



Corporate Committee

Tuesday, 11 June 2024

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, 11 June 2024 at 09:30.**

BUSINESS

1. **Sederunt**
2. **Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests ***
3. **Resolution**

Consider, and if so decide, adopt the following resolution:
"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 16 and 17 of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act."
4. **Minutes of meeting of 23 April 2024** **7 - 16**
5. **Written Questions ****
6. **Performance Report (HR ICT and OD) Period to March 2024** **17 - 24**

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development)
7. **Performance Report (Governance, Strategy and Performance) Period to March 2024** **25 - 32**

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development)

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|-----|---|--------------|
| 8. | Human Resources ICT and Organisational Development and Governance Strategy and Performance Service Plans 2023-2024 | 33 - 56 |
| | Report by Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) | |
| 9. | Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2022-23 and 2021-22 Results | 57 - 86 |
| | Report by Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) | |
| 10. | Workforce Working Group | 87 - 90 |
| | Report by Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) | |
| 11. | Performance Report (Financial Services) Period to March 2024 | 91 - 96 |
| | Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) | |
| 12. | Financial Services Service Plan 2024-25 | 97 -
108 |
| | Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) | |
| 13. | Common Good Funds - Summary Expenditure for 2023-24 and Estimated Disposable Income for 2024-25 | 109 -
130 |
| | Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) | |
| 14. | Property Asset Management Appraisal | 131 -
140 |
| | Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) | |
| 15. | Information Reports - if called in | |

Item(s) which the Committee may wish to consider with the Press and Public excluded

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 16. | Voluntary Early Retirement and Severance Applications [Para 1] | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. Information relating to staffing matters; | |
| 17. | Common Good Property in Forres [Paras 4 and 9] | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9. Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority; • 4. Information relating to any applicant or recipient of any financial assistance provided by the Authority; | |

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.

Information Report - Community Asset Transfers Annual Report 141 - 160

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

Information Report - Community Rental Support Annual Review 161 - 170

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

Summary of Corporate Services Committee functions:

To regulate, manage and monitor the finances of the Council both capital and revenue; to deal with staffing policies and practices other than for teaching staff; to deal with equal opportunities policies and practices; to deal with procurement policies and priorities; to deal with all matters relating to the Council's duty to initiate, maintain and facilitate Community Planning; to ensure that the organisation, administrative and management processes of the Council are designed to make the most effective contribution to achieving the Council's objectives; to provide all central support services; to exercise the functions of the Council in connection with the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages; to deal with valuation and electoral registration matters.

GUIDANCE NOTES

- * **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.

MORAY COUNCIL

Corporate Committee

SEDERUNT

Councillor Scott Lawrence (Chair)
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 Draeyk van der Horn (Member)

Clerk Name:	Tracey Sutherland
Clerk Telephone:	07971 879268
Clerk Email:	committee.services@moray.gov.uk

Minute of Meeting of the Corporate Committee

Tuesday, 23 April 2024

Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

PRESENT

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, Councillor Draeyk van der Horn

APOLOGIES

Councillor Theresa Coull

IN ATTENDANCE

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Fiona Lees, External Consultant, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, Chief Financial Officer, Head of Housing and Property Services, Business Continuity and Risk Management Officer, Records and Heritage Manager, Asset Manager (Commercial Properties), Asset Management Co-ordinator and Democratic Services Manager.

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Bridget Mustard.

2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests

In terms of Standing Order 21 and 23 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.

In terms of transparency, Councillor Robertson confirmed that in terms of Item 9 on the agenda she is a trustee of the Moray Supports Migrants and Refugees but did not think that it would preclude her from taking part in the consideration but would remove herself from the meeting if felt necessary at that point.

3. Resolution

The meeting resolved that in terms of 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 14 - 16 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class.

Para number of the minute	Para Number of Schedule 7a
15	<p>4 Information relating to any applicant or recipient of any financial assistance provided by the Authority</p> <p>9 Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority</p>
16	<p>4 Information relating to any applicant or recipient of any financial assistance provided by the Authority</p> <p>9 Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority</p>
17	<p>6 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person(s)</p> <p>8 and 9 Information on proposed terms and/or expenditure to be incurred by the Authority</p>

4. Minute of meeting dated 30 January 2024

The minutes of the Corporate Committee on 30 January 2024 were submitted and approved.

5. Written Questions

The meeting noted that the following written question submitted by Councillor Harris and the Council's response thereto:

In the allocation of Ward Budgets for 2023/2024, Council agreed that the main options for potential expenditure is identified by members based on their local knowledge and understanding of minor works/concerns in their ward.

