

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

25 AUGUST 2009

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

ABSTRACT

This report advises of the production of the 2008/09 Annual Report for the Infrastructure Services department. A copy of the report is attached.

1 RECOMMENDATION

The Committee note the terms of the Infrastructure Services department annual report, 2008/09.

2 INTRODUCTION

As an integral part of the council's performance management arrangements, each department is required to prepare an annual report for submission to their service committee in the first committee cycle following the summer recess.

The reports are designed to give members, employees and the public (who will have access to the reports via the council's website) an at a glance picture of performance within the departments during the previous financial year.

They follow a standard format to ensure consistency of approach across the council.

The reports, in draft format, were considered in detail by the Monitoring Group at its meeting on 16 June 2009.

Attached to this report is annual reports ([1](#) and [2](#)) for the Infrastructure Services department for 2008/09.

1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the terms of this report.

2 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications associated with this report.

3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An equalities impact assessment is not required.

6 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Law & Administration and Head of Finance have been consulted on the terms of this report.

ERIC S LOWSON
DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

NOTE No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

IS/ESL/JSG

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1 SERVICE PROFILE

The Infrastructure Services Department is responsible for developing and delivering strategies which impact on the daily lives of everyone who lives in, works in or visits Angus.

The four divisions in the department are Roads, Planning & Transport, Environmental & Consumer Protection and Economic Development.

Roads

The Roads Division is responsible for improving and maintaining the roads in Angus (with the exception of the A90 trunk road) and ensuring traffic flows safely. The work includes planned maintenance, responsive maintenance and winter maintenance, improving road safety and implementing improvements to road layouts, street lighting and signs.

Additionally, Roads division staff contribute to the discharge of certain of the Council's statutory duties, in particular those arising under the legislation dealing with river and coastal flooding. These areas of administration are presently subject to significant changes in the legislation which also has a bearing for example in development standards.

Planning & Transport

The Planning and Transport Division is responsible for developing local and regional land use planning strategies in partnership with colleagues in the Council and regional partners. It also deals with the regulatory aspects of development standards and building control which are essential to ensure we have sustainable and safe development in Angus.

Local transport planning and public transport is also a key service, working with colleagues in Roads, neighbouring authorities and private sector partners to ensure public transport is available throughout Angus. The division also takes a lead for the Council on environmental climate change and heritage initiatives.

Environmental & Consumer Protection

The Environmental and Consumer Protection Division has a wide range of responsibility including leading on the development and delivery of the Council's waste and waste reduction strategies, protecting vulnerable groups through the trading standards team and in environmental health through food safety and health and safety, environmental protection and controls on noise. The service is also responsible for animal welfare including the dog warden service.

Economic Development

The Economic Development Division's work ranges from supporting individuals into work and employers to grow, to marketing and promoting Angus as a place to visit and to invest in. It also leads for the Council on European initiatives and on external funding opportunities to support Council functions and local community groups.

A key area of work in the promotion of Angus and gaining inward investment is the work in China and the Carnoustie Country strategy, and through the tourism and economic development strategies.

2 ACHIEVEMENTS

The department leads on and delivers a wide range of services, some of the main achievements are summarised below.

Sales of Council owned serviced employment land (2.92 hectares on 7 sites) generated £315,000 net capital income. The planned company investments will create 48 New jobs and help safeguard 459 existing jobs.

The average occupancy levels for the 109 Business/Office/Retail units rented out by the Council was 88% generating £768,000 rental income and supporting around 430 occupant jobs.

In April 2008 Angus Council (along with Dundee City and Perth and Kinross Councils) assumed responsibility for delivery of the Business Gateway contracts from Scottish Enterprise. Along with other achievements, the service supported 215 business start-ups and 15 Growth Pipeline companies (growth of more than £400,000 in turnover in 3 years).

A team of 4 (2.5FTE) Business Advisers were employed by Angus Council to work with local companies and the Angus Grant Scheme was re-introduced.

The Supplier Development Programme, to help Angus companies win public sector contracts, was launched and by March 2009, 79 Angus Companies had joined the programme.

