



Agency Board Meeting 28 September 2021

Board Report Number: SEPA 30/21

August Monthly Performance Report

Summary:	<p>Our Annual Operating Plan was launched on 1 July. This is the first report to show our performance against the 20 performance measures set out on pages 38 and 39 of the plan.</p> <p>To help Board members get a better understanding of our new performance measures, we have included an explanation of each one in Appendix 2. For future reports this will be published on our website with a hyperlink from the monthly report.</p>
Risks:	Risks will be discussed with the Board during the morning session.
Resource and Staffing Implications:	Resource challenges will be discussed with the Board during the morning session.
Equalities:	There are no specific equality challenges raised this month.
Environmental and Carbon Impact:	Progress with our ambition to achieve a Regenerative SEPA is covered in the report.
Purpose and audience of the report:	<p>The report is for the Board to note.</p> <p>It will also be reviewed by the Scottish Government and published on our website.</p>
Report Author:	<p>Terry A'Hearn, Chief Executive</p> <p>Anne Turner, Business Strategy Manager</p> <p>Craig Ballantyne, Junior Business Consultant</p>
Appendices:	<p>Appendix 1: August performance report</p> <p>Appendix 2: Corporate performance measures explanations</p>

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our Annual Operating Plan set out ambitious aims for how we will regulate and carry out our flooding responsibilities this year, in tough circumstances. In the plan we said that, in everything we do, we will deliver on-ground outcomes and build back better. We will fast-track reforms we were going to make anyway.
- 1.2 This report shows how we are progressing after two months.

2. Performance

- 2.1 We have made good progress. Sixteen of our performance measures are on track. Three have some issues and one will not be achieved because we have missed a planned deadline.
- 2.2 Performance highlights
 - 2.2.1 We have undertaken compliance checking activity at all our highest priority sites. We have action plans in place to tackle high priority illegal sites and those which cause significant impact on local communities. (Measures 4 and 5)
 - 2.2.2 We had to adapt our approach to land-use planning because of the cyber-attack. We put in place a more collaborative approach, with regular liaison with planning authorities. As a result, we estimate that we are dealing with around fifty percent fewer development management cases compared with previous years, because we are focussing on where we can add the greatest value while ensuring we fulfil our statutory requirements. We are reinvesting the time savings in new transformative interventions with the planning and development sector. (Measure 2)
 - 2.2.3 We have issued flood guidance statements every day so that responders can prepare when flooding is likely. The second phase of the consultation on flood risk management plans opened on 30 July 2021 and we received over 180 responses in the first month. (Measure 7 and 9)
 - 2.2.4 We are continuing with the rebuild of our finance systems. We are on track to invoice our customers by the end of September and complete last year's annual accounts by the end of November. (Measure 13)
 - 2.2.5 We have released four online registration services to replace those that were affected by the cyber-attack. (Measure 20)
- 2.3 Performance issues
 - 2.3.1 Drafting of our Procurement Annual Report will not be ready in September as planned. It has been delayed until October, as information from the annual accounts that is needed for the report, is not available yet. We anticipate having the report ready for approval in late October or early November. (Measure 15)
 - 2.3.2 There is a low-level risk that external consultants will not be able to deliver the design and build of the online producer registration service needed for the Deposit Return Scheme. (Measure 20)
 - 2.3.3 We are accepting new applications for all activities except for Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations Part A activities, where we are currently only able to deal with business-critical applications. We are working towards fully opening this final area as soon as possible. (Measure 1)

- 2.3.4 We are slightly behind schedule developing our compliance verification plan. However, this has not stopped us delivering verification activities as explained in 2.2.1. (Measure 4)

3. The Report

- 3.1 We traditionally produce quarterly performance reports. The reports are reviewed by the Agency Management Team, the Board and the Scottish Government. They are also published on our website.
- 3.2 Given the challenging circumstances we are working in this year, the Scottish Government has asked us to increase the frequency of reports to monthly.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 The Board is asked to **note** this performance report.

Author(s) and Date

Terry A'Hearn, Chief Executive
Anne Turner, Business Strategy Manager
Craig Ballantyne, Junior Business Consultant

20 September 2021

Appendix 1: August performance report



SEPA Monthly Corporate Performance Report

August 2021

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<http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

www.sepa.org.uk

Chief Executive's introduction

SEPA's Strategy – One Planet Prosperity

Most nations around the world set up an environment protection agency (EPA) in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. In this 'first phase' of EPAs, the primary focus was to stop pollution from industrial facilities, farms and other activities. EPA's were not set up with a focus on systemic environmental problems such as the climate emergency, the collapse of biodiversity, the massive overuse of resources, the filling of the oceans with plastic waste, etc. Similarly, the activities of the EPA were, basically the only influence on the environmental performance of regulated businesses. Today, there are multiple influences (supply-chain requirements, access to loans and insurance, etc). SEPA's One Planet Prosperity is designed to create what we believe may be the world's first 'Phase 2' EPA – set up for the challenges of the 21st century.

Pandemic – Impact

As with all organisations, SEPA was significantly affected by the pandemic in several ways. The most significant impact was to severely curtail our field activities (e.g. monitoring of rivers and lochs, inspection of regulated sites, etc).

Cyber-attack – Impact

The impact of the cyber-attack was severe with SEPA being temporarily locked out of the vast majority of our data and systems.

SEPA's Approach

SEPA's Board and senior management have responded to the major impacts of the pandemic and cyber-attack with the following focus:

- 1) To prioritise delivering high priority services (e.g. flood warnings and alerts, licence and permit approvals, oversight of high-risk sites, etc).
- 2) To be open and transparent (e.g. we have been complimented for being far more open about the cyberattack than the majority of organisations, even by global standards).
- 3) To look after our staff (e.g. for eight months, we have run a series of weekly and fortnightly briefing sessions for staff).
- 4) To be innovative in using 'workarounds' to deliver our services while we have limited access to data and systems.
- 5) Importantly, to fast-track building a completely new IT system and implement our new Phase 2 ways of working (i.e. we were planning to do this over four to five years, but will now do it within two years).