With this in mind, as we move towards the end of the financial year, can the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) provide a breakdown of spending of these funds across each Ward, with information on specific allocations to groups or individuals. Can the CFO also confirm that if monies are not fully spent, that they will not be carried forward into the next financial year?

RESPONSE

Ward 1

Sandbags £1,120

Grit bins £720

Speyside Community Carshare scheme £4,960

Grants to schools £8,200 (theatre outings)

Ward 2

Portknockie Paddling pool £3,000
Cullen Men's Shed £550
Three Kings Cullen Assoc – £2,200 (public toilet, residential centre)
Deskford and District CC £1,200
Grange Community Assoc £1,200
Longmore Community Hall £1,200
Keith Men's Shed £550
Keith Christmas lights £500
Keith Community bus £500
Portknockie community association £1,200
Rothiemay public hall £1,200
Strathisla pipe band £500

Ward 3

Buckie HS - £5,000, spend to be agreed with 3 ward members
Buckie Community Council £5,000 (traffic activated speed cameras at Arradoul and Slackhead)
CCTV at Buckie harbour £5,000

Ward 4

Garmouth & Kingston CC – equipment for grass cutting at playing field £7,601.89
Portgordon Community Trust £1,990.
Lennox Community Council £828
Mosstodloch Parent Group £1,500
Lhanbryde Primary School Parent Council £1,540
Milnes Primary School Parent Council £1,540

Ward 5

Hopeman Path Project £1,794.18
Lossiemouth CC £8,118.51 renew lights in square, upgrade lights in public convenience
Burghead Amenities Assoc £3,636 create outdoor gym
Action Marine Park £1,451,31

Ward 6

Heartstone £2,250
Elgin BID £2,500
Bishopmill Mutual Improvement Assoc. £1,899
Elgin Allotment Assoc £5,250
Elgin Men's Shed £1,700
Elgin Car Parking £1,401

Ward 7

Heartstone £2,250
Elgin BID £2,500
Elgin Allotment Assoc £5,250
Elgin Men's Shed £1,700
Elgin Community Council £3,300 (New Elgin community space project)

Ward 8

Dyke Community Council £2,000 flashing safety speed lights
Findhorn & Kinloss CC £2,000 window replacements
Finderne CC £2,000 wall repairs at village hall
Forres Area Forum £500 maps for tourists

Forres Heritage Trust £4,250 painting restoration
Forres Osprey Bus £4,250 EV Charging Point

All budgets have been fully spent.

6. Best Value Action Plan

The meeting had before it a report by the Chief Executive, noting the external recommendations in relation to Best Value and the output of self-assessment exercises; to seek agreement on a refreshed Best Value Action plan for the Council.

The Committee joined the Council Leader in thanking Officers and Members for the collaborative work that had gone into producing the plan and that a special meeting of Moray Council will be convened in early June to consider the report Accounts Commission findings.

Following consideration the Committee unanimously agreed:

- i) to note the consolidated list of Improvement Actions (attached as Appendix 1) which brings together recommendations from a number of sources in relation to the Council's progress in achieving its Best Value duty;
- ii) to note the output from the Council Wide Strategic Self-Assessment of Performance by both Councillors and Officers attached as Appendix 2;
- iii) the Best Value Action Plan (attached as Appendix 3) which sets out the Council's priorities for the next 3 years to enable it meets Best Value duty;
- iv) the format of the Council wide Strategic Self-Assessment of Performance for the future, with assessments being undertaken annually; and
- v) that the Best Value Action Plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis and reviewed annually by this Committee based on the Self-Assessment.

7. Improvement and Modernisation Programme

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informing Committee of the progress made in developing the projects set out in the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme (IMP).

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed to:

- i) note progress on the projects set out in the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme (IMP); and
- ii) note that a report will be considered by the Special Moray Council on 24 April 2024 on the consolidation of projects in the IMP programme into an updated programme of transformation work sitting within the initial iteration of a new Transformation Strategy

8. Risk Management and Business Continuity Policies

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) seeking approval of the updated Risk Management Policy and Business Continuity Policy for the Council.

Following consideration, the Council unanimously agreed to approve:

- i) the updated Risk Management Policy in Appendix 1; and
- ii) the updated Business Continuity Policy in Appendix 2.

9. Corporate Risk Register

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) providing the Committee with an update on the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

Councillor Robertson moved to have a quarterly overview of the Corporate Risk Register and a full report every 6 months.

Following consideration and there being no one otherwise minded, the Committee unanimously agreed to:

- i) approve the updated Corporate Risk Register dated March 2024 attached as Appendix 1; and
- ii) receive quarterly overview reports and 6 monthly full update reports of the Corporate Risk Register.

10. Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) presenting the Council's mainstreaming report and provide an update on progress against published equality outcomes.