A media unit of 3 staff (1.8FTE) was established to enrich web content and improve promotion of Angus. The in-house approach provides significant added value (4x) compared to previous private sector procurement.

An Ancestral Initiative aimed at attracting visits from the global Scottish Diaspora to Angus & Dundee was launched through 2 products, the Angus and Dundee Roots Festival (generating £33,983 in spend) and the Digitisation of the Angus Burial records.

The External Funding Team supported 161 local groups with funding enquiries and advised 399 individuals attending events organised by the team

External Funding processed 61 applications for Community Grant.

A consultative draft Angus Tourism Strategy and associated Action Plan was published.

The 10th Angus Ambassadors Awards in November 2008 were followed by civic visits to all 9 award recipients which stimulated 58 published news articles.

Tartan Day Scotland 2008 featured 64 events across 8 Local Authority areas which generated 166 media articles with an estimated 17 million audience and a value of £183,370. The Angus coverage alone generated an audience of over 4 million.

A new range of Carnoustie Country golf wear was launched in China in March 2009. The range produced by Berry Textiles is targeted at the growing Chinese market of golfers and is the latest initiative to come out of the Angus in China initiative. The idea was born out of the Berry Textiles Group Chairman, Simon Chung, attending the Tartan Day Golf Challenges held annually in April. A trademark agreement has been signed by Angus Council and Berrytex to allow the production of golf wear which carries the Carnoustie Country logo and website.

Visits to Angushead.com equalled 229,800 up 5% on 07/08. Around 8% came from the top 6 overseas visitor bases (over 18,000).

Tartandayscotland.com attracted 7,740 visits with 23,575 pages viewed, Carnoustiecountry.com attracted 13,043 visits with 49,704 pages viewed. Finally Tayroots.com attracted 11,068 visits with 47,048 pages viewed.

Environmental Health investigated a fatal Legionnaires' disease incident in Angus. As a result of this incident 120 businesses in Angus were contacted and received advice regarding the control of the Legionnaires' disease risk within their business.

A new Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System to facilitate the electronic reporting and verification of the Council's food enforcement annual returns was implemented.

Environmental Health and Trading Standards worked together for the successful implementation of (EC) Regulations for the hygiene of foodstuff and animal feed on farms. .

Following representation to the Scottish Government to improve living accommodation for migrant workers, the Council was successful in bringing agricultural worker accommodation within the licensing and regulatory control of the Caravan Site Act

Trading Standards used Scottish Government funding to start tackling the illegal sales of tobacco products to children in Angus. A pilot programme of test purchasing using children was carried out and planning completed for a programme of test purchasing using teenage volunteers for a range of age restricted products such as tobacco, video games, fireworks, spray paints. In a similar way Trading Standards worked with the Arbroath Community Task-force project to encourage businesses in the Arbroath area to adopt the Angus Age Restricted Sales Code of Practice

In partnership with the Federation for small Businesses Trading Standards developed a reputable trader scheme for Angus (ARTS) to support local businesses and give consumers confidence in participating businesses.

The Waste Strategy Team

- (a) successfully introduced a business and schools recycling service throughout Angus and,
- (b) completed and evaluated an eighteen month long pilot household scheme for the kerbside collection and recycling of small cardboard packaging from 1300 houses in Arbroath,
- (c) completed the construction of the first phase of a dedicated compost processing facility at Restenneth to enhance the Council's capability for the production of quality compost from the green waste collection service.

The Angus Local Plan Review was adopted by the Council. The Local Plan provides the detailed policy framework to guide future development, land use and investment in Angus for the period to 2011.

The Building Standards balanced scorecard, a performance management tool, was audited by the Scottish Building Standards Division and of the five categories audited, four were ranked as "excellent" and one "good".

The Dundee, Perth, Angus and North Fife Strategic Development Joint Committee was established which is responsible for publishing Tayplan. This new strategic development land use plan will set out the long term vision for land use planning in the area over the next 20 years.

