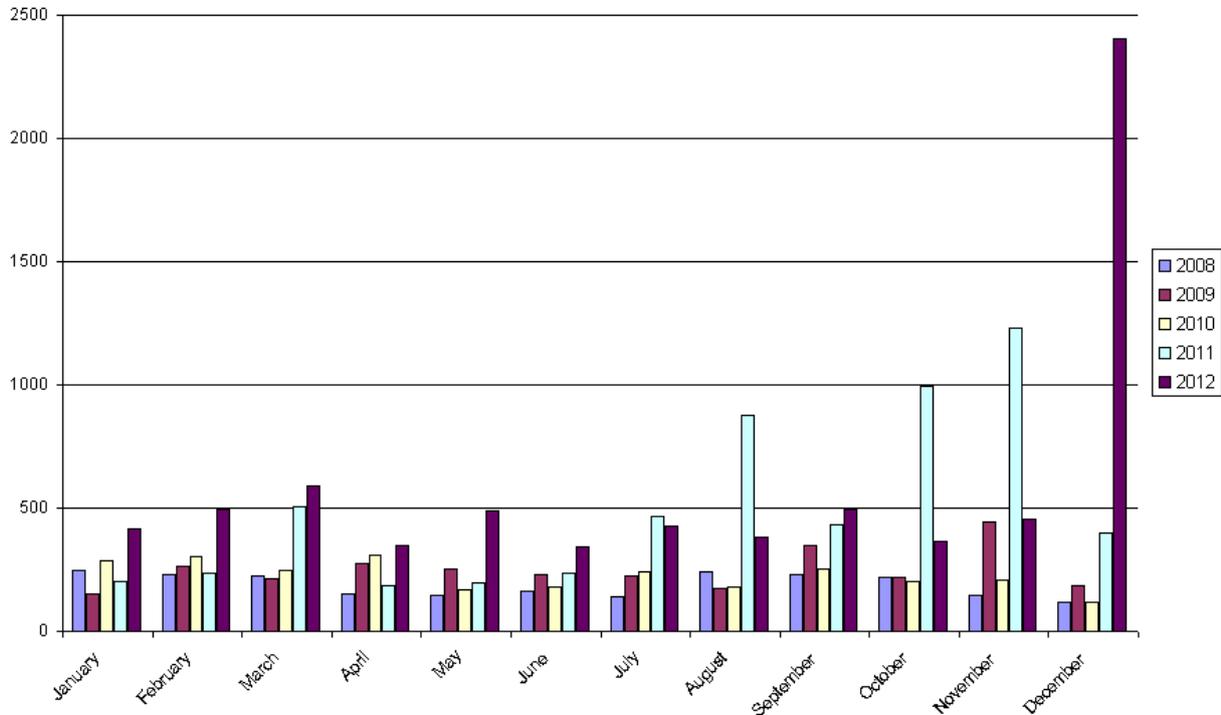


There were 1,433 re-tweets, most of which were related to messages about flood alerts and flood warnings, as well as prosecutions and the SEPA Update.

Five year trends

Below are some charts showing the change in articles and media enquiries since 2008.

Articles mentioning SEPA 2008 – 2012



Media enquiries received by media desk