1.0 Performance summary

Regulation

Restoring our permitting service remains a priority. All applications received prior to the cyber-attack have either been determined or are in progress. We have granted 4,110 authorisations since the attack and have 460 in progress. We are now accepting new applications and pre-application enquiries for all activities except Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations Part A activities, where we are currently only able to deal with business-critical applications. We are working towards fully opening this final area as soon as possible.

We have undertaken compliance verification activities at all our highest priority sites, which include all nuclear, and some of those regulated under the Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations and Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations. We have action plans in place to tackle twelve of our high priority illegal sites and thirty-five sites where issues are, or could, cause significant impact on the local community. We continue to respond to reports of pollution and have responded to all of those which could cause significant environmental harm of which there were 31 incidents during July and August.

We have received very positive feedback on the more collaborative approach to land use planning applications that we put in place while we were unable to access any systems. We have issued 428 planning responses during July and August, and 1,153 since 31st December 2020.

Flooding

We have issued flood guidance statements every day so that responders can prepare when flooding is likely. There were three significant flood events during July and August and we issued the relevant flood alerts and warnings for each of them. Over July and August, we issued 60 initial regional alerts and four initial local flood warnings. All 345 gauging stations which are key to our flood warning service are operational except for two remote sites near Aberfoyle. These rely upon satellite communications that we have been unable to restart following the cyber-attack. We have put in place solutions which enable us to offer a good standard of flood warning in the interim.

The second phase of the consultation on flood risk management plans opened on 30 July 2021. In the first month of the consultation, over 180 responses have been received. The timetable for publishing the Flood Risk Management Plans remains challenging and we are currently discussing the most appropriate publication date with the Scottish Government.

Corporate

Work to rebuild our finance systems is progressing. We are on-track to complete our 2020-2021 annual accounts by the end of November. We have created new billing systems and anticipate invoicing our customers by the end of September.

We have now released four online registration services to replace those that were affected by the cyber-attack. The new systems provide the same experience for our customers but are more robust and secure.

2.0 Performance dashboard

	Performance measure	Status ¹
Regulation		
1	All permitting determinations completed within statutory timelines by March 2022	A
2	Establish regular liaison with all planning authorities and consulting bodies by September 2021	G
3	All Category 1 and 2 environmental events responded to	G
4	Compliance verification plan delivered by March 2022	A
5	Action plans in place and being delivered for all priority sites	G
Flooding		
6	Complete phase 2 of the transformation of the land-use planning service, focussing on best use of readily available flood risk information, input to government policy change and update climate change allowances for industry	G
7	Deliver 14 flood risk management plans in accordance with the revised deadlines	G
8	Publish our flooding strategy, 10-year roadmap and associated metrics of success	G
9	Continued operation of the flood warning service 24/7, 365 days a year. Warnings and alerts issued for all significant flooding events. The hydrometric network and associated data feeds are maintained and operational. The forecast models and data feeds from the Met Office are maintained and operational	G
10	Agree and implement long-term future flood incident messaging systems and telemetry solutions	G
Corporate		
11	100% of managers have been offered group coaching sessions	G
12	We have run management development sessions on four topics by 31 March 2022	G
13	HR 2021-2022 data and the 2020-2021 closing balance sheet are complete in Agresso by November 2021	G
14	Invoices are issued by 30 September 2021 and the debt level is returned within year to pre-COVID and cyber levels by March 2022	G
15	Our procurement strategy, annual report and contracts register are in place by September 2021	R
16	Draft Future of Work roadmap with small set of targeted initial actions by September 2021	G
17	Solve at least five long-standing information challenges	G
18	Regenerative SEPA route map prepared and agreed.	G
19	The software and hardware required to enable staff to safely work from anywhere will be available by the end of March 2022.	G
20	Launch four online permit application services.	A

¹ Status: Red – there are significant issues that are likely to impact delivery of the measure
 Amber – There are issues, but we can get back on track
 Green – The measure is broadly on track

3.0 Performance updates

Regulation

Regulation		
Measure 1: All permitting determinations completed within statutory timelines by March 2022		
AMT lead: Ian Buchanan / John Kenny		Amber ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>Since the cyber-attack, restoration of our permitting service has been one of our highest priorities, enabling us to continue to support Scotland's businesses whilst protecting the environment. We have maintained strong communications with applicants and trade bodies to prioritise business critical applications. All applications received prior to the cyber-attack have either been determined or are in progress.</p> <p>We are now accepting new applications and pre-application enquiries for all activities except Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations Part A activities, where we are currently only able to deal with business-critical applications. This measure has been assessed as amber because of the applications we are not yet able to accept. We are working towards fully opening this final area as soon as possible.</p> <p>To resume our permitting service as quickly as possible, we developed a new way of processing applications which allows applications to be determined faster. We are now regularly determining administrative variations and some new applications in just one to two weeks.</p> <p>Future reports will include data to demonstrate that determinations are made within statutory timelines where it is applicable.</p>		
Type of application	Total number of authorisations granted between 24/12/20 and 19/8/21	Total number of applications pending determination at 19/8/21
Permits	883	362
Registrations (excluding digital registrations)	542	50
Digital registrations		0
• Septic tanks	1,586	
• New waste carriers	1,035	
Notifications	29	31
Radioactive Substances	35	16
Variations to permits	0	1
Total	4,110	460

