



Waterways and Drainage Investment Plan

PERFORMANCE REPORT

2023–24



'We Will Walk Country Together' Artist: Gerard Black ©2023

Aboriginal Acknowledgement

Melbourne Water respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which all Australians rely.

We pay our respects to Bunurong, Gunaikurnai, Taungurung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely and operate. We pay our deepest respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise and respect the continued cultural and spiritual connections that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the land and water they have cared for and protected for thousands of generations.

We demonstrate our ongoing commitment to reconciliation through our partnerships with Traditional Owners and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as we work together to manage land and water now and into the future, while maintaining and respecting cultural and spiritual connections.

Contents

 [Click below to navigate](#)

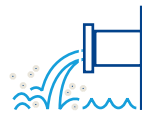
Summary

Every five years Melbourne Water develops a Waterways and Drainage Investment Plan (WDIP) which sets out our responsibilities, goals, levels of service and programs of work for waterway management, flood management and drainage.

It outlines the cost of delivering these services and programs of work funded by property owners across the Port Phillip and Westernport region through the Waterways and Drainage Charge.

The preparation of a WDIP is a key requirement of Melbourne Water's Statement of Obligations, which are issued in accordance with the Water Industry Act 1994.

Our 2021 WDIP outlines nine distinct services to support environmental health and the health, safety and recreational opportunities of our customers and community. These services work together to maintain and improve community value, waterway health and protection from flooding, and reduce the impact of urban development and climate change.



Stormwater management



Healthy waterways



Flood risk management



Flood risk management and healthy waterways



Aboriginal cultural values



Community access, involvement and recreation

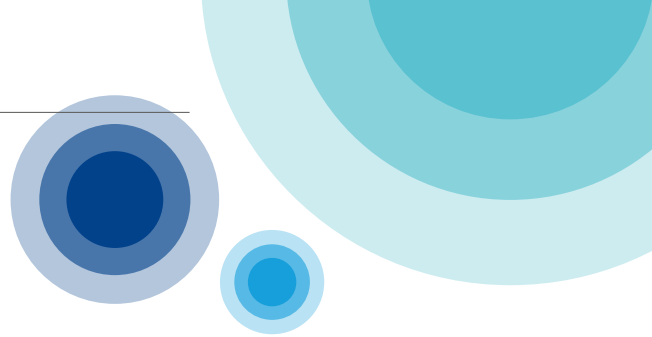


Emergency and pollution response



Urban development

Each year, our progress to deliver the WDIP is assessed and reported against 19 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which were developed in consultation with subject matter experts, local government representatives, stakeholders and community groups. We are now in the third year of delivering our 2021-2026 WDIP and, while progress has been made to deliver on our commitments, we recognise that there are still some areas where we are off track. We are working closely with our customers, community and partners to address these areas.



Relationship to the Price Submission and performance reporting

The 2021 Price Submission details our proposed services in water, sewerage, waterways and drainage over a five-year price determination period, as well as the cost of delivering these services and the prices we intend to charge customers.

The 2021 WDIP informed the development of Melbourne Water’s Price Submission, which was subsequently reviewed by the Essential Services Commission (ESC), Victoria’s independent regulator.

Our 2021 Price Submission is underpinned by six customer outcomes which are monitored, measured and reported each year in the annual Customer Outcomes Performance Report. This report is published on our [website](#). In 2023-2024, we have assessed our overall performance against our customer outcomes as close to or largely met.

