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**REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 30 NOVEMBER 2021**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE) – PERIOD TO SEPTEMBER 2021.**

**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 30 September 2021.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Committee in terms of section III (A) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration in relation to monitoring performance in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Framework.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that Committee:**

- (i) **scrutinises and notes performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of September 2021; and**
- (ii) **note 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).

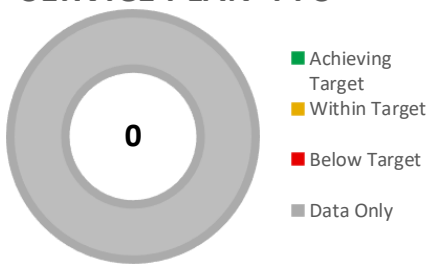
**4. SERVICE PLANNING**

- 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 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 The narrative included is by exception, however links to backing tables for all [Service Plan Actions](#) is provided.

SERVICE PLAN PRIORITIES	RAG
STRATEGIC LEVEL OBJECTIVES	81%
SERVICE LEVEL OBJECTIVES	49%
RECOVERY AND RENEWAL	N/A
OVERALL PLAN PROGRESS	68%
<b>Comment</b>	
Progress is measured over the 2-year plan period. At the mid point of year 2 progress against a number of actions have slipped with overall progress behind schedule. The impact of Covid-19 and staffing pressures have restricted strategic and service level activity, this has continued into 2021-22.	

### SERVICE PLAN PI'S



- 4.3 As reported to the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee on the 26 May (para 17 of the Minute refers), there continues to be significant impact on services ability to progress strategic and service plan activity while maintaining operational level work as a result of the Council Covid-19 response. Many services are continuing to deal with changes in their day to day activities to meet the additional demands that have resulted from dealing with Covid-19 for example Track and Trace calls and Pandemic Support Payments.

#### **Strategic Outcomes – successes**

- 4.4 One full calendar year of revised performance reporting has now been achieved. Actions to seek continuous improvement and refinement of reporting under the Performance Management Framework will be incorporated in future service reporting. (GSP20-22.Strat-4.2a-d)
- 4.5 The Community Planning Board approved the Delivery Framework on the 28 April (para 3 of the Minute refers), with the four Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) priorities reviewed and refined. The Community Planning Outcome Group (CPOG) agreed, in September 2021, for Pentana to be used for future quarterly performance reporting against LOIP actions and performance indicators. (GSP20-22.Strat-4.4a-c)

#### **Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support**

- 4.6 The Governance Review aim was to streamline processes including reviews of committee structures, schemes of delegation and reporting to committees. The review has largely been completed, the only outstanding actions are for further clarification on the role of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and consideration of consultation on a proposed sub-committee for Children's Services. A report will go to Full Council on 10 November with proposals for both. (GSP20-22.Strat-4.1)
- 4.7 Each CPOG meeting will apply a focus to a single LOIP priority whereby the Priority Lead will submit an extended report on their particular priority. Work will continue on the development of underlying milestones and refinement of the delivery framework indicators with partners. (GSP20-22.Strat-4.4d)
- 4.8 Following limited progress during the pandemic around the Modernisation and Improvement activities to redesign customer contact (while Access points remained closed and staff being redeployed to cover email and call handling

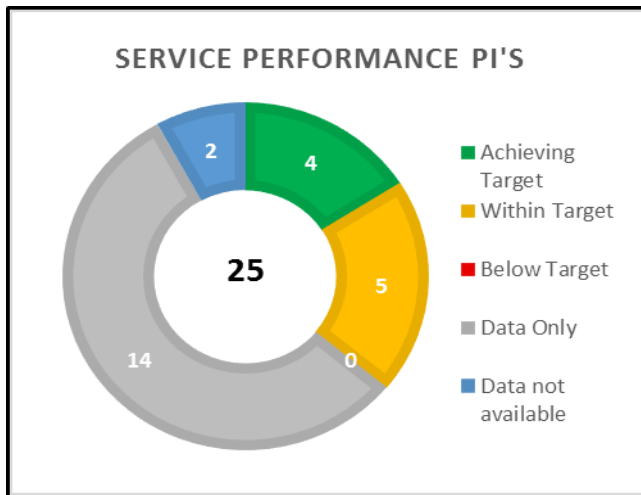
duties) a report was submitted to this Committee on 12 October 2021 to agree principles for redesign of front facing customer services. (GSP20-22.Strat-4.5a-c)

### **Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support**

- 4.9 The development of Council Benefits and Council Tax e-forms has slipped against original timescales due to the significant additional and continuing pressures on staff on the pandemic response. Initial development of the e-forms has begun with a skeleton e-form specification submitted to ICT. Further progress is dependent on ICT resources which continue to be diverted during the Covid-19 response. As a result, the due date for these actions have been extended to April 2022 but this date may need to be further reviewed. (GSP20-22.Serv-5.1a-b)
- 4.10 The Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee approved the revised Model Complaints Handling Procedure on the 31 March (para 11 of the Minute refers). Accompanying training for staff in the new complaints system has been restricted due to the impact of Covid-19. At the Complaints Administrators meeting on the 20 October officers were asked to identify staff within their departments who require training, with training to be scheduled from the 15 November. Alternatives to face to face training will be utilised (GSP20-22.Serv-5.2b)
- 4.11 An update on the work on remote Committee meetings was submitted to the Full Council on 15 September (item 3.7 of the Agenda refers). Agreement to continue online meetings until December 2021 and review in January 2022. As a result the due date of this action will be amended accordingly. (CSP20-22.Serv-5.4a)
- 4.12 In reviewing where Business Continuity fits with the Council's risk management process steps have been taken to include Business Continuity as an Internal Audit management function. Discussions are taking place over the staffing resources are now required. (GSP20-22.Serv-5.5)
- 4.13 The increase of services using SharePoint as their primary document management system has not been progressed in 2021/22. The Customer Development Manager is now in place and resources of the team are under active consideration. However, the team remain focused on Covid-19 phone contacts taking test and protect calls with a "care and maintenance" role for existing SharePoint builds. Business cases / project mandates will be required for bringing new services onto SharePoint, with staff resourcing requiring to be identified. (GSP20-22.Serv-5.7)

## **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 Report is by exception, however links to backing tables for all [Service Performance Indicators](#) are provided.



