



Corporate Committee

Tuesday, 13 June 2023

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Meeting of the **Corporate Committee** is to be held at **Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX** on **Tuesday, 13 June 2023 at 09:30.**

BUSINESS

1. **Sederunt**
2. **Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests ***
3. **Minute of the meeting of the Corporate Committee on 25 April 2023** 5 - 12
4. **Written Questions ****
5. **Human Resources, ICT and Organisational Development and Strategy Governance and Performance Services' Service Plans 2023-24** 13 - 38
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	Report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development)	
14.	Information Reports - if called in	
15.	Question Time ***	
	Consider any oral question on matters delegated to the Committee in terms of the Council's Scheme of Administration.	

Information Reports - Not for Discussion at this Meeting

Any member wishing to call in a noting or information report from one meeting shall give notice to Committee Services at least 48 hours before the meeting for which the report is published. The Notice shall be countersigned by one other elected member and shall explain the reason for call in including any action sought.

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Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)

* **Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests** - The Chair of the meeting shall seek declarations from any individual or political group at the beginning of a meeting whether any prior decision has been reached on how the individual or members of the group will vote on any item(s) of business on the Agenda, and if so on which item(s). A prior decision shall be one that the individual or the group deems to be mandatory on the individual or the group members such that the individual or the group members will be subject to sanctions should they not vote in accordance with the prior decision. Any such prior decisions will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.

** **Written Questions** - Any Member can put one written question about any relevant and competent business within the specified remits not already on the agenda, to the Chair provided it is received by the Proper Officer or Committee Services by 12 noon two working days prior to the day of the meeting. A copy of any written answer provided by the Chair will be tabled at the start of the relevant section of the meeting. The Member who has put the question may, after the answer has been given, ask one supplementary question directly related to the subject matter, but no discussion will be allowed.

No supplementary question can be put or answered more than 10 minutes after the Council has started on the relevant item of business, except with the consent of the Chair. If a Member does not have the opportunity to put a supplementary question because no time remains, then he or she can submit it in writing to the Proper Officer who will arrange for a written answer to be provided within 7 working days.

*** **Question Time** - At each ordinary meeting of the Committee ten minutes will be allowed for Members questions when any Member of the Committee can put a question to the Chair on any business within the remit of that Section of the Committee. The Member who has put the question may, after the answer has been given, ask one supplementary question directly related to the subject matter, but no discussion will be allowed.

No supplementary question can be put or answered more than ten minutes after the Committee has started on the relevant item of business, except with the consent of the Chair. If a Member does not have the opportunity to put a supplementary question because no time remains, then he/she can submit it in writing to the proper officer who will arrange for a written answer to be provided within seven working days.

THE MORAY COUNCIL

Corporate Committee

SEDERUNT

Councillor Bridget Mustard (Chair)
Councillor Kathleen Robertson (Depute Chair)

Councillor Theresa Coull (Member)
Councillor John Cowe (Member)
Councillor John Divers (Member)
Councillor Amber Dunbar (Member)
Councillor Jérémie Fernandes (Member)
Councillor Sandy Keith (Member)
Councillor Graham Leadbitter (Member)
Councillor Marc Macrae (Member)
Councillor Paul McBain (Member)
Councillor Shona Morrison (Member)
Councillor Derek Ross (Member)
Councillor John Stuart (Member)

Clerk Name:	Lindsey Robinson
Clerk Telephone:	07966 120593
Clerk Email:	committee.services@moray.gov.uk

Minute of Meeting of the Corporate Committee**Tuesday, 25 April 2023****Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX****PRESENT**

Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor John Stuart

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the above meeting were the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Chief Financial Officer, Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, Stuart Beveridge, Estates Surveyor, Andy Donegan, Customer Development Manager, and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer, as Clerk to the meeting.

1. Chair

Councillor Bridget Mustard, Chair of the Corporate Committee, chaired the meeting.

2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Order 21 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations from Group Leaders or Spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how Members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

3. Resolution

The meeting resolved that under Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for Items 17, 18 and 19 of business on the grounds that they involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Paragraph Number of Minute	Paragraph Number of Schedule 7a and Reason
17	8 – Information of the amount of expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Authority.
18	1 – Information relating to staffing matters; and 11 – Information relating to ant consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations.
19	6 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person(s)

4. Minute of Meeting of the Corporate Committee of 31 January 2023

The minute of the meeting of the Corporate Committee dated 31 January 2023 was submitted and approved.

5. Written Questions **

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

6. Ward Budgets

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) invited the Committee to agree expenditure of Ward budgets in 2023/24.

During consideration, Councillor Mustard, seconded by Councillor Ross, moved the recommendations as written in the report.

Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Coull, moved an amendment to change the recommendations as follows:

- i. in order to empower communities, ward budgets should be allocated for spend using a system of Participatory Budgeting;
- ii. that the Community Support Unit is tasked with bringing forward a proposal on how this may be achieved; and
- iii. that further consideration is given, ahead of the next budget, to forming a recurring capital allocation for participatory budgets across all of the Council wards and leveraging in match funding from external and commercial entities wishing to support community activity.

Councillor Coull sought clarification on how people know to apply for it and what the criteria was.

In response, the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advised that the use of criteria was raised at the Admin Group meeting and at the Political Group Leaders meeting and it was agreed that the process should be kept as simple as possible and would be determined through the collective view of local needs as understood by local members.

On a division there voted:-

For the Motion (9)	Councillors Mustard, Ross, Cowe, Divers, Dunbar, Keith, Macrae, McBain and Robertson
For the Amendment (5)	Councillors Morrison, Coull, Fernandes, Leadbitter and Stuart
Abstentions (0)	

Accordingly the motion became the finding of the meeting and the Committee agreed that:

- i. potential expenditure is identified by members based on their local knowledge and understanding of minor works/concerns in their ward;

- ii. authority is delegated to the Chief Financial Officer to authorise expenditure throughout the year until the budgets are exhausted if two thirds or more (3 in a 4 member ward) of local members are in agreement as to proposed expenditure; and
- iii. if the agreement of at least two thirds of local members cannot be reached then proposals will be brought to Corporate Committee for consideration.

7. Best Value Progress Report on Moray Council

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the latest progress on the Best Value Assurance Review Strategic Action Plan.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note progress made on the Best Value Assurance Report Strategic Action Plan shown in Appendix 1.

8. Improvement and Modernisation Programme

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the progress made in developing the projects set out in the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme (IMP).

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- i. note progress on the projects set out in the Council's IMP; and
- ii. recognise that the IMP is focussed on financial sustainability and to assist in managing risks associated with the ongoing budget position agrees to reduce the financial commitment to the poverty project and to take this work forward through a different use of resources.

9. Employment Policy Framework Review 2022-23

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) invited the Committee to approve the update on the employment policy framework for 2022-23.

During consideration, Councillor Dunbar sought clarification on the safe driving policy as it states that a voicemail should be left for staff when they are driving. Concern was raised that this would still involve phoning the member of staff who may think to answer if the call was from management.

In response the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) advised that if management know someone is driving they are not to contact them but to stop any confusion it would be taken out of the policy.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to approve the update on the employment policy framework for 2022-23 as follows:

- i. Menopause Policy – this is a new policy which outlines the Council's position with regards to our approach in recognising the impact of this transition on the workforce and our response to this.

- ii. Safe Driving Policy – the policy has been updated following amendments to the Highway Code and streamlined to concisely set out the Council’s requirements for the workforce.

10. 2021-2023 Workforce Planning

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the progress made against the interim workforce strategy and plan for the period 2020-2022 and to consider the proposed workforce and organisational development (OD) strategy for the period 2023-2026.

During consideration, Councillor Robertson sought clarification on what measurable outcomes were achieved by the Culture Working Group.

In response, the Chief Executive advised that he would provide that information for the Committee.

Councillor Divers sought clarification on the Culture Working Group meeting without elected members. He was of the opinion that the report says that everything is OK but he has been approached by the Trade Unions with issues.

In response, the Depute Chief Executive advised that the Culture Working Group had completed the work instructed and has now been mainstreamed. The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development added that it had been sub-groups that had been meeting not the full working group.

After lengthy discussion, the Chief Executive agreed to speak to all groups to look at the options available around the Culture Working Group and existing framework for raising issues. He further agreed that this would be completed within one month.

Thereafter the Committee agreed:

- i. to note the progress made against the 2020-2022 Interim Workforce Plan;
- ii. to approve the proposed Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy for 2023-26 as set out in Appendix A and Workforce and OD Plan for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix B;
- iii. that the culture work is progressing as a core part of business as usual; and
- iv. to defer the closure of the Culture Working Group until after the findings of the consultation by the Chief Executive.

Councillor Macrae left the meeting during the discussion of this item.

11. Health and Safety Annual Report 2022

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities, Organisational Development) asked the Committee to consider the annual Health and Safety report and approve the progress noted and proposed future actions.

During consideration, Councillor Robertson asked for a breakdown of the violence and aggression incidents by gender.

The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development agreed to provide this.

Councillor Leadbitter asked if the same could be provided for the perpetrators of the violence and aggression incidents.

The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development advised that this information may not be easily obtained, but that if it was not too time consuming for officers it would be fed back to the Committee.

Councillor McBain asked if there could be consistency across the graphs and figures and if they could show the figure and the percentage.

This was agreed by the Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development.

Thereafter the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the content of the annual health and safety report, as set out in Appendix 1, and the progress towards the outcomes established in the last report; and
- ii. approve the proposed future actions for 2023.

12. Public Performance Report 2021-22

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Committee to consider the Public Performance Report 2021-22 in its reporting of actions and performances of Council services against Corporate Plan priorities.

During consideration Councillor Coull sought clarification on the last page of Appendix 1 where it states that £2.6 million was spent on the replacement bridge in Lossiemouth. She stated that this was Scottish Government funding.

In response, the Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development advised that if the report was inaccurate it would be corrected.

Thereafter the Committee agreed to approve the Public Performance Report 2021-22 in its reporting of Council performance and progress against Corporate Plan Priorities.

13. Customer Charter Update

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) invited the Committee to consider and approve the updated Customer Charter in Appendix 1.

During consideration Councillor Coull sought clarification on the wording around a safe, confidential space being available.

In response the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance agreed to include wording that a private space would be available to members of the public if they required it.

Thereafter the Committee agreed to approve the updated Customer Charter.

14. Freephone Numbers for Service Users

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) provided the Committee on the cost and impact of implementing free telephone access to Council services.

During consideration Councillor Fernandes asked if there was the possibility of having one free telephone line for those in crisis, suffering mental health challenges, struggling with the cost of living, or dealing with domestic violence.

In response, the Customer Development Manager advised that he would be happy to bring a report back to Committee on this.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to note the background and cost of customer telephone contact with the Council and agreed that:

- i. existing local rate calls are retained for customers who contact the Council by telephone;
- ii. the availability of call back continues to be promoted for those who are unable to phone for financial reasons;
- iii. free telephone access is retained at the Elgin HQ reception and Information Hubs; and
- iv. officers will investigate the costs of having one free telephone line for people in crisis and report back to a future committee.

15. Strathisla Community Council

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of membership issues in relation to the Strathisla Community Council and recommended the dissolution of the community council as a result of these.

During consideration, Councillor Coull, seconded by Councillor Morrison, moved that the recommendation should be to extend the supported status of the Community Council for a further 3 months and to look into a merger with Keith Community Council.

In response, the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) advised that to do a merger would involve a review of the Community Councils and there would be resource and capacity issues in doing this.

Councillor Ross stated he had reservations on an amalgamation between the two Community Councils.

Following further consideration, the Committee agreed to continue the supported status of the Community Council for a further 3 month period to allow the membership issues to be resolved and a further report to be brought to Committee if necessary.

16. Question Time ***

Under reference to paragraph 6 of the minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 31 January 2023, Councillor Could sought an update on the Fife Keith pavilion.

In response the Chief Financial Officer advised that there are a couple of groups looking at it and these were being assessed by officers and report will come back to Committee.

Under reference to paragraph 8 of the minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 31 January 2023, Councillor Robertson sought an update as to when a report on the consultation on car park charges could be expected.

In response the Chief Financial Officer advised a report would be due after recess.

Under reference to paragraph 9 of the minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 31 January 2023, Councillor Robertson sought an update on the Volunteer Policy Refresh.

In response the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) advised that consultation with the Community Councils had taken place and report would be brought to the June meeting.

Under reference to paragraph 8 of the minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 31 January 2023, Councillor Keith sought an update from the Chair with regard to writing to COSLA and if there had been a response.

In response, Councillor Mustard advised that the letter was being drafted and a response will be circulated once received.

Councillor Fernandes sought clarification on non-domestic rates as he was not aware that the relief had been cancelled and people were having to re-apply.

In response, the Chief Financial Officer advised that information went out with the recent bills signposting people to the Council website for more information on the changes being made.

Councillor Keith queried if this was a change at Scottish Government Level.

In response, the Chief Financial Officer advised that there are two things that impact NDR, firstly there are periodic re-valuations and the latest one was 1 April 2023 which meant that rates could go up and down. Secondly the Scottish Government changed the thresholds and how the relief is administered. Moray Council administers these on behalf of the Scottish Government and it is a complex process which is why reliefs have been cancelled and people encouraged to re-apply to ensure they are getting the relief in which they are entitled.

17. Forres Flood Alleviation Scheme - Compensation Claim [Para 8]

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asked the Committee to approve payment of compensation arising from the Forres Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. approve the compensation payment as detailed in Section 5 of the report; and
- ii. remit the Legal Services Manager to document the transaction accordingly.

18. Trade Union Facility Time [Para 1 & 11]

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asked the Committee to determine the Council's position in relation to trade union facility time from April 2023 onwards from the options set out in the report and if required, to recommend to the Council the allocation of budget to cover backfill costs.

During consideration Councillor Ross, seconded by Councillor Keith, moved that there should be a permanent extension of the current arrangements.

Councillor Robertson, seconded by Councillor Dunbar, moved an amendment that there should be a 12 month extension of the current arrangements.

On a division there voted:-

For the Motion (9)

Councillors Ross, Keith, Cowe, Coull, Divers, Fernandes, Leadbitter, Morrison and Stuart

For the Amendment (4)

Councillors Robertson, Dunbar, McBain and Mustard

Abstentions (0)

Accordingly the motion became the finding of the meeting and the Committee agreed:

- i. a permanent extension to the current arrangements; and
- ii. the creation of a budget pressure for future years for backfill costs arising from this.

19. Corporate Scanning Printing and Copying Contract [Para 6]

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) sought authority from the Committee for the award of the corporate scanning, printing and copying contract.

Councillor Macrae rejoined the meeting at this juncture.

During consideration Councillor Robertson asked if the connectivity issues could be looked into and if ways to help those with medical issues could be investigated to save printing off committee papers

In response, the Chief Executive advised that this would be investigated.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to give authority to the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance to award the tender to the bid which represents the best overall price and quality and to sign the contract on behalf of the Council.



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 13 JUNE 2023

**SUBJECT: HUMAN RESOURCES, ICT AND ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY GOVERNANCE AND
PERFORMANCE SERVICES' SERVICE PLANS 2023-2024**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To invite the Committee to consider the Human Resources, ICT and Organisational Development and Strategy Governance and Performance services' Service Plans for 2023-2024.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (50) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to ensuring that the organisation, administrative and management processes of the Council are designed to make the most effective contribution to achieving the Council's objectives and to keep these procedures under review.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Committee consider and approve the Service Plans for services within Human Resources, ICT and Organisational Development and Governance, Strategy and Performance.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Service planning is a key aspect of the Council's Performance Management Framework and is undertaken annually to set out the strategic direction for services over the coming months.
- 3.2 The service planning process focuses on forward planning for medium-term activities supporting delivery of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Corporate Plan. The Council planning process also includes team plans that focus on short term tactical and operational activities supporting delivery of the Service Plan and strategies and Employee Review and Development Plans (ERDP) provide individual planning for employees' activities and development.

- 3.3 As well as identifying service developments and improvements, the Service Plan Framework requires an assessment of the output and outcome requirements for services based on the Council's priorities, statutory and regulatory requirements and other relevant factors and matching of resources to these priorities. Priority outcomes are those included in the Council's Corporate Plan that directly relate to the service or are influenced by the service and should be clearly identified.
- 3.4 Setting clear measurable outcomes and defining key indicators by which progress will be assessed is a recognised area for development within the Council and these Service Plans are part of the improvement journey to implement the Performance Management Framework. For some actions it can be difficult to identify a measurable outcome (e.g. a change in legislation that must be implemented, or updating a policy framework). It can also be challenging where there is currently no clear baseline or benchmarking from which informed targets and reasonable steps towards these can be developed. Therefore, as far as possible efforts have been made to set measurable outcomes for service plan actions but in some cases outputs have been used so that it is still possible to measure whether the action has been progressed as intended. In other areas, further work will be required to refine outcomes in future.
- 3.5 A summary of progress is given below based on the annual reviews carried out for each of the service areas.
- 3.6 Reference is also made to the report to the Council on 2 February 2023 on the progress of work to revise the Corporate Plan following the local government elections in May 2022 and to take account of the issues from the Covid pandemic that will influence future service requirements and the Scottish Government programme for government. The Council agreed that Service Plans be prepared as normal and that they be further reviewed as required as part of the normal 6 monthly performance reporting framework to take account of any revisions and change in direction in the new Corporate Plan (para 15 of the minute refers). The updated draft of the Corporate Plan is developing and has had input from Heads of Service which is consistent with the content of these service plans and so it is not anticipated that further review would be required, subject to any amendments to the final Corporate plan that is approved by the Council. These plans focus on the period up to June 2024.

2022/23 Updates

3.7 Human Resources, ICT and Organisational Development

Progress on planned work (success)

3.7.1 ICT

- Progress with M365 Project.
- Flexible Working concluded and subsumed within Smarter Working project with ongoing support for e.g. additional WiFi, hybrid meeting equipment, solution for NHS staff and identified options for devices in schools.
- Cyber Security programme of work progressed.

3.8.2 HR

- Revised Workforce Strategy and Plan agreed.
- Flexible Working Policy revised and agreed at Committee, further work now embedded within Smarter Working Project.

3.7.2 OD

- Health and Work training re-introduced, mental health awareness sessions delivered.
- Employee engagement programme and workforce culture activity reinstated.
- Policy Review work completed for 2022/23.
- Communication Strategy and Plan developed and being implemented.
- Digital Skills Survey undertaken and plan in place to ensure actions taken forward.
- School Security Audit completed, Lone Working Guidance and Joint Inspections Programme in place, Risk Assessment Guidance reviewed and refreshed.
- Project management workshop sessions delivered and ongoing programme developed.

Progress on planned work (areas for development/not delivered)

3.7.3 ICT

- Further expansion of online services for Education and Children's Social Work – web pages for Fostering and Adoption and Home Care now updated, focus on promoting the Parents Portal and finalising content for remaining Social Work web pages.
- Cyber Security work to be continued e.g. Awareness raising and training with support from OD.

3.7.4 OD

- Leadership Development – proposal for future leadership development direction and supporting activity being finalised, carried forward to 2023/4 plan.
- Violence and Aggression incidents increasing, continued support to service as part of ASN Review Programme.

Planned focus in new plan (reflecting above and challenges to come)

3.7.5 ICT

- Development of digital approach across services.
- Delivery of Cyber Resilience Action Plan.

3.7.6 HR

- Workforce Planning and Change – to manage the contraction and re-shaping of the Council workforce to achieve a sustainable skilled and motivated workforce for the future aligned to the Council's priorities.

3.7.7 OD

- Leadership Development and workforce planning to prepare the workforce for transformation and change.
- Organisational Development approach to Transformational Change.
- Establish Apprentice and Trainee Programmes where viable solution.

- Options for Warning Markers system to be progressed.
- Management development programme in place.
- Continued work on workforce culture actions.

3.8 Strategy, Governance and Performance

3.8.1 Progress on planned work (success)

- Completion of governance review.
- Move from Access Points to Information Hubs within libraries.
- Implementation of Hybrid committees.
- Short term let licensing.

3.8.2 Progress on planned work (areas for development/not delivered)

- Further develop outcome measures and indicators for LOIP.
- Continue work with Lands and Parks service to improve efficiency of Burial Grounds administration.
- Review hybrid committee system to identify improvements.

3.8.3 Planned focus in new plan (reflecting above and challenges to come)

- Further develop continuous improvement self assessment cycle for services.
- Further development of “digital first” and improved self-service solutions for customers.

Service Plans for 2023/24

- 3.10 Given the pressures across all services and the need to prioritise resources to the council’s priorities, services are focussing on essential service delivery and developments and taking account of the planned review of the Corporate Plan when undertaking service planning. The two Service Plans are attached to this report as follows:

Appendix 1: Human Resources and Organisational Development

Appendix 1a: ICT

Appendix 2: Governance, Strategy and Performance

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The Service Plans were informed by the Loip and the Council’s Corporate Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

Statutory requirements and Council policies are considered by managers when preparing service plans for the year ahead.

- (c) **Financial implications**
No additional financial resources are required to support the Service Plans.
- (d) **Risk Implications**
Up to date risk registers and maintained and considered as part of the service planning process.
- (e) **Staffing Implications**
Service Plans are integral to good management practice including workforce planning and assisting with communication about work plans for staff, identifying priorities and matching staff time to the Council's priorities.
- (f) **Property**
There are no property implications arising from this report.
- (g) **Equalities**
Managers consider equalities issues for staff and service users when assessing current service delivery arrangements and future requirements.
- (h) **Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**
There are no climate change and biodiversity impacts from this report.
- (i) **Consultations**
Heads of Service have worked with their management teams to prepare the Services Plans attached as appendices and have contributed to the updates in this report.