Regulation	
Measure 2: Establish regular liaison with all planning authorities and consulting bodies by September 2021	
AMT lead: John Kenny	Green ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>By the start of July, each of the 32 local authorities, both National Park Authorities, and all four consulting bodies had participated in at least one liaison meeting to discuss planning and development casework. We provided practical planning advice during each meeting, or shortly afterwards, significantly shortening the usual casework turnaround period and the number of formal consultations.</p> <p>Throughout July and into August, most planning authorities and consulting bodies had participated in further liaison meetings to not only discuss casework, but wider partnership opportunities to help drive transformational change consistent with One Planet Prosperity. Fife Council, for example, is proactively engaging with us to pilot new ways of working as it begins to prepare 'FifePlan 2', the next generation Local Development Plan for Fife. East Ayrshire and Fife Councils are each working collaboratively with us and the other key agencies of government to help support green recovery.</p> <p>We continue to tailor the frequency of liaison meetings to meet the specific needs of each planning authority and consulting body. Some are every two to three weeks, while some authorities have requested liaison meetings on an 'as and when' basis, according to casework demands - with communication channels remaining firmly open in-between times.</p> <p>The next set of liaison meetings will provide an opportunity for planning authorities and consulting bodies to provide constructive feedback on the post cyber-attack triage arrangements.</p> <p>Early feedback on this new way of working has been very positive. This was reflected by the CEO of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities during a recent meeting with our CEO and Chairman, and in the following contributions from partners: <i>"...many, many thanks for the exceptional response in respect of our Electricity Act applications. Way above and beyond our expectations given the devastation caused by the cyber-attack. The triage meetings have been really helpful in allowing us all to hone-in on our priorities."</i> Team Leader, Scottish Government Unit.</p> <p>In the recorded minutes of the Heads of Planning Development Planning Sub-Committee meeting in August, representatives from East Ayrshire Council confirmed they have <i>"found the [Key Agencies Green Recovery] collaboration very useful and more effective than previous ways of working."</i> They also said they would <i>"recommend that other local authorities get involved."</i></p>	

Regulation																	
Measure 3: All Category 1 and 2 environmental events responded to																	
AMT lead: Ian Buchanan	Green ¹																
<p>Performance update</p> <p>Each month we receive reports, either by phone or through a form on our website, of pollution incidents. The number of incidents varies, but it averages about 500 a month. We prioritise our response according to the level or environmental harm. Category 1 and 2 events are the most significant pollution incidents. We have responded to all category 1 and 2 events reported in July and August.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Number of events received and responded to</th> <th>July</th> <th>August</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Category 1</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Category 2</td> <td>11</td> <td>14</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>14</td> <td>17</td> <td>31</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Number of events received and responded to	July	August	Total	Category 1	3	3	6	Category 2	11	14	25	Total	14	17	31
Number of events received and responded to	July	August	Total														
Category 1	3	3	6														
Category 2	11	14	25														
Total	14	17	31														

Regulation	
Measure 4: Compliance verification plan delivered by March 2022	
AMT lead: Ian Buchanan / John Kenny	Amber ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>We are developing a plan to focus our compliance verification on a range of sectors and operators whose performance is poor, and on those activities with greatest potential for harm. This measure is amber because finalising the plan is slightly behind schedule. It is currently being reviewed and will be confirmed in September. However, this has not stopped us delivering verification activities.</p> <p>Our initial focus has been those activities with greatest potential for harm. We have undertaken verification activities at 100% of our highest priority sites, which include all nuclear, and some of those regulated under the Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations and Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations.</p>	

Regulation													
Measure 5: Action plans in place and being delivered for all priority sites													
AMT lead: Ian Buchanan	Green ¹												
<p>Performance update</p> <p>To address non-compliance and improve compliance, we prioritise sites which have the biggest environmental or community impact. We develop action plans to tackle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • illegal sites • sites which are generating significant community impact • regulated sites which are significantly non-compliant. <p>The tables below show the progress made towards delivery of action plans for community impact sites and illegal sites.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Number of priority sites identified</th> <th>Priority sites where action plan in progress</th> <th>Priority sites where action plan is complete</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Illegal sites</td> <td>24</td> <td>12</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community Impact Sites*</td> <td>36</td> <td>35</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*These sites include those which are currently causing a nuisance to communities and those where we are proactively implementing a range of measures to prevent future issues. The issues identified can be complex and take a number of years to resolve.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to plan and tackle the third area included in this measure – regulated sites which are significantly non-compliant. Teams across Scotland are identifying and tackling these sites. Progress will be reported in the next monthly report.</p>			Number of priority sites identified	Priority sites where action plan in progress	Priority sites where action plan is complete	Illegal sites	24	12	3	Community Impact Sites*	36	35	0
	Number of priority sites identified	Priority sites where action plan in progress	Priority sites where action plan is complete										
Illegal sites	24	12	3										
Community Impact Sites*	36	35	0										

Flooding

Flooding	
Measure 6: Complete phase 2 of the transformation of the land-use planning service, focussing on best use of readily available flood risk information, input to government policy change and updated climate change allowances for industry	
AMT lead: David Pirie	Green ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>The flood maps on our website are being improved to be more accessible and easier to use. They will be accompanied by clear guidance on how to use them to plan new development which is safe from flooding. Users will see their area in more detail and be better equipped to make decisions on how to avoid flooding. We are on track for making the changes to the website in September.</p> <p>We have engaged with the Scottish Government on the early stages of drafting the next National Planning Framework, so that the policy direction will equip Scotland to meet the challenges of the climate emergency, particularly on increased flooding. We are ready to bring our expertise to the formal consultation stage, expected this Autumn.</p> <p>We are updating our guidance on the climate change allowances that should be applied to any new development or infrastructure. This will mean that those involved in planning and design have access to the best available information and can apply it directly to their sites. We aim to publish the updated guidance in March 2022 which will incorporate the latest scientific predictions, and we are on target to do that.</p>	