Following consideration the Committee unanimously agreed to:

- i) approve the Council's Mainstreaming report; and
- ii) note the progress made against the Council's Equality Outcomes.

11. Moray Draft British Sign Language Plan 2024-2030

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) providing an update on progress against the Moray British Sign Language Plan 2018-2024 and present the draft Moray British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2024-2030.

Following consideration the Committee unanimously agreed to:

- i) note the progress made against the Moray British Sign Language Plan (BSL) 2018-24; and
- ii) approve the draft Moray British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2024-2030 for consultation.

12. Closed Circuit Television Policy

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) requesting Committee to approve a new Council wide Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Policy.

Councillor van der Horn raised concerns about the wide use of CCTV equipment produced by Hikvision which is a Chinese state owned surveillance technology and requested that the Council look at phasing out the use of the technology manufactured by Hikvision and any other Chinese state owned technology company for the use of surveillance.

In response the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance stated that the Council are required to have a policy which covers CCTV surveillance in its buildings to make sure it is used proportionately and that is the issue covered within the report on the agenda.

CCTV in public spaces was recently procured alongside Police Scotland and Hikvision equipment was installed by the successful contractor.

He further added that whilst the camera manufacturing company is partly owned by the Chinese government and Hikvision equipment is used in settings which people have issues with, it is used widely across the public sector and there is no ban.

The wider issues for this Committee, although not raised in the report before you are:

- Procurement: ethical issues and how these can be enforced through procurement legislation.
- Data security issues: whether there are any security risks in using equipment from this company.

He further stated that there were no plans to bring a report forward to Committee but should Councillor van der Horn wish, he could submit a Notice of Motion to a future meeting of the Committee and request a report on this issue.

Councillor Macrae confirmed that he would be happy to support Councillor van der Horn in his request to phase out the use of CCTV provided by Hikvision and would be a sensible approach to look at ethical procurement when purchasing this kind of systems in the future.

The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that a commitment was made at a previous meeting to look at the extent the Council could procure ethically but expressed caution as the Council does include at the moment ethical issues as part of the quality checks but there is a fairly limited method of checking which can be done particularly if it involves a long supply chain. She further reminded members that the next Procurement Strategy will detail specific issues of ethical procurement

and how the Council can best deal with those. The Strategy will be presented to Committee in September 2024.

The Chief Executive added that it would be important for Officers to consider what the issues are around procurement and data security and if there is a need to move from one system to another, what programme would need to be put in place and report back to Committee accordingly with the urgency of the report back dependent of the issues identified.

Councillor van der Horn confirmed he was happy to wait for Officers to look at the issues and report back as part of the Procurement Strategy in September or before if the need arises.

Following further consideration the Committee, unanimously agreed to approve the new CCTV Policy as set out in Appendix 1 and summarised in Section 4 of the report.

13. Workforce Working Group

The meeting had before it, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asking the Committee to consider and approve the terms of reference for the Workforce Working Group for an initial period of 4 months to oversee and maintain the momentum on the proposed work plan.

Following consideration the Committee unanimously agreed to approve the terms of reference for the Workforce Working Group (Appendix1)

It was further agreed that Group Leaders would notify the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) of their nominations for the group.

14. Health and Safety Annual Report 2023

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asking the Committee to consider and note the annual Health and Safety report and approve the progress noted and proposed future actions.

Concern was raised by a number of Councillors regarding the increasing figures regarding violence and aggression within the Schools.

The Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) noted that the figures quoted in the report are for the year 2023 and the report does not contain the figures since the introduction of various improvement actions as reported to Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee, and it is hoped that the actions implemented will have had a positive affect on the figures for 2024.

Following further lengthy consideration, the Committee unanimously 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 2024.

15. Common Good Site, Forres [Paras 4 and 9]

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) inviting the Committee to review the decision in relation to an application to vary lease terms in respect of Common Good Land in Forres.

Councillor McBain moved to accept option A2 as set out in Paragraph 7.2 and B1 as set out in paragraph 7.6. This was seconded by Councillor Robertson.

Councillor Van Der Horn, seconded by Councillor Leadbitter proposed accepting the recommendations as stated in the report.

On the division there voted:

For the Motion (9)	Councillors McBain, Robertson, Cowe, Divers, Dunbar, Keith, Macrae, Mustard and Ross
For the Amendment (3)	Councillors Van Der Horn, Leadbitter and Morrison
Abstention (2)	Councillors Fernandes and Stuart

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

- i) Option A2 as set out in paragraph 7.2 of this report (to limit the rent payable for a period of 3 years as set out in paragraph 5.1 (i) with any future rebates to be dealt with under the Council's existing arrangements for considering limited life Community Rent Rebates; and
- ii) reject the request to remove the Council's option to resume possession.