The Angus Council Draft Core Paths Plan was published. This Plan, which may be subject to a public inquiry, sets out a framework of clearly defined routes across land or inland water which will be accessible to the public.

Environmental improvement projects were commenced in Forfar Town Centre and Carnoustie Seafront, with path/cycle paths at Easthaven, St Vigeans and Dighty.

The Roads service is one of the Council's services which everyone uses. The main achievements here were the delivery of investment strategies in maintenance of our roads, bridges and street lighting which keep Angus as one of the best performing Councils in the country. Programmes were also introduced or completed to deal with speed reduction, accident reduction and energy reduction in street lighting, all of which contributed to making Angus safer and sustainable.

The redevelopment and enhancement of Arbroath harbour has been completed which now provides a range of facilities for leisure users alongside the continuation of commercial fishing activities.

Particular demands were placed on the winter road maintenance service over the later part of the winter period as also across most of the UK. The winter service continued to be provided in conjunction with Tayside Contracts in accordance with the policy and operational standards set by the council.

Excelsis

Appendix 1 comprises Excelsis reports detailing Infrastructure Services department service plan actions completed during 2007-08 and actions carried forward to 2008-09.

3 SERVICE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE

| Key Performance Indicators | | 07/08 | 08/09 |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------|--------|
| Roads | | | |
| 1 | Street Lighting faults repaired within 7 days of fault being reported. | 90.1% | 94.8% |
| 2 | Traffic signal faults repaired within 48 hours of fault being reported. | 97.1% | 92.2% |
| 3 | Percentage reduction in number of people killed or seriously injured through road accidents compared to the base figures over the 1994 – 1998 period against a target of 40% reduction by 2010. | 47% | 60% |
| 4 | Percentage reduction in number of children killed or seriously injured through road accidents compared to the base figures over the 1994 – 1998 period against a target reduction of 50% by 2010. | 29% | 86% |
| 5 | Percentage of the road network which has reached a condition which indicates that further investigation should be taken to establish if remedial treatment is required. (Designated “amber” in the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey). | *24.9% | *22.6% |
| 6 | Percentage of the road network which has deteriorated to the point at which repairs to prolong its future service life should be considered. (Designated “red” in the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey). | *5.5% | *4.0% |
| Environmental & Consumer Protection | | | |
| 7 | Net cost of refuse collection/household. | £55.73 | £58.89 |
| 8 | Net cost of refuse disposal/household | £66.23 | £69.10 |
| 9 | Proportion of waste recycled or landfilled: | | |
| | a Landfilled | 48.3% | 47.1% |
| | b Composted | 14.7% | 15.3% |
| | c Recycled | 20% | 20.4% |
| | d Energy from waste | 17% | 17.2% |

| Key Performance Indicators (contd) | | 07/08 | 08/09 |
|------------------------------------|--|-------|-------|
| 10 | Food Safety Hygiene Inspections: | | |
| | Approved premises % inspected within time. | 72.7% | 74% |
| | Due for inspection every 6 months, completed on time. | 100% | 100% |
| | Due for inspection every 12 months, completed on time. | 98.4% | 100% |
| | Due for inspection at greater than 12 months, completed on time. | 86.2% | 87% |
| 11 | Trading Standards | | |
| | Percentage of customer complaints dealt with within 14 days. | 57.7% | 54.4% |
| | Percentage of business advice requests completed in 14 days. | 95.6% | 96.3% |
| 12 | Inspection of Trading Premises | | |
| | Percentage of high risk (12 months) inspections undertaken in time. | 89.7% | 93.6% |
| | Percentage of medium risk (2 years) inspections undertaken in time. | 26.2% | 29.0% |
| Planning & Transport | | | |
| 13 | Processing of Planning | | |
| | Percentage of householder applications dealt with within 2 months. | 82.0% | 90% |
| | Percentage of non-householder applications dealt with within 2 months. | 43.0% | 54% |
| | Percentage of appeals successful. | 45.2% | 37% |
| 14 | Issue of Building Warrant approvals within 5 days of receiving information. | 83% | 81% |
| 15 | Issue of acceptance of completion certificate within 5 days of receiving all information and final site visit. | 97% | 99% |
| Economic Development | | | |
| 16 | Number of groups assisted with funding enquiries (meetings, funding searches run etc) | 137 | 161 |
| 17 | Number of funding alerts/bulletins issued | 135 | 116 |
| 18 | Number of funding or promotional events held | 21 | 23 |