Flooding	
Measure 7: Deliver 14 flood risk management plans in accordance with the revised deadlines	
AMT lead: David Pirie	Green ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>A public consultation on the draft output from the flood risk management plans started on the 21 December 2020. Due to the impact of lockdown and the cyber-attack on SEPA, the Scottish Government agreed that the consultation deadlines could be split into two phases with a revised end date of the consultation. Phase one opened on 21 December 2020 and ran until 30th July 2021.</p> <p>Phase two of the consultation opened on 30 July 2021. The consultation provides draft information on the flood risk management objectives and actions in target communities across Scotland, along with consultation questions. The consultation also includes information and questions on the Strategic Environmental Assessment carried out for the flood risk management plans. The consultation is on our website and will close on 31 October 2021. In the first month of the consultation, over 180 responses have been received.</p> <p>During the consultation, we will discuss the consultation content and answer any initial questions with key national and local stakeholders during a series of meetings and workshops.</p> <p>A draft digest of the consultation responses will be compiled and submitted to Scottish Ministers within two months of the closing date. The digest of responses will inform alterations to the flood risk management plans.</p> <p>We are currently carrying out a review of flood management funding alongside the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Scottish Government and local authorities. In response, we have been discussing the most appropriate publication date of the flood risk management plans with the Scottish Government. This is to ensure the published flood risk management plans take into account the conclusions from the review and deliver the best outcome possible for Scotland.</p> <p>We will submit a first draft set of flood risk management plans by the date agreed with the Scottish Government.</p>	

Flooding	
Measure 8: Publish our flooding strategy, 10-year roadmap and associated metrics of success	
AMT lead: David Pirie	Green ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>Following a stakeholder consultation period, during which a number of constructive and positive responses were received, our One Planet Prosperity Flooding Services Strategy has been revised. It has been strengthened by the feedback and support and retains the key direction and commitments of the draft.</p> <p>We are currently developing a 10-year implementation plan and establishing what metrics to use to measure the success of the strategy over that period.</p> <p>We are working with the Scottish Government on Scotland's flooding policy direction over the next year, to ensure Scotland can adapt to the challenges of a changing climate. The appropriate publication opportunity for the Flooding Services Strategy is being explored with the Scottish Government to maximise the power of the commitment and the clarity of message.</p>	

Flooding

Measure 9: **Continued operation of the flood warning service 24/7, 365 days a year. Warnings and alerts issued for all significant flooding events. The hydrometric network and associated data feeds are maintained and operational. The forecast models and data feeds from the Met Office are maintained and operational**

AMT lead: David Pirie

Green¹

Performance update

Flood guidance statements

Thirty-three flood guidance statements were issued in July (two flood guidance statements on each of 27 and 28 July during an amber situation). Thirty-one flood guidance statements were issued in August. The statements advised:

- 48 days: all green.
- 12 days: risk elevated to yellow on at least one of the five days ahead.
- Two days: risk elevated to amber on at least one of the five days ahead.

Flood alerts and warnings**Issued in July**

- 42 initial regional alerts
- Three initial local warnings
- A total of 179 messages*

Issued in August

- 18 initial regional alerts
- One initial local warning
- A total of 107 messages*

* (including initial, updates and 'No Longer In Force')

Three significant events occurred during the reporting period. On all occasions when flooding impacts have been reported, regional alerts, and where relevant local warnings, had been in force.

Hydrometric network and telemetry system operation availability

All 345 stations key to flood warning service are operational except for two remote sites near Aberfoyle. These rely upon satellite communications that we have been unable to restart following the cyber-attack. We have put in place solutions which enable us to offer a good standard of flood warning in the interim.

We currently rely on an interim telemetry data transfer solution. We are working on improving the resilience of this interim system before the winter and are also developing the statement of requirements for our future long-term telemetry solution which we hope to tender this financial year.

In July, there was 100% availability of the interim system with no days with unplanned downtime over three hours. In August, there was 93.5% availability. There were two days with over three hours of unplanned downtime, fortunately outside a flooding period.

Flood forecasting system operation availability

We are currently using an interim cloud-based forecasting system until a more resilient twin system is rebuilt following the cyber-attack. The interim system has been 100% operational during July and 95.2% in August when there was one partial outage of 36 hours outside periods of flooding. This was promptly resolved once we were notified.

Flood warning dissemination system operation availability

The flood warning dissemination system used to issue flood guidance statements, alerts and warning messages, has been 100% operational during the reporting period.

Flooding	
Measure 10: Agree and implement long-term future flood incident messaging systems and telemetry solutions	
AMT lead: David Pirie	Green ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>A series of workshops has taken place within SEPA over the past two months to ensure user needs for the future flood incident messaging systems and telemetry solutions.</p> <p>We are also working with the Scottish Government to ensure our plans satisfy Digital Scotland's pre-procurement technology assurance. This is a process the Scottish Government requires all major digital projects to complete. It will examine and evidence that there is a sound business case for the project and a sound procurement process in place.</p>	

Corporate

Corporate			
Measure 11: 100% of managers have been offered group coaching sessions			
AMT lead: John Kenny			Green ¹
Performance update			
Coaching sessions delivered for managers		Take up of coaching sessions	
Month	Number of sessions		
July	4		
August	0		
Total	4		
		This month	This year
		July	32
		August	0
			32
		July	100%
		August	N/A
			100%

Several coaching sessions were run in June. A smaller number were scheduled for July based on the same topic to allow an increased number of managers to access the sessions. No coaching sessions were scheduled for August.

Corporate			
Measure 12: We have run management development sessions on four topics by 31 March 2022			
AMT lead: John Kenny			Green ¹
Performance update			
Topic 1: Performance Development Review	This month	This year	
Number of workshops run	2	2	
Number of managers attended	17	17	

We began running workshops on performance development reviews in August. The majority of sessions on this topic are being delivered in September.

Planning is ongoing to deliver sessions on further topics between September and November.