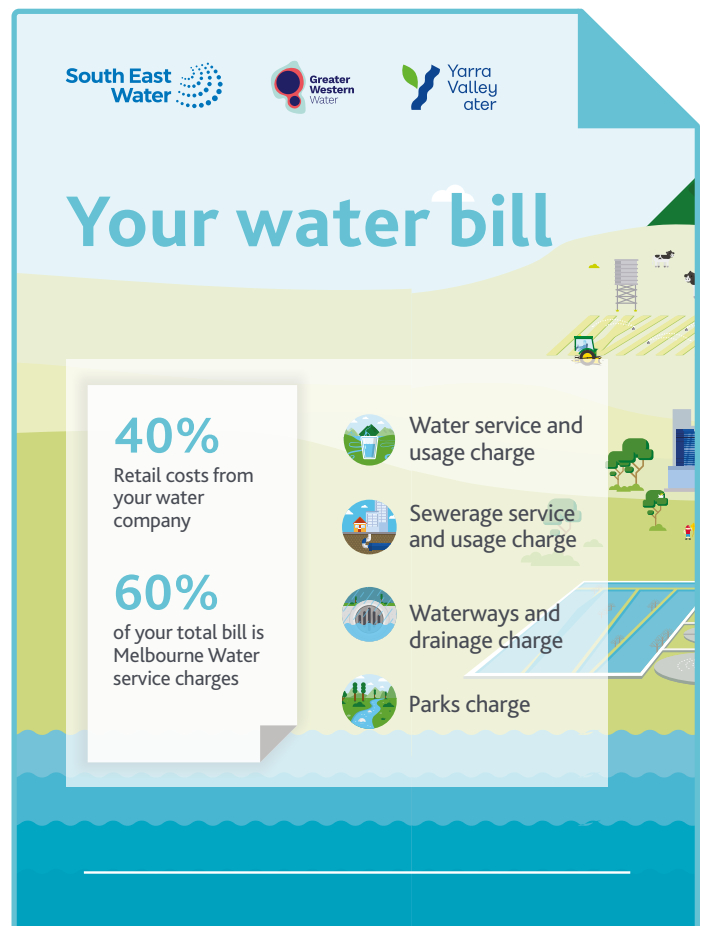


In 2023-2024, community satisfaction with waterways was 92%, well above the target of 85% and a slight improvement on last year’s satisfaction score of 91%. Our performance against 16 of 19 KPIs was assessed as ‘met’ or ‘substantially met’.

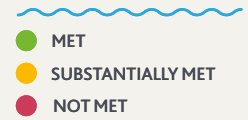
Your water bill

The bill you receive from your water retailer helps fund the services we deliver. Your water bill is made up of the following charges:

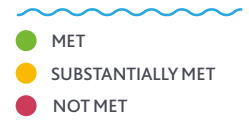
- **Water and Sewerage services and usage charges** – These include the cost of supplying water and sewerage services to you, as well as bulk costs from Melbourne Water which cover investment in major infrastructure like dams, pipes and treatment plants. These bulk costs make up just over half the charges on your bill.
- **Waterways and Drainage Charge** – This charge is collected on behalf of Melbourne Water by your water retailer. It funds activities outlined in the WDIP, such as protecting waterway health, managing drainage and providing flood protection.
- **Parks Charge** – This charge is collected by your water retailer on behalf of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action. It supports Melbourne’s parks, trails, public facilities and zoos, as well as the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Shrine of Remembrance. This charge does not fund waterways and drainage services.



Our performance

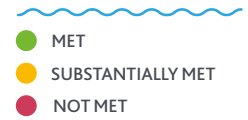


Service area	Five-year target	Year 1 (2021-22)	Year 2 (2022-23)	Year 3 (2023-24)	Year 4 (2024-25)	Year 5 (2025-26)	
		84%	91%	92%			
	Community satisfaction with waterways is annually maintained at greater than 85%						
Stormwater management	Stormwater harvesting and infiltration capacity will increase to 8 GL/year, through Melbourne Water programs	0 GL/yr 	0.1335 GL/yr 	0.1893 GL/yr 			
	Melbourne Water's stormwater quality treatment asset management and incentives programs will improve pollutant load reduction performance against an agreed dynamic baseline	104.3% 	105.1% 	101.8% 			
	100 capacity-building initiatives will be delivered under the Clearwater program	19 	41 	61 			
Healthy waterways	3,218 hectares of vegetation will be established and 5,523 hectares maintained for ecological benefit	282 ha established 5179 ha maintained 	757 ha established 6522 ha maintained 	1378 ha established 6665 ha maintained 			
	Environmental water initiatives and outcomes will be delivered in accordance with legislative obligations and agreed priorities	100% 	100% 	92% 			
Flood risk management	Melbourne Water will deliver flood awareness activities in accordance with the agreed Flood Engagement Program, to improve community awareness of flood risk and increase the program's reach	100% 	100% 	100% 			
	A reduction in flood damages of \$155 million achieved over the life of the works	\$23M 	\$148.9M 	\$249.4M 			
	Flood information is renewed in 25% of rural catchments and 35% of urban catchments subject to flooding	5% rural 7.6% urban 	5.2% rural 7.6% urban 	Information developed 14.7% rural 23.1% urban 	Information delivered 5.2% rural 8.4% urban 		
	The drainage network is condition assessed and remedial action taken as specified in the relevant standard	78% 	66% 	72% 			



