



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 14 JUNE 2022

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2022

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 2022.

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 2022;

(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).

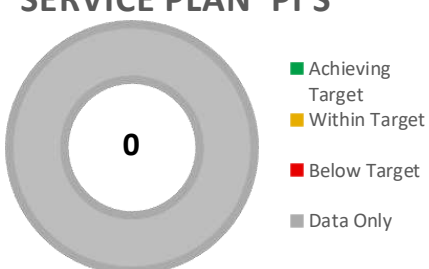
4. SERVICE PLANNING

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 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, a link to Service Plan Actions can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.

SERVICE PLAN PRIORITIES	RAG
STRATEGIC LEVEL OBJECTIVES	87%
SERVICE LEVEL OBJECTIVES	69%
RECOVERY AND RENEWAL	N/A
OVERALL PLAN PROGRESS	80%
Comment Service Plan - progress has been measured over the 2-year plan period. At the end of year two the majority of actions have been completed, however there has been slippage in some actions with overall progress behind schedule. The impact of Covid-19 and staffing pressures have restricted strategic and service level activity, delayed actions taken forward into the 2022-23 service plan. Performance Indicators - no strategic indicators.	

SERVICE PLAN PI'S



- 4.3 As reported to the Corporate Committee on the 30 November (item 11 of agenda), the Council's response to Covid-19 over the past two years has, and continues to impact on the services ability to progress strategic and service plan activity while maintaining operational level. A number of services within Governance, Strategy and Performance 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 Pandemic Support Payments and Self-isolation support calls. Actions that have slipped have been reviewed and are included in the 2022/23 service plan.

Strategic Outcomes - successes

- 4.4 A full calendar year of revised performance reporting has now been achieved in line with the Performance Management Framework (PMF). Continuous improvement and refinement of reporting under the PMF will remain a strategic focus in 2022/23, with each service establishing core performance measures / indicators linked to Council priorities. (GSP20-22.Strat-4.2a-d and 4.3a-c)

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.5 The Governance Review aims to streamline processes including reviews of committee structures, schemes of delegation and reporting to committees. The review has been delayed, however the majority of work has now been completed with the final element of the Governance Review, establishing the role of the Audit and Scrutiny committee, to be agreed at Full Council by September 2022. Business of the council will be more strategic, corporate and efficiently progressed with clearer focus on performance and priorities of the council as a whole. (GSP20-22.Strat-4.1)
- 4.6 Modernisation and Improvement activities to redesign customer contacts, including Access Points and digital interactions, have not progressed as initially planned mainly due to redeployment of staff covering Covid-19 tasks. A Change Management plan has now been drafted and is ready to go out for consultation with staff, feedback will be considered and changes agreed before being implemented. (GSP20-22.Strat-4.5a-c)

Service Level Outcomes - successes

- 4.7 There was a service plan action to approve high level Council Equality Outcomes for 2021-2025. These outcomes, which help the Council meet its statutory equality duties, were approved at the Corporate Committee on 30th November 2021 (para 15 of the minute refers). (GSP20-22.Serv-5.3)
Ongoing monitoring of these high level outcomes will be incorporated in the performance reporting cycle, while further work will be undertaken within the Equality and Diversity Corporate Advisory Forum to define and review specific actions relating to protected groupings.

Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

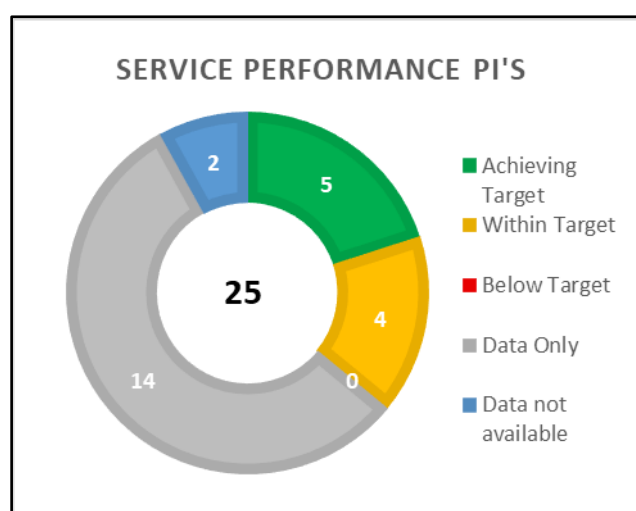
- 4.8 Progress with the development of Council Benefits e-forms continues to be limited due to ongoing workload pressures. Initial development of the e-forms has begun, however further progress is dependent on ICT resources which continue to be diverted during the Covid-19 response. The completion of the e-forms remains a service level priority and has been carried forward into the 2022/23 service plan as part of delivering efficiency savings through increased use of Council online self-service and e-forms. (GSP20-22.Serv-5.1a)
- 4.9 Training of staff on new Customer Complaints policy and process is continuing. Complaints training completed for Environmental and Commercial and Housing and Property Services which receive the largest volume of complaints as frontline services. Dates have been agreed for Social Work services. E-learning project plan agreement signed and development planning underway for completion May 2022. (GSP20-22.Serv-5.2b)
- 4.10 Review of Business Continuity post undertaken and agreed that the Council's risk management process is to sit within Internal Audit management function. Business Continuity post now advertised and plan established for risk management processes. (GSP20-22.Serv-5.5)
- 4.11 Installation of the hybrid system for conducting and broadcasting Service Committee meetings has slipped from the initial timescale, however the system has now been installed with tests carried out in April / May 2022. The first live committee where the hybrid system will be used is in June 2022. (GPS20-22.Serv-5.4a)
- 4.12 The increase of services using SharePoint as their primary document management system has not progressed in 2021/22. The Customer Development Manager has been appointed and will oversee the action, however resources are currently being diverted to engage in Covid-19 humanitarian assistance calls. The action remains a long term service priority as part of improving records management as well as bringing benefits with homeworking and remote access to documents. (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 Initial publication of 2020/21 Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators in February 2022 will be refreshed in early June. The full suite can be viewed within the Background Papers section of this report. Published indicators for this service have been incorporated within the relevant section of this report depending on whether results are used evidence progress against strategic, service plan or service performance priorities.
- 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 financial impact of Covid-19 and the general increasing cost of living can be reflected in the rising demand on the Council Benefits and Money Advice Moray teams. Both teams have continued to work 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 were still available to those in need. Many people that had never claimed benefits or sought money advice before have found themselves in difficult financial circumstances and contacted services for the first time. Additional support funds such as Self-Isolation grants and Family Pandemic Payments, have seen high demand throughout 2021/22.
- 5.5 Money Advice Moray have assisted in securing clients an estimated £700,000 in welfare benefits during 2021/22. The actual number of welfare appeals are down on previous years, this is due to a combination of issues including delays in initial applications with the DWP, delays in GP supporting evidence and changes from face to face assessments to telephone. The team also assess and provide monetary payments for the Flexible Food Fund. The fund was enhanced in early 2022 to incorporate a contribution towards fuel costs, this has since seen a significant increase in applications over quarter 4 with 1,155 applications received and £247,980 awarded. The amount of award paid is dependent on the number of people in a household and ranges from

£80 per single adult household to £530 per couple with five children.
(Indicators ENVDV271 and 280)

- 5.6 In addition to the Flexible Food Fund the Council have administered pandemic support funds through Self-Isolation Support Grants and Family Pandemic payments. Over £1.2 million has been distributed through both streams in 2021/22. Over 800 grants of £500 to support low income workers who are asked to self-isolate by Test and Protect have been awarded, with a total of £418,550 paid. The grant remains live with the standard payments reducing to £225.00 from the 1st May. Family Pandemic payments are based on children in receipt of free school meals, with qualifying families receiving quarterly payments of £160. On average Moray have 1,400 children receiving free school meals, with over £810k having been allocated to families through the Family Pandemic fund in 2021/22. (Indicators ENVDV283 and CPS074 / CPS070)
- 5.7 For the second year in a row there has been a notable increase in applications for Scottish Welfare Funds. In 2021/22 Scottish Welfare Fund (Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants) payments increased by £156,800 from the previous year to £635,739. The percentage of application awards has remained around 60%. (Indicators ENVDV281 and 281a)
- 5.8 The Housing benefit processing performance exceeded targets in the period to March 2022. The average processing time for new housing benefit claims was 20.2 days against a target of 21 days, while change of circumstances in housing claims were processed in an average of 3.9 days against a target of 6 days. (Indicators CPS011 and 012)
- 5.9 Committee Services issued agendas on time to 94% (49 out of 52) of committees during 2021/22, exceeding the 85% target. In addition to service committees a further 94 agendas were issued by the team, including 40 meetings which the service also clerked. (Indicator CS001)