| Key Performance Indicators (contd) | | 07/08 | 08/09 |
|------------------------------------|--|---------|---------|
| 19 | Number of attendees at events | 296 | 399 |
| 20 | Number of searches carried out on www.angus4community.com | 469 | 629 |
| 21 | Number of applications processed through Angus Council Community Grant Scheme | 68 | 61 |
| 22 | Number of Employment Land plots sold | 5 | 7 |
| 23 | Income generated (£) | 245,000 | 411,000 |
| 24 | Established new jobs | 30 | 48 |
| 25 | Jobs safeguarded | 91 | 459 |
| 26 | Number of business units (incl yards) | 109 | 109 |
| 27 | Average occupancy levels (%) of business units | 89 | 86 |
| 28 | Number of jobs supported (est.) | 430 | 430 |
| 29 | Rental income (£) | 724,000 | 768,000 |
| 30 | Visitors to Angusahead.com | 219,813 | 229,800 |
| 31 | First time visitors to Angusahead.com | 167,891 | 171,670 |

*** Footnote – These are 2 year rolling average figs. incl. for the preceding year in accordance with national reporting practice.**

Service Improvements

In 2008/2009 a Development Standards Member/Officer Working Group was established to consider improvements to enforcement procedures and reporting the consequences of new planning legislation on decision making and the scheme of delegation in relation to dealing with planning applications. The Working Group recommended changes to procedures particularly in relation to the scheme of delegation and these were implemented in early 2009.

A Best Value Review of Development Standards was undertaken in the year and an Action Plan published. A Service Review of Tendered Local Bus Services was commenced in 08/09.

The Transport team continued to develop the innovative work in respect of training individuals with learning difficulties to be able to travel by bus independently.

The Building Standards team engaged in a Peer Review exercise with Dundee City and Perth and Kinross Councils in respect of building warrants which the Council had an interest in.

Carnoustiecountry.com and Tayroots.com also improved on visitors etc but a change in method of collating information through Google Analytics makes it impractical to make direct comparison over 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Commentary on significant variances

| | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Management of resources through joint working with Tayside Contracts has increased performance throughout the year. |
| 2 | There have been some issues with traffic light controllers combined with the performance of the remote monitoring system. The problematic controllers have been replaced/refurbished. |
| 13 | The improvement in the processing times for planning applications reflects the management action taken during 2007/08 and 2008/09. |

4 FINANCE

It should be noted that all of the figures detailed in this section are based on the 2008/09 unaudited financial statements.

Capital Budget 2008/09

| Capital Programme 2008/09 | Net Budget £000's | Unaudited Actual to 31 March 09 £000's | Variance Over / (Under) £000's | Actual Against Budget % |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| IS Directorate | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Economic Development | 631 | 274 | (357) | 43.4 |
| Environmental & Consumer Protection | 1,426 | 1,278 | (148) | 89.6 |
| Planning & Transport | 653 | 647 | (6) | 99.1 |
| Roads | 5,610 | 5,643 | 33 | 100.6 |
| Transport Projects | 776 | 698 | (78) | 90.0 |
| Infrastructure Services Total | 9,096 | 8,540 | (556) | 93.9 |

There was a net underspend on the capital plan of £556,000 which can be explained as follows: -