Service area	Five-year target	Year 1 (2021-22)	Year 2 (2022-23)	Year 3 (2023-24)	Year 4 (2024-25)	Year 5 (2025-26)
Flood risk management and healthy waterways	In collaboration with key delivery partners, Melbourne Water will implement the Monitoring and Evaluation, Reporting and Implementation plans for the Healthy Waterways Strategy and Flood Management Strategy	100% 	100% 	100% 		
Aboriginal cultural values	Formal partnership agreements with Traditional Owner organisations will be established and agreed commitments implemented	1 	2 	2 		
Community access, involvement and recreation	42 hectares of vegetation will be improved and programmed maintenance undertaken to enhance amenity and community benefit	0 ha 	15.8 ha 	15.8 ha 		
	31 hectares of Melbourne Water land and assets are activated to increase community enjoyment of nature and recreation	0 ha 	1.5 ha 	1.5 ha 		
	200 community education and/or citizen science initiatives will be delivered	63 	155 	172 		
	Community satisfaction with the cleaning up of litter will improve and litter will be reduced at management sites	60% 	59% 	98% 		
Emergency and pollution response	100% of incidents that require a response will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation	100% 	100% 	100% 		
Urban development	Responses will be provided for 100% of statutory and non-statutory applications and at least 95% will be within the agreed timeframe	100% response rate 83.2% agreed timeframe 	100% response rate 81.7% agreed timeframe 	100% response rate 78.9% agreed timeframe 		
		100% 	100% 	100% 		

Stormwater management



The WDIP invests in programs that manage stormwater quality and quantity, as these are crucial to protecting the health of our waterways and bays, and making more water available for community uses such

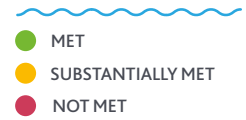
as irrigating parks and sports fields.

We manage stormwater through three key programs:

- Stormwater Quality
- Stormwater Harvesting and Infiltration
- Stormwater Monitoring, Planning and Research, in collaboration with partners, including councils, water retail companies and water industry.

Five-year target	Year 1 (2021-22)	Year 2 (2022-23)	Year 3 (2023-24)	Year 3 Target	
Stormwater harvesting and infiltration capacity will increase by 8 GL/year, through Melbourne Water programs	0.0 GL/yr 	0.1335 GL/yr 	0.1893 GL/yr 	2 GL/yr	<p>In 2023-24, stormwater harvesting and infiltration capacity was increased by 0.056 GL/year to a cumulative total of 0.1893 GL/year over the last three years.</p> <p>Key obstacles to delivery have been rising project costs, the need for tailored solutions for each sub-catchment, low demand for stormwater in some places, and unclear asset types for delivering infiltration targets.</p> <p>These challenges have increased costs and project timelines, making it unlikely that we will meet our five-year target.</p> <p>Nevertheless, several key projects are progressing and contributing to our overall goals. For example, options to construct the Sunbury Stormwater Harvesting Scheme, which would aim to deliver 3.8 GL/year by 2026, have been explored and a decision is pending.</p>
Melbourne Water's stormwater quality treatment asset management and incentives programs will reduce key pollutants, including total nitrogen, by 100% against an annual target to improve pollutant load reduction performance	104.3% 	105.1% 	101.8% 	100%	<p>The target uses total nitrogen as the measure as it is the most useful indicator of pollutant load reduction available, and is the key limiting nutrient relating to the health of Port Phillip Bay.</p> <p>For the third year running, we have surpassed the target of reducing total nitrogen, achieving 461.6 tonnes reduction against the annual target of 453.4 tonnes.</p>
100 capacity-building initiatives will be delivered under the Clearwater program	19 	41 	61 	60	<p>In 2023-24, we met our target of delivering 20 initiatives under the Clearwater program, with 61 events delivered over the past three years against a target of 60.</p>

Healthy waterways



Healthy rivers, estuaries and wetlands play a vital role in many aspects of our daily life.