16. Suspension of Standing Orders

In terms of Standing Order 85 the Chair sought permission from the Committee to suspend Standing Order 77 and continue the meeting after 12.45pm.

This was unanimously agreed.

17. Common Good Asset in Buckie [Paras 4 and 9]

The meeting had before it, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) inviting the Committee to consider an application for the renewal of a limited life community rent rebate in respect of a Common Good property in Buckie.

Following consideration the Committee unanimously agreed to approve the application as set out in paragraph 5.1 of this report (to renew the company's current 100% rent rebate of £2,700 per annum for the period 15 May 2024 to 14 May 2027).

18. Coularbank Industrial Estate, Lossiemouth [Paras 6, 8 and 9]

The meeting had before it, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asking the Committee to approve terms for the sale of the Council's interest in the building at Coularbank Industrial Estate, Lossiemouth as detailed in paragraph 4 and main terms for a 99 year ground lease of the site.

Following consideration the Committee, unanimously agreed to:

- i) approve the proposals as detailed in section 5 of this report; and
authorise the Asset Manager (Commercial Properties) and the Legal
- ii) Services Manager to finalise the detailed terms and conditions and conclude the transaction.



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 11 JUNE 2024

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (HUMAN RESOURCES, INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2024

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 2024.
- 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 2024; and**
- (ii) notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

3. BACKGROUND

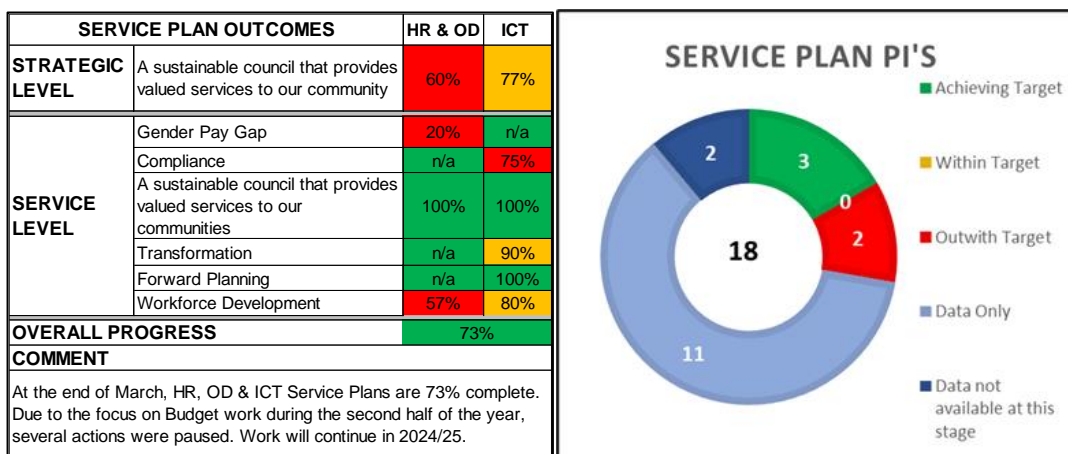
- 3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Moray Council approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of minute refers).

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 2022/23, initially published in February 2024, will be refreshed in June. The full suite can be viewed via the [LGBF Dashboard](#). In total, there were four indicators covering Human Resources, ICT and Organisational Development published, two indicators ranked in the top 16 local authorities when compared nationally and two indicators ranked in the top 4 when compared in our family group of 8 local authorities. Overall, results improved from previous year performance for one indicator and worsened for three. Published indicators for this service have been incorporated within the relevant section of this report depending on whether used to evidence progress against strategic, service plan or service performance priorities. 2023/24 LGBF data will be available early 2025.

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 A review of Transform is complete with Change Management policies and guidance updated to accommodate the adoption of the No Compulsory Redundancies principle. Both have been used successfully as part of the 2024/25 Budget review. (Action HR&OD23-24.Strat 4.2)

4.5 The council’s digital approach has expanded this year with 105 services now available online, ranging from school and nursery registrations, benefits applications and corporate complaints forms. At the end of March, 149k, logins had been recorded. It is anticipated this will continue to increase as digital services are promoted and developed. (Action ICT23-24.Strat.4.1a, PIs ICT001, ICT002)

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

4.6 To allow resources to prioritise budget review activities, several HR & OD actions were paused during the second half of 2023/24. Progress has been made during quarter 4 around leadership development and recruitment and retention however work to establish trainee and apprentice programmes remains on hold due to the investment required and the Council’s financial position. This is being kept under review for reactivation when possible. All areas will continue out with original target timescales in 2024/25. (Action HR&OD23-24 Strat.4.1, 4.3 and 4.4)