Corporate	
Measure 13: Staff 2021-2022 data and the 2020-2021 closing balance sheet are complete in Agresso by November 2021	
AMT lead: Stuart McGregor	Green ¹
Performance update	
The work to build our staff data at 1 April 2021 into Agresso is complete. The work recreating our 2020-2021 financial records is underway and it is expected that the closing trial balance for 31 March 2021 will be completed by the end of November.	

Corporate	
Measure 14: Invoices are issued by 30 September 2021 and the debt level is returned within year to pre-COVID and cyber levels by March 2022.	
AMT lead: Stuart McGregor	Green ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>The Stabilising Income project commissioned the development of the billing functionality in Agresso and commissioned the development of a charging tool from IT. Both systems have been developed. The charging tool is in test and is working in relation to the Agresso feed. An up-to-date customer licence database is being created from various source databases. This will be checked in the next two weeks to ensure we have an accurate set of customer records to bill on. It is planned to bill prior to 30 September 2021. When the billing run has been completed, we will reinstate our normal credit control processes with the objective of ensuring outstanding debt is returned to pre-COVID levels.</p>	

Corporate	
Measure 15: Our procurement strategy, annual report and contracts register are in place by September 2021	
AMT lead: Stuart McGregor	Red ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>Themes for a 2021-2023 Operating Plan were approved by the Agency Management Team in August 2021. The complete draft of the Operating Plan will be ready by the end of September 2021.</p> <p>The Contracts Register is nearing completion following Agresso go live and will be published in September 2021.</p> <p>Drafting of the Annual Report is awaiting the completion of work on the Annual Accounts for 2020-2021. Spend information for the financial year is central to the report. This is likely to be delayed into October 2021 for approval in late October or early November 2021. The Scottish Government has been notified of the delay and has not raised any concerns. This measure has been rated red because of that delay.</p>	

Corporate	
Measure 16: Draft Future of Work roadmap with a small set of targeted initial actions by September 2021	
AMT lead: Fiona Martin	Green ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>Our Future of Work staff preference survey closed on 6 August 2021 with 82% of staff responding. The survey focussed on collating some basic information about staff workspace preferences and workstyle profiles.</p> <p>Key insights from the survey include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixty-eight percent of staff have a preference to be home-based. Eighty-two percent of those staff would prefer to work from home the majority of the time (over three days a week or over 60% of the time) • Twenty-three percent of staff have a preference to be office-based. Forty-three percent of those staff want to work from an office for more than three days a week, or 60% of the time. • Sixty-six percent of staff with a preference to be office-based have a preference to work from home some of the time (one to three days a week, or 20-60% of the time). <p>We are working on a follow-up to the survey results in the context of defining our Future of Work vision and implementation roadmap.</p> <p>We have also made good progress in defining our Future of Work vision. We have continued to work on consolidating a clear understanding of our current position and opportunities, and what other, global, organisations are doing to inform the Agency Management Team and Board's decision-making. Further sessions with the Agency Management Team and Senior Leaders Team are scheduled during September to discuss the outputs from this work, agree our vision, and ultimately agree an implementation roadmap with a small set of targeted initial actions.</p>	

Corporate	
Measure 17: Solve at least five long-standing information challenges	
AMT lead: Terry A'Hearn	Green ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>We have been gathering feedback from across the organisation on which information challenges we should focus on first. We are setting up a network of Information Champions to help the organisation tackle these challenges. Two introductory workshops for the Information Champions are arranged for the first half of September and a plan for the sessions has been developed.</p> <p>Our new systems will be central to success in this area. All staff have access to, and have received initial training on, the new SEPA M365 system. A network of M365 Champions has been trained and are now providing generic and bespoke training to staff on request. Two pilot projects have trialled the application of M365 Sharepoint as a document management system and as an internal communication tool.</p>	

Corporate	
Measure 18: Regenerative SEPA route map prepared and agreed	
AMT lead: Jo Green	Green ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>The Agency Management Team provided direction on draft proposals for our approach to becoming a regenerative organisation. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what impacts should be included in the scope of regenerative SEPA. We are aiming to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, our water use, our materials use and our waste • draft long-term goal and targets that we should set to ensure that we keep on track with our goal to become a regenerative organisation • an initial list of priority work areas that we will aim to embed a regenerative approach into <p>Internal staff engagement and conversation sessions were held in August to start the process of introducing Regenerative SEPA to staff, and to involve them in thinking about actions that will help us to deliver that goal.</p>	

Corporate	
Measure 19: The software and hardware required to enable staff to safely work from anywhere will be available by the end of March 2022	
AMT lead: David Pirie	Green ¹
<p>Performance update</p> <p>There are four areas of work which contribute to this measure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide all members of staff with a laptop. 2. Provide mobile phones to members of staff who need them to carry out their role. 3. Provide staff with the hardware and software assistive technologies they need. 4. Work with staff to identify what they need to work anywhere in their specific roles and meet these needs. <p>1. Provide all SEPA members of staff with a laptop.</p> <p>This work is almost complete. By 19 August 2021, we had distributed 1,154 laptops. All laptops have been configured with Microsoft 365 and the build includes security protocols. The remaining laptops will be issued to staff over the next three to four weeks at which point all staff will have a SEPA laptop. Training has also been provided to all staff with training drop-in sessions continuing.</p> <p>2. Provide mobile phones to members of staff who need them to carry out their role.</p> <p>We are working to identify those staff who do not currently have a SEPA mobile phone and need one for their role.</p> <p>3. Provide staff with the hardware and software assistive technologies they need.</p> <p>We received 12 staff requests for assistive technology. The requests included hardware, such as specialised monitors, keyboards and wrist guards. There have also been software requirements, such as electronic dictation software and screen lighting controls. We have provided all the hardware requested. We are in the process of arranging to collect the laptops from individuals to install the required software. In addition, we are finalising a process to be used when a member of staff indicates they need assistive technology. This process will ensure staff receive the equipment they need quickly.</p> <p>4. Work with staff to identify what they need to work anywhere in their specific roles and meet these needs.</p> <p>Our staff work in a variety of roles; we have office-based, laboratory-based and field staff. Each group has different technical requirements to help them do their job. We have started working with groups of staff to identify what technology they need to enable them to work anywhere. This is likely to include things like software to take photographs as part of an inspection which can be uploaded securely to our systems or software to enter data on site which can be securely uploaded.</p>	