- I.S. Directorate had a zero net capital expenditure in 2008/09. However, £55,000 was spent on building improvement works at County Buildings, which was fully funded from the Local Capital Fund and revenue budget contributions.
- Economic Development had a net underspend of £357,000 due in the main to tendering delays relating to; services to employment land, with design work being slowed by associated service providers; slippage on Angus Marketing Portal due to staff shortages; and delays to Tourism Projects - specifically Pictavia and certain Tourism Information Centre projects.
- Environmental & Consumer Protection applied £201,060 of Strategic Waste Fund revenue funding to the Restenneth Landfill Site (In-bay Composting), which helped to reduce the funding required through the Capital Plan. However, due to an overspend on the leachate treatment plant project it has been necessary for other capital projects to be deferred into 2009/10 resulting in a net underspend overall.
- Although Planning & Transport is close to budget this is due in the main to the transfer of Brechin Town Heritage Initiative's non-enhancing capital expenditure into revenue expenditure. In addition, the accrual in respect of the final settlement for the building of the Arbroath Harbour Development has been increased.
- The Roads division reported a net overspend on its capital programme in 2008/09 of £33,000, an overspend of 0.6% on its net budget of £5,610,000. There were budget overspends on Footway & Carriageway Reconstruction, Lighting Upgrades & the Brechin Flood Prevention Project which were primarily offset by underspends on the: Montrose Bridge, A92 Arbroath – Dundee, Coastal Protection, 3 Route Action Plans, Brothock Burn Flood Prevention and Supplementary Capital.
- Transport Projects (previously TACTRAN monies) underspent by £78,000. This was primarily due to slippage in the "Provision of walking / cycling facilities" and "A935 Route Action Plan – Lay-by construction" projects.

Revenue Budget 2008/09

| Revenue Budget 2008/09 | Adjusted Net Budget £000's | Unaudited Actual to 31 March 09 £000's | Variance Over / (Under) £000's | Actual Against Budget % |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| IS Directorate | 472 | 492 | 20 | 104.3 |
| Economic Development | 2,307 | 2,288 | (19) | 99.2 |
| Environmental & Consumer Protection | 11,780 | 11,417 | (363) | 96.9 |
| Planning & Transport | 2,992 | 3,040 | 48 | 101.6 |
| Roads | 18,407 | 18,414 | 7 | 100.0 |
| Infrastructure Services Total | 35,958 | 35,651 | (307) | 99.1 |

Overall the Infrastructure Services Department underspent by £307,000 and can be explained as follows: -

- The IS Directorate overspent by £20,000; £16,000 of this relates to property costs (excluding energy and planned / unplanned maintenance costs), general maintenance £3,000, rates £5,000, window cleaning £3,000, building cleaning £4,000 and refuse collection £1,000.
- Economic Development have an underspend of £19,000 after allowing for uncontrollable property maintenance and energy budget adjustments totalling £7,000 and approved 100% budget carry forwards. The underspend is mainly due to staff slippage and increased European Grant income, which was partially offset by higher than budgeted third party payments.
- The Environmental and Consumer Protection division are reporting an overall underspend position of £363,000, after allowing for approved 100% carry forwards in respect of the Strategic Waste Fund. This was as a result of higher than anticipated recycle sales income (£116k) and commercial waste refuse collection income (£58k); DERL charges were (£121k) lower than expected due to non-achievement of budgeted tonnage levels (although partially offset by increased landfill tax charges); higher than estimated staff slippage (£86k); unforeseen underspends on the SEPA License (£41k) and car allowances (£11k). These favourable movements were partially offset by increased leachate costs £70k.
- The Planning & Transport division reported a £48,000 overspend position which principally resulted from decreased income from planning applications and building warrants plus increased legal fees in respect of the Windfarm Public Local Inquiry. To compensate savings were made through the Access to the Countryside budget, the Public Sector Housing Grant contribution, staff slippage and a reduction in third party payments.
- The Roads division was expecting an on budget outturn position, after the necessary adjustments /transfers between the revenue, capital and R&R fund budgets in respect of the revenue overspends on street lighting energy costs and winter maintenance. However, a late adjustment of £7,000 in respect of telecom works costs undertaken at The Mart in 2008/09, which had originally been earmarked for funding in 2007/08, resulted in a £7,000 overspend on the Roads revenue for 2008/09.