- 4.7 Following a successful pilot with third sector organisations, a Personal Data Store (PDS) that will enhance the value of council data is now live. Next stages of this project will be led by Health and Social Care Moray. Workshops to take this forward are planned, with ICT providing technical support as required. (Action ICT23-24.Strat.4.2)

Service Level Outcomes – successes

- 4.8 Based on priorities, actions to empower and enable the workforce have been delivered. Skills for Change workshops are a core part of the training calendar while the review of Transform has provided more choice and opportunity for employees affected by budget savings proposals. Team Talks have also been amended to support the next stages of the process and recommendations from the Employee Survey, reported at a meeting of this committee on 30 January 2024 (para 12 of the Minute refers) are being taken forward. Work to deliver the ongoing wider requirements for an adaptable and flexible workforce will continue. (Action HR&OD23-24.Serv 5.1.1)
- 4.9 Planned work to support the implementation of the council's Health and Work policy is complete. Training sessions covering both Health and Work and Mental Health First Aid featured in the corporate training calendar and HR Advisors continue to support managers in dealing with absence cases. Due to cessation of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund the Mental Health First Aid course will not be offered through Moray College during 2024/25 although limited provision may be required to be bought in. Work will continue in 2024/25. (Action HR&OD23-24.Serv 5.1.2)
- 4.10 Support for the Smarter Working Project is complete with approximately 81% of staff that use ICT, now utilising mobile devices. Connectivity is available for NHS staff within council offices and WiFi access in schools extended. Preparatory work for Phase 2 is now well underway. (Action ICT23-24.Serv 5.2, PI ICT004)
- 4.11 Throughout the reporting year, ICT have worked with services and external organisations to identify and plan the replacement of corporate systems. Work around Care First is ongoing while a pilot Sharepoint 365 site was successfully built and tested with recommendations this be adopted for the Common Data Environment. Replacement of a new Learning Management System is progressing with procurement due to complete by the end of June 2024. (Action ICT23-24.Serv 5.4)

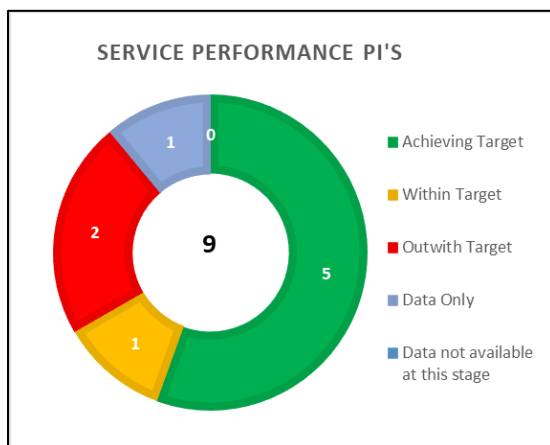
Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.12 Following a pause due to staff absence and budget priorities, work to address the Gender Pay Gap has recommenced with influencing factors identified and included within the Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report, presented to a meeting of this committee on 23 April 2024 (item 9 of the Agenda refers). Latest figures show the Gender Pay Gap has fallen to 5.3%, assisted by the regrading of Social Care Assistants and the increase in the Scottish Living Wage, however Moray remains in the lowest quartile against a Scottish average of 2.5%. Work will continue to address this position in 2024/25. (Action HR&OD23-24.Serv 5.2 PI CORP3c)

- 4.13 Cyber Resilience work is ongoing with summaries received on a daily basis from the Scottish Cyber Co-ordination Centre and discussions ongoing around incident response and planning. Following the Phishing simulation in quarter 3, an online training module was launched in February. Although uptake was 48%, it is anticipated this will increase over the next few months with further training modules planned around passwords, secure remote working and malicious software. (Action ICT23-24.Serv 5.1, PI ICT003)
- 4.14 At the end of March, the move to M365 is reported as 90% complete with three quarters of all users and shared mailboxes migrated and 70% of all devices with access. Configuration for the final deployment is well underway and will be progressed as business-as-usual work by the team. (Action ICT23-24 Serv 5.3, PI ICT005)
- 4.15 Due to long term absence and other priorities, it has not been possible to undertake all ERDPs within the service, however, a high proportion are complete within ICT. Any outstanding will be arranged for 2024/25. (Action HR&OD23-24.Serv 5.3, PI ERDP.HROD3, Action ICT23-24.Serv 5.5, ERDP.ICT3)
- 4.16 Sickness absence levels across the Council have increased in 2022/23. In particular, absence amongst teaching staff has increased to 7.9 days per full time equivalent (FTE), above both the Scottish average of 6.8 days per FTE, and the family group average of 7.4 days per FTE. As a result, performance ranking has moved to the lowest quartile nationally but maintains a mid-ranking against family group comparator authorities. A worsening trend has been seen nationally with absence levels across Scotland now higher than pre-pandemic levels and the highest recorded since benchmarking began. Contributory factors include treatment delays, increasing mental health issues and recruitment challenges. National policy changes as well as support for wellbeing initiatives continue in response to these significant challenges. (PIs CORP6a, CORP6b)