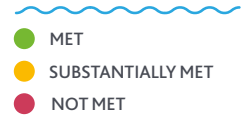
The Healthy Waterways Strategy 2018-2028 sets a long-term vision for managing the health of rivers, wetlands and estuaries in the Port Phillip and Westernport region, and protecting and enhancing environmental, social, cultural and economic value. The strategy is shared across Melbourne Water, state and local government, water corporations, Traditional Owners and land management councils,

non-government organisations and community.

Across our region, Melbourne Water monitors and provides targeted maintenance and improvement works, and invests heavily in partnerships, to achieve healthy water outcomes for 25,000 kilometres of rivers and creeks, 33 estuaries and more than 14,000 natural wetlands – including three listed as 'internationally significant' under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. We oversee licenced water extractions in parts of the catchments to ensure a sustainable take of water from our rivers and creeks, balancing environmental water and economic outcomes.

Five-year target	Year 1 (2021-22)	Year 2 (2022-23)	Year 3 (2023-24)	Year 3 Target	
3,218 hectares of vegetation will be established and 5,523 hectares maintained for ecological benefit	282 ha established 5179 ha maintained	757 ha established 6522 ha maintained	1,378 ha established 6665 ha maintained	2228 ha established 3314 ha maintained	<p>In 2023-24, we established 581 hectares of vegetation for a total of 1,378 hectares over the three-year period. Although this represents a 22.3% increase from last year, this result fell short of the three-year target of 2,228 hectares.</p> <p>A total of 6,665 hectares of vegetation was maintained in 2023-24, well in excess of the target of 3,314 hectares. Of this, 57% is high quality vegetation.</p> <p>While the maintenance target was far exceeded, the shortfall in vegetation established means that the target has been assessed as not met in 2022-2023.</p> <p>To improve this going forward, we are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating ways to improve engagement with private land holders Looking to technology to make working in remote and difficult terrain safer for our people.
100% of environmental water initiatives and outcomes will be delivered in accordance with legislative obligations and agreed priorities	100%	100%	92%	100%	<p>Melbourne Water delivered 92% of the key environmental water commitments set out in Environmental Water Key Commitments and Priorities document for 2023-24.</p> <p>The review of one Environmental Water Action Plan wasn't finished due to limited internal resources. Investigations will be planned this year to ensure that key priorities are met.</p>

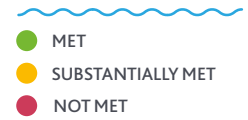
Flood risk management










The Flood Management Strategy for Port Phillip and Westernport sets the 10-year direction for flood management in the region. As floodplain manager, Melbourne Water works with more than 50 organisations to manage the region’s vast network of drainage and flood mitigation infrastructure.

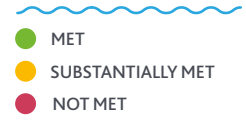
This work focuses on preparing for and mitigating the impacts of flooding, maintaining and renewing the region’s drainage network, modelling and mapping flood risks, providing flood information and strategic planning, and providing enhanced rural drainage services in the Koo Wee Rup and Longwarry Flood Protection Districts (on a fee-for-service basis).

Five-year target	Year 1 (2021-22)	Year 2 (2022-23)	Year 3 (2023-24)	2023-24 Target	
Melbourne Water will deliver at least 90% of flood awareness activities in accordance with the agreed Flood Engagement Program, to improve community awareness of flood risk and increase the program’s reach	100% 	100% 	100% 	90%	For the third consecutive year we exceeded the target of 90%, with the delivery of 100% of flood awareness activities against the agreed Flood Engagement Program.
A reduction in flood damages of \$155 million achieved over the life of the works	\$22.7M 	\$148.9M 	\$249.4M 	\$63M	In 2023-24, we achieved a reduction of \$100.4 million against an annual target of \$21 million. We continued to meet our target to reduce risk through land use planning programs and educational awareness programs.