5. **CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 **Service Plans have been prepared identifying the improvements targeted for the period up to June 2024. In preparing the plans managers have taken account of risk, performance data (including inspections and Best Value), the Loip, the Corporate Plan and other relevant factors such as audit and inspection outcomes. The service Plans identify the resources allocated to each service and how these will be utilised to deliver core service requirements and improvements.**

Author of Report:	Denise Whitworth, Alasdair McEachan, Frances Garrow
Background Papers:	Report to Council on 19 January: Corporate Plan Preparation Report to Corporate Committee on 15 March 2022: - Service Plans 2022/23 Report to Council on 02 February: Corporate Plan
Ref:	SPMAN-1108985784-864 / SPMAN-1108985784-874 SPMAN-1108985784-875 / SPMAN-1108985784-873

HR &OD SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1

1. Service Definition:	The HR and OD Service provides professional advice to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, best practice and industry standards to support the council in delivering its corporate priorities. The six main functions are: HR professional advisory service, corporate employment administration function, payroll, corporate communications, corporate health and safety and organisational development.
2. Service Resources:	Service Resources: 43.44 FTE Budget: Capital £000: Revenue £000: £2,687k

3. What have we identified for improvement in {Financial Year}?	What evidence did we use to identify this improvement? Please add benchmark information wherever available and relevant to the improvement.
Leadership Capacity and Development	1. Best Value Follow Up Report 2. Corporate Plan 3. Corporate Workforce Strategy and Plan 4. Management of workforce implications of revenue budget savings 5. Feedback from Trades Union representatives, workforce and managers 6. Survey results
Workforce Planning and Change	
Organisational Development	
Future Proof Employer of Choice	
	7. Recruitment and retention data (vacancies, repeat adverts) and anecdotal evidence from recruiting managers

HR &OD SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating 1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	Develop and implement redesigned leadership development to ensure it develops the skills and behaviours necessary for leadership of the corporate and strategic direction required for transformation	Leaders are developed to lead the response to the challenging agenda, the Council is prepared for the future and makes sustained progress in its improvement and transformation work Revised programme in place to meet organisational requirements	Revised programme developed to meet organisational requirements Leadership development courses in place Leaders developed to lead challenging agenda and feedback positive 1/2/3 tier managers have attended training and show improvements in awareness of key learning points	Mar 2024	H/HR, ICT & OD / ODM	1

HR & OD SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating 1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing
			Evaluation programme of impact on practice is developed and implemented			
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	Review Transform approach to align with workforce implications of change with relevant solutions deployed Continue to actively manage vacancies to prepare for future changes	Workforce reductions dealt with in a timely and managed way to minimise the need for compulsory changes and in affordable way	Reduction in headcount Number of compulsory redundancies below half of total workforce reduction	As required	H/HR&ICT/HRM	4
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides	Review and refresh recruitment and	Recruitment attracts high calibre	Increased number of candidates	Oct 2023	HRM	1

HR & OD SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating 1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing
valued services to our communities	retention activities to deploy appropriate recruitment strategies that promote employment opportunities and raise the profile of Moray Council as an employer of choice including pathways for development for internal candidates	candidates and council services are well-resourced	<p>meeting criteria for council vacancies in hard to fill posts – specifics to be developed further per service requirements</p> <p>Attrition rates improved (lowered) for areas with high turnover – to be developed further per service requirements</p> <p>Reduced number of repeat adverts</p> <p>Feedback of positive impact from managers</p>			

HR &OD SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating 1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing
			through Personnel Forum Career progression opportunities are enhanced			
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	Establish trainee and apprentice programmes where viable solution	Increased number of younger employees in services where there are gaps or difficulties recruiting.	Increased number of trainees / apprentices	Mar 2024	ODM	2

HR &OD SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	Ensure workforce is empowered and enabled to embrace and be prepared for change	Workforce is prepared for and embraces change, with flexibility to adapt and develop to future requirements	<p>Range and scale of changes demonstrate increased flexibility and adaptability of workforce</p> <p>Improved employee survey results on workforce development questions</p> <p>Positive feedback from change exercises</p>	Mar 2024	ODM	2
	Support the implementation of the Council's Health and Work policy in order to deliver ongoing improvements in	To achieve a sustained reduction in absence levels as measured through the Local	Increased number of managers and employees trained in	Mar 2024	H/HR,ICT,OD/HRM,ODM	2

HR &OD SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
	absence levels with focus on proactive support for attendance and wellbeing	Government Benchmarking Framework Pls. To improve the awareness of and management of mental health (as a main cause of absence) within the workforce. To instigate proactive measures to promote health and well-being as preventative measures	<p>Mental Health Awareness and First Aid</p> <p>0.25 day per fte reduction in sickness absence levels per annum</p> <p>0.25 day per fte reduction in absence due to mental health and wellbeing reasons per annum</p> <p>Improved survey results on relevant questions</p> <p>Positive anecdotal feedback from trade unions, managers and workforce</p>			

HR & OD SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
Gender Pay Gap	Have in place fair and competitive pay and conditions that are recognised as such and are free of bias	Assessment of gender pay gap and equality issues	Actions developed and implemented to address any issues that emerge	March 2024	HRM	2
Workforce Development to meet demands and deliver priorities	The service improves the ERDP experience and holds accurate records, including continuous professional development (CPD) - from mandatory training through to service and job specific learning.	Staff are safe and competent in their roles as a result of taking part in regular and appropriate continuous professional development opportunities, including digital and customer skills	Evidence that all staff have undertaken relevant mandatory training to their roles or as identified within ERDPs 70% of of ERDPs completed	March 2024 (and reviewed annually) March 2024 (measured quarterly) March 2024 (measured quarterly)	HoS	2

ICT SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1a

1. Service Definition:	The service focuses on leveraging the maximum benefits from our ICT investment and ensuring that we have a sound ICT infrastructure in place to support the Council's strategic and service priorities. The service provides procurement of systems/services, provision of equipment, such as desktop PCs desktop, laptops and smartphones, implementation of solutions, compliance, application and infrastructure support.
2. Service Resources:	Service Resources: 47.4 FTE (4 x Temp – 2 x 2 year, 2 x 1 year) Budget: Capital £000: £611k Revenue: £3,549k and additional 386k from Committee Report on ICT Resources

3. What have we identified for improvement in {Financial Year}?	Recovery & Renewal (tick if app)	What evidence did we use to identify this improvement? Please add benchmark information wherever available and relevant to the improvement.
1. Transformation of Council Services	✓	Best Value Audit Review Corporate plan – Work towards a financially stable council that provides valued services to our communities ICT & Digital Strategy Response and recovery strategic framework Improvement and Modernisation Programme Strategy for use of ICT in schools Emerging national direction for ICT Cyber Security (Scottish Government Cyber Resilience Unit, UK National Cyber Security Centre, Internal Audit and SEPA lessons learned)
2. Decision Support Solutions	✓	
3. Legislative Compliance	✓	
4. Forward Planning	✓	

ICT SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1a

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating 1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	Develop the Council's digital approach	Expansion and enhancement of the use of digital technologies across services to improve the efficient and effective delivery of services and ways of working	<p>Increased number of services available to the public online</p> <p>Increased number of users of additional online services</p> <p>Increased use of digital technology for advancement of learning and teaching</p> <p>10% increased use of digital technologies in key strategic projects</p>	<p>Mar 2024</p> <p>Mar 2025</p> <p>Mar 2025 or as confirmed by Education Digital work</p> <p>Mar 2024 or as confirmed per project</p>	Info Systems Mgr	1
Cloud	Develop the Council's Digital Approach	Services will be moved to the cloud where there is a robust business case for doing so	10% of services moved to the Cloud	Mar 2025	Info Sys Mgr	2
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that	Enhance the value of data through robust, open and	Data and information is held, accessed and made available to	Develop approach for using big data to connect data, develop analytics to	Mar 2024	Information Systems Mgr	1

ICT SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1a

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating 1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing
provides valued services to our communities	transparent access	improve understanding and better inform decisions	inform and drive service efficiency			

ICT SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1a

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
Compliance	Cyber Resilience - accreditations	Implement enhanced measures to manage cyber security and resilience risks	Plan implemented for enhanced risk based approach	March 2024	Infr Mgr and TL (MA)	1
			80% of online workforce completed e-learning modules	March 2024	TL (MA)	1
CP: Sustainable Council RRSF: New environment/infrast ructure strategic change	Transformation : Support the Smarter Working project in embedding hybrid working across the council	Hybrid working established as the norm. Council has the capacity to flex and contract homeworking in line with the organisational, national and regional requirements	80% office based staff utilising mobile devices 80% office based staff working flexibly Reduction in number of fixed workstation requirements.	Oct 2023	Infr Mgr (GC)	1
Transformation	M365 developed and implemented	Collaborative working fully facilitated through implementation of M365	a) 90% online staff with access to M365 suite b) 90% online staff using M365 suite c) Increase in number of staff that feel they have the communication tools they require for hybrid working	March 2024	Info Systems Mgr	2

ICT SERVICE PLAN

Appendix 1a

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
Forward Planning	Identify, plan and schedule large scale corporate system replacements	Corporate system replacements (Lagan, Care First, Content Management System) are replaced efficiently and timeously in accordance with agreed council procedures	Systems replaced within scheduled timeframes Compliance with procurement procedures and due technical diligence	As required	Infra Sys Mgr	2

SERVICE PLAN GSP

Appendix 2

SPMAN-1293228629-874

1. Service Definition:	<p>Governance Strategy and Performance.</p> <p>Services to the public: Customer Services (contact centre and access points), Revenues, NDR, Benefits, Money Advice, Licensing, Registrars Service, Elections, FOI and Data Protection</p> <p>Support services: Legal (inc Monitoring Officer), Licensing, Committee services. Elected Members support, Mail room, SharePoint, Customer services Support, Strategy and Performance, Audit and Risk, Records Management</p>
2. Service Resources:	<p>135 fte</p> <p>Budget</p> <p>Capital:</p> <p>Revenue:</p>

3. What have we identified for improvement in 2023/2024	What evidence did we use to identify this improvement? Please add benchmark information wherever available and relevant to the improvement.
Implement framework for Continuous Improvement across council services	Identified through Best Value indicators
Transfer of burial grounds administration to the Lands and Parks Service.	Feedback from service users that process to arrange a burial was taking too long

SERVICE PLAN GSP

Appendix 2

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating (1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing, 5 for on hold?)
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	Implement framework for Continuous Improvement across council services	Drive continuous improvement across services Demonstrate best value	Develop/re-activate self- assessment framework Agree timetable/programme for review Report outcome through service performance reports.		Strategy and Performance Manager	2

SERVICE PLAN GSP

Appendix 2

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
Ongoing digital transformation and efficiency	Customer Services: Develop digital assistant for Contact Centre	Service efficiency savings Improved customer self- service.	Market research to establish system capability Tender for software		Customer Services Manager	3
Ongoing digital transformation and efficiency	Benefits/Money Advice: Develop Benefits e form.	Service efficiency savings Improved customer self- service.	% of total applications successfully completed through new form. Reduction in application processing time.		Benefits and Money Advice Manager	4
Improved Governance	Benefits/Money Advice: Renew citizens advice bureau SLA	Ensure clarity of purpose and value for money	New SLA signed and in operation.		Benefits and Money Advice Manager	4
Ongoing digital transformation and efficiency	Benefits/Money Advice: Investigate options for centralising financial assessments within Benefits Team	Improved quality and consistency of financial assessments across the Council Potential efficiencies.	Review completed and recommendation to CMT		Benefits and Money Advice Manager	4

SERVICE PLAN GSP

Appendix 2

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
Ongoing digital transformation and efficiency	Registrars: Transfer of burial grounds administration to the Lands and Parks Service.	Service efficiency by reducing double handling Allow funerals to be arranged more quickly.	Process mapping Review costs of service and fees Consult on fees Calls transferred to Lands and Parks service. Have accessible records online.		Democratic Services Manager	4
Improved Governance	Democratic Services: Continue with review programme of second tier governance documents	Help clarify the respective roles of Councillors and Officers. Reduce conflict by clarifying the Council's position on areas of potential tension.	Committee approval of scope. Approve index and breakdown documents with priority order. Agree timetable		Head of GSP/Democratic Services Manager	2
Performance Management	Strategy & Performance: Finalise Delivery Frameworks and reporting arrangements following review of Local Outcome Improvement Framework priorities	Board can measure progress against agreed outcomes	Agree suitable indicators		Strategy and Performance Manager	2

SERVICE PLAN GSP

Appendix 2

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
Improved Governance	Strategy & Performance: Introduce Child Friendly Complaints version aligned to SPSO model complaints policy	Compliance with SPSO requirements	System, guidance and training arrangements in place	Aligned to SPSO timescales	Strategy & Performance Manager	2



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 13 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: FINANCIAL SERVICE PLAN 2023-24

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To invite the Committee to consider the Financial Services Plan for 2023-24.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (50) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to ensuring that the organisation, administrative and management processes of the Council are designed to make the most effective contribution to achieving the Council's objectives and to keep these procedures under review.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee consider and approve the Service Plan for Financial Services (Appendix 1).**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Service planning is a key aspect of the Council's Performance Management Framework and is undertaken annually to set out the strategic direction for services over the coming months.
- 3.2 The service planning process focuses on forward planning for medium-term activities supporting delivery of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Corporate Plan. The Council planning process also includes team plans that focus on short term tactical and operational activities supporting delivery of the service plan and strategies and Employee Review and Development Plans (ERDP) provide individual planning for employees' activities and development.

- 3.3 As well as identifying service developments and improvements, the Service Plan Framework requires an assessment of the output and outcome requirements for services based on the Council's priorities, statutory and regulatory requirements and other relevant factors and matching of resources to these priorities. Priority outcomes are those included in the Council's Corporate Plan that directly relate to the service or are influenced by the service and should be clearly identified.
- 3.4 Setting clear measurable outcomes and defining key indicators by which progress will be assessed is a recognised area for development within the Council and this Service Plan is part of the improvement journey to implement the Performance Management Framework. For some actions it can be difficult to identify a measurable outcome (e.g. a change in legislation that must be implemented, or updating a policy framework). It can also be challenging where there is currently no clear baseline or benchmarking from which informed targets and reasonable steps towards these can be developed. Therefore, as far as possible efforts have been made to set measurable outcomes for service plan actions but in some cases outputs or milestones have been used so that it is still possible to measure whether the action has been progressed as intended. In other areas, further work will be required to refine outcomes in future. So for example, in some actions, strategic and delivery planning is not yet concluded and so performance indicators are not yet agreed. Where possible in such cases milestones are provided.
- 3.5 A summary of progress is given below based on the annual review carried out for the service area.
- 3.6 Reference is also made to the report to the Council on 2 February 2023 on the progress of work to revise the Corporate Plan following the local government elections in May 2022 and to take account of the issues from the Covid pandemic that will influence future service requirements and the Scottish Government programme for government. The Council agreed that Service Plans be prepared as normal and that they be further reviewed as required as part of the normal 6 monthly performance reporting framework to take account of any revisions and change in direction in the new Corporate Plan (para 15 of the minute refers). This plan focusses on the period from April 2023 to April 2024.

3.7 Financial Services

3.7.1 Progress on planned work (success)

- A format of financial reporting to the Moray Growth Deal Programme Board has been developed and is now in regular (monthly) use.
- Council Tax e-billing is available and uptake compares favourably with other authorities benchmarked with.
- Successful engagement with local suppliers and contract awards supported for meat and bakery goods.

3.7.2 Progress on planned work (areas for development/not delivered)

- Progress towards automating council tax backroom functions has been slow, largely due to revisions to how information is stored required by the software provider, necessitating additional work on this project.
- Progress on Participatory Budgeting has been slow. A number of projects suggested by services have stalled due to lack of resource in the service department to support the process.
- Work with MIJB on supporting commissioning has changed focus across the year on the initiative of the Commissioning team and little progress has been made but there is now an action plan in place to drive progress.

3.7.3 Planned focus in new plan (reflecting above and challenges to come)

- Continue to develop digital solutions across financial services and other previously planned actions brought forward
- New focus on preparing for changes in legislation on capital accounting, particularly IFRS 16 (accounting for leases)

Service Plans for 2023/24

- 3.8 Given the pressures across all services and the need to prioritise resources to the council's priorities, services are focussing on essential service delivery and developments and taking account of the planned review of the Corporate Plan when undertaking service planning. The Service Plan attached to this report is:

Appendix 1: Financial Services

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**
The Service Plan was informed by the LOIP and the Council's Corporate Plan.
- (b) Policy and Legal**
Statutory requirements and Council policies are considered by managers when preparing service plans for the year ahead.
- (c) Financial implications**
No additional financial resources beyond those previously reported to service committees are required to support the Service Plan.
- (d) Risk Implications**
Up to date risk registers are maintained and considered as part of the service planning process.

(e) Staffing Implications

Service Plans are integral to good management practice including workforce planning and assisting with communication about work plans for staff, identifying priorities and matching staff time to the Council's priorities.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities

Managers consider equalities issues for staff and service users when assessing current service delivery arrangements and future requirements.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

There are no climate change and biodiversity impacts from this report.

(i) Consultations

The Head of Financial Services has worked with her management team to prepare the Services Plan attached as **Appendix 1** and have contributed to the updates in this report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Service Plan has been prepared identifying the improvements targeted for the period up to April 2024. In preparing the plan managers have taken account of risk, performance data (including inspections and Best Value), the LOIP, the Corporate Plan and other relevant factors such as audit and inspection outcomes. Consideration has also been given to the longer term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and action that is required to respond to them, these considerations now being embedded in core work. The Service Plan identifies the priority rating ascribed for each action and key performance measures to enable progress in delivery of core service requirements and improvements will be tracked.

Author of Report:

Rhona Gunn

Background Papers:

Report to Council on 19 January: Corporate Plan

Preparation

Report to Corporate on 15 March 2022: Financial Service Plan 2022/23

Ref:

Report to Council on 2 February 2023: Corporate Plan

SPMAN-1108985784-870

SPMAN-1293228629-853

Item 6.
FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 23-24

APPENDIX 1

1. Service Definition:	FINANCIAL SERVICES Financial services provide the following support services across the Council, to Grampian Valuation Joint Board and – in partnership with NHS colleagues - contribute towards the support of Moray Integration Joint Board: Accountancy, Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable, Banking, Insurance, Procurement, Taxation (Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates), Treasury Management, VAT
2. Service Resources:	Fte 59.76 Budget £2,133,000

3. What have we identified for improvement in 2023/26?	What evidence did we use to identify this improvement? Please add benchmark information wherever available and relevant to the improvement.
Strengthen the financial planning process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh the council's short term and medium to long term financial strategies 	Corporate Plan and BVAR action plan
Implement legislative / regulatory changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IFRS 16 	A requirement with which the council has no choice but to comply and which will involve significant work to ensure compliance
Support Financial Governance Processes for Moray Growth Deal	A major programme which the Council is leading with significant financial implications, particularly as more projects begin to draw down government grant. Local economic recovery is part of Moray Economic Strategy and the Moray Growth Deal will assist in this.

FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 23-24

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating (1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing, 5 for on hold?)
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	<p>Further develop the council's medium to long term financial strategy (BV)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Transformation savings Look for small scale spend-to-save initiatives and review for possibility of upscaling Savings proposals developed for members consideration and public engagement and financial proposals linked to Corporate Plan 	<p>Affordable and achievable medium to long term financial strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further savings targets developed for each strand of programme Further savings targets developed, linked to investment in change Potential service reductions / cessations identified assessed and quantified 	<p>Strategy agreed to address funding gap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in projected funding gap, linked to programme of transformative change Further reduction in projected funding gap without impact on services Further reduction in projected funding gap with clearly articulated impact on services 	September 2023	LP	1

FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 23-24

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
Implement legislative / regulatory changes	Implement requirements of IFRS 16 (Carried forward from previous service plan as implementation date put back) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess whether to implement in advance of 2024/25 target Implement in accord with agreed timing 	Fully compliant accounts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implications and timeline agreed with other services Accounts drafted with supporting working papers 	Audit opinion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach and timing agreed with auditor Unqualified audit opinion 	April 2026 September 2023 September 2026	DO'S	1
Participatory Budgeting	Further develop mainstream Participatory Budgeting (Carried forward from previous service plan)	Successful implementation of PB projects within the community	Year on year increase in amount allocated until reach 1% of budget (as defined by COSLA) allocated via PB process	February 2026	LP	2
Implement the Procurement Strategic Action Plan (PSAP)	Implement the actions identified as priorities in the Procurement Strategic Action Plan (Carried forward from previous service plan and will be annual target with different actions)	Revised Procurement Strategy 2023/26 Contract register developed to maximise functionality and meet SG reporting requirements.	September 2023 Increase in performance as measured by PCI (National Evidenced based Audit)– this is being postponed until 2024/25	2024/25 September 2023 24/25	DB	4
Support for MIJB	Support and drive forward the working relationships required for effective procurement and commissioning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Commissioning team to tackle backlog of contracts requiring review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced backlog of contracts requiring review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised contractual arrangements in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milestone to be as set by MIJB action Plan 	LP	1
Increase Service Efficiency	Automation of Council Tax back room processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automated processes Promote availability 	Identify Council Tax services which can be delivered on-line Develop on-line services	Generate uptake of self-service (currently not available so baseline nil)	March 2025	JT JT	2

FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 23-24

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate uptake 					
	CTX e-Billing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline sign-up process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved e-Billing uptake by CTX payers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased uptake of e-billing. 	End June 2024	JT	2
	NDR e-billing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop process Benchmark level of uptake with other local authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce e-billing for NDR payers Once introduced, liaise with other LAs to research how others have maximized uptake 	Generate uptake of e-billing	End June 2024	JT	2
			Maximize NDR e-Billing uptake	End June 2025	JT	3
	CTX Direct Debit sign-up	Paperless direct debit sign-up	Offer online CTX direct debit sign-up option Generate uptake of direct debit sign-up option - 10% of all applicants	February 2026	JT	3
	Investigate workflow for accountancy processes	Introduction of workflow where appropriate to facilitate remote management of task	Consistent use of workflow across section and more timeous completion of routine tasks	Investigation Complete September 2023 Implementation commence December 2023	DO'S	3
	Review Capital Monitoring	Automate production of monthly reports	Automated process implemented	December 2023	DO'S	3
	Development of e-form for Accounts Payable	Automation of AP	Automated process used across all departments	March 2024	DB	3
Sound Financial Governance	Support the Financial Governance processes for Moray Growth Deal		Timeous, accurate and informative financial information provided to Board.	Monthly	LP	1
			Council spend reported to members on a quarterly basis	Quarterly	LP	1

FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 23-24

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
	Budget Manager training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered timeously to new budget managers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Manager Refresher courses offered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content of training reviewed for continued appropriateness 	Procurements compliant with regulations Budget Mangers given appropriate training	Timeous and accurate returns made to Scottish Government and funding drawn down per forecast Successful procurement meeting needs of project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Budget Managers confident they understand their role – feedback from training sessions is good / very good Feedback from training sessions is good / very good 	Per agreed financial schedule (monthly / quarterly) As required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within a month of Accountancy being notified of appointment Two year anniversary of training March 2025 	LP DB DO'S	1 1 1
Workforce Planning Development - to meet demands and deliver priorities	The service improves the ERDP experience and holds accurate records, including continuous professional development (CPD) - from mandatory training through to service and job specific learning.	Staff are competent in their roles as a result of taking part in regular and appropriate continuous professional development opportunities, including digital and customer skills	Evidence that all staff have undertaken mandatory training. Number of ERDPs completed 100% of ERDPs carried out within timescale % staff completing Customer Excellence e-learning module	March 2023 (and reviewed annually) March 2023 (measured quarterly) March 2023 (measured quarterly)	Head of Service	1

FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 23-24

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
	Training posts created and filled in Accountancy	Suitably qualified staff brought on and retained	or digital standard training that could give % <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post filled• Achievement of CPS targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• September 2023• Per scheme requirements, completion by end 2026		



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 13 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY RENTAL SUPPORT – ANNUAL REVIEW

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To invite the Committee to consider the level of rental support awarded to voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) occupying Council property under legacy arrangements and the Council's Scheme of Delegation for short-term low-value concessions and to consider options for the review of the level of support provided through community rent rebates.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Corporate Committee in terms of Sections III (B) (20) and (30) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the management of Common Good and Trust property and the monitoring and review of concessionary rents respectively.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Committee is invited to:

- (i) note that no rental support was approved under the Scheme of Delegation for short-term low-value rental concessions during the financial year 2022/23;**
- (ii) note the extent of long term rental support provided under the legacy arrangements detailed in Appendix 1;**
- (iii) note the extent of rental support provided under the Community Rent Rebate arrangements detailed in Appendix 2; and,**
- (iv) approve one of the following two options for the review of existing community rent rebates:**
 - (a) allow all existing rebates to continue unchanged until such time as a rent review is implemented; or,**
 - (b) cancel all rebates when the related rent is due to be reviewed, whether or not the rent review is implemented, and require the beneficiary to re-apply if they wish the rebate to continue.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 1 September 2015, the Policy and Resources Committee agreed that rental support provided to VCOs occupying Council property be monitored by means of an annual report (para 8 of the Minute refers). On 25 May 2016, the Council agreed that all new requests from VCOs for leases at less than market value would be considered under the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) scheme (para 22 of the Minute refers). New lease applications considered under the CAT scheme are covered in a separate annual report.
- 3.2 Leases where the property has no commercial value, where the rent payable has been reduced to reflect an agreement that the tenant will undertake improvement works to the property, or where the Council's ability to charge a rent is restricted in some way do not involve the provision of discretionary rental support. Such leases are considered outside the scope of this report.

Short-Term Low-Value Rental Concessions

- 3.3 On 12 May 2021, Moray Council delegated authority to the Chief Financial Officer to approve applications for short-term low-value concessionary arrangements to facilitate a light touch process and enable a quick response (para 16 of the Minute refers).
- 3.4 When the approved rent rebate comes to an end the tenant can apply for a rent rebate in the normal way, with the application then being determined by this committee. No applications for short-term low-value rental support were considered under the Scheme of Delegation during the 2022/23 financial year.

Leases with Nominal Rents

- 3.5 **Appendix 1** lists those leases where the property is considered to have a commercial value and where nominal rentals result from the provision of discretionary rental support. There is generally no provision in these leases to review the rent payable during the lease term. When such leases are terminated the tenant is invited to enter into a new lease on commercial terms or apply under the CAT Scheme for a new lease at less than market value. Tenants can apply under the scheme for a transfer of ownership at any time.

Community Rent Rebates

- 3.6 From 23 March 2005, the Council changed the way it handled requests for rental support from VCOs. Instead of agreeing a nominal rent, the rent payable was set at a commercial rate and the VCO could apply separately for a rental grant (rent rebate). Under these arrangements, the rent rebate ceases whenever the rent is reviewed. The VCO can then apply for a continuation of the rent rebate.
- 3.7 On 30 August 2022, the Corporate Committee agreed to allow existing VCO tenants that do not currently benefit from a rent rebate to apply for rental support whenever their rent is reviewed (para 10 of the Minute refers). VCOs that have had an application refused may re-apply at the next rent review. All applications for rent rebates are determined by this committee.

- 3.8 **Appendix 2** lists those leases where the tenant currently benefits from a rent rebate. As each lease comes to an end, any request for a new lease with rental support would be considered under the CAT scheme. The total rental support provided under these arrangements for the 2022/23 financial year amounted to £25,730. This comprised £16,630 relating to general services, £2,700 relating to common good, and £6,400 relating to public trusts.
- 3.9 The current value of rent rebates involved where the rent is due to be reviewed over the next five financial years is shown in the table below:

Financial Year in which rent review is due	Current Rebate Value
2023/24	£9,040
2024/25	£2,700
2025/26	£5,790
2026/27	£6,700
2027/28	£1,500
Total	£25,730

Current rental valuations of the properties where the rent is due to be reviewed in future financial years have not been carried out.

4. **OPTIONS FOR THE REVIEW OF RENTAL SUPPORT**

- 4.1 Rent reviews are due in the current financial year in respect of two leases where the tenants benefit from a community rent rebate. Negotiations are currently underway in relation to a new lease on commercial terms for one of these. The Asset Manager (Commercial Buildings) considers that there is insufficient evidence of any uplift in rental values to justify carrying out a rent review for the other. In these circumstances, no rent review would be carried out until the next rent review date.
- 4.2 Under the current arrangements, there would be no automatic cancellation of the rent rebate for the lease concerned. If no actions are taken then the tenant would continue to benefit from a rebate valued at £5,040 per annum until such time as a rent review is implemented. A similar situation could arise next financial year in respect of one further lease involving a rebate valued at £2,700 per annum.
- 4.3 The Council has two options where there is insufficient evidence to justify implementing a rent review:
- (a) **Do Nothing** – the existing rent rebates would continue unchanged until such time as there is an uplift in rental values sufficient to justify implementing the rent review provisions of the lease; or,
 - (b) **Cancel the rent rebate at the next rent review date even if the rent review is not implemented** – the tenant would then have an opportunity to re-apply for ongoing rental support at the same level under the arrangements for community rent rebates.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Leasing assets to the community at less than market value can support the LOIP aim of creating more resilient and sustainable communities with less need for universal services provided by the public sector. It can also be consistent with the Corporate Plan value of promoting community empowerment as a means of supporting communities to take on more responsibility.

Where the property is a Common Good asset, the interests of the inhabitants of the former burgh take precedence over the Council's Corporate Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP).

Where the property is held under a Public Trust, leases must be considered only in relation to uses that reflect the trust purposes.

(b) Policy and Legal

On 21 March 2017, the Policy and Resources Committee approved the following policy statement (paragraph 5 of the Minute refers).

“Moray Council recognises the important role that the transfer of property assets can play in empowering communities and strengthening their resilience. Where appropriate, the council will use the transfer of assets to give more control to communities and local people, inspire them to find local solutions to community needs, and as a means of helping communities become more sustainable in the long term. In determining all asset transfer requests, the council will have regard to the guidance provided by the Scottish Government in relation to asset transfer requests made under Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, whether or not such requests are made under the provisions contained in the Act.”

Assets leased at less than market value must comply with the Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010, which require the Council to be satisfied that the proposal is reasonable and that the granting of the lease is likely to contribute to the promotion or improvement within Moray of one or more of the following purposes:

- a) Economic Development,
- b) Regeneration,
- c) Public Health,
- d) Social Wellbeing, or
- e) Environmental Wellbeing.

Reasonableness in this context is taken to imply that the requested discount is the minimum necessary to allow the project to proceed and that it is commensurate with the likely benefits of the project.

In administering Common Good assets, the Council is required by section 15(4) of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 to have regard to the interests of the inhabitants of the area to which the Common Good related prior to 16 May 1975.

Where the Council Members act as Trustees under a Public Trust, they are not acting in the capacity of a local authority but in their capacity as Trustees under and in terms of the Trust.

(c) Financial Implications

The value of the rents forgone in relation to community rent rebate beneficiaries are set out in **Appendix 2**.

If option (a) is followed then a rebate valued at £5,040 per annum would automatically continue without review with effect from 17 September 2023 with the possibility of a further rebate valued at £2,700 per annum automatically continuing the following financial year with effect from 15 May 2024. If option (b) is followed then all rent rebates will cease whenever the rent is due to be reviewed and the VCO will need to re-apply if they wish the rebate to continue.

The financial implications of ongoing support following a review are considered on a case-by-case basis and reported to this committee as each is taken through the relevant approval process.

(d) Risk Implications

Under option (a) there is a risk that a material change in circumstances may be missed that could have resulted in an application for a continuation of the rent rebate being refused. Option (b) provides the Council with an opportunity to ensure that the reasons for awarding rental support remain valid.

(e) Staffing Implications

The properties concerned tend to have unique characteristics that make assessing rental values more staff intensive than usual. Pressures on staff resources within the Property Asset Management team mean that workloads continue to be prioritised in favour of higher value corporate priorities. As such, rent reviews for lower value properties are not being implemented currently. This situation is under continuous review and the merits of implementing lease renewals and rent reviews should be considered within this context.

Adoption of option (b) is likely to result in applications by tenants for continuation of rental support, and staff resources will be required to consider such applications and report to committee.

(f) Property Implications

There are no property implications arising directly from this report. Any such implications arising from changes in the level of support provided are identified on a case-by-case basis during each review.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities or socio-economic issues arising directly from this report. Equalities and socio-economic issues are considered on a case-by-case basis as part of each review.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impact

There are no climate change or biodiversity implications arising from this report.

(i) Consultations

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Chief Financial Officer, Head of Housing and Property, Property Asset Manager, Asset Manager (Commercial Buildings), S. Souter Senior Accountant, Legal Services Manager, Community Learning and Engagement Manager, L. Robinson Committee Services Officer, and Equal Opportunities Officer have been consulted and their comments incorporated in the report.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Although the Council has established appropriate arrangements for assessing new requests from VCOs for leases at concessionary rentals, there remains a legacy of agreements entered into prior to these arrangements coming into force. Some agreements involved setting a nominal rent that subsists until the end of the lease. Others can be reviewed at regular intervals. This report sets out the level of rental support provided under these arrangements together with support approved under delegated powers and invites the Committee to consider options for the review of existing community rent rebates.**

Author of Report:	Andrew Gray, Asset Management Coordinator
Background Papers:	Held by author
Ref:	SPMAN-1108985784-874 / SPMAN-1108985784-875 SPMAN-1108985784-873

PROPERTIES LET AT NOMINAL RENTS REFLECTING THE AWARD OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT UNDER LEGACY ARRANGEMENTS

Financial support can be provided through the Council retaining responsibility for specified property costs, agreeing to forego rent that it could otherwise charge, or a combination of both. Most leases involve the tenant taking on full responsibility for all property costs, including repairs and maintenance – these lease types are designated by the letters FRI (full repairing and insuring). In some cases, the tenant is responsible for internal repairs only – these are denoted by the letters IRO. Where properties were let at nominal rents a new valuation would be required to identify the current value of the rental concession. The majority of these leases contain no provision for reviewing the rent, so can only be reviewed when the lease is terminated. The list is grouped by title, i.e. general services, common good and public trust, and then sorted by expiry date with the earliest dates at the top.

	Location	Community Body	Property	Lease Type	Date of Entry	Term	Expiry	Annual Rent	Next Review
	General Services								
1.	Newmill	Village Hall Management Committee (Note 1)	Newmill Institute, Mill Brae	IRO	16/03/2006	Year-to-year	Annually on 31-Oct	£1.00	Lease end
2.	Rothies	Rothies Bowling Club	Bowling Green, Recreation Park	FRI	01/03/1983	50 years	01/03/2033	£1.00	Lease end
3.	Forres	Forres Thistle FC	Logie Park, Pilmuir Road	FRI	01/06/1988	50 years	01/06/2038	£10.00	Lease end
4.	Mosstodloch	Mosstodloch Amenities Association	Site of Speymouth Hall, Stynie Road	FRI	15/03/1977	99 Years	14/03/2076	£0.01	Lease end
5.	Lhanbryde	Lhanbryde Community Challenge	Site of Village Hall, Robertson Road	FRI	11/11/1977	99 years	11/11/2076	£0.01	Lease end
6.	Portgordon	Portgordon Recreation Committee	Bowling Green, Station Road	FRI	01/09/1978	99 years	01/09/2077	£0.01	Lease end
7.	Fochabers	Fochabers Rifle Club	13 Christie Place	FRI	28/05/2006	99 years	28/05/2105	£1.00	Lease end

	Location	Community Body	Property	Lease Type	Date of Entry	Term	Expiry	Annual Rent	Next Review
	Common Good								
8.	Buckie	Buckie Victoria Bowling Club	Bowling Club, West Church Street	FRI	01/04/2005	25 years	31/03/2030	£1.00	Lease end
9.	Forres	Forres Bowling Club	Forres Bowling Club, St. Catherines Road	FRI	07/07/1995	99 years	06/07/2094	£1.00	Lease end
	Public Trust								
10.	Aberlour	Aberlour Community Association (Note 2)	Fleming Hall, Queens Road	IRO	01/04/2001	25 years	31/03/2026	£1.00	01/04/2026 or lease end

Notes

1. The Council is currently responsible for keeping the Newmill Institute wind and watertight, resulting in a net cost to the Council. The Council's title restricts its ability to secure an income from the property. Negotiations are underway to renew the lease on FRI terms and conditions. Once completed, the proposed new lease is expected to be cost-neutral to the Council and will not involve a rental concession, so will no longer appear on this list.
2. The Fleming Hall trust has no funds. The Council is currently responsible for keeping the hall wind and watertight, resulting in a net cost to the Council. The rent payable for the hall was initially set at £1 (if asked) but with a provision for quinquennial rent reviews. The rent review clause contains provision for determining whether the rental concession should continue. The tenant has benefited from this provision throughout the tenancy with the result that there is no income generated by the lease. The trust deed does not permit the trustees to retain any surplus income from the property. When the lease is due to be renewed it will be offered on FRI terms and conditions.

COMMUNITY RENT REBATES

All but one of the leases listed involve the tenant taking on full responsibility for all property costs, including repairs and maintenance. The list is grouped by title, i.e. general services, common good and public trusts, and sorted by earliest rent review date.

	Location	Community Body	Property	Date of Entry	Expiry Date	Annual Rent	Rebate Awarded	Rent Payable	Review Cycle	Next Rent Review Date
	General Services									
1.	Elgin	New Elgin Junior FC (note 1)	Pavilion, Pinefield Playing Fields	01/08/2011	31/07/2023 (year-to-year)	£4,000	£4,000	£0	3 Years	01/08/2023
2.	Keith	Keith Golf Club (note 2)	Keith Golf Course	17/09/2013	16/09/2112	£5,040	£5,040	£0	5 Years	17/09/2023
3.	Keith	2 nd Keith Scout Group	Old Ogilvie School, Fife Street	31/10/2015	30/10/2035	£5,790	£5,790	£0	5 Years	31/10/2025
4.	Findochty	Findochty Bowling Club (note 3)	Findochty Bowling Green	18/05/2006	17/05/2031	£400	£400	£0	5 Years	18/05/2026
5.	Buckie	Buckie Skate Park Committee (note 3)	Skate Park, Ian Johnston Park	27/09/2008	26/09/2028	£1,400	£1,400	£0	5 Years	27/09/2028 (lease end)
	Total Values for General Services					£16,630	£16,630	£0		
	Common Good									
6.	Buckie	Fishing Heritage Centre (note 3)	Fishing Heritage Centre	01/03/2006	28/02/2036	£2,700	£2,700	£0	3 Years	15/05/2024
	Total Values for Common Good					£2,700	£2,700	£0		
	Public Trusts									
7.	Forres	Grant Park Pavilion Committee (note 3)	Bowling Pavilion, Grant Park	03/11/2008	02/11/2048	£6,300	£6,300	£0	3 Years	03/11/2026
8.	Elgin	Bowling Club (note 4)	Bowling Pavilion, Cooper Park	01/04/2008	31/03/2028	£100	£100	£0	None	01/04/2028 (lease end)
	Total Values for Public Trusts					£6.400	£6.400	£0		

	Location	Community Body	Property	Date of Entry	Expiry Date	Annual Rent	Rebate Awarded	Rent Payable	Review Cycle	Next Rent Review Date
	All Ownership Categories									
	Total Values for all ownership categories					£25,730	£25,730	£0		

Notes.

1. Negotiations are currently underway with New Elgin Junior FC in respect of a new lease on commercial terms and conditions.
2. Following detailed investigations, the Asset Manager (Commercial Properties) considers that there is little evidence of any increase in rental value beyond the passing rent. Consequently, the upcoming rent review would be deferred until the next review date.
3. When the last rent reviews were due, evidence suggested that no increases in rent were appropriate. Consequently, no formal rent reviews were implemented. The position will be considered again when the next reviews are due.
4. The Council is liable for maintaining the Bowling pavilion roof but has the option to terminate the lease if it becomes uneconomic to repair.



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 13 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (FINANCIAL SERVICES) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2023

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 31 March 2023.

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (A) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration to monitor performance in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Framework.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) **scrutinises performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of March 2023;**
- (ii) **notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

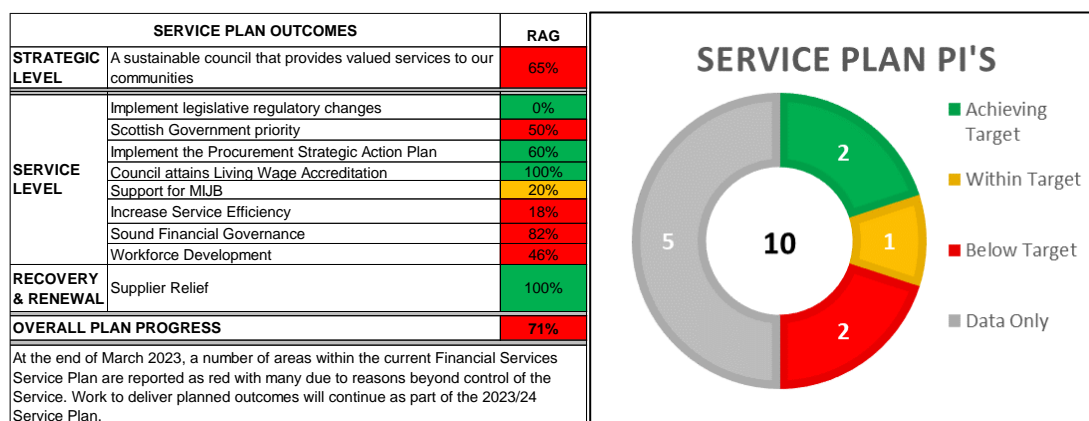
3. BACKGROUND

3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Moray Council approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

4. SERVICE PLANNING

4.1 Each service plan sets out the strategic and service level priorities and outcomes it intends to deliver in the coming year aligning closely with financial planning, corporate and community planning partnership strategic priorities. This report provides an interim update on progress on the service plan, key outcomes and performance indicators. Committee is invited to review progress to secure assurance that is satisfactory and to provide scrutiny and further direction where performance requires attention.

- 4.2 Latest Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Indicators covering 2021/22, initially published in February 2023, will be refreshed in June. The full suite can be viewed using the [My Local Council](#) tool. Published indicators for this service have been incorporated within the relevant section of this report depending on whether results are used to evidence progress against strategic, service plan or service performance priorities. 2022/23 LGBF data will be available early 2024.
- 4.3 The narrative included is by exception, links to Service Plan Actions and Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.