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 Incidents of violence and aggression against Moray Council employees continue to exceed target. Data from three sources provide a total of 3,757 incidents, an increase of 65% from 2022/23. Table 1 shows Education accounted for most of this increase. The process of reporting an incident within Education has improved with an online form allowing greater opportunity for analysis of areas requiring support. A trauma informed approach that is solution oriented has been agreed with mandatory training for all staff to continue the vision of being nurturing and inclusive. In terms of ASN and behaviour, specialist provision is currently being sought with a view to increasing this as part of a change management plan. (PI HROD006)

Table 1:

		Education	Corporate	Care Facility	Total
2022/23	Q1	296	5	81	382
	Q2	241	0	55	296
	Q3	582	6	99	687
	Q4	822	21	71	914
	Total	1941	32	306	2279
2023/24	Q1	959	7	90	1056
	Q2	716	3	90	809
	Q3	830	4	81	915
	Q4	875	2	100	977
	Total	3380	16	361	3757

5.5 Working days lost due to industrial injury/accident can fluctuate considerably due to varying circumstances. Often only one case can contribute to a significant increase. This was evident during the second half of the year with the majority of the days lost relating to one absence. (PI HROD007)

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 reporting period, HR, ICT and OD has received no complaints but closed 1 investigative complaint. Target timescales were not met due to delays with correspondence. Following investigations, this complaint was not upheld.
- 6.3 Between October and March, no MP/MSP enquiries were received by HR, ICT and OD.

Other Performance (not included in the Service Plan)

- 6.4 Nothing to report.

Case Studies

- 6.5 To ensure access to clear and up to date workforce information, data dashboards were re-developed by HR and ICT. Following positive feedback, these are now available at Service level with further dashboards, featuring other key management related information, being piloted.

Consultation and Engagement

- 6.6 Engagement around budget related work and workforce implications has continued during quarter 4 with consultations and meetings taking place with Trade Union/Officer Groups and the Joint Consultative Committee. Regular meetings, providing advice and support, have also been held with managers and staff affected.

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

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None

(i) Consultations

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

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 At the end of March 2024, progress of the Human Resources, ICT and Organisational Development Service Plan is 73% complete. Several actions are out with original target timescales due to the focus on budget related work during the second half of the year. Work will continue in 2024/25.

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-1656699058-193



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 11 JUNE 2024

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2024

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 2024.

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 2024; and**
- (ii) notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

3. BACKGROUND

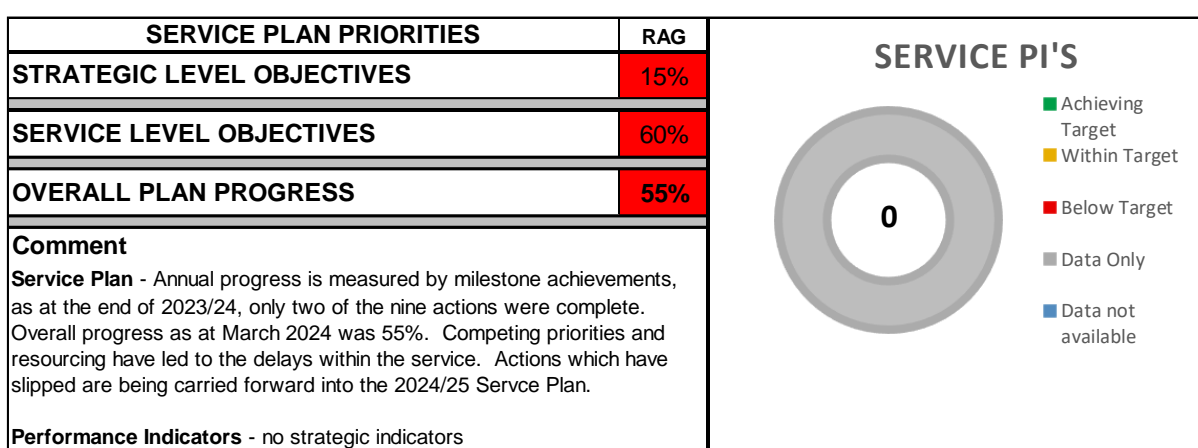
3.1 The Moray Council approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services on 7 August 2019 (para 5 of minute refers) which provides for twice yearly reports to committee on service performance.