Five-year target	Year 1 (2021-22)	Year 2 (2022-23)	Year 3 (2023-24)	2023-24 Target	
Flood information is renewed in 25% of rural catchments and 35% of urban catchments subject to flooding	5.2% rural 7.6% urban 	5.6% rural 21.9% urban 	Information developed 14.7% rural 23.1% urban  Information delivered 5.2% rural 8.4% urban 	15% rural 21% urban	<p>Since the beginning of this price period, Melbourne Water has developed updated flood information for a total of 149 catchments, representing 14.7% of rural catchments and 23.1% of urban catchments. We work in partnership with councils and other agencies to deliver this information to communities.</p> <p>Of the flood information developed, only 8.4 % has been delivered to urban communities and 5.2% to rural communities. There are two key factors impacting the delivery of this information to communities, including:</p> <p>The risk current flood information will soon become outdated as flood models are updated over the coming years as part of our program to update flood maps and models for every catchment in Greater Melbourne by 2026.</p> <p>Delays with council partners deciding on whether to accept current models or to remodel to include pending changes to climate change policies.</p> <p>Melbourne Water is continuing to work with councils and other agencies to identify the best approach to sharing flood information with communities.</p>
	The drainage network is condition assessed and remedial action is taken as specified in the relevant standard	78% 	66% 	72% 	75%

Flood risk management and healthy waterways



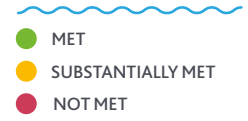
Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) plans are currently in place for the Healthy Waterways Strategy and Flood Management Strategy – Port Phillip and Westernport.

Monitoring and reporting on our progress in delivering our strategies helps guide annual planning, and ensure our actions are creating the change we envisioned. Evaluating our efforts gives us confidence that we are employing the right approaches to create change.

Five-year target	Year 1 (2021-22)	Year 2 (2022-23)	Year 3 (2023-24)	2023-24 Target	
In collaboration with key delivery partners, Melbourne Water will implement at least 80% of the Monitoring and Evaluation, Reporting and Implementation (MERI) plans for the Healthy Waterways Strategy and Flood Management Strategy	100% 	100% 	100% 	80%	<p>In 2023-24, 100% of the agreed priority actions were implemented.</p> <p>Melbourne Water also completed the mid-term evaluation for the Healthy Waterways Strategy. In addition, the MERI Framework plan was developed to support the Flood Management Strategy mid-term evaluation which will be undertaken in 2024-25.</p>



Aboriginal cultural values

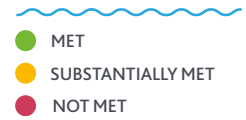


Melbourne Water recognises and deeply respects the connections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with land and waterways. We are committed to partnering with Traditional Owners as we carry out our role of managing and protecting Melbourne’s catchments and waterways.

We acknowledge the unique perspective and role of First Nations peoples in managing waterways. Melbourne Water is building strong relationships with the Wadawurrung, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong Traditional Owners, who represent most of our operating area. We also work with the Taungurung and Gunaikurnai, who also have land and waterways within our boundaries.

Five-year target	Year 1 (2021-22)	Year 2 (2022-23)	Year 3 (2023-24)	2023-24 Target	
Formal partnership agreements with Traditional Owner organisations will be established and agreed commitments implemented	1 ●	2 ●	2 ●	3	Melbourne Water has established Partnership Agreements with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, and 'stories of success' have been developed with both. We are committed to formalising a partnership with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation in 2024-25 and are progressing discussions towards a formal agreement.

Community access, involvement and recreation






Melbourne Water manages over 33,000 hectares of land and 25,000 kilometres of waterway corridors within the Greater Melbourne Region.

We recognise the vital role that the land and water we manage plays in the physical and mental wellbeing of Victorian communities, and the strong connection between waterway health and human health. We are committed to working with the community, stakeholders and partners to maximise community benefits in the delivery of our services.