Roads & Transport Renewal and Repairs Fund 2008/09

| | £000's |
|---|----------------|
| Total R&R Fund as at 1 April 2008 | 3,248 |
| Total expenditure 2008/09 | <u>(2,956)</u> |
| Total R&R Fund as at 31 March 2009 | 292 |
| Total committed expenditure outstanding | <u>(132)</u> |
| Uncommitted Fund balance as at 31 March 2009 | 160 |
| Less minimum Fund balance | <u>(100)</u> |
| Available Fund balance as at 31 March 2009 | 60 |

The above illustrates that there is an uncommitted balance of £60,000 on the Fund as at 31 March 2009, which will be available for use in future years. This is after allowing for corrective action totalling £490,000 to partially address the overspends on winter maintenance and street lighting that arose in 2008/09.

5 STAFFING

Staffing numbers

The department's budgeted staffing numbers for 2008/09 comprised of 257 full time equivalent (FTE). This was a marginal increase on 2007/08.

Budgeted staff numbers for Economic Development in 2008/09 was 33.2 (FTE)

Budgeted staff numbers for Environmental & Consumer Protection was 73.3 (FTE)

Budgeted staff numbers for Roads was 75.

Budgeted staff numbers for Planning & Transport was 74.

Sickness Absence

| | Percentage of days lost | | Days lost per employee | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
| | 07/08 | 08/09 | 07/08 | 08/09 |
| Ec Dev | 5.69 | 3.73 | 12.13 | 7.7 |
| E&CP | 2.7 | 4.8 | 6.37 | 10.7 |
| P&T | 3.51 | 4 | 7.05 | 10 |
| Roads | 3.33 | 1.74 | 7.44 | 4.5 |
| Departmental Total | 3.43 | 3.47 | 7.48 | 8 |

Employee Turnover

The staff turnover percentage figures represent the numbers of staff leaving the divisions of the department. Indicator A includes staff moving to other divisions or departments within the Council whilst indicator B reflects staff leaving the Council.

| | A | | B | |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 07/08 | 08/09 | 07/08 | 08/09 |
| Ec Dev | 13.0 | 9.67 | 4.3 | 9.67 |
| E&CP | 6.0 | 7.5 | 4.5 | 5.6 |
| P&T | 8.2 | 8.0 | 6.8 | 6.67 |
| Roads | 17.14 | 18.9 | 14.2 | 12.6 |
| Total | 10.78 | 11.1 | 8.19 | 8.4 |

Roads division has continued to see high turnover in staff in 08/09 which has caused some difficulties in continuity for certain projects and has also posed some difficulties for recruitment into the vacated jobs.

6 HEALTH AND SAFETY

In 2008 a new Health & Safety Forum within the Department was established. The Forum comprises representatives from each of the four divisions of the Department together with Trade Union representatives. The Departmental Health and Safety Policy was reviewed and agreed.

There were no significant Health and Safety incidents or events reported during the year 2008/09. There were 12 minor accidents reported during the year ranging from slips and trips to minor cuts and grazes.

Senior Management from the Department undertook a Safety for Senior Executives training course which was validated by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health.

7 ASSET MANAGEMENT

The department is responsible for a variety of assets including public conveniences, a bus station, car parks and the harbour at Arbroath. However the two largest physical assets the department is responsible for managing are the road network and the Economic Development property portfolio.

The road network,

1,120 miles of road
20,576 lighting columns
373 bridges

requires constant maintenance and upgrading to keep it fit for public use. This requires continuous assessment and prioritisation with maintenance being funded from the departments revenue and capital budget.

Progress has continued with the Roads division towards developing an Asset Management Plan for the roads infrastructure in line with the national Society of Chief Officers for Transportation (SCOTS) project which is on target to complete in 2012. As part of this process the roads carriageways and footways in Angus have been estimated as having replacement costs of over £700m.

The Economic Development Division manages a total of 109 units consisting of 6 yards, 41 offices, 43 industrial units under 5000ft², 11 industrial units over 5,000ft² and 8 retail units. The retail and office figures contain details of units at Arbroath Harbour Visitor Centre which although held on the Miscellaneous Other Services Budget is managed by Economic Development and will be transferred to Infrastructure Services Economic Development Budget in 2010/11.