3.2 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.

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 through 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 2022/23, initially published in February 2024, will be refreshed in June. The full suite can be viewed via the [LGBF Dashboard](#). In total, there were five indicators covering corporate services published, just one indicator ranked in the top 16 local authorities when compared nationally and none in the top 4 when compared in our family group of 8 local authorities, with most results achieving a mid-range ranking. Overall, indicators results have improved to a greater extent than results worsened when compared to previous year performance. Published indicators for this service have been incorporated within the relevant section of this report depending on whether used to evidence progress against strategic, service plan or service performance priorities. 2023/24 LGBF data will be available early 2025.
- 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 – challenges and actions to support

- 4.4 Progress on implementing a framework for Continuous Improvement across council services has not progressed as planned. Process around best value activity / self-assessment oversight to be embedded in existing routine reporting arrangements, but limited progress made due to competing council priorities such as corporate budgeting activities, which have impacted on the resources available. The action will be carried forward to 2024/25. (GSP STRATEGIC 1.1)

Service Level Outcomes - successes

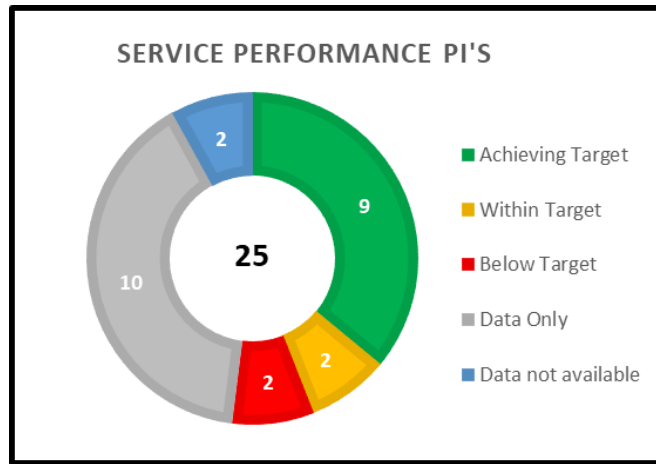
- 4.5 Options for centralising financial assessments within Benefits Team have been fully explored, including a scoping exercise which involved surveying other Scottish local authorities. The next step is to move forward with discussions and planning with stakeholders, where further work may take the form of a future transformation project. (GSP 2023-24 DTE 1.3)
- 4.6 The transfer of burial grounds administration to Lands and Parks Service has been completed. Full cost recovery of burials from 1 April 2024 was agreed at Full Council on 27 March 2024 (item 4 of the agenda), including the cost of a burials administrative clerk. The member of staff will move permanently to Lands and Parks Service by 1 April 2025, following a transfer period from Registrars. (GSP 2023-24 DTE 1.4)

Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.7 Investigation and development of potential digital assistant options and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the Contact Centre has not progressed due to the complexity and resourcing for any solution. This action will be continued into 2024/25 and be incorporated into a new action to Increase Digital Solutions. (GSP 2023-24 DTE 1.1)
- 4.8 The development of a Benefits e-form has progressed, with the first draft of the e-form reviewed and discussions with IT continuing. Further progress is reliant on the pace of IT's development work in conjunction with their other priorities. Work will continue into 2024/25, with a reviewed completion date for the development of the e-form by August 2024. (GPS 2023-24 DTE 1.2)
- 4.9 Renewal of the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) Service Level Agreement (SLA) is well progressed. Review of CAB and in-house money advice performance and scoping of terms of SLA complete. As the scope of the new SLA will include the provision of independent housing advice being delivered by CAB, it has been necessary to involve Housing Services in further development. This has slightly delayed the completion of the SLA, however it is expected that a draft SLA will be reported to members in June 2024. (GSP 2023-24 IG 1.1)
- 4.10 Approval of Council Standing Orders was approved at Full Council on the 27 March 2024 (item 5 of the agenda). Work is progressing on the next tranche of 2nd tier of governance documents, and it is planned for these to be presented to Full Council in May 2024 for agreement. The review of documents is an ongoing process and will continue as part of a 2024/25 Service Plan. (GSP 2023-24 IG 1.2)
- 4.11 The finalising of Delivery Frameworks and reporting arrangements following review of Local Outcome Improvement Partnership (LOIP) has not progressed this reporting year. Review of the LOIP is ongoing with discussion at Community Planning Officers Group (CPOG) and Community Planning Borad (CPB) around next steps. The first of four Community Planning Partnership (CPP) development sessions have been complete, however due to challenges in resourcing, the second session was postponed. Progress updates for 2023/24 will take the form of Lead Officer summaries. The action will be carried forward to the 2024/25 Service Plan. (GSP 2023-24 PF 1.1)