Five-year target	Year 1 (2021-22)	Year 2 (2022-23)	Year 3 (2023-24)	2023-24 Target	
42 hectares of vegetation will be improved and programmed maintenance undertaken to enhance amenity and community benefit	15.8 ha 	15.8 ha 	15.8 ha 	25.2 ha	<p>Whilst significant progress was made towards future years' projects during the period, no new projects were delivered in 2023-24.</p> <p>Melbourne Water has been focusing on identifying and programming the works needed to deliver vegetation for amenity for the remainder of the pricing period.</p> <p>However, even with this forward programming in place it is anticipated that Melbourne Water will find it challenging to meet the target set for the pricing period. This is due to likely cultural heritage permitting requirements and the need for landowner agreements.</p>
31 hectares of Melbourne Water land and assets are activated to increase community enjoyment of nature and recreation	nil 	1.5 ha 	1.5 ha 	1.5 ha	<p>While no new land activations occurred during the 2023-24 period, we are on track to exceed our target of 31 hectares by the end of the price period. A number of land activation projects are now largely complete, with final reporting expected in early 2025.</p>
200 community education and/or citizen science initiatives will be delivered	63 	155 	172 	120	<p>For the third consecutive year we exceeded our targets for education and/or citizen science initiatives and are close to meeting the target for the entire period, having delivered 172 of the five-year target of 200 initiatives.</p>
Community satisfaction with the cleaning up of litter will improve to at least 70% and litter will be reduced at management priority sites through maintenance activities	60% 	59% 	58% 	70%	<p>Community satisfaction in 2023-24 remained steady, but is under our target of 70%.</p> <p>During the period, 86% of scheduled litter-related Works Orders were completed and interim priority sites were identified ahead of more dedicated prioritisation work which is due to be completed toward the end of 2024.</p> <p>This will help better inform our operational response to litter and support land managers, such as local government, to focus effort in the right areas.</p>

Emergency and pollution response

-  MET
-  SUBSTANTIALLY MET
-  NOT MET

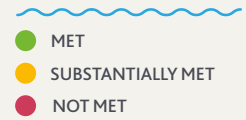
Maintaining the health of our waterways demands effective management of and response to waterway pollution, including industrial pollution.

Our legislated obligations under the Environment Protection Act 2017, Emergency Management Act 2013, Water Act 1989 and Statement of Obligations, as well as the clear expectations of our customers and the community, drive our emergency and pollution response.

Five-year target	Year 1 (2021-22)	Year 2 (2022-23)	Year 3 (2023-24)	2023-24 Target	
100% of incidents that require a response will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation	100% 	100% 	100% 	100%	<p>In 2023-24, there were no water pollution incidents that met the criteria for this target (events that had an environmental consequence rating of 'moderate' or above).</p> <p>Outside of the target criteria, Melbourne Water responded to 106 pollution incidents classified as 'minor'.</p> <p>Melbourne Water's Emergency Management Framework was reviewed in June 2023.</p>









Urban development



Melbourne Water contributes to the healthy, sustainable growth of our community by providing support to development across the urban spectrum – from greenfield sites, through to renewal and development in established suburbs.

Melbourne Water reviews statutory applications relating to land subdivision and development in flood prone areas, which are referred to us under municipal planning scheme requirements. A 28-day statutory response period applies to these applications.

Developers can also apply to Melbourne Water for agreements in relation to subdivisions and developments that interact with the floodplain or our assets. By agreement with the land development industry, a 60-day response target applies to these non-statutory applications where they involve the construction of Development Services Schemes assets, or 28 days where the application would involve payment of contributions or work on or near our assets.

Five-year target	Year 1 (2021-22)	Year 2 (2022-23)	Year 3 (2023-24)	2023-24 Target	
Responses will be provided for 100% of statutory and non-statutory applications and at least 95% will be within the agreed timeframe	100% response rate 83.2% agreed timeframe 	100% response rate 81.7% agreed timeframe 	100% response rate 78.9% agreed timeframe 	100% response rate 95% agreed timeframe	In 2023-24, we continued to meet our target of responding to 100% of applications but fell short of our target to respond to 95% of them in the agreed timeframe, processing 78.2% of statutory applications and 79.5% of non-statutory applications on time. We have launched a number of improvement projects to address response times, which aim to standardise our approach to all applications.
100% of development services schemes will be implemented in accordance with the development planning program	100% 	100% 	100% 	100%	All schemes were implemented in accordance with the development planning program.