Corporate

Measure 20: **Launch four online permit application services**

AMT lead: David Pirie

Amber¹

Performance update

Service	Target release date	Actual release date
Radioactive substances notifications	End July 2021	22 nd June
Private sewage treatment systems	End August 2021	16 th August
Waste carriers	End September 2021	23 rd August
Deposit Return Scheme Producer Registration	End January 2022	

We have released another three of the online registration services that were affected by the cyber-attack. We have already released a service that allows customers to register activities that are exempt from waste management licensing, a free, heavily used service.

To the customer, the services look and feel the same as those that were in place before the cyber-attack, however they are more robust and more secure. Reviving and improving these services required a great deal of effort from staff across the organisation, but what we have now is a solid platform to work from, with expertise and processes in place to get more services released.

To provide context, we receive around 2,500 registrations for private sewage treatment systems each year. These sometimes come to us in a last-minute panic, when homeowners on the brink of selling their property, realise they must have a registration in place before the sale can go through legally.

The average turnaround time, from the point the customer submitted their registration form to the point they receive their permission, used to be four weeks. With the online service this has been reduced to five minutes. On hitting <submit> the customer will receive their emailed registrations almost instantaneously. We also include additional helpful information for the customer, for example explaining how to look after their treatment system.

We receive around 2,500 waste carrier registrations per year, which are required for businesses to operate legally. We receive fewer radioactive substances notifications but this is still a crucial, free, service.

Each service has been built in line with the Scottish Government's Digital First standards, which bring consistency and familiarity for customers. They're accessible, clear and easy to use.

This measure is reporting amber because the fourth and final online registration service, for the Deposit Return Scheme, has been subject to significant external delays which are out of our control. These were due to the impact of COVID and subsequent delay to the appointment of a Scheme Administrator. To ensure we meet our statutory obligations on 1 January 2022, and provide a digital producer registration service, we are working in partnership with external consultants to fast-track the design and build of a minimum viable product. A series of requirements workshops are underway, which will inform the consultants' proposed delivery date. We have requested the Deposit Return Scheme build is prioritised and brought forward as far as possible. We are closely monitoring a risk that the consultants are unable to deliver the work required by 1 January 2022; we have assessed this is a low-level risk which is unlikely to occur. However, until this delivery timeline is confirmed the project and digital service workstream remains on amber status.

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Introduction

At the back of our Annual Operating Plan 2021-2022 we set out twenty performance measures. We will report regular progress against those measures. The reports will help the Agency Management Team, Board and Scottish Government assess our progress. We publish performance reports on our website.

This document sets a bit of context around each of the twenty performance measures. It is to help people who are unfamiliar with aspects of our work to understand the performance reports.

Regulation

Measure 1: All permitting determinations completed within statutory timelines by March 2022

Many businesses carry out activities that could cause pollution or pose a risk to the environment. Before they begin, they need to apply to us for an authorisation. Each activity is regulated under different regulations. The regulations set out the timescales for us to determine whether to authorise the activity. We aim to determine all authorisations within the statutory timescale. We are also improving our processes and systems to reduce determination times.

Measure 2: Establish regular liaison with all planning authorities and consulting bodies by September 2021

We have statutory responsibilities within the land use planning system, development and environmental assessment regimes. We engage with all 32 Scottish local authorities, two National Park authorities and other consulting bodies. Through this, we help deliver development and places that benefit the environment, society and economy. We focus on where we can add most value to the planning and development process. We work at a variety of scales and across a wide range of development types. These range from transformational partnership projects to early engagement in Local Development Plans, to individual planning applications.

Before the cyber-attack, we processed much of work through our Planning Casework System, Engagement was often transactional and email-based, though liaison did occur in some parts of the country.

The cyber-attack meant we could no longer access our Planning Casework System. We became wholly reliant on regular liaison with planning authorities and consulting bodies to discuss casework priorities and to provide planning and development advice.

As a result of this more collaborative approach, we estimate that we are dealing with around fifty percent fewer development management cases compared with previous years, because we are focussing on where we can add greatest value whilst ensuring we fulfil our statutory requirements. Time savings are reinvested in new transformative interventions with the planning and development sector. Collaboration is creating the conditions for us to work even more proactively with planning authorities on shared place-making outcomes which deliver for the environment, society and economy”.

Measure 3: All Category 1 and 2 environmental events responded to

We categorise pollution reports from level one to four based on the severity of environmental impact. For example, a Category 1 (major) event impacts more than one kilometre of a watercourse, kills more than 100 fish, or could result in the closure of a designated bathing water, shellfish water or drinking water source. By contrast, a Category 3 (minor) event would only see localised impact on a watercourse, kill fewer than 10 fish in total, or cause minor visible pollution or littering. Category 4 events are unsubstantiated, where we have not found any impact when we investigated a report.

Since January, we have received and responded to environmental events reported by phone. We are now also able to respond to events reported through a form on our website. We have officers and managers on standby 24 hours a day to respond to any significant events.

A single event can generate many reports, often 20 or more. The numbers in our performance report relate to the number of events. They do not reflect the number of reports received for each event.

Measure 4: Compliance verification plan delivered by March 2022

This measure is about ensuring that operators are compliant with their environmental obligations. Our verification plan will cover a range of sectors and operators. It will focus on those whose performance is poor or could deteriorate without regulatory action. It will address activities where harm caused could worsen without action. It also includes those activities with greatest potential for harm. These activities take place on sites regulated under the Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations, some sites regulated under Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations and at those sites managing radioactive substances.