Operational Indicators – challenges and actions to support

- 5.10 Nothing to report

6. OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA

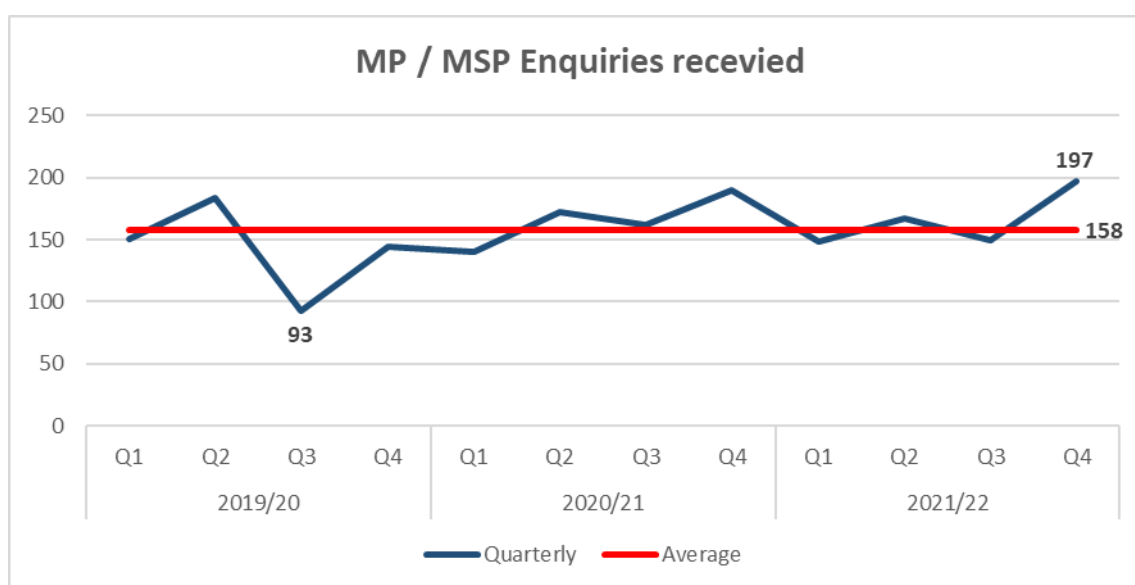
Complaints & MP/MSP Enquiries

- 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 Three complaints were received during the second half of 2021/22, with a total of 10 received over the full year. Two of the three complaints received were closed, both at frontline stage and both not upheld. The average time taken to resolve frontline complaints was 1 working day, well within the 5 working day timescale. A recent review of the complaints structure has been completed and will see welfare and benefits complaints recording move from Financial Services to Governance, Strategy and Performance, aligning with

the council structure. As a result the number of complaints reported through Governance, Strategy and Performance will likely increase from 2022/23.

6.3 Ten MP/MSP enquiries were received and closed during the second half of 2021/22 for Governance, Strategy and Performance. On average MP/MSP enquiries took eight days to be resolved.

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 2019/20.



On average each quarter the Council respond to 158 enquiries, this reporting quarter 197 enquiries were received and resolved, the highest number over the last three years. Almost 75% of enquiries are directed to Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure, which includes services such as Housing, Environmental Health and Roads Maintenance. Education and Social Care received 20% of enquiries followed by Corporate Services (Legal, Finance and Human Resources) with 6%.

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 Tracey Sutherland, 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 during 2021/22, with continuing changes to workloads in prioritising the council response to the pandemic. As a result there is some slippage against strategic and service level actions however overall, delivery of the Service Plan is 80% complete. These actions have been taken forward into the 2022/23 Service Plan.

Author of Report: Neil Stables, Research & Information Officer
Background Papers: [Service Plan Actions](#)
[LGBF Indicators](#)
[Service Performance Indicators](#)
[Service Complaints](#)
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