Strategic Outcomes – successes

- 4.4 The planned review of the 10 year capital plan, aimed at developing a cap on expenditure, is complete with an updated plan approved at a Special Meeting of Moray Council on 1 March 2023 (para 5 of the Minute refers). A target saving of 10% reduction was achieved due to rescheduling of planned work with further reductions anticipated through use of a prioritisation matrix. The process to review small scale spend to save initiatives has also concluded for 2022/23 with no proposals taken forward. This process will be repeated in 2023/24. (Action FIN22-23 Strat-4.1b and 4.1d)

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.5 While the Transformation programme remains ongoing, a review of savings identified to date was undertaken in December and included in the Council's budget for 2023/24. Opportunities for any further savings will continue to be assessed throughout the year. Public consultation regarding potential savings linked to the new Corporate Plan is to be rescheduled with a document outlining proposals currently in development. (Actions FIN22-23 Strat-4.1c, 4.1e)

Service Level Outcomes – successes

- 4.6 Although out with original target timescales, a review and update of Budget Manager Training is now complete. A refresher module is available on-line with a programme of face to face sessions scheduled to take place over the summer. (Action FIN22-23 Serv-5.7b)

Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.7 Work to develop mainstream Participatory Budgeting (PB) continues with the addition of an Active Travel project covering Buckie and Keith. With 12 activities now in progress, allocated spend has increased to £473,802 however this remains well below the target of £1,975,000. (Action FIN22-23 Serv-5.2, Pls FS214, FS215 and FS216). The results of a recent report on PB activity across Scotland will be used as the basis of a review of the Council's approach to PB.
- 4.8 At the end of quarter 4, five actions aimed at Increasing Service Efficiency are behind schedule. Four relating to Council Tax have been delayed due to resourcing issues around system upgrades to software and hardware. Financial Services are liaising with ICT however progress is unlikely in the short term and revised due dates in the 2023/24 Service Plan are proposed. Development of an e-form for Accounts Payable is 65% complete with focus now on workflow and authorisation processes outwith the original due date. (Actions FIN22-23 Serv-5.6a, 5.6b, 5.6c, 5.6d and 5.6f)
- 4.9 Work to develop the financial process for the Moray Growth Deal remains ongoing with further modifications to the financial template agreed and to be implemented in 2023/24. (Action FIN22-23 Serv-5.7a)
- 4.10 Actions relating to workforce development remain ongoing. Unexpected workload during quarter 4 has delayed ERDPs within Taxation while the creation of a Trainee post in Accountancy is overdue. This is now anticipated to be finalised by the end August 2023. (Action FIN22-23 Serv-5.8b)

Recovery and Renewal - successes

- 4.11 The Supplier Relief scheme ended on 31 March 2023. During quarter 4, 18 claims were received, all were paid within the target deadline.

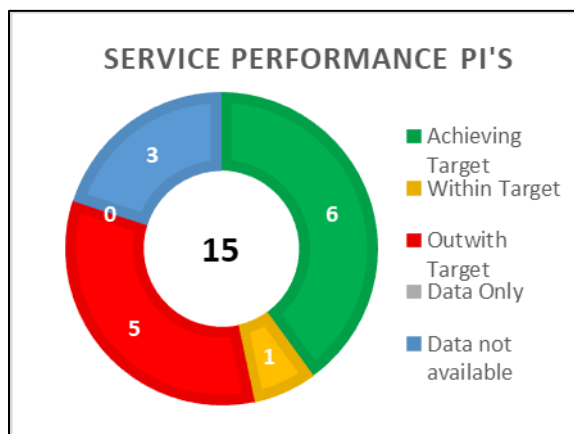
Recovery and Renewal – challenges and actions to support

- 4.12 Nothing to report.

5 SERVICE PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 In line with Performance Management Framework, operational performance is monitored quarterly by departmental management. Areas performing well and/or areas subject to a decreasing trend or where benchmarking results show performance below comparators will be reported to this Committee for member scrutiny.

- 5.2 The narrative included is by exception, links to Service Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.



Operational Indicators – successes

- 5.3 Nothing to report.

Operational Indicators – challenges and actions to support

- 5.4 For 2021/22, the percentage of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days has increased slightly from 84.02% to 85.49% however Moray remains in the lowest quartile ranked 26th and below the Scottish average of 92.2%. All payments are made immediately on receipt of authorised invoices from departments. This therefore reflects the pace of budget managers' authorisation rather than the performance of Financial Services. Heads of Service are periodically informed of the performance of their service in this regard. (PI CORP8).
- 5.5 The ratio of financing cost to net revenue stream, one of the Prudential indicators used nationally to measure affordability, highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs, net of investment income. For the 2021/22 reporting period, a ratio of 8.27% was reported for Moray, above the Scottish average of 5.89%, maintaining the ranking of 27th against all other local authorities. Prudential Indicators were reported to Council on 1 March 2023 (para 5 of the Minute refers) and reflected the ongoing general requirement to increase borrowing to fund capital expenditure in the capital plan, particularly in the Learning Estate and the Moray Growth Deal. (PI SFINSUS03)
- 5.6 To ensure spending is accurately forecast, LGBF reports on actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure. In the year to March 2022, despite an improvement from 89.6% to 91.1%, Moray remains below the Scottish average of 98.3% and ranked in the lowest quartile, falling from 30th to 32nd. (PI SFINSUS05) Patterns of budgeted spend are impacted across all local authorities, albeit in different ways, with for an example an increase in the level of reserves held a common feature. Budget manager training is key to an accurate forecast and this has been reviewed during 22/23.

6. OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA

Complaints & MP/MSP Enquiries

- 6.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, complaints are reviewed quarterly by departmental management in terms of time taken to respond, outcome and learning points. Detailed tables can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.
- 6.2 During the second half of 2022/23, Financial Services received and closed 26 complaints; 20 (77%) as Frontline, 5 (19%) as Investigative and 1 (4%) as Escalated. Twelve (60%) Frontline complaints and 2 (40%) Investigative complaints met the target timescales of 5 and 20 working days respectively. All others were closed out with set targets.
- 6.3 Overall 9 complaints were upheld with a further 3 partially upheld. Eight complaints related to issues around Council Tax. Procedures around the handling of customer enquiries have been reviewed, refresher training has also been undertaken and best practice reinforced. A template to improve signposting has also been developed.
- 6.4 In addition to complaints, 7 MP/MSP enquiries were received between October and March. 4 related to council tax, 2 regarding the cost of living award and 1 around invoicing. All met acknowledgment targets.

Other Performance (not included in the Service Plan)

- 6.5 During quarter 4, the Taxation team have been administering energy grants to those not previously entitled under earlier government schemes. Despite starting during one of the busiest times of the year, the team have dealt with this additional workload well and in a timely manner to the benefit of those receiving the grants. However, this additional workload inevitably impacted the Taxation Team's ability to deal with its core workload at this time of peak demand.

Case Studies

- 6.6 Nothing to report.

Consultation and Engagement

- 6.7 Nothing to report.

7 SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Performance measurement is used to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of services to meet the Council's priorities in both the Corporate Plan and the LOIP.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council has a statutory requirement to publish a range of information that will demonstrate that it is securing best value and assist in comparing performance both over time and between authorities where appropriate.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the report is to inform the Committee on performance.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None

(i) Consultations

The Chief Financial Officer, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Service Managers, Legal Services, the Equal Opportunities Officer, and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 At the end of March 2023, progress against the current Financial Services Service Plan sits at 71%. Some actions have been delayed due to reasons beyond the control of the Service while others relate to longer term work including Participatory Budgeting and savings proposals. Work to deliver these planned outcomes will continue as part of the 2023/24 Service Plan.**

Author of Report: Suzanne Wilson, Research and Information Officer

Background Papers: [Service Plan Actions](#)
[Service Plan Performance Indicators](#)
[Service Performance Indicators](#)
[Complaints Monitoring Report](#)

Ref: SPMAN-1293228629-869



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 13 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the committee with a report of progress made against the Corporate Asset Management Plan for 2022/23 and to consider targets for 2023/24.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to committee in terms of Section III (B) (28) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the formulation, implementation and review of asset management policies and practices, and to the maintenance of an overview of the Council's property disposal programme.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the committee:

- (i) considers and notes the work done to date to meet the targets set in the Corporate Asset Management Plan for 2022/23 as set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.6;**
- (ii) notes the status of Asset Management Plans for each type of asset as set out in APPENDIX 2; and**
- (iii) approves the actions included in the Corporate Asset Management Plan for 2023/24 as set out in paragraph 5.1.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Policy and Resources Committee approved the Council's first Corporate Asset Management Plan (CAMP) on 23 September 2008 (paragraph 6 of the minute refers). The CAMP is updated annually and the updated CAMP for 2022/23 was approved by Corporate Committee on 14 June 2022 (paragraph 8 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 A schematic representation of the asset management planning process is included as **APPENDIX 1** to this report. Committee should note the iterative nature of asset management planning, taking financial affordability into account. The process involves a corporate overview to set parameters and review the overall impact of asset management plans and service level involvement to develop the detail of plans, which are scrutinised along with other service level issues at Service Committees.
- 3.3 Asset Management Planning is recognised as one of the main drivers for the Capital Plan. The lead-in time for capital projects can be up to 24 months, allowing for design work, planning permission if required and depending on the procurement route appropriate to the project. Consequently the Council prepares ten year capital plans as part of the planning process for future years. This also facilitates assurance of financial sustainability by forecasting future investment needs of the current asset base of the Council. In common with most other Scottish local authorities the Council has reviewed its capital plans for affordability during 2022/23 in the light of rising construction cost and rising interest rates. The latest 10 year plan, for 2023 to 2034, was approved as an indicative plan by Council on 1 March 2023 (paragraph x of the Minute refers).
- 3.4 A summary of progress to date on developing individual asset management plans is included as **APPENDIX 2** to this report. This highlights progress in Property Asset Management Planning over the past year, mainly in the learning estate and corporate properties, although these major areas are still areas of work in progress.

4. REPORT ON PROGRESS UNDER THE CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022/23

- 4.1 The CAMP for 2022/23 reflected a year of continuing consolidation, with the key aim of the CAMP being to ensure that the work needed to underpin and deliver a ten-year capital plan was identified, resourced and carried out. A target of 10% savings was achieved during an initial broad review of the plan, arising largely from slippage. A more in-depth review of the plan was then carried out with a view to developing a methodology for prioritising capital projects. Further savings of 12.7% in 2023/24 and 6% in total over the ten year period were achieved.
- 4.2 There were four key tasks identified for 2022/23:

4.3 Review the Property Asset Management Appraisal

A Property Asset Management Appraisal (PAMA) was presented to the Moray Council on 12 December 2018 (paragraph 6 of the Minute refers). The PAMA proposed a review of office accommodation, depots, storage facilities and the implementation of a revised Asset Management Structure - all of which were to be completed in 2019/20. A progress report on the PAMA was presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 29 October 2019 (paragraph 13 of the minute refers) to Full Council on 30 June 2021 (paragraph 14 of the minute refers) and to the Corporate Committee on 30 August 2022 (paragraph 7 of the minute refers). Future opportunities have been highlighted for detailed option appraisal to ensure all our building assets contribute efficiently to service delivery and further refined as post-pandemic working practices have been reviewed. The review of Council offices is now progressing under the Smarter Working Project, following adoption of hybrid working as the norm. This project is largely focussed on the HQ Campus at present but the general principles are to be rolled out across all Council offices. The outline business case was approved by Full Council on 2 February 2023 (paragraph 10 of the Minute refers and the Full Business Case will be reported to Council on 28 June 2023. The outline business case for the rationalisation of depots and stores is being developed and will incorporate the need to decarbonise the Council's property and fleet assets in line with the Council's climate change objectives and statutory duties placed on local authorities. To this end the outline business case will reflect the need for appropriate electrical vehicle charging points across Council locations and ensure property assets retained can be decarbonised economically. The outline business case is due to be reported to Council in the autumn of this year, with an update being presented to committee before the summer recess. These two projects are significant exercises in asset management but also incorporate wider elements such as flexible working and decarbonisation. Other aspects of the PAMA beyond offices, depots and stores are more limited and are being progressed with an update to committee scheduled for the autumn.

4.4 Complete the post project review of the Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) Capital Project

An end of project report covering both revenue and capital aspects of the ELC Expansion Project was submitted to the ELC Programme Board and the Transform Learning Board. This report was a background paper for the Audit & Scrutiny Committee meeting on 10 May 2023. Capital works continue in Aberlour (part of the original project) and at various locations as additional works required by the Care Inspectorate following revised requirements. Any further developments in ELC will be brought forward through the Transform Learning Board.

4.5 Continue to develop a selection process for post project reviews and bring a draft report with recommendations to the AMWG

Work continues to be ongoing to formalise a process for selecting post project reviews, with collaboration between Officers from the Programme Management Office and Finance on identifying the best way forward. This work will continue into 2023/24 with a target completion date of October 2023...

4.6 **Continue general development of AMPs**

Continuing the development of individual asset management plans is an on-going task. Progress during 2022/23 was sporadic as the focus of Council services continued to be on response to the pandemic and then supporting recovery. A specific area to be addressed in response to the annual reporting requirement of the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 is how spending plans will contribute towards reducing emissions and so asset management plans will require to be aligned with this requirement.

5. **CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24**

5.1 The undernoted tasks are recommended for inclusion in the 2023/24 CAMP:

- Improve and automate capital monitoring information provided to budget managers to facilitate better management of the capital plan, with a target of December 2023;
- Continue work on prioritisation of the capital plan for including in the budget process, with a target completion date of September 2023;
- Update Asset Management Planning Process to incorporate the requirements of the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020;
- Progress with the development of the Learning Estate Strategy with a 2023/24 milestone of completing conditions surveys;
- Progress with the Smarter Working Project with a view to increasing occupancy in the HQ campus in the summer, taking into account the lessons learned from early adopters;
- Continue to develop the outline business case for the rationalisation of depots and stores taking into account the need to decarbonise the Council's property and fleet assets in line with the Council's climate change objectives. The aim is to report to Council in the autumn of 2023;
- Continue to develop a selection process for post project reviews, with a target of October 2023;
- Review the status of Asset Management Plans in **APPENDIX 1** in June 2023 and develop a programme of updates by October 2023. A rolling 5 year programme is envisaged as the likely outcome.

5.2 The full CAMP can be found at **APPENDIX 3**.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Asset management planning assists the Council to deliver Council and community planning priorities whilst achieving Best Value.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no policy or legal implications arising directly from this report.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Asset management planning feeds into the Council's financial planning process and forms a key part of the strategy for reducing budget pressures and of the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risks to the Council arising directly from this report. Asset management planning reduces the risk to the Council of unexpected issues arising relating to the Council's assets.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report. All recommended actions are planned to be carried out within current staffing resources.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities issues arising directly from this report.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

The mandatory annual reporting under the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 means that the annual compliance reports must now include details of how Moray Council will align its spending plans and use of resources to contribute to reducing emissions and delivering national and regional emissions reduction targets. This means the asset management plan should align with the ambitions of Moray Council becoming carbon neutral by 2030 as set out in the Climate Change Strategy and the Route Map to Net Zero, noting the caveats to this in the report to the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee on 2 May 2023.

Plans for decarbonising Council property and fleet are being created by the relevant services. When these are created these should be costed and the implications included in Corporate Asset Management Plan. The costs associated with these actions will be substantial and external funding will be critical, however asset planning will need to highlight these projected future costs so that, as was done in the latest report on 2 May, any issues could be included in the annual climate change reports and in the annual update on the route map to net zero to help determine if the decarbonisation targets are likely to be met.

A carbon impact assessment should be included in business cases as per Green Book guidance and the high capital costs of fleet and building decarbonisation means that business case calculations for these should take into account the social cost of carbon emissions as well as financial costs to allow a more whole life approach to investment to influence funding decisions.

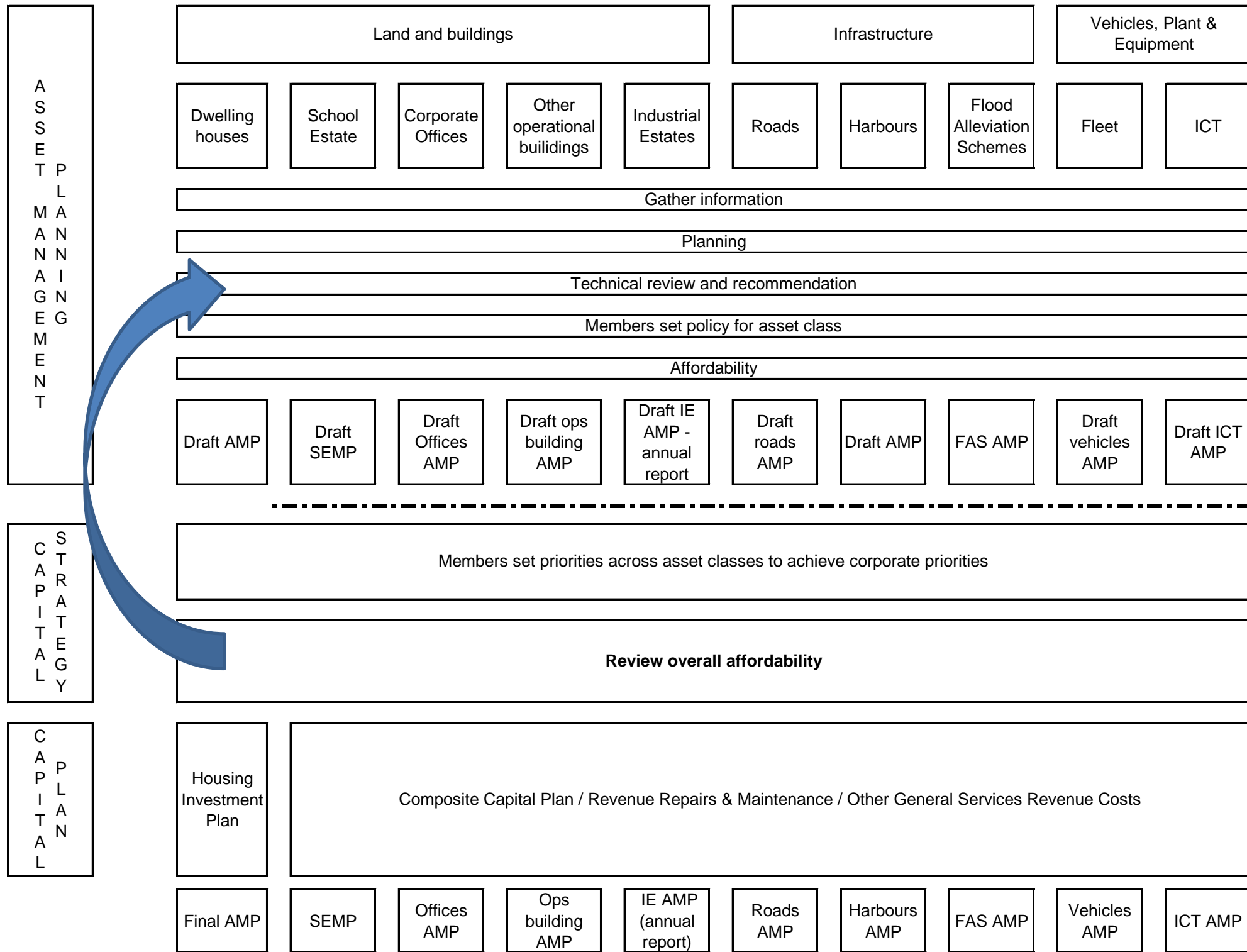
(i) Consultations

Members of the Corporate Management Team and of the Asset Management Working Group, the Principal Climate Change Strategy Officer, the Legal Services Manager, the Property Asset Manager and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 One of the specific actions included in the CAMP for 2022/23 has been completed and one transferred to a Transform Board.**
- 7.2 Progress continues to be made with revision of the PAMA, now being carried forward as part of the Smarter Working project and the depot and stores review. Post project review selection and the development of asset management processes and plans are carried forward in the 2023/24 CAMP.**
- 7.3 The Corporate Asset Management Plan for 2023/24 sets out the actions planned for this financial year to progress asset management planning in the Council.**

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Background Papers:
Ref: *SPMAN-1293228629-870*



APPENDIX 2

The table below summarises the contents and status of completion of Asset Management Plans for each category of asset.

	Property				Open Space	Roads etc			Housing	Fleet	ICT
<u>Baseline Information</u>	Schools	Offices	Other op buildings	Industrial Estates		Roads & associated infrastructure	Harbours	FAS			
Numbers/Suitable Measure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Condition	✓	✓	✓	✓	Part	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Suitability	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
Sufficiency	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Current Revenue	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cost											
Future Revenue Cost	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Part
<u>Planning</u>											
Performance Targets	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Service Plans	✓			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
<u>Technical Review</u>								✓			
Investment Needs	to be updated	✓	✓	✓	Part	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
<u>Policy for asset class Agreed by Council.</u>					In draft			✓			
	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Asset Management Plan	(old) Learning Estate Strategy	Part	Part	Complete		Complete	Part	Complete	Complete	Complete	✓

Changes from the position last reported to this Committee on 14 June 2022 are in bold type.

Schools information is being updated.

SPMAN-1293228629-511

APPENDIX 3**CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan (CAMP) describes the arrangements which the Moray Council has made for asset management planning; links the asset management planning process to other key concerns of the Council; highlights progress in the preparation of asset management plans for the six main categories of asset, and includes an action plan for the coming year.
- 1.2 The CAMP also seeks to make explicit the links which exist between the asset management planning process and the financial planning process, particularly capital planning, and this is addressed throughout the CAMP.
- 1.3 The CAMP has been prepared according to the guidelines set out in the CIPFA Guide to Asset Management and Capital Planning ("the CIPFA Guide").