### Operational Indicators - successes

- 5.3 Many people that had never claimed benefits or sought money advice before found themselves in difficult financial circumstances, having been furloughed or lost jobs, contacted services for the first time. Benefit Services and Money Advice Moray teams have worked throughout the pandemic so that support from Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Free School Meals, Clothing Grants, Educational Maintenance Allowance, Scottish Welfare Fund, Discretionary Housing Payments and Money Advice was still available to those in need. Additional pandemic support was made available through the Flexible Food Fund and Family Pandemic Payments.
- 5.4 It is estimated that over £1 million of welfare benefits have been secured for clients in each of the last two years, an increase from the previous two year period. In the 6 months to September 2021, an estimated £400k has been achieved for clients. The team also developed the Flexible Food Fund to enable government pandemic funding to reach those in challenging financial circumstances. They assess circumstances and provide monetary payments, with just under £500,000 allocated in 2020/21 and a further £158,000 distributed in this reporting year. (ENVDV217)
- 5.5 Pandemic Support payments evidence an increasing trend. Self-Isolation Support Grants, introduced from October 2020, offer a grant of £500 to support low income workers who are asked to self-isolate by Test and Protect and would lose income as a result. Between April and September 2021, over 160 grants were awarded with a total of £80k allocated. Similarly Family Pandemic Payment total £238k in the same reporting period increasing support from £100 to £160 per child. (ENVDV283, CPS074)
- 5.6 There has been an increase in applications for Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments during the pandemic. In 2020/21 Scottish Welfare Fund (Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants) payments increased by £84,100 from the previous year to £478,873, while payments in the first half of 2021/22 total £332,400. The percentage of application awards has remained around 60%. Discretionary Housing Payments have seen a similar rise, with awards increasing by £92,200 to £562,149 in 2020/21. In the first half of this reporting year a total of £538,500 has been allocated – almost £50,000 on the same period last year. (ENVDV281, ENVDV282).

5.7 Housing benefit processing performance exceeded targets in the period to September 2021. The average processing time for new housing benefit claims was 20.4 days against a target of 21 days, while change of circumstances in housing claims were processed in an average of 5.2 days against a target of 6 days.

## 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. Links to backing tables for all [Service Complaints](#) is provided.

6.2 A total of 21 complaints were received during the first half of 2021-22, 11 of which were in quarter 2. The number of complaints is up by 200% on those received during the first half of 2020-21 (7). This seems to reflect a lower number of complaints during the height of the pandemic and a backlog/return to normal more recently.

6.3 All of the 20 complaints closed were at frontline stage. Of these 2 (10%) were upheld, five (25%) partially upheld and 13 (65%) were not upheld. The average time taken to resolve frontline complaints was 5 days, with 12 (60%) of frontline complaints closed within the 5 working day timescale. None of the overdue complaints were granted an authorised extension.

6.4 Complaints range across services and the seven upheld or part upheld relate mainly to process/procedure. There appears to be no obvious service wide learning, instead corrective actions were put in place for each.

6.5 A total of 14 MSP enquiries have been received and closed during the first half of 2021-22. On average MSP enquiries took four days to be resolved.

### **Other Performance (not included within Service Plan)**

6.6 The impacts of the latest lockdown were detailed in the report, Covid Related Pressures and Service Prioritisation (para 9 of the Minute refers), presented to Council on 10 March 2021. The Service's contribution to the immediate and ongoing pandemic response is referenced in that report.

### **Case Studies**

6.7 The Low Income Pandemic Payment (LIPP) scheme was put in place by Scottish Government with its administration being delegated to Scottish local authorities. Staff in Benefits and Taxation teams had to identify and to make contact with almost 6,000 persons eligible for a payment of £130 and gather bank details so that LIPP payments could be made in accordance with the government's schedule. The Scheme remains live and overall award totals will be included in quarter 4 reporting.

6.8 Licensing has had to adapt and overcome in order to continue the service and assist licence holders and businesses to continue trading throughout. Licence holders were kept updated with changes to the law and restrictions, the life of various licences was extended, open ended occasional licences for outdoor spaces were introduced, use of occasional and other licences for unlicensed areas was increased, a value for money alcohol licence variation process to

add off-sales where none existed was put in place and work with taxis undertaken to keep them operating during a period when vehicle testing was not available. Efforts continue in recovery to maintain the flow of business through application processing, review of delegated decisions and providing opportunity for online remote hearings.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

- 6.9 Committee Services have carried out a survey of elected members on the use of the online meeting system. Comments were fed back to provider and some improvements are being made to the system as a result.

## **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) Consultations**

The Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, 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 **The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been felt across the service, with significant changes to workloads in prioritising the council response to the pandemic. There is some slippage against strategic and**

**service level actions however overall, delivery of the Service Plan is 68% complete. These actions will be further considered as to how they are taken forward.**

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Background Papers: Held by Author  
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