Verification activities include desktop reviews of data and reports, virtual meetings, telephone conversations and on-site inspections. On-site inspections have increased as Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions have eased.

Measure 5: Action plans in place and being delivered for all priority sites

We define priority sites as those which are having (or could have) a significant impact on the environment, on people, or on both. They include illegal sites and regulated sites which are significantly non-compliant. Some of these might also be generating significant community impact from a nuisance perspective. They also include sites which are currently assessed as compliant, but which generate substantial complaints.

For each priority site, we take action to address the harm or prevent the harm. Sometimes our compliance verification checks demonstrate there is no harm. Our approach is set out in site-specific action plans. Implementation of each action plan is tracked. This ensures timely resolution of the issues or proactive measures to prevent a situation arising. Due to the complex nature of the issues on some sites, resolution is likely to take longer than the current financial year.

Flooding

Measure 6: Complete phase 2 of the transformation of the land use planning service, focussing on best use of readily available flood risk information, input to government policy change and updated climate change allowances for industry

In phase one, we built back the land use planning service to a good operational level. To do this, we had to redesign the service so that we were able to deliver flood risk advice for high-risk sites and other important areas. We did this while also managing a backlog of work and difficulties associated with having less access to our data and technical tools.

In the redesign, we embedded some of our long-term aspirations for transforming the service to be more collaborative, risk-based, and streamlined. In phase two, we will continue developing the service in this direction.

To support Scotland's green recovery and enable sustainable development, we will make our data more accessible. We will begin with flood maps. The maps will be easier to use and will have clear guidance on how they can be used to inform development decisions.

We will focus our site-specific advice in high-risk places. We will also focus on the places with the greatest potential to benefit from collaboration, to create successful communities resilient to climate change in the long term.

We will work with the Scottish Government on its development of the fourth [National Planning Framework](#) and the digital transformation of Scotland's planning system.

We will also update our guidance on the climate change allowances that should be applied to flood risk assessments. This will ensure that industry can readily access clear advice on climate change. It will be directly applicable at the site level and based on the latest climate change science.

Measure 7: Deliver 14 flood risk management plans in accordance with the revised deadlines

First produced in 2015, flood risk management plans coordinate and concentrate efforts by many organisations to tackle flooding in Scotland.

Flood risk management plans are produced in collaboration with other public agencies, for each of Scotland's 14 Local Plan Districts. These documents determine the long-term priorities and shorter-term actions to reduce the impact of flooding in Scotland. They target communities and infrastructure where flood risk management could provide the greatest benefit.

A public consultation on the draft output from the flood risk management plans started on 21 December 2020. Due to the impact of lockdown and the cyber-attack, the Scottish Government agreed that we could split the consultation into two phases with a revised end date. Phase one opened on 21 December 2020 and ran until 30th July 2021. Phase two opened on 30 July 2021 and runs until 31 October 2021.

We will submit a digest of the consultation responses to Scottish Ministers within two months of the close of the consultation.

Measure 8: Publish our flooding strategy, 10-year roadmap and associated metrics of success

The climate is changing, and we face a crisis. Nine of the ten warmest years in the UK have occurred since 2002 and seven of the ten wettest since 1998. The science on climate change is clear. Flooding is likely to increase in the future, particularly due to rising sea levels, increased surface water and water from rivers.

Our One Planet Prosperity Flooding Services Strategy sets out how we will refocus our flooding services in response to the emergency. By doing so we will be ready to tackle the challenges of future flood risk.

We are helping the Scottish Government to transform flooding policy direction over the next year. This work will set the future direction for flood management in Scotland and ensure Scotland can adapt to the challenges of a changing climate.

We will align our flooding strategy with the future direction set out by the Scottish Government. We will also develop a 10-year roadmap and identify how we will measure success.

Measure 9: Continued operation of the flood warning service 24/7, 365 days a year. Warnings and alerts issued for all significant flooding events. The hydrometric network and associated data feeds are maintained and operational. The forecast models and data feeds from the Met Office are maintained and operational

Flooding is a frequent natural hazard in Scotland. It can have devastating impacts on people, on activities, and on the natural and built environment. Our 24/7 flood forecasting and warning services enables people, businesses, and communities to take action to protect themselves. We also advise civil contingency responders in advance and during flood events. This is part of Scotland multi-agency emergency planning and incident response.

Every day we issue a daily flood guidance statement to responders (more than 900 people). Ahead of flooding periods, we issue regional flood alerts and local flood warnings to inform the public. We operate a network of rainfall, river and coastal water level gauges. These feed into our real-time forecasting models, along with meteorological forecasts. A dedicated communication system issues the flood guidance statements, alerts and warnings.

This measure is monitoring the readiness of our systems to ensure that we are always ready for the next big flood.

Measure 10: Agree and implement long-term future flood incident messaging systems and telemetry solutions

We are creating a new, integrated and multi-hazard early warning service, the first of its kind in the UK.

It will replace our existing flood warning direct dissemination system. This has been sending vital flood forecasting and warning information to Scotland's responders and the public for 10 years.

To better serve current and future consumer needs, our Future Flood and Incident Messaging Service will digitally reform several of our services and will:

- enhance our existing Floodline service. Over 30,000 registered customers currently benefit from flood warnings direct to their phones;
- improve online flood warning provision to the hundreds of thousands who choose to access information online; and
- deliver the new Scottish Flood Forecast. This is a daily online publication of our three-day look ahead of forecast flooding in all parts of Scotland.

We're also expanding our early warning services by incorporating water scarcity (drought) alerts for the first time. This service currently relies on paper-based notifications to water abstractors in Scotland. Both will follow Digital Scotland's service standards by ensuring we meet users' needs, provide a continually improving service and use the right technology.

Following a period of gathering user requirements, we aim to procure the new service by January 2022 and launch by March 2023.