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Asset Management Working Group (AMWG) was established to develop and oversee overall asset management arrangements within Moray Council. A key task for the group is to assist in the development of proposals for capital expenditure based on asset management principles. These proposals are then fed into the Council's financial planning process. They aim to establish appropriate expenditure plans for the medium term. Indicative ten years plans are prepared, reflecting approved asset standards and asset conditions at the time the plan is prepared, and reported to Council when the Council Tax is set to facilitate longer term planning. The current indicative ten year plan was approved on 1 March 2023, along with the capital plan for 2023/24. The 2023/24 plan falls in an environment of considerable uncertainty about the state of the economy, with increased inflation and supply chain issues causing price rises. The current trend of increasing interest rates is also putting pressure on spending plans.
- 2.2 The AMWG is also responsible for developing the corporate asset management framework and for overseeing progress on the development of individual asset management plans. Progress on the development of asset management planning is reported to the Corporate Committee, which approves the CAMP on an annual basis.

2.3 The key drivers for asset management planning are listed below:

Driver

Condition	This requires to be measured for each class of asset, and each asset within that class graded. The Council sets targets for condition for each asset class.
Suitability	This assesses whether or not an asset is fit for purpose.
Sufficiency	This is about asset capacity rather than asset use and reflects demand for the asset.
Revenue Costs	The costs of operating the asset.
Accessibility	Both physical accessibility – e.g. with the duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equalities Act 2010 – and whether specialist knowledge is required to operate the asset, potentially restricting its use.
Value	This could be the book value of the asset, the market value or replacement value.

2.4 Asset management planning is closely linked to capital planning, and has come of age in local government under the Prudential Code. Long-term affordability is therefore a major concern for asset management planning. The recognised six drivers listed above all impact on affordability. The CAMP places this under the umbrella of sustainability and this will be discussed from three aspects – financial sustainability, environmental sustainability and economic sustainability – in section 3.

2.5 As well as affordability, the asset management process aims to achieve efficiency in terms of use of assets, and maximisation of value in terms of asset disposal.

2.6 The CIPFA Guide identifies the six main categories of asset for asset management planning as property, open space, roads and associated structures, housing, fleet and ICT. Asset Management Plans should be based on robust data about the number of assets in each category; their condition; suitability for use; sufficiency for use, and revenue cost of use. They should set targets for performance; relate to service plans for future delivery of service; identify investment needs; support the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Corporate Plan or other Council policy priorities.

2.7 In order to better reflect local priorities and operational needs two of these main categories have been subdivided. Property is subdivided into the school estate, industrial estates and offices and other properties; Roads etc. is subdivided into roads and directly associated infrastructure; harbours; flood alleviation schemes.

- 2.8 Assessment of current progress on preparation of asset management plans for each asset type is summarised in section 4.
- 2.9 The Action Plan for 2023/24 forms section 5 of the CAMP.

3. SUSTAINABILITY

Financial Sustainability

- 3.1 For the Council to be able to assess the sustainability of its asset base, it must have good quality information on the condition of its assets and use this to estimate the cost to the Council of maintaining each asset over its expected life.
- 3.2 The Council's Capital Strategy sets out the principles underlying the Capital Planning process and in doing so describes how Asset Management Planning and Capital Planning inter-relate. The latest version of the Capital Strategy was approved by Council on 2 February 2023 (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).
- 3.3 The Council requires to reduce expenditure to an affordable and sustainable level. An important part of this process will be to reduce the Council's asset base; to review the standards to which the Council aspires its assets to reach; to agree on an affordable level of capital expenditure, and to agree a process for prioritising capital expenditure across asset types and prioritising new developments. The AMWG has trialled a process of prioritisation of capital bids and work to prioritise bids will continue during 2023/24.
- 3.4 The ten-year plan when first developed was based on the work required to meet the Council's approved standards for all asset groups. The plan presented to the Council on 1 March 2023 also reflected the requirement to provide new or improved infrastructure and facilities to accommodate planned local developments, along with expenditure arising from Asset Management Plans (AMPs). Accordingly, the Capital Plan is framed by drivers for expenditure that: recognise the Local Development Plan and other Council plans (specifically for Economic Development); Asset Management Planning; Improvement and Modernisation Programme/efficiencies; expenditure arising from Legislative Requirements; Funded Government Priorities and Responsive Expenditure.

Environmental Sustainability

- 3.5 A Special Meeting of the Council on 27 June 2019 (paragraph 6 of the Minute refers) recognised that Climate Change was an ecological emergency and agreed to form a Climate Change Group made up of Officers and Members with the view to developing a Climate Change strategy and action plan within 6 months, with a core goal of carbon neutral by 2030. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Strategy and Action Plan was not approved until 10 March 2021 (paragraph 13 of the Minute refers).

- 3.6 At a meeting of the Council on 6 April 2022 a Route Map to Net Zero (RMNZ) Carbon Emissions was approved. This set out the current pathway to net-zero for the Council by 2030 by explaining actions to target the Council's major emissions sources; buildings (electricity and heat), fleet, waste and operating emissions. The additional work to reduce emissions contained in the RMNZ will require substantial funding over the next ten years and will need to be progressed through the Council's financial planning process. However, without significant external funding RMNZ is likely to be unaffordable.
- 3.7 The Council has invested in energy efficiency projects and in prior years has benefited from funding from the Central Energy Efficiency Fund and a capital grant from the Scottish Government. The Council is investigating solar energy projects to progress as spend to save energy proposals with possible funding through SALIX Loans. An annual report on the Council's Energy Strategy is made to the Economic Development and Infrastructure Service Committee, with the latest report being to that committee on 15 November 2022.
- 3.8 The Council undertook a project to replace all SON and SOX street lanterns with LED lanterns and this was successfully complete in 2022/23.
- 3.9 The Council also funds on-going small scale energy saving projects and an allowance is included in the capital plan each year to fund such projects.
- 3.10 Environmental considerations will remain an important consideration in the development of individual asset management plans and in developing individual projects. Proposals for capital projects will seek to maximise environmental benefits, balanced with cost to the Council. With respect to the Learning Estate and LEIP funding, this has set an energy efficiency target of 67/kWh per square metre per annum for core facilities use. At a meeting of Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee on 7 February 2023 (paragraph 12 of the minute refers) it was agreed that for capital spend on fleet and property the value of carbon should be incorporated into the appraisal of projects. As per guidance from the UK Government Department for Business, Energy & Industry Strategy (BEIS) the social costs of carbon should be monetised and included in appraisal and evaluations to ensure the impacts of carbon are taken into consideration.
- 3.11 Each key service area has a responsibility of supporting the Council's budget strategy through reducing the cost and impact of the use of resources, including water, energy and transport fuel. This has associated carbon reductions that will contribute to the goal of the Council being carbon neutral by 2030.

Economic Sustainability

- 3.12 Sustainable Economic Development is a priority in the Corporate Plan. The Council aims to support a sustainable economy in Moray through various policy initiatives designed to support economic development locally and in particular through the development of the Moray Economic Partnership, Moray Economic Strategy and the Moray Growth Deal.

3.13 For asset management planning, economic sustainability has three strands:

- ensuring the Council's asset management planning process supports the economic development process by joined-up planning with partners in the Moray Economic Partnership and Moray Growth Deal;
- planning asset management which directly supports economic development (such as developing industrial estates or facilitating development at Buckie harbour), and
- reflecting the requirements of the Local Development Plan.

3.14 Asset disposal can support financial sustainability by maximising capital or other financial receipts. Economic sustainability can also be assisted by facilitating community development and the Council's Community Asset Transfer process seeks to support local sustainable community ventures. This process continues to be part of the mainstream asset management planning function of the Council.

3.15 The Moray Growth Deal was formally signed by the Council and the both the UK and Scottish Governments on 20 December 2021. The outline business cases (OBC) for the various projects were presented to Government and agreed as a precursor to sign off. The financial spend and funding profile in the full business case for the Digital Health Initiative and OBCs for the other seven projects were incorporated into the Council's ten year Capital Plan. As Full Business Cases are signed off the capital plan is updated to reflect the latest planned profile. Any amendments arising from approved change requests will also be reflected in Council's ten year capital plan.

4. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS

4.1 Property

4.1.1 The Learning Estate

The Council previously approved target grades of B for both condition and suitability for the Moray School Estate. There is a commitment to provide capital over the next 10 years to support a refurbishment plan to deliver this and an estate-wide condition survey project is underway to determine the scale and scope of upgrade refurbishment works. The B-B upgrade programme that the Council has committed to will be accompanied by the implementation of a robust asset management plan and Planned Preventive Maintenance (PPM) regime. The benefits of this approach should reduce the lifetime operational costs of buildings and equipment. This will include the requirement for a component renewal capital allocation within any future learning estate asset management plan and a robust and affordable approach to delivering a net zero carbon learning estate. The assumption is that a future PPM budget will replace the current repairs and maintenance budget and that some of the BB upgrade budget may be recommended for additional upfront project costs to develop a comprehensive and detailed asset register and PPM plan. Until the service has completed the full condition surveys, which will be mid-2024, it will not be in a

position to develop the full Asset Management Plan – within which PPM and Component Renewal planning resides. This will be a phased process based around an ASG prioritised approach with Forres ASG, Buckie ASG and Elgin ASG being the initial focus (with all the relevant condition surveys completed in these ASGs by autumn 2023) due to future capacity issues and related capital spend. A learning estate team was established in May 2021 to deliver the 2020 Moray Learning Estate Strategy. In addition to managing the B condition / B suitability refurbishment and new build projects, the team are focused on developing options for estate rationalisation, engaging with the local community and other stakeholders to deliver a long term sustainable and affordable learning estate. At Council on 9 October 2020 (paragraph 4 of the Minute refers) the draft approach on the Learning Estate Strategy was presented. The approach confirmed that B suitability and B condition across all elements of a school should be a minimum standard. An updated Learning Estate Strategy was agreed at Council on 28 September (paragraph 12 of the minute refers). The Scottish Government have stipulated minimum standards for schools funded through the Learning Estate Improvement Programme (LEIP). There are four key elements to LEIP. Firstly condition, where a new learning environment is built to a high quality (Condition A) and well maintained (not less than Condition B) over the long-term (25 years). Secondly, new build should be energy efficient and over the long-term contribute to net zero commitments. Thirdly, it should enable digital learning and advancements in technology. Finally, the investment creates new jobs and enables inclusive economic growth. It recognised there needs to be whole life costing and maintenance plans adequately provided for in the Council's financial planning and recognition that it may take many years to achieve this across the whole school estate.

4.1.2 Offices / Other operational buildings

The Property Asset Management Appraisal (PAMA) was presented to Policy and Resources Committee on 12 December 2018 with updates provided on 29 October 2019. Further updates on the actions were provided to Council on 30 June 2021 and then to Corporate Committee on 30 August 2022. The PAMA is a strategic document which details current corporate building usage and associated operational costs. Future opportunities have been highlighted for detailed option appraisal to ensure all our building assets contribute efficiently to service delivery. Two components of the PAMA have been separated. The Office Review is now progressing as part of the Smarter Working Project following the move to hybrid working as the norm. The project is focussed on the HQ Campus at present but the general principles are to be rolled out across all Council offices and the outline business case was approved by Full Council on 2 February 2023. Early adopters have started trialling increased occupation of office space in the HQ building following the end of Covid restrictions. As lessons are learned from these early adopters increased occupation of the HQ Campus will progress during summer and autumn. The increased use of the HQ Campus will see the opportunity to reduce occupation in other locations with early surplus office assets already being identified for generating some revenue savings during this financial year. An update on the Depot and Stores review was provided to the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services

Committee on 6 September 2022. The outline business case for the rationalisation of depots and stores is progressing in development and will take fully on board the need to decarbonise the Council's property and fleet assets in line with the Council's climate change objectives. To this end the outline business case will reflect the need for appropriate electrical vehicle charging points across Council locations and ensure property assets retained can be decarbonised economically with the intention that the outline business case will be reported to Committee in the autumn this year.

4.1.3 Industrial Estates

The annual industrial portfolio report on industrial estates is the vehicle for asset management planning for the Council's industrial portfolio. The latest report was to the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee on 6 September 2022. The Industrial Estate portfolio plays an important role in supporting the Corporate Plan aim of facilitating economic growth and diversification of the local economy.

4.2 Open Space

- 4.2.1 The Council does not have an approved all-encompassing asset management plan for open spaces (including park and cemeteries), however specific types of open space – in particular cemeteries – have strategies approved by committee. The Cemetery Strategy was approved by the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee on 4 December 2018 (paragraph 6 of the Minute refers)
- 4.2.2 The Council has a rolling programme of replacement of play area equipment. Play area upgrades are prioritised and selected from condition scores received annually from an independent play inspection report. The Council's Open Space and Community Support teams are working closely with communities using Participatory Budgeting to deliver upgrades to play areas prioritised for repair/upgrade. In 2023/24 these are Mannachie Play Area Forres, Letterfourie Park Buckie, and Tomnavoulin Park Speyside.
- 4.2.3 A programme of infrastructure repairs for parks and cemeteries is being prepared for delivery in 2023/24 and is based upon findings and reports from operational teams. A more detailed approach to condition scoring these assets will be developed during 2023/24 and will include road, steps and footpath repairs; and where required refurbishments to walls, gates and fences. Work is also ongoing with support from the Council's Consultancy and Estates teams to develop plans for a new cemetery in Elgin.
- 4.2.4 Given the annual value of the capital programme for open space, the development of a full Asset Management Plan is not currently a priority of the service due to other competing demands on the team's resources but investment continues to be made and prioritised in response to health and safety concerns and as outlined above.

4.3 Roads and other infrastructure

4.3.1 Roads and Associated Infrastructure

The first Roads Asset Management Plan (RAMP) was completed in April 2012, following a nationally developed model. The RAMP addressed the specific lifecycle requirements of 5 different asset groups: carriageways, footways (including footpaths and cycle tracks), structures (road bridges, foot bridges and retaining walls), street lighting and street furniture. This was then modified in the preparation of the financial plan for 2014/15 in which a target of reducing the standard of Moray's roads to the Scottish average over the next ten years was set in order to achieve savings, and this target has since been clarified as being a desired mid-table ranking. The latest RAMP was presented to the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee on 7 February 2023 (paragraph 6 of the Minute refers). It was approved that Officers continue to monitor the Road Condition Indicator (RCI) on an annual basis and subject to the outcome of these, consider to undertake a more detailed analysis that would provide a more up to date long-term prediction on road condition for the future years. In the meantime, work would continue to the current standard, which is mid-table in terms of the highlight RCI score.

4.3.2 The Council participates in a project run by the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) to continue development of Roads Asset Management Planning. The project is now in Phase 3, with Atkins as the Support Consultant. Moray Council's current Road Asset Safety Inspection strategy and operations manual documents were approved by the Council's Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee on 10 September 2019 (paragraph 6 of the minute refers). This system of risk-based inspections, which is in line with both the Well-managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice and SCOTS guidance was implemented on 1st April 2020. The Council's Asset Management System software (WDM), which manages customer enquiries, works instructions, asset inventory and asset inspections, was upgraded to a web-based version recently (27 March 2023). The new system utilises mobile technology to deliver an end-to-end mobile working solution which will enable better management of reportable defects on site and create a works instruction for the repair, which can then be sent to the repair crew almost instantly. The paper-free system has also greatly improved the speed and efficiency of allocating work to crews, particularly those based at different depots, as supervisors can send the works instructions directly to their tablets electronically, and also receive back completed instructions, in real time.

4.4 Harbours

4.4.1 Condition surveys of the harbours have been used to develop a planned programme of work which forms the Asset Management Plan for the harbours. A review has now been completed and a four year plan been drafted to cover all urgent repairs based on risk of failure and consequences of that failure. That plan will be reviewed annually. The nature of the asset is such that emergency

and unplanned works can be required, particularly following severe weather events, and an agile approach to asset management planning is required.

4.5 Flood Alleviation Schemes

- 4.5.1 Maintenance of the Council's seven flood protection schemes is undertaken as and when required. Inspection of these schemes is considered critical and any work identified during these inspections will be prioritised based on risk
- 4.5.2 Under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009, we must prepare and publish Flood Risk Management Plans for our local area and members agree these plans. This is done in partnership with SEPA and neighbouring authorities. The plans set out at a fairly high level actions we must undertake to address flood risk over a six year cycle. As part of the plan, we also prepare an annual schedule of Clearance and Repair, which is published, subject to agreement by members
- 4.5.3 Small watercourses, culverts and coastal protection systems as identified on the flood team's schedule of clearance and repair are prioritised based on risk.

4.6 Housing

- 4.6.1 Following a review of the recently introduced Housing Asset Management Team within Housing and Property Services it was established that further staffing resource would be required to manage and implement the housing stock improvements identified within the stock condition survey undertaken in 2021. The Housing and Community Safety Committee of 6 September (paragraph 10 of the minute refers) approved the extension of the team. Due to long term staff illness a steady expansion of the team has been undertaken with two of the four new posts filled by 31 March 2023. It is recognised that the Council's housing stock requires significant investment to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) within appropriate timescales. Work programmes for the 2022/23 financial year on the stock improvement have once again been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic along with material and labour shortages however circa 8% of the housing stock received replacement heating systems in the year. The Housing Investment Plan approved by Council on 1 March 2023 (paragraph 6 of the minute refers) sets out the areas of spend for next financial year and the following two years in order that the Council can significantly improve the quality of the housing stock in line with legislation, with a particular emphasis on improvement to the poorest energy efficient properties first.
- 4.6.2 A review of the Housing Business Plan was carried out in 2023 to assess the capacity of the Housing Revenue Account to deliver the housing service's ongoing investment priorities, including: EESH compliance; maintaining its housing stock to a good standard; continuing with its new build programme and meeting the home improvement preferences identified by tenants in the 2021

Tenant's Survey and to ensure continued affordability of the programme of the Council's new build housing programme.

- 4.6.3 The Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2023/28 sets out proposals for the delivery of new Council housing over the planned period. The programme will be funded from resources provided by the Scottish Government as part of the Moray Affordable Housing Programme. The 2023 Housing Business Plan has made provision for 50 new houses to be delivered per annum. The new council housing will help address the ongoing acute shortage of affordable homes in Moray and will provide accommodation for a broad range of needs, including overcrowded families, older people, wheelchair users and people with physical disabilities. It will also contribute to the aims of the Council's Rapid Re-Housing Transition Plan by providing permanent accommodation for homeless households. The new council housing is being built to high levels of sustainable design and energy efficiency, achieving EPC B and the "silver" level of current Building Regulations in respect of both Carbon Emissions and Energy for Space Heating.

4.7 Fleet

- 4.7.1 The current policy for replacing vehicles is to plan to replace them at the age assessed as being, on average, the optimum replacement age for that type of vehicle, balancing the cost of repairs and downtime with the cost of replacement. The Fleet's 10 year rolling vehicle and plant replacement plan has to accommodate the Council's target to be Net Zero by 2030 subject to availability of suitably advanced technology vehicles and plant. A project is currently in progress looking into decarbonisation of the Council's fleet through the use of zero emission electric vehicles. A report was submitted to the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee on 7 February 2023 (paragraph 8 of the minute refers) reporting recommendations as to how the Council Fleet can reach its Net Zero position by 2030 subject to available vehicle technology. Further to this, the budget implications associated with this position will need to be identified and reported through the Council's financial planning process.

4.8 ICT

- 4.8.1 The use of ICT underpins all of the Council's activities, to a greater or lesser extent. It is recognised that robust asset management planning for this area is of great importance. The response to the pandemic has changed the shape of the Council's ICT asset base through extensive roll out of devices to support hybrid working. Another significant change is the move to hosted, or Cloud based, systems which reduces the requirement for ICT infrastructure at our own premises. The impact of these changes on future requirements is still being assessed.
- 4.8.2 The current policy for replacing ICT assets varies, depending whether the equipment is related to the schools' network, or the corporate network but is essentially based on the optimal age for the type of asset in the particular setting. Actual replacement, however, does need to take into account other

factors such as performance of the asset but also external factors such as third party support, compatibility with other products, general trends in technology, and security requirements / accreditation. The increased number of mobile devices will also have a bearing on the current policy. This will be addressed when consideration is given to the replacement of the mobile devices which were rolled out during a short period of time.

- 4.8.3 The 2023/24 ICT plan will focus on the server infrastructure to address compliance requirements and major system upgrades. There is also further work planned on the core corporate network infrastructure, which is dependent upon the Council's approach to hybrid working and the future requirements of the property estate. The School's ICT Strategy, when approved, is likely to be a key area that will impact upon the ICT asset management plan. The options for the provision of devices to pupils and teachers may have a significant impact on current planning if there is a move towards 1:1 devices, or a major shift towards the use of different technologies.

