

## Corporate Performance Measures Explanations

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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 a 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.