Corporate

Measure 11: 100% of managers have been offered group coaching sessions

Coronavirus and the cyber-attack have led to our staff and managers operating in a hugely challenging environment. We carried out a short period of consultation with staff, managers and our external consultant through March and April. This led to the management development programme focussing on supporting managers to:

- look after themselves;
- look after staff; and
- deliver SEPA's work programme.

These coaching sessions are an opportunity to explore ways to achieve positive outcomes in the three elements of the programme. As they are a valuable contribution to supporting wellbeing and effectiveness, accessibility is an important consideration.

Measure 12: We have run management development sessions on four topics by 31 March 2022

A key element of the programme is supporting managers to deliver SEPA's work programme. To do this we will run workshop on four different topics.

Measure 13: HR 2021-2022 data and the 2020-2021 closing balance sheet are complete in Agresso by November 2021

This measure helps ensure that we recover our financial records and completes our annual accounts for the financial year to 31 March 2021. We have a statutory duty to complete and lay accounts before parliament by 31 December 2021.

Measure 14: Invoices are issued by 31 September 2021 and the debt level is returned within year to pre-COVID and cyber levels by March 2022

This measure is about ensuring that we restore, maintain and develop our charging schemes and other income streams.

Measure 15: Our procurement strategy, annual report and contracts register are in place by September 2021

These publications are legislative requirements under the Procurement Reform Act 2014. Our existing “Procurement Operating Plan 2019-2021” expired at the end of March 2021.

Themes for a 2021-2023 Operating Plan will be developed in August 2021.

The Procurement Annual Report is created between July and December every year. It is published on our website and the Scottish Government’s in line with statutory timescales.

The Contracts Register is usually published quarterly. That has not been possible without our normal finance software platform, Agresso. It should resume in August 2021 with an interim Quarter 2 register.

Measure 16: Draft Future of Work roadmap with small set of targeted initial actions by September 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic and cyber-attack have substantially altered our way of working. We are now looking at ways of building on these changes to determine the future of how we will work as an organisation.

As part of this, we will develop an implementation roadmap. It will include key decisions, the next steps we need to take, and the targeted initial actions we will complete. We will further develop the roadmap as our vision evolves. We will be clear on how and when we will put in place the changes needed to our people, workspaces and technology.

Measure 17: Solve at least five long-standing information challenges

We use lots of information in our work. We want to make sure that we have robust procedures in place to protect the information we need to keep secure. We also want to proactively publish information that people need to make decisions. As we build new systems, we want to use technology to help us manage our information more easily.

This project will involve people from across the organisation. They will work together to develop and embed practical approaches to manage information. This approach will also help us raise confidence and competence in managing information.

Measure 18: Regenerative SEPA route map prepared and agreed

As a society we are over-using our planet's resources. This has resulted in a climate crisis, a biodiversity crisis and a resource use crisis. They are having profound impacts on our planet and its people. The imperative to act has never been more urgent. As Scotland's environmental regulator, we are requiring and encouraging businesses to reduce their impacts. We must do the same.

Our goal is to become a regenerative organisation. This means tackling the direct and indirect environmental impacts we have by reducing them to net zero wherever possible. At the same time, we will take opportunities to be net positive through actions that restore the environment.

We have reduced our greenhouse gas emissions by almost two thirds in the last decade. Becoming a regenerative organisation is a significant extension of that. The goal is to effectively end our emissions and impacts by becoming a net contributor to the restoration of our planet.

This is a long-term goal that will be supported by targets aimed at (a) becoming net zero in our greenhouse gas emissions, water use, materials use and waste generation and (b) maximising projects that offer opportunities to restore the environment. A simple route map that sets out the actions we will take to embed this goal into our work will be published.

Key milestones to March 2022:

- October 21 – The Agency Management Team and Board formally agree Regenerative SEPA targets.
- December 21 – We publish our 2020-2021 greenhouse gas emissions.
- March 22 – Regenerative SEPA route map published.

Measure 19: The software and hardware required to enable staff to safely work anywhere will be available by the end of March 2022

Staff in SEPA work in a variety of roles, we have office-based, lab-based and field staff. Each group of staff have different technical requirements to help them do their job.

The technical requirements are both hardware and software. The hardware includes devices such as laptops and mobile phones. The software requirements include things like the ability to view data securely in the field.

By the end of March 2022, we will identify what staff need to be able to do their work anywhere. We will meet those requirements ensuring our data remains secure.

Measure 20: Launch four online permit application services

We will launch four online permit application services:

- Radioactive Substances by the end of July.
- Existing Septic Tanks by the end of August 2021.
- Waste Carriers by the end of September 2021.
- Deposit Return Scheme Producer Registration by the end of January 2022.

The permit application service for Radioactive Substances is a free service. It is used for the management of radioactive sources. It can be used by any individual or company who manages low risk or orphan radioactive sources.

The Existing Septic Tanks permit application service is used to register a sewage discharge to land or water. This is a legal requirement, and the lack of a registration often comes up through the process of selling a house. The service can be used by private homeowners. Payments made for the service are completed online. Customers receive their registration certificate immediately.

The permit application service used to register as a new waste carrier or broker enables legal transportation of controlled waste. It is intended to be used by sole traders, partnerships and limited companies who deal with the transport of waste. Payments made for the service are completed online. Customers receive their registration certificate immediately.

We must provide a producer registration service for the deposit return scheme by 1st January 2022. From that date, drinks producers and importers will have to register with us if they intend to market or sell drinks to consumers on the Scottish market. Independent research estimates that 4,000–4,500 producers will have to register.

Our digital registration system will make it easy for producers to meet their registration obligations. It will support complex data and reporting requirements. It will allow members of the public to check if a producer is registered. It will also ensure the secure transmission of data between us, producers and a Scheme Administrator, who producers may appoint to fulfil their obligations on their behalf.