5. ACTIONS PLANNED FOR 2023/24

5.1 The key tasks are noted below:

- Improve and automate capital monitoring information provided to budget managers to assist in improved management of the capital plan, with a target completion date of December 2023;
- Continue work on prioritisation of the capital plan for including in the budget process, with a target completion date of September 2023;
- Update Asset Management Planning Process to incorporate the requirements of the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020.
- Progress with the development of the Learning Estate Strategy ;
- Progress with the Smarter Working Project with a view to increasing occupation in the HQ campus in the Summer, taking into account the lessons learned from early adopters;
- Continue to develop the outline business case for the rationalisation of depots and stores taking into account the need to decarbonise the Council's property and fleet assets in line with the Council's climate change objectives. The aim is to report to Council in the autumn of 2023.
- Continue to develop a selection process for post project reviews, with a target of October 2023;
- Review the status of Asset Management Plans in APPENDIX 1 in June 2023 and develop a programme of updates by October 2023. A rolling 5 year programme is envisaged as the likely outcome



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 13 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: DEVOLVED SCHOOL BUDGETS – CARRY FORWARD

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE [EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT]

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee's decision on whether to allow schools to carry forward budget spend which was for the financial year however did not go ahead.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B)(1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the financial and budgetary policy of the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee allow the following schools to retain the following amounts for planned spend which has not progressed.**

- (i) Newmill Primary School for £9,000
- (ii) Speyside High School for £118,652

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme permits Head Teachers to carry forward up to a 5% overspend or 2.5% underspend in any one year. This facility enables Head Teachers to manage budgets more flexibly and to plan for particular areas of spend over periods of time. This includes for example the purchase of ICT devices, refurbishment of classrooms and purchasing replacement desks/chairs or additional staffing for an academic session.
- 3.2 Budgets are monitored on a monthly basis by Head Teachers and are also scrutinised by the Finance Department. Budget Monitoring statements are provided to schools by Financial Services on a monthly basis and Head Teachers are expected to scrutinise these statements closely and monitor them in line with their actual school position. A situation has arisen however in 2 schools where, for context and property related reasons, the 2.5% underspend limit has been breached. In normal circumstances the school

would be operating outwith financial regulations and the additional budget would be taken away. However, in this case, the Head of Education is of the view that there are mitigating circumstances and that the excess budget should be maintained to allow for the spend to progress when possible.

- 3.3 Speyside High School has a projected carry forward of £102,108 with a permitted underspend of £78,394 which would mean, under DSM restrictions that they would lose £23,714. However, they had submitted plans to the property department in 2022 regarding the refurbishment of a Science classroom costing £35,000, as well as a planned upgrade of their Closed Circuit Television costing £10,000 which have not progressed through no fault of the school. Permission is granted to carry forward an additional £45,000 to cover the planned works which were not completed during the academic year. To lose this budget, the school would be heading towards an excess of 5% overspend for financial year 2023/24 as they have overstaffed in key areas as they had planned for this however if their carry forward is reduced, this will have a major impact if the current budget has to be used for property projects. To lose this funding, the school would be unable to progress with this work and would be unable to undertake further planned work as part of their tenant responsibilities.
- 3.4 Newmill Primary School has a projected carry forward of £18,494 and is allowed, under the DSM scheme to carry forward £9,097. However included in the £18,494 is £9,000 to carry out works required under tenant responsibilities. This budget was being kept to repair floor tiles and resurface the ramp at the entrance to the school which has become a health and safety issue. Although the works were planned, bad weather prior to Easter delayed this with the allocated contractor now withdrawing from the job and as a result the work has gone back out to tender. The school therefore requests permission to carry forward the £9000 over and above their 2.5% underspend for this reason.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- (a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**
None
- (b) **Policy and Legal**
A decision to allow retention of more than 5% overspend would require Committee approval as it would be a deviation from policy.
- (c) **Financial implications**
The unspent budget has not arisen due to poor financial management but due to planned works which could not be completed within the financial year. The schools listed would require the budget to be retained within DSM so that there is sufficient budget once orders can be progressed so that they can cover staffing already planned for, for the session ahead as well as any upcoming tenant responsibilities.

(d) Risk Implications

Risks associated with not allowing the budget to remain within the DSM of each school will mean that planned spend cannot go ahead and that there will be a negative impact on learning and teaching delivery within each school which will impact on attainment and achievement of learners.

(e) Staffing Implications

None arising directly from this report

(f) Property

None

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

None

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None

(i) Consultations

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development); The Head of Education Resources and Communities, Quality Improvement Managers, Chief Financial Officer the Headteachers of Speyside High School Newmill Primary and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer have been consulted on this report and agree with the sections of the report relating to their areas of responsibility.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 That Committee allow Speyside High School and Newmill Primary School to continue, with no penalty, a larger than normally permitted underspend in their devolved budget for the reasons provided in the report.

Author of Report: Vivienne Cross, Head of Education (Chief Education Officer)

Background Papers:

Ref:



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 13 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: VOLUNTEERING POLICY REFRESH

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the committee on the need to review our current Volunteer Policy and to seek approval of the refreshed Moray Council Volunteering Policy which has been redrafted in direct engagement with council volunteers, community councils and other stakeholders.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (41) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the formulation and review of Council wide policy, strategies, priorities and objectives

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To adopt the refreshed Volunteer Strategy to reaffirm Moray Council support for direct volunteering with council services and within communities.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There are currently a number of different documents relating to Volunteering on the council website which can cause confusion. [The Moray Council Volunteering Policy](#) has references to The Scottish Executive and has been in place since 2007. The [Volunteering Policy \(Staff Guidance\)](#) is the most up to date document being updated in September 2019 and approved in March 2020 by the HSCM Strategic Leadership group and Adult Care Practice Governance Board. It was due for review in March 2022.
- 3.2 There is an opportunity to update and simplify the current position, hence the refreshed Policy at **APPENDIX 1** which has evolved from the Staff Guidance document. The updated version better reflects the different types of volunteering that the council supports and is informed by the experiences of recent years where community volunteers and groups played such an important role in mobilising during the pandemic and adverse weather events.

- 3.3 The [Scottish Government review](#) of Storm Arwen made a number of recommendations one of which is “*Fuller integration of the voluntary and community sector into emergency planning and response*”. Reference is therefore made explicitly to Emergency Planning within the refresh in recognition of work being delivered with community councils and others to develop local resilience plans.
- 3.4 The Policy outlines
- How Moray Council services will encourage, support and celebrate the work of volunteers.
 - How the council will link in with Community Resilience groups and other stakeholders to co-ordinate support to communities in emergency situations.
- 3.5 A version of the policy was reported to Corporate committee on 5 January 2023 (para 9 of the minute refers) and the Committee requested that further engagement take place with Community Councils and Council volunteers in shaping the policy. The wording of the strategy has also been reviewed to take account of feedback from committee.
- 3.6 The draft strategy was circulated to Community Council chairs with a link to a short online survey around the refreshed policy. Nine community councils responded and were generally supportive of the policy although two respondents did feel that there needed to be more emphasis placed on the role that Community Councils play in Resilience Planning. This has been reflected with specific references to Community Councils added to the Policy.
- 3.7 A further discussion took place in person with the Joint Community Councils of Moray who were supportive of the policy. Community Councils are actively engaged in Resilience Planning as well as numerous other activities at the community level and recognised the potential to celebrate the work of community councillors during Volunteers Week.
- 3.8 Direct council volunteers contributed to the redrafting process by taking part in an online survey (56 respondents) and a follow up focus group discussion which was attended by 11 volunteers. The key messages were that:
- Volunteers recognise the value and importance of induction and training.
 - Volunteers want ongoing communication and regular catch-ups with the service staff and to meet other volunteers to share experiences.
 - Volunteers recognise the need to undergo Protection of Vulnerable Group (PVG) checks as required.
 - Most volunteers do so to make a meaningful contribution and to make a difference in their community. 43% also volunteered to meet new people.
 - Volunteers would like to know how they are making a difference and are glad to see the intention to celebrate the impact of volunteering in Moray.

- 3.9 A new cross service Volunteering Forum will be formed for all services who support and work with volunteers in order to share good practice and improve overall co-ordination in areas such as volunteer induction and training.
- 3.10 The Policy has also had earlier input from council services, tsi MORAY and Moray Health and Social Care Partnership colleagues. It has been discussed and amended after feedback from the Personnel Forum and CMT.
- 3.11 Colleagues in Health and Social Care have confirmed that the Policy is consistent with their refreshed NHS Grampian Volunteering Policy and that they will report back to the Integration Joint Board on the new council policy once approved.
- 3.12 The Policy makes reference to the [Volunteer Essential Information Handbook](#) which will require a new Foreword and which will be updated once the Policy is approved.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan /Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)

The refreshed policy will support volunteering in Moray and is consistent with the Corporate Plan Vision which explains how the council works with 'public, private, community and voluntary organisations to create the right environment for people to do well and reach their potential...'

The LOIP refers to the key role of the CLD Plan in supporting the development of 'resilient and self-reliant, empowered communities'. The CLD Plan has a dedicated Active Citizens and Communities strand which seeks to encourage and value volunteering, support community action groups and to help community groups develop Community Resilience Plans, all of which are consistent with the new policy.

(b) Policy and Legal

None.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

There will be a new cross service forum to bring together services who use volunteers to share good practice and general support to volunteers.

(f) Property

There are no Property Implications.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is at **APPENDIX 2**.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Implications

The changes to our climate caused by man-made climate change means that storms and extreme weather will become increasingly the norm. Volunteers working with resilience planning and community responses to the changed climate will be essential to assist communities in the more frequent emergency situations they will face.

(i) Consultations

The Head of Education Resources and Communities, the Chief Financial Officer, the Head of Legal & Democratic Services, the Head of HR, ICT & OD, the HR Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Principal Climate Change Strategy Officer, and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective areas of responsibility.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 It is recommended that Committee support the refreshed strategy and reaffirm the council's commitment to supporting volunteering.

Author of Report: Kevin McDermott, Communities Service Manager

Background Papers:

Ref: SPMAN-9425411-226
SPMAN-9425411-227
SPMAN-9425411-243

MORAY COUNCIL VOLUNTEERING POLICY

(DRAFT April 2023)



MORAY COUNCIL VOLUNTEERING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Moray Council recognises the enormous contribution that volunteers make in our communities – both informally through helping neighbours and more formally in terms of running groups and activities.

Moray citizens are happy to volunteer in many ways as evidenced by the community responses to emergency situations such as the COVID pandemic or mobilising around extreme weather events. Volunteers also get involved in community councils and other representative forums as well as through participation in the many groups and activities which bring people together in our communities.

This Policy has a specific focus on direct Council volunteers as well as in enhancing links to community groups and volunteers involved in Community Resilience Planning.

['Volunteering for All'](#) the national framework for volunteering describes volunteering as

"...the wide range of ways in which people help out, get involved, volunteer and participate in their communities (both communities of interest and communities of place). Volunteering is a choice. A choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one's own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary".

This Volunteering Policy has been updated to reflect the breadth of volunteering opportunities and scenarios in Moray and outlines our commitment to

- **Encourage, support and celebrate those who volunteer to add value to key council services - everything from local befriending, supporting adult learners with literacy and numeracy through to supporting youth groups in initiatives like Active Schools and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.**
- **Working with community councils and other key community bodies involved in Resilience Planning to support them in developing Community Resilience Plans to help them in mobilising quickly and safely around emergency situations.¹**

In terms of this policy when we use the term Moray Council we are also including Health and Social Care Moray, the integrated partnership with NHS Grampian working together to deliver a range of community health and social care services.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Moray Council is committed to supporting and promoting volunteering opportunities in appropriate departments and roles. In terms of external procurement of services, the council will encourage the involvement of volunteers in line with this policy and contractual requirements as appropriate. We recognise that volunteers are a significant

¹ [Storm Arwen Review – Scottish Government, January 2022](#) Recommendation 2 – 'Fuller integration of the voluntary and community sector into emergency planning and response'.

community asset and that volunteering is a demonstration of citizenship in action which benefits both the volunteer and the wider community.

Moray Council also recognises the part that volunteers play in civic society and community life and that we as a Council have an enabling role to play as a supportive partner. The Council will work directly with community based groups and individuals to maximise our joint responses to emergency situations building on the high levels of social capital that already exist within Moray

3. AIMS

The overall aim of this updated policy is to continue to develop and promote best practice with volunteers **working directly with the Council**.

In addition the policy reflects the councils desire to work in in partnership with community councils and others community groups and volunteers in responding to emergency situations such as the pandemic or extreme weather events.

OBJECTIVES

- This Policy serves as a clear statement of the Council's commitment to volunteering and of the expectations on our staff and services to provide a productive and safe environment for volunteers.
- Moray Council services will co-ordinate their approach to volunteering through a new cross service Volunteering Forum for all services using or planning to use volunteers. The Forum will also have input from officers leading on Resilience Planning with communities.
- Moray Council's direct volunteers will feel valued and respected and have access to training around relevant Council policies such as child protection, adult protection, health and safety, equal opportunities, etc.
- Moray Council will acknowledge and celebrate the contribution of its volunteers, including staff volunteers, during national [Volunteers' Week](#).

4. PRINCIPLES

The Moray Council:

- Will never directly introduce volunteers to replace paid Council employees.
- Recognises that volunteers make a unique and valuable contribution to policy objectives and service provision and that they have a right to good quality support and developmental opportunities.
- Recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users, employees and communities.
- Believes that volunteering should be open to all and recognises that there can be financial barriers to volunteering. We will therefore ensure that out of pocket and authorised expenses will be offered and reimbursed in line with the Council's expenses claims process.

5. **SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

This Policy applies to all Moray Council staff; volunteers and elected members. Services in Health and Social Care Moray will also adhere to this policy in relation to volunteer support and development.

6. **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Volunteers have a right to know what is expected of them in the context of their volunteering commitment which as stated in the Volunteering for All framework is a

'...choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one's own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary'.

We believe that direct council volunteers are entitled ...

- To know what is expected of them and who their main contact is.
- To have clearly specified lines of support and supervision along with the opportunity for more informal meetings and catch-ups with staff and other volunteers.
- To have safe working conditions which have been risk assessed and be insured in their volunteering role.
- To know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong
- To have access to appropriate training for their role and personal development.
- To get feedback on their contribution and to be made aware of other volunteering opportunities they may be interested in exploring.
- To be valued and appreciated and not subject to any bullying or discrimination.

In return volunteers are expected to...

- Undertake PVG (Protecting Vulnerable groups) disclosure checks as required.
- Carry out their tasks in a way that corresponds to the aims, values and policies of the Council
- Operate within agreed guidelines and remits relating to their task
- Follow health and safety regulations and instructions
- Adhere to the Council's statements *or policies such as Equal Opportunities, Child Protection, GDPR/Data protection/Information Sharing and other relevant Policies and Procedures*
- Respect confidentiality and adhere to any policies and procedures associated with information sharing protocols that the Council may have entered into
- Attend training and support sessions where required

- Adhere to the employee code of conduct

7. VOLUNTEER ESSENTIAL INFORMATION HANDBOOK

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Essential Information Handbook which will be updated as required.

The handbook includes information on

- Best Practice Guidance for Volunteering
- Clear explanations of roles which require a Protection for Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check to be carried out by Disclosure Scotland (funded by the Council)
- Volunteer Agreements - covering agreed tasks; expenses; support and supervision; induction and on-going training etc.
- Key Policies – information on policies such as Health and Safety; Data Protection; Equal Opportunities; Confidentiality; Child Protection; Vulnerable Adult Protection etc.
- Service specific information relevant to a particular strand of volunteering – for instance Boundaries and Safeguarding training specific to health and social care settings/

Current volunteering opportunities within the council can be accessed via the [volunteering page on the website](#).

8. POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Moray Council is committed to ongoing monitoring and review of this policy and will carry out a formal review every 5 years, with the next review to take place in 2028. This policy and any updates should influence best practice within Council services

Community Engagement

Working through local community planning structures, the Moray Council will actively engage with the wider community and key partners in order to raise awareness of this policy and seek their views, opinions and support, making any necessary amendments for improvement as required.

Equalities

The Moray Council will actively encourage volunteering amongst those people and groups, who are more likely to be excluded from volunteering because of low income, race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or philosophical belief. We will work to remove any barriers to volunteering and match volunteers to roles where they can utilise existing skills and develop new ones.

Moray Council Equality Impact Assessment

Important

Under the Equality Act 2010 we must assure that all decisions are taken only after an active assessment of the impact of the decision on people affected by the decision. Where necessary, those who may be affected should be consulted beforehand.

If this is not done, the decision could be unlawful and the council can be prevented from acting upon the decision until the impact has been assessed. This will result in major delays in the implementation as well as financial, reputational and other potential damage and loss to the council.

Service: Council wide

Title of policy/activity: Volunteer Policy

1. What are the aims and objectives of the policy/activity?

The Moray Council Volunteer Policy has been refreshed and has a focus on

1. How Moray Council services will encourage, support and celebrate the work of volunteers who directly volunteer with council services.
2. How the Council will link in with Community Resilience groups and other stakeholders to co-ordinate support to communities in emergency situations.

The incorporation of Community Resilience Planning relates to The [Scottish Government review](#) of Storm Arwen which made a number of recommendations one of which is “*Fuller integration of the voluntary and community sector into emergency planning and response*”. Reference is therefore made explicitly to Emergency Planning within the refresh in recognition of work being delivered with community councils and others to develop local resilience plans.

2. List the evidence that has been used in this assessment

Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints)

Anecdotal information would suggest that the number of volunteers in general has reduced since the pandemic. Significant numbers of individuals signed up to be volunteers during the pandemic but obviously their involvement has lessened since the return to normality.

Colleagues in Health and Social care had noted significant reductions in volunteer numbers since (in roles such as alarm responders, befrienders) from a pre-Covid 192 in 2019 to a post Covid 126 in 2022 (-34%) .

Based on feedback from volunteers they have developed clear role descriptions to use more inclusive and respectful language, making the volunteer programme more welcoming and accessible to a wider range of volunteers. The drop in numbers is being reversed with a 7% increase in 2023.

Consultation with officers or partner organisations	An initial draft was developed with input from council services who utilise volunteers, Emergency Planning, Health and Social Care Partnership and tsimORAY. HR also commented on the draft document and on their advice reference to encouraging staff volunteering was removed.
Consultation with volunteers/ groups	<p>Existing council volunteers were engaged through an online consultation with 56 respondents of whom 11 went on to take part in a follow up focus group session. These volunteers confirmed the importance of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear role definition and expectations (96%) ○ Induction into role and council processes (84%) ○ Access to regular support and supervision (78%) ○ Access to training (84%) ○ The need for PVG in some roles (98%) ○ 91% of volunteers identified their motivation being to make a meaningful contribution <p>Community Councils were consulted on the policy as a whole and specifically in relation to the key role that they play in producing and co-ordinating Community Resilience Plans. They were supportive of the policy and the recognition that community councils have as key points of contact in communities in emergency situations and with their ability to identify vulnerable people in the community.</p>
External data (statistics, census, research)	<p>In March 2023 the TSI Scotland Network produced a Position Statement on Public and Third Sector Cuts and Volunteering. This refers to the STUC/Volunteer Scotland Charter with specific reference that <i>"Volunteers should not carry out duties formerly carried out by paid workers nor should they be used to disguise the effects of non-filled vacancies or cuts in services."</i></p> <p>The refreshed Moray Council Policy is consistent with this in that it states The Moray Council "Will never directly introduce volunteers to replace paid Council employees".</p>
Other	At the annual review of the CLD Strategic Partnership Plan the partnership committed to the national Volunteer Charter to promote quality experience and practice in supporting volunteers. Typical of this process would be ensuring new recruits access appropriate induction, training and support, with accreditation to develop their skills and aspirations to improve delivery and confidence within their volunteering opportunities. Covid taught us that more volunteers are happy to access facilitated on-line training (e.g. Introductions to child protection) , but some subjects are better delivered face to face, most recently in relation to topics such as Food Hygiene, Makaton and Youth Work.

3. Detail any gaps in the information that is currently available?

a) A number of different council services engage volunteers, but they do so in isolation. Some volunteers reported that they would be open to taking on different/additional volunteering opportunities but were not always aware of what these may be.

b) There is currently no external validation of the volunteer offer within Moray Council or standardised way to evaluate how inclusive our volunteering opportunities are.

4. What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the policy/ activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan

Measure	Timescale
<p>a) A new cross service Volunteer Forum will be developed to bring together all services utilising direct volunteers and the Emergency Planning Officer in relation to Resilience Planning. The Equalities Officer will also be asked to support and advise the Forum as required. This should lead to better co-ordination of volunteering and relevant training – as well as wider promotion of volunteering opportunities to existing and potential volunteers.</p> <p>b) The Forum will explore the Investing in Volunteers Standard. There are 6 Quality Areas in this nationally recognised Standard. Quality Area 3 has a focus on Volunteer Inclusion - <i>There is a positive approach to inclusion, equity and diversity and a proactive approach to making volunteering accessible.</i></p> <p>If this standard was followed services will be better able to evaluate how good practice is and to gather data on Inclusion which can feed in to any emerging Improvement Plan.</p>	August 2023 (then quarterly)

5. Are there potential impacts on protected groups? Tick as appropriate

	Positive	Negative	None	Unknown
Age – young	✓			
Age – elderly	✓			
Disability	✓			
Race	✓			
Religion or belief	✓			
Sex	✓			
Pregnancy and maternity	✓			
Sexual orientation	✓			
Gender reassignment	✓			
Marriage and civil partnership	✓			

6. What are the potential negative impacts?

Each service is responsible for recruiting and managing their own volunteers – and should work to ensure that people are not discriminated against in relation to their protected group status. Some volunteer roles may have specific requirements (for instance ability to drive) but these requirements are related to the volunteer role rather than the protected group.