8 EQUALITY

The period of 2008 - 2009 gave the Department the opportunity to form and allow the Virtual Equalities Action Group to grow in to its lead role within the Department for this important area of legislation.

The Director facilitated the formation of the Group and has linked the activity of the Virtual Equalities Action Group with the Department Management Team (DMT) through requiring the Corporate Equalities Group Departmental Representative to report regularly on Equality issues to the DMT meeting.

The personality mix of the Virtual Equalities Action Group has worked well and with the implementation of the Equality Impact Assessments requirement for all Council reports the members of this Group have assisted report writers with this task. The task of reviewing the Department's policies, procedures etc, is progressing with the Roads Division taking the lead by reviewing all their procedures etc, during the period of the Plan. The other Divisions are at various stages with this task but the endeavour is there to complete this task by the end of 2009.

During 2008 - 2009 the individual Divisions within Infrastructure Services Department continued to meet their legal obligation.

Roads Division

The Roads Division continued their rolling programme to increase the number of dropped kerbs and tactile paving areas across the roads network. In addition, the Division has provided engineering services to our colleagues in Planning and Transport in further programmes of providing access onto buses for wheelchair users at bus stops.

The new legislation for disabled car parking came into force at the end of the year and the proposals have been assessed in preparation for implementation in due course. Over the period last year car parking enforcement, including disabled parking spaces, has been increased in Council off street car parks.

The Division has completed screening and assessments of its policies and procedures in respect to current equality requirements, and is now undertaking screening and assessment of Committee reports and any new policies as necessary.

Economic Development Division

The European funded programmes e.g. LEADER, ERDF and ESF administered by the Division stipulate that the equal opportunities agenda is an integral horizontal theme which must be applied to every successful application for which a grant has been approved.

The Angus Council Community Grant Scheme administered by the Division also requires that any applicant demonstrates that equality of opportunity is embedded in their organisational culture.

Environmental and Consumer Protection Division

During 2008 - 2009 work continued to resolve issues surrounding the provision and inspection of Migrant Workers accommodation in Angus. The objective of this work was to improve the living facilities provided for this minority.

The old and infirmed in Angus continued to be protected by the Doorstoppers initiative implemented during the period of the previous Plan.

The continued use of the Consumer Direct Scheme has improved the accessibility to Trading Standards services for those citizens suffering from disabilities.

The continued improvements at the Council's recycling centres has facilitated greater access to the recycling services for the physically impaired. Also the recycling attendants can render assistance to the less able.

The implementation of the Angus Reputable Traders Scheme (ARTS) has assisted the less able and those living in Angus whose first language is not English to avoid unfair traders.

Planning and Transport Division

In 2008/2009, Planning and Transport staff worked in partnership with colleagues in both the Roads Division and from BEAR Scotland to deliver more raised kerbs at bus stops. There are now 295 such kerbs across Angus with a further 50 planned for 2009/2010. All key bus stops on the strategic public transport corridor between Arbroath, Carnoustie and Monifieth are now equipped with raised kerbs, improving the ease of access on and off buses in these areas. These kerbs are also in place at well used stops across the local authority area.

The Division's work with Social Work and Health staff to integrate the public transport requirements of people with learning disabilities and to encourage independent public transport use continued throughout 2008/2009. It remains a highly successful example of good practice in working with people with such disabilities. Representatives from Planning and Transport and Social Work and Health have been invited to attend a review of practice at NHS Tayside in late May 2009 to explain how such high levels of independent public transport use have been achieved.

On-bus surveys have been conducted during 2008/2009 in order to identify particular transport needs and these are passed onto bus operators or assessed as part of the bus route tendering process. Where practical, demand responsive services for bus travel continue to be considered.

TACTRAN strategies produced in 2008/2009 considered equality issues and the organisation continued to work to improve the accessibility on and off train services passing through the Angus Council area.