7. Have any of the affected groups been consulted. If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?

Volunteers in the focus group discussion all volunteer in health and social care settings – often in a 1:1 support role. Some of them identified a need for training and support in dealing with loss in the event that the person they support passes away.

These volunteers also recognised the need for boundaries and safeguarding training to keep both them and the people they support safe – for instance in relation to issues like dementia.

8. What mitigating steps will be taken to remove those impacts? These should be included in the action plan.

Mitigating step	Timescale
These concerns were noted by the service and are the type of things that will be explained in more detail in each service's information for their volunteers and specific setting. The Communities and Volunteering Team are reinstating catch up meetings for volunteers	In place

9. What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups? These should be included in the action plan.

An emerging issue in Moray is the introduction of a contingency hotel for Asylum Seekers run by a private business contracted by the UK Govt. The strategic group overseeing this work are conscious of the need to support the young men housed in this hotel to promote opportunities for integration with volunteering being of particular relevance.

10. How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?

The Policy reaffirms the commitment of the council to promote inclusive volunteering which will be enhanced as a result of the new cross service Volunteer Forum being proposed.

11. What monitoring arrangements will be put in place? These should be included in the action plan.

The Volunteering Forum will be exploring the potential of using the Investing in Volunteers Standard to ensure good practice in relation to key areas and to measure impact and identify areas for improvement.

12. What is the outcome of the assessment? Tick as appropriate.

1	No impacts have been identified	
2	Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated as outlined in question 8	✓
3	Positive impacts have been identified in relation to the need to:	
	a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Equality Act 2010	✓
	b) Promote equality of opportunity	✓
	c) Foster good relations between groups who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.	✓
4	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully	

13. Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact?

The Council already has a Volunteer Policy which has been used as the basis for this updated version which takes account of feedback from volunteers, community councils, council services and partners.

Sign off and authorisation

Department	Full Council
Title of Policy/activity	Volunteer Policy
We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Kevin McDermott Position: Communities (CLD) Manager Date :
Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name Position: Date:

Action plan

Action	Start	Complete	Lead Officer	Expected Outcome	Resource Implications
Initiate cross service Volunteer Forum	Aug 23		K McDermott	Cross service group formed and develop Terms of Reference	Staff Time
Explore Investing in Volunteers Standard	Sept 23		Volunteer Forum	Services understand how the Standard works and the requirements if the Council sought to benchmark using this.	If the Council sought the Standard there will be a cost – would need to make a business case on merits of doing so.
Produce annual review	Sept 24		Volunteer Forum	Collated report on volunteer activity over the past year.	Staff time



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 13 JUNE 2023

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (HUMAN RESOURCES,
INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2023**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 31 March 2023.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (A) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration to monitor performance in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Framework.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) **scrutinises performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of March 2023;**
- (ii) **notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

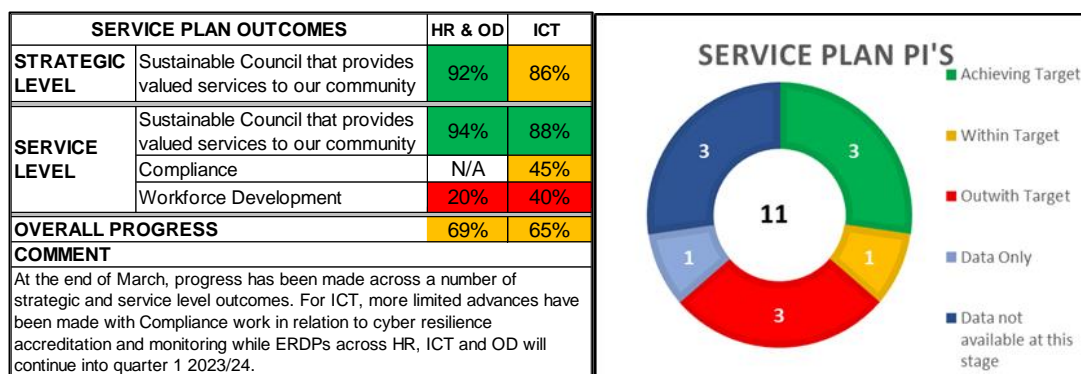
3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Moray Council approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

4. SERVICE PLANNING

- 4.1 Each service plan sets out the strategic and service level priorities and outcomes it intends to deliver in the coming year aligning closely with financial planning, corporate and community planning partnership strategic priorities. This report provides an interim update on progress on the service plan, key outcomes and performance indicators. Committee is invited to review progress to secure assurance that is satisfactory and to provide scrutiny and further direction where performance requires attention.

- 4.2 Latest Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Indicators covering 2021/22, initially published in February 2023, will be refreshed in June. The full suite can be viewed using the [My Local Council](#) tool. Published indicators for this service have been incorporated within the relevant section of this report depending on whether results are used to evidence progress against strategic, service plan or service performance priorities. 2022/23 LGBF data will be available early 2024.
- 4.3 The narrative included is by exception, links to Service Plan Actions and Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.



Strategic Outcomes – successes

- 4.4 Planned work for 2022/23 aimed at developing the workforce is now complete. A revised Workforce Strategy and Plan was approved at a meeting of this committee in 25 April (item 10 of the Agenda refers) while regular meetings are now in place at both strategic and operational level to take forward transformation and change work streams. (Action HR&OD22-23 Strat 4.1 and 4.2)

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.5 The action to redesign leadership development is progressing at 85% complete. A proposal for future leadership development direction and activity is being finalised while current activity in relation to management development that includes a review of Moray Management Methods is nearing completion. In terms of learning and development opportunities, a programme of Project Management workshops to support the budget review process has been developed. (Action HR&OD22-23 Strat.4.3)
- 4.6 Recruitment and retention challenges continue to affect some council services and roles. Work to improve these activities will be taken forward as a priority within the revised Workplace Strategy and Plan. (Action HR&OD22-23 Strat.4.4)
- 4.7 ICT continue to support Education and Children's Social Work in further developing the Parents Portal and online services. The technical solution for the Portal is now in place while web pages for Fostering and Adoption and Home Care have been updated. Although out with original target timescales, focus is now on promoting the Portal, to include a web page aimed at

encouraging uptake and finalising content for the remaining Social Work web pages. (Action ICT22-23 Strat 4.2 and 4.3)

Service Level Outcomes – successes

- 4.8 Work planned for 2022/23 to improve absence levels is complete. Training covering the Health and Work Policy has been re-introduced with absence management guidance ongoing and Mental Health awareness sessions being delivered. Feedback from service managers and trade union representatives has been positive in terms of the impact of the training in supporting managers to manage absence effectively which is particularly relevant given the figures for sickness absence have increased over this period. Local Government Benchmarking Framework data for the previous year (2021/22) shows, since COVID, sickness absence for non-teaching staff has increased across all local authorities. Although Moray has risen from 8.67 days to 11.08 this remains below the Scottish average of 12.43 with ranking improved to 9th place. (Action HR&OD22-23 Serv 5.1, PI Corp6b)
- 4.9 ICT actions in relation to the Flexible Working project and Schools Digital Strategy have been delivered as planned with additional WiFi facilities and equipment to facilitate hybrid meetings, a solution for NHS staff to work from the Annexe and identified options for devices in Schools now in place. Further developments will continue via the Smarter Working Project and the Transformation Programme. (Actions ICT22-23 Serv 5.4 and 5.6)

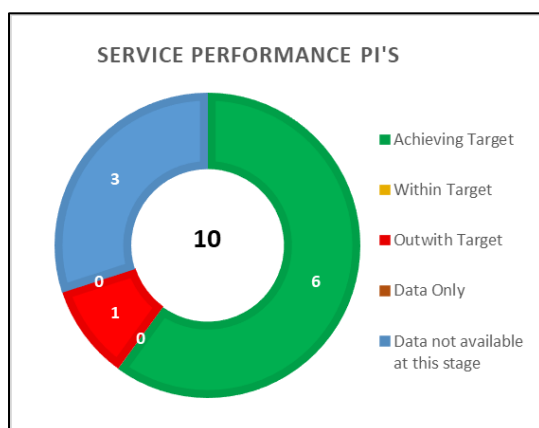
Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.10 Three HR actions aimed at delivering a sustainable council are all well advanced at over 90% complete. Fire Risk Assessments continue as planned, supporting documentation to finalise the school security audit is currently with Education while joint inspection programme and lone working guidance have moved to implementation with support provided as required. A review of Driving Policy and Safer Driving handbook has concluded with risk assessment guidance for schools nearing completion. Actions contributing to preparing the workforce for future requirements have moved forward with outcomes from the digital skills survey submitted to the Transforming the Council Board, links between M365 and Smarter Working project established, support and guidance delivered through the Digital Champions network and cyber security development progressing. Workshop sessions supporting the implementation of hybrid working were delivered to managers with further resources for the Smarter Working project outlined in the OD Plan. (Actions HR&OD22-23 Serv 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4)
- 4.11 Violence and Aggression incidents have increased to 2,276; a 35% increase from 2021/22. 1,941 incidents (85%) were recorded by Education with most (1,404) occurring during quarters 3 and 4. Guidance and training on intervention techniques are currently being delivered as part of the ASN Review led by the Head of Education, Resources and Communities while it is anticipated the new electronic incident recording system will allow for swifter more targeted work to help reduce violence and aggression in schools. (PI CS024b)

- 4.12 Good progress has been made around cyber resilience awareness raising with the initial baseline phishing campaign completed and training programme agreed. More limited advances have been made on work around cyber resilience accreditations and monitoring due to time taken on staff appointment and other priority projects. As this work is monitored by the Cabinet Office, they have been advised that work to complete will continue into 2023/24. (Actions ICT22-23 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3).
- 4.13 Due to other work commitments and sick leave in quarter 4, the ERDP process across HR, ICT and OD will continue in quarter 1 2023/24.

5 **SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

- 5.1 In line with Performance Management Framework, operational performance is monitored quarterly by departmental management. Areas performing well and/or areas subject to a decreasing trend or where benchmarking results show performance below comparators will be reported to this Committee for member scrutiny.
- 5.2 The narrative included is by exception, links to Service Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.



Operational Indicators – successes

- 5.3 During quarter 4, 98.79% of the 2,065 helpdesk calls were resolved within anticipated timescales against a target of 90%. All vacancies within the Support Team have been filled successfully with emphasis now on addressing the backlog of outstanding calls. (PI CPS041)
- 5.4 In 2021/22, the percentage of women in the highest paid 5% increased to 62.72% against a Scottish average of 58.96%, achieving a ranking of 3rd highest, an improvement from 8th in 2020/21. (PI CORP3b)
- 5.5 Payroll accuracy continues to be excellent with both indicators used to monitor activity consistently above target. (PIs FS111 and FS112)

Operational Indicators – challenges and actions to support

- 5.6 The gender pay gap increased in 2021/22 from 6.16% to 6.95%, above the Scottish average of 3.54%, gaining a ranking of 30th against all other authorities, remaining in the bottom quartile. Further work on analysing and understanding the gender pay gap will be taken forward as an agreed action in the 2023/24 Service Plan.

6 OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA

Complaints & MP/MSP Enquiries

- 6.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, complaints are reviewed quarterly by departmental management in terms of time taken to respond, outcome and learning points. Detailed tables can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.
- 6.2 During the second half of 2022/23, HR, ICT and OD have received no complaints and no MP/MSP enquiries.

Other Performance (not included in the Service Plan)

- 6.3 An application for Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award has recently been submitted. This Employee Recognition Scheme acknowledges employers who provide exceptional support to the Armed Forces community. If successful, this award will build on the Silver recognition received in 2021.
- 6.4 Workforce Planning meetings have been held with Heads of Service and the refresh of the Moray Management Methods, the reference document capturing all major corporate responsibilities for council managers, is almost complete.

Case Studies

- 6.5 Nothing to report.

Consultation and Engagement

- 6.6 Several employee engagement activities have taken place during the second half of 2022/23. Head of Service and elected members undertook a service learning visit to ICT, corporate management team members participated in back to the floor visits meeting staff at the supported accommodation facility Woodview, pupil support at Forres Academy and the DLO. The Chief Executive also chaired three Managers' Listening Meetings.
- 6.7 Service question times provided staff from Environmental and Commercial Services, Finance and Economic Growth and Development the opportunity to discuss budgeting issues with Rhona Gunn, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance). Question times have also been held with staff to introduce the scope and objectives of the Smarter Working Project.

7 **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Performance measurement is used to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of services to meet the Council's priorities in both the Corporate Plan and the LOIP.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council has a statutory requirement to publish a range of information that will demonstrate that it is securing best value and assist in comparing performance both over time and between authorities where appropriate.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the report is to inform the Committee on performance.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None

(i) Consultations

The Head of HR, ICT & Organisational Development, Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities & OD), Service Managers, Legal Services, the Equal Opportunities Officer, and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

8. **CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 At the end of March 2023, the HR & OD and ICT Service Plans are reported at 69% and 65% complete respectively. Progress has been made across a number of strategic and service level outcomes and work will continue where required in 2023/24.**

Author of Report: Suzanne Wilson, Research and Information Officer

Background Papers: [Service Plan Actions](#)
[Service Plan Performance Indicators](#)
[Service Performance Indicators](#)
[Complaints Monitoring Report](#)

Ref: SPMAN-1656699058-134



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 13 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2023.

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 31 March 2023.

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (A) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration to monitor performance in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Framework.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee;

- (i) scrutinises performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of March 2023;**
- (ii) notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

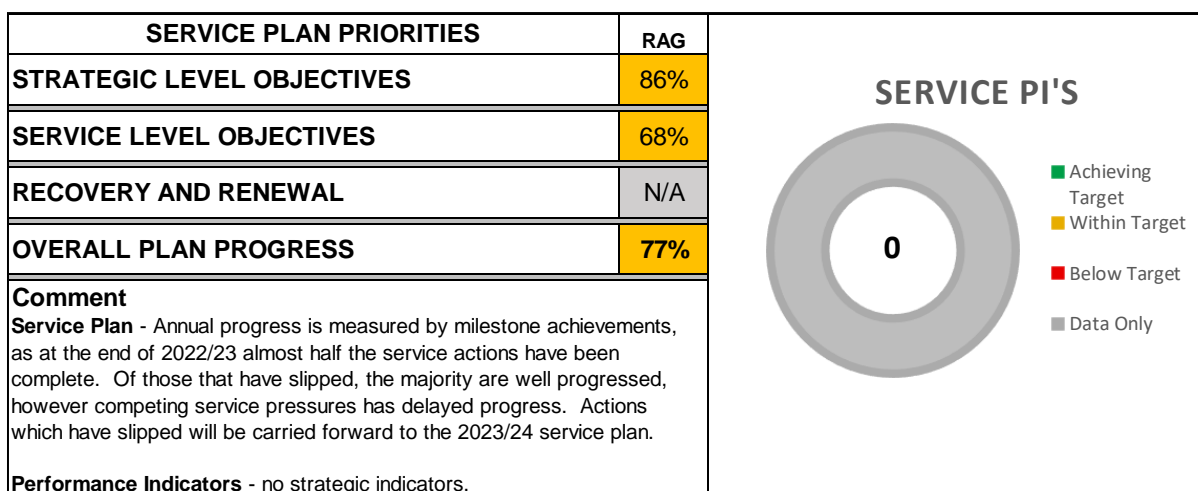
3. BACKGROUND

3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Moray Council, approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

4. SERVICE PLANNING

4.1 Each service plan sets out the planned strategic and service level priorities and outcomes it intends to deliver in the coming year aligning closely with financial planning, corporate and community planning partnership strategic priorities. This report provides an update on progress on the service plan, key outcomes and performance indicators. Committee is invited to review progress to secure assurance that is satisfactory and to provide scrutiny and further direction where performance requires attention.

- 4.2 The narrative included is by exception, however links to Service Plan Actions and Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.



Strategic Outcomes - successes

- 4.3 The implementation of the customer services change management plan has started to deliver the improvement in both call handling and email responses. 91.3% of the near 131,000 calls received by the Contact Centre in 2022/23 were answered, an improvement in performance compared to the previous two years. Of those answered, 71.6% were within 60 seconds. Based on the data collected during 2022/23, a target of 75% has been set for 2023/24. A targeted training programme for new starts has allowed new team members to quickly deliver across all skillsets, which has helped to improve the availability of advisors across all enquiry types. As well as telephone calls, the Contact Centre dealt with 61,633 emails during the reporting year, with 98.1% responded to within 2 working days. The service aims to ensure that progress is maintained with the volume of customer contact being influenced by seasonal trends such as council tax, garden waste permits and will continue to explore opportunities to encourage self-service to further improve capacity to maintain and build on the experience of customers. This will continue as an on-going action in the 2023/24 service plan. (GSP22-23.Strat-4.1 to 4.3 / PIs CPS058 and CPS062)
- 4.4 The library information hub model from Forres has been expanded and established in all Moray libraries to provide customers with supported service delivery if required. The Council's Customer Charter has also been refreshed and relaunched. (GSP22-23.Strat-4.3 & 5.1)
- 4.5 Review of the Money Advice Moray Service to establish sustainable funding model has completed. Shared Prosperity Funding has been established for the next two years. The funding will support people to access training and employment opportunities alongside wider financial support to be provided by the Money Advice Moray Team. (GSP22-23.Strat-6.1)

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.6 Annual progress report against Corporate Plan priorities will be drafted following conclusion of scrutiny of quarter 4 performance reports by service committees, slightly out with original timescales of March 2023. Review of core performance measures is ongoing following committee approval of 2023-24 Service Plans. (GSP22-23.Strat-2.2 & 2.3 / GSP22-23.Serv-4.1)
- 4.7 The Local Outcome Improvement Plan is currently undergoing a mid-point review. As an interim solution Delivery Framework documents are being refreshed against existing priorities to enable reporting during 2023-24. A Community Planning Partnership Development Session took place on 8 May with representatives from the Community Planning Board and Community Planning Officer Group in attendance. The session aims to strengthen partnership ambition for Moray communities and restate the shared commitment to delivery of Local Outcome Improvement Plan priorities. (GSP22-23.Strat-3.1 to 3.3 / GSP22-23.Serv-3.1)

Service Level Outcomes - successes

- 4.8 Equality and Diversity Corporate Advisory Forum (EDCAF) re-established and statutory obligations being met. Recent work around EDCAF include Connect magazine article encouraging staff to update demographic information to allow richer examination of workforce. Thirty council officers have signed up to training by Police Scotland on third party reporting of hate crime. A group has been set up to engage with minority groups to identify policies, practices and procedures that lead to poor outcomes for ethnic minorities, liaising with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) to gain official status. Work will continue into the 2023/24 service plan on embedding equality outcomes within Council's Performance Management Framework, as well as adjusting and refining outcomes to align with Corporate Plan and LOIP. (GSP22-23.Serv-1.2)

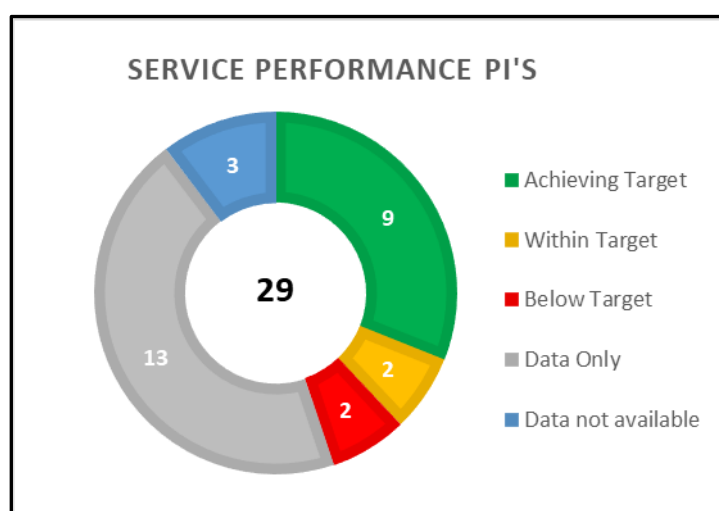
Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.9 ICT continue to develop the Benefits e-form infrastructure. Due to the complexity of the multi-use benefits form this has taken longer than anticipated. Action to be carried forward to 2023/24 with a revision of the completion date to 31 July 2023. (GSP22-23.Serv-2.1)
- 4.10 Development of the performance monitoring system Pentana has not progressed as planned. Data tidy of system has been complete, with revised Council structure reflected in system permissions and roles. Virtual session with Pentana Officer has provided further direction around development of corporate portal layout, work on the system will progress in amongst other work priorities, with the action carried forward to the 2023/24 service plan. (GSP22-23.Serv-1.3)

- 4.11 Digitisation of burial ground records has not progressed as planned due to staffing issues. Full transfer of administration of burial grounds to Environmental Services continues to be the aim, with a view to have useable records for all cemeteries available online. Funding approved to extend temporary administration post, recruitment process underway. This action will be carried forward to the 2023/24 service plan. (GPS22-23.Serv-6.1)
- 4.12 Scheduled survey of users on the Hybrid Committee system has not taken place during 2022/23, delay due to staffing issues and competing workload priorities. The survey will now take place during 2023/24. (GSP22-23.Serv-5.3)

5. **SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

- 5.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, operational performance is reviewed quarterly by departmental management. Areas performing well and/or areas subject to a decreasing trend or where benchmarking results show performance significantly below comparators will be reported to this committee for member scrutiny.
- 5.2 Initial publication of 2021/22 Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators in February 2023 will be refreshed in early June. The full suite can be viewed using the [My Local Council](#) tool.
- 5.3 The narrative included is by exception, links to Service Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.



Operational Indicators - successes

- 5.4 The Housing Benefits team continue to exceed targets in the processing of new and change of circumstance benefit claims. Over 2022/23 the average processing time for new housing benefit claims was 18 days, well within the target of 21 days and improving on the previous year result of 20 days. Change of circumstances housing claims were processed in an average of 5 days, exceeding the 6 day target. (Indicators CPS011 and 012)

- 5.5 The Money Advice Moray team secured welfare benefits clients an estimated £860,000 in benefits during 2022/23, while just over 87% of 70 welfare benefits appeals were successful. This represents an increase in both benefits secured and percentage of successful appeals compared to the previous year, up by £160,000 and 7% respectively. The estimated income maximisation benefit gains for Money Advice Moray clients over 2022/23 totalled £1.6 million, an increase of over £400,000 from 2021/22 performance. (PIs ENVDV217, 217b and ENVDV218i)
- 5.6 New Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators around benefits processing were introduced for 2021/22. Two of the indicators showed Moray performing above the Scottish average and in the top half ranked against all local authorities. 98.25% of Crisis Grant decisions in Moray were processed within 1 working day, ranking Moray 11th in Scotland and performing well above the Scottish average of 93.25%. While 95% of Community Care Grant (CCG) decisions in Moray were processed within 15 days, ranking Moray 14th and exceeding the Scottish average of 85.75%. (PIs CORP9 and CORP10)

Operational Indicators - challenges

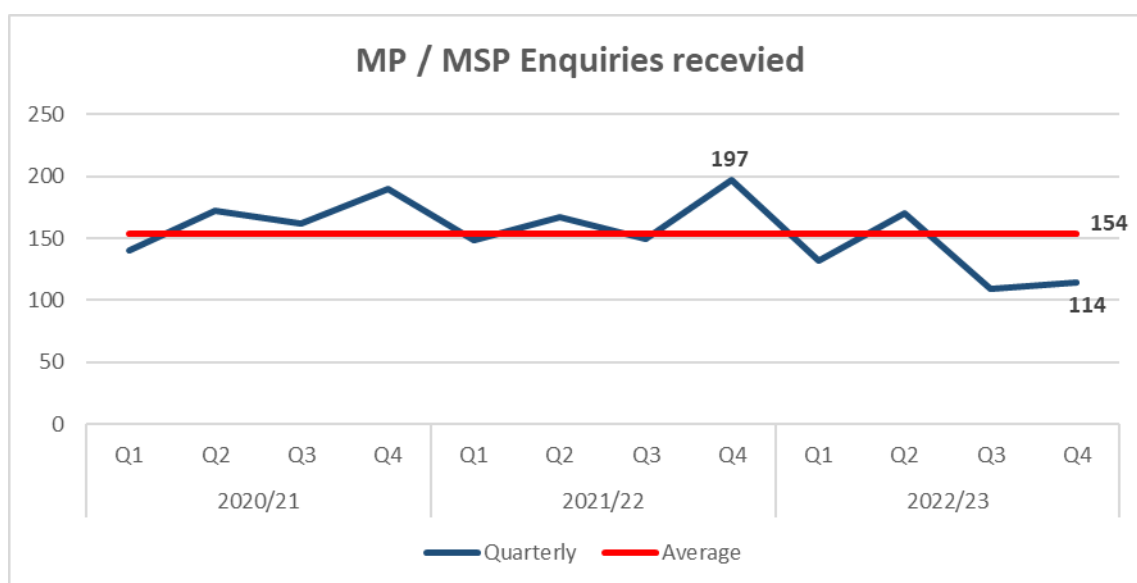
- 5.7 LGBF indicator reports on proportion of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Fund spend that ranked Moray 31 out of the 32 local authorities, with 75.1% of the fund spent in 2021/22 compared to a Scottish average of 96%. During 2020/21 and 2021/22 the allocation of DHP funding was affected by increased workload in dealing with the processing of Self Isolation Support Grants. The team were unable to spend the required time on DHP's, while there was also less movement of people meaning there was less need for DHP's for new tenants or those tenants looking to move to new tenancies. The budget allocation for DHP's from Scottish Government had also increased, this subsequently meant percentage spend looked less compared to previous years. This has now been investigated and Scottish Government have addressed this with the reduction in the budget allocation for 2022/23. The proportion spend for this year is back to pre Covid-19 levels and will be reflected in LGBF indicator performance in 2022/23. (CORP12)
- 5.8 During 2022/23, around 40 committee action sheets and draft minutes were issued, the percentage issued on time or early slipped in the reporting period. Just over a third of action sheets (67.4%) and 63.1% of draft minutes were issued by their due date, below the target of 85%. A number of factors have impacted on service performance including staffing issues, over running committees and additional clerking of meetings. The service continues to closely monitor performance.

6. OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA

Complaints & MP/MSP Enquiries

- 6.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, complaints are reviewed quarterly by departmental management in terms of time taken to respond, outcome and learning points. Detailed tables can be accessed with the Background Papers section of this report.

- 6.2 Eight complaints were received during the second half of 2022/23, with a total of 21 received over the full year. Of the eight received this reporting period, seven were resolved at frontline with the remaining complaint closed at investigative stage. Five complaints were not upheld, while two were upheld and one partially upheld. The average time taken to resolve frontline complaints was 4 working days, with six of the seven frontline complaints responded to within the 5 working day timescale. The investigative complaint was replied to in 10 days. The three complaints requiring action were across different services within Governance, Strategy and performance, agreed actions were taken to resolve complaints.
- 6.3 No MP/MSP enquiries were received or closed during the second half of 2022/23 for Governance, Strategy and Performance. Over the full year the service received 11 MP/MSP enquiries.
- 6.4 Over the last three years the Council have dealt with over 1,800 MP/MSP enquiries. The following graph shows the volume of enquiries received each quarter since 2020/21.



On average each quarter, officers respond to 153 enquiries, this reporting quarter 114 enquiries were received, the second lowest number for a quarter over the last three years. Over 78% of enquiries are directed to Economy, Environment and Finance, which includes services such as Housing and Property Services, and Environmental and Commercial Services. Education, Communities and Organisational Development received 12% of enquiries followed by Health and Social Care Moray with 9%.

Other Performance (not included within Service Plan)

- 6.5 Nothing to report.

Case Studies

- 6.6 Nothing to report.

Consultation and Engagement

6.7 Nothing to report.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Performance measurement is used to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of services to meet the Council's priorities in both the Corporate Plan and the LOIP.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council has a statutory requirement to publish a range of information that will demonstrate that it is securing best value and assist in comparing performance both over time and between authorities where appropriate.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform the Committee on performance.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None

(i) Consultations

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Service Managers, Legal Services, the Equal Opportunities Officer, and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

8. **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 As at 31 March 2023, overall progress against the service plan for 2022/23 was 77% complete. Actions subject to slippage have been impacted by competing priorities, these actions will be carried forward to the 2023/24 service plan.

Author of Report: Neil Stables, Research & Information Officer

Background Papers: [Service Plan Actions](#)
[Service Performance Indicators](#)
[Service Complaints](#)

Ref: SPMAN-2045703626-265



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 13 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: INFORMATION REPORT: COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFERS – ANNUAL REPORT

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report meets the reporting requirements of section 95 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 in relation to Community Asset Transfer requests dealt with during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (32) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the consideration of Community Asset Transfer (CAT) requests.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The CAT Scheme is concerned with the transfer of Council-held land and buildings to community-controlled bodies. Moray Council has a long history of transferring assets to the community through transferring ownership, granting leases and entering into management agreements.
- 2.2 Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the Act) gives eligible community-controlled bodies a right to make asset transfer requests to public authorities. The Act requires those authorities to assess requests transparently against a specified list of criteria, and to agree the request unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal.
- 2.3 Section 95 of the Act requires each authority to publish an asset transfer report by the end of June each year. This report covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. There is no legal requirement that all asset transfer requests be made under the Act. Therefore, in the interests of transparency and completeness, details of those requests received outwith the Act are also included in the annual report.
- 2.4 The legislation requires the report to cover two areas of activity. The first relates to asset transfer requests and decisions made in respect of these. The second relates to actions taken by the Council to promote the use of asset transfer requests and to support community transfer bodies in the making of such requests.

- 2.5 During the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, Moray Council completed the transfer of three property assets to the community and at the end of the reporting period was in the process of transferring two more. One asset transfer request was refused and one community body withdrew from the process after its request had been approved. Further information on these is included in the Annual Report, which is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 2.6 In addition to the seven asset transfer requests referred to above, officers dealt with twenty-one formal Expressions of Interest (EOIs) during the reporting period, eleven of which remained live as at 31 March 2023. These figures exclude enquiries that had not yet progressed to the formal EOI stage. There is no requirement that all cases first go through the EOI process. Community groups are free to go straight to making an asset transfer request.
- 2.7 The Council's Community Support Unit (CSU) provides capacity building support to community groups at all stages of the CAT process. Officers from the CSU carry out initial assessments of all groups submitting an EOI. This assessment identifies if the group is eligible to make an asset transfer request under the CAT Scheme, has the skills and experience to take on responsibility for an asset, and considers any community engagement that has been done by the group. From this assessment, CSU officers can work with the groups on addressing any issues.

3. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Transferring assets to the community supports the LOIP aim of creating more resilient and sustainable communities with less need for universal services provided by the public sector and is consistent with the Corporate Plan value of promoting community empowerment as a means of supporting communities take on more responsibility.

Where the property is a Common Good asset, the interests of the inhabitants of the former burgh take precedence over the Council's Corporate Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP).

Where the property is held under a Public Trust, it is burdened with the trust purposes. Consequently, a request must be considered only in relation to uses that reflect the trust purposes.

(b) Policy and Legal

On 21 March 2017, the Policy and Resources Committee approved the following policy statement in relation to Community Asset Transfers (para 5 of the Minute refers).

"Moray Council recognises the important role that the transfer of property assets can play in empowering communities and strengthening their resilience. Where appropriate, the Council will use the transfer of assets to give more control to communities and local people, inspire them to find local solutions to community needs, and as a means of helping communities become more sustainable in the long term. In determining

all asset transfer requests, the Council will have regard to the guidance provided by the Scottish Government in relation to asset transfer requests made under Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, whether or not such requests are made under the provisions contained in the Act.”

Where assets are transferred at less than market value, such disposals must comply with the Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010, which requires that the Council must be satisfied that the proposed transfer is reasonable and that the disposal is likely to contribute to at least one of the following purposes:

- a) Economic Development,
- b) Regeneration,
- c) Public Health,
- d) Social Wellbeing, or
- e) Environmental Wellbeing.

Reasonableness is taken to imply that the requested discount is the minimum necessary to allow the project to proceed and that it is proportionate to the costs and benefits of the project.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 only applies to the Council when acting in its capacity as a local authority. Where the Council Members act as Trustees under a Public Trust, they are not acting in the capacity of a local authority but in their capacity as Trustees under and in terms of the Trust. Consequently, the Act confers no rights on community-controlled bodies in these cases.

(c) Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impact

There are no climate change or biodiversity implications arising from this report.

(i) Consultations

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Chief Financial Officer, Head of Economic Growth and Development, Head of Education Resources and Communities, Legal Services Manager, Asset Manager (Commercial Buildings), S. Souter Senior Accountant, Community Learning and Engagement Manager, L. Robinson Committee Services Officer, and Equal Opportunities Officer have been consulted and their comments incorporated in the report.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 During the year ending 31 March 2023, officers dealt with seven valid asset transfer requests and a further twenty-one expressions of interest.**
- 4.2 The Annual Report provides details of the actions taken to support communities in the making of asset transfer requests.**

Author of Report:	Andrew Gray, Asset Management Coordinator
Background Papers:	Held by author
Ref:	SPMAN-1293228629-867 / SPMAN-1293228629-874

Community Asset Transfer

Annual Report: 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023



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Empowering Communities

Community empowerment refers to the process of enabling communities to increase control over their own lives. Communities are groups of people who share common interests, concerns or identities. Empowerment refers to the process by which people gain control over the factors and decisions that shape their lives.

Moray Council has long recognised the important role that the transfer of property assets can play in empowering communities and strengthening their resilience. The Council's Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Scheme supports its Corporate Plan priority of empowering and supporting communities. Where appropriate, the Council will use the transfer of assets to give more control to communities, helping to inspire them to find local solutions to community needs and become more sustainable in the long term.

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

From 23 January 2017 the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the Act) gave eligible community bodies a right to make asset transfer requests to public authorities. A request can be made in respect of any land or building that is owned or leased by the relevant authority. The Act requires public authorities to agree to the request unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal.

Section 95 of the Act requires each authority to publish a report annually covering the number of asset transfer requests processed through the year together with details of what actions it has taken to promote the use of asset transfer requests and to support community bodies through the process. There is no requirement that all asset transfer requests be made under the Act. In the interests of transparency and completeness, details of requests dealt with outside of the Act are included in this report.

This report covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. During this time, Moray Council successfully completed the transfers of three assets to the community and is currently in the process of transferring two more. A full list of asset transfer requests dealt with during the reporting period is shown in Appendix 1. Previously successful asset transfers completed since the introduction of the Act in January 2017 are shown in Appendix 2.

Completed Transfers

Findochty Town Hall SCIO secured an initial short-term lease of Findochty Town Hall while it developed its plans to take over responsibility for the facility permanently. Subsequently, the charity received the Keystone Award in recognition of it meeting the required standards of governance and management. Despite the difficulties posed by dealing with the pandemic-related lockdown, the charity carried out numerous improvements to the facility while increasing the extent to which it was used by the community. The hall was held by the Council on an inalienable Common Good title. In October 2020, the Council issued a Decision Notice agreeing to transfer the hall to the charity subject to the necessary court consent being granted. Decree was granted following a successful petitioning of the court thus allowing ownership of the hall to transfer to the charity in July 2022.

The Findhorn Village Conservation Company submitted an asset transfer request for ownership of the two public toilets and the site of a former public toilet located at Findhorn Beach in January 2021. The company intended to re-open the closed toilet, improve the facilities, and expand the service by providing the necessary infrastructure to support a stopover facility for motorhomes. The Council agreed to the company's request and ownership transferred in July 2022.

On 14 June 2022, the Council agreed to transfer ownership of Garmouth Water Tower to Garmouth and Kingston Community Association. The category B listed building, which was leased to the Garmouth and Kingston Amenities Association at a peppercorn rent for a period of 50 years from April 1991, supplied water to Garmouth, Kingston and the surrounding district from the late-1800s until the mid-1960s. The Community Association was set up for the purpose of taking over responsibility for all the assets of the Amenities Association, including a local park and a community hub. Future development proposals for the water tower include enhanced interpretation boards, improved landscaping and upgraded footpath signage, together with the possibility of providing refreshments, seating and a telescope. Ownership of the asset transferred to the Community Association in December 2022.



- The Old Water Tower at Garmouth

Approved Transfers

Coulardbank Playing Field is held by the Council on an inalienable Common Good title. In January 2020, the Lossiemouth Community Development Trust submitted an asset transfer request for a 25-year lease of a site within the Coulardbank playing fields for the purpose of developing a skate park. In October that year, the Council agreed to the requested lease subject to the courts granting consent and to the Trust obtaining the necessary planning consent for the development. Decree has now been granted by the court for the lease of the site, which is currently in the process of being completed.

The Fishermen's Hall Trust secured an initial short-term lease of Buckie's Fishermen's Hall while it developed its plans to take over responsibility for the facility permanently in order to ensure that the facility remained as an important hub supporting the needs of its community. The hall was held by the Council on an inalienable Common Good title. In November 2021, the Council issued a Decision Notice agreeing, subject to court consent, to transfer the hall to the trust. Decree has now been granted for the transfer of the Council's interest in the property, which is currently being progressed.

Expressions of Interest

The Council's CAT Scheme involves a two-stage process. Community bodies are encouraged to take advantage of the pre-application stage by completing an Expression of Interest (EOI) for any land or buildings in which they have an interest. On receipt of an EOI, the Council will:

- check the community body's eligibility under the scheme,
- check that the Council has the ability to transfer the relevant property rights,
- identify the Council's current and future operational requirements for the property,
- identify as far as possible any other material considerations that should be taken into account in determining an asset transfer request for the property, and
- exchange information related to the community, the asset and the potential transfer.

The EOI stage is designed to help the community body avoid abortive work and prepare a robust business case in support of its asset transfer request. Not all community bodies that submit an EOI will progress to making a formal asset transfer request and some will choose to go straight to making a formal request without first submitting an EOI. In addition to the seven asset transfer requests detailed in Appendix 1, we dealt with twenty-one expressions of interest during the period covered by this report, eleven of which remain current.

Supporting Communities

The Council's Community Support Unit (CSU) provides capacity building support to community groups at all stages of the CAT process. Officers from the CSU carry out initial assessments of groups submitting an expression of interest. This assessment identifies if the group has the skills and experience to take on an asset and also considers any community engagement that has been done by the group. From this, CSU officers can work with the groups on addressing any issues, e.g. governance, consultation, business planning, etc.

Officers from the CSU encourage groups to consider the requirements of those most in need in their community. CSU will work with the Council's Research and Information Officers to provide relevant data and statistical information to help groups understand the demographics and needs of their communities. We also work with other partners who can provide support to groups – notably the Development Trusts Association Scotland's Community Ownership Support Service (COSS) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE). HIE have provided funding in the last year for community groups to commission options appraisals and a Social Return on Investment report in support of potential CATs.

During the last year we have worked with a number of groups looking to acquire a diverse range of assets, e.g. open spaces to develop and enhance recreational facilities, public toilets and pavilions to retain and improve these facilities for the community, and office buildings to develop a community hub.

Community Rent Rebates

The Council brought the management of its former Community Rental Grant Scheme within the purview of its CAT Scheme. In August 2022, the Council agreed to extend the Scheme to provide an opportunity to all existing voluntary and community organisations that lease property from the Council to apply for a rent rebate whenever their rent falls due to be reviewed. This element of the scheme is not covered by the Community Empowerment legislation and all applications are considered entirely at the Council's discretion. Applications must be supported by a robust business case demonstrating ongoing benefits commensurate with the rebate being applied for.

Council Asset Register

Section 94 of the Act requires public authorities to make available a register of land and buildings that are owned or leased by the authority. Communities can find out more about the Council's land and buildings from its map-based Asset Register. The full register is available to search or download through the Council's Open Mapping Data Portal 1.



Open Mapping Data Portal:

<https://data-moray.opendata.arcgis.com/>

Contact Us

Further information on the scheme is available from the Council's CAT team or its Community Support Unit (CSU).



by post:

Moray Council, High Street, Elgin IV30 1BX



by phone:

01343 543451



by email:

CAT@moray.gov.uk or CSU@moray.gov.uk



on the web:

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/CAT>

Appendices

Appendix 1

The following asset transfer requests were dealt with during the reporting period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. No validated asset transfer requests were awaiting a decision and no decisions were the subject of a review or appeal during the reporting period.

Table 1. Asset transfers completed by 31 March 2022

Property	Community Body	Type	Transferred	Notes
Findochty Town Hall	Findochty Town Hall (SCIO)	Ownership	21/07/2022	
West Dunes Toilets, Findhorn	Findhorn Village Conservation Company	Ownership	12/10/2022	
Garmouth Water Tower	Garmouth and Kingston Community Association	Ownership	19/12/2022	

Table 2. Approved Asset Transfer Requests Awaiting Completion

Property	Community Body	Type	Approved	Notes
Fishermen's Hall, Buckie	Fishermen's Hall Trust	Ownership	30/11/2021	
Land, Coulardbank Park, Lossiemouth	Lossiemouth Community Development Trust	Lease	06/10/2020	

Table 3. Refused Asset Transfer Requests

Property	Community Body	Type	Refused	Notes
Land, Bogton Road, Forres	Transition Town Forres	Ownership	30/08/2022	

Table 4. Withdrawn Asset Transfer Requests

Property	Community Body	Type	Withdrawn	Notes
Alice Littler Park, Aberlour	Aberlour Community Association	Ownership	03/02/2023	

Appendix 2

The following assets were transferred prior to the current reporting year but after Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 came into force on 23 January 2017. No asset transfers were completed between 23 January 2017 and 31 March 2017.

Table 1. Asset transfers completed from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

Property	Community Body	Type	Transferred
Cullen Community and Residential Centre	Three Kings Cullen Association	Ownership	05/11/2021

Table 2. Asset transfers completed from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Property	Community Body	Type	Transferred
Dufftown Sports and Community Centre	Dufftown Community Centre (SCIO)	Ownership	05/03/2021
Forres Town Hall	Forres Area Community Trust	Ownership	26/02/2021
Land, Lesser Borough Briggs, Elgin	Elgin Sports Community Trust	Lease	23/11/2020

Table 3. Asset transfers completed from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

Property	Community Body	Type	Transferred
Portknockie Bowling Green and Tennis Courts	Portknockie Bowling and Tennis Club	Ownership	08/11/2019
Marine Park, Lossiemouth	Action Marine Park	Ownership	05/06/2019

Table 4. Asset transfers completed from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

Property	Community Body	Type	Transferred
Cabrach School and Community Hall	Cabrach Trust	Ownership	24/10/2018
Abbeylands School, Kinloss	Morayvia	Ownership	05/10/2018

Table 5. Asset transfers completed from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

Property	Community Body	Type	Transferred
Tomintoul Bowling Green	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Bowling Club	Ownership	25/05/2017
Tomintoul Youth Hostel	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust	Ownership	19/04/2017
Tomintoul Museum	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust	Ownership	19/04/2017