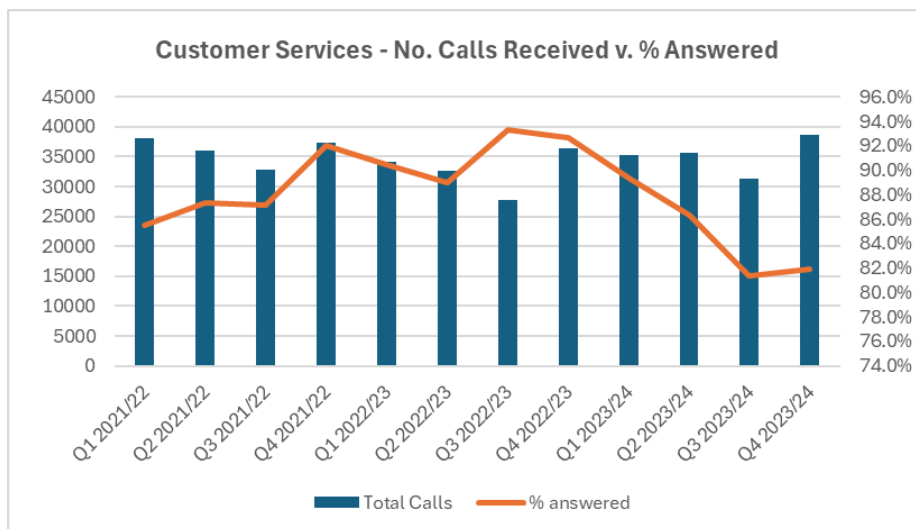
5. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

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



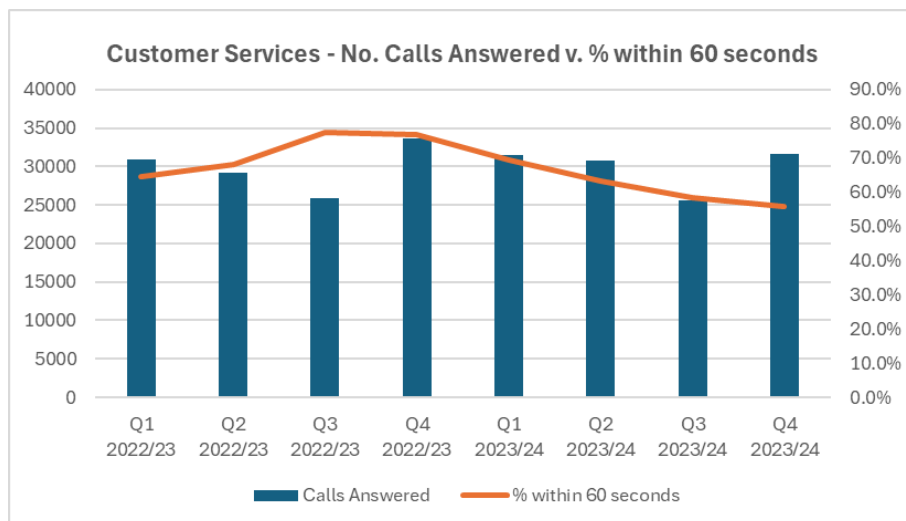
Operational Indicators - challenges

5.3 Customer Services Call Centre has noted an increase in call volume over the reporting year compared to last year. A combination of increased customer calls and a reduction in call handling staff has resulted in a decrease of calls being answered. Over the last two reporting quarters, the percentage of calls answered has dropped well below the 93% target, with 81.9% being answered in quarter 4. The graph below shows the call volume and answer rates over the last 3 years.



Some of the increase in call volume can be attributed to a shift in customers from online and email back to telephone, with 1,000 less emails received during quarter 4 this year compared to last year - equivalent to a 4% drop. While in contrast the volume of calls has increased 14% over the same period, which represented almost 5,000 more calls. It should be noted that further investigation shows that the number of calls abandoned has increased by 138% this reporting quarter compared to the same quarter in 2022/23, so a significant number of calls will likely be repeat callers. (PI CPS058)

5.4 The increase in call volumes and reduced staffing has also impacted the rate of calls answered within the 60 second target. The graph below shows the decline in the percentage of answered calls within 60 seconds.



Over the reporting year, no quarter period achieved the 75% target of calls being answered within 60 seconds, with the 55.8% of calls answered within 60 seconds in quarter 4. Further analysis of call data showed that the average answer delay increased by 30 seconds on the previous quarter, and by 83 seconds on the same time period last year. (PI CPS058a)

Operational indicators – challenges and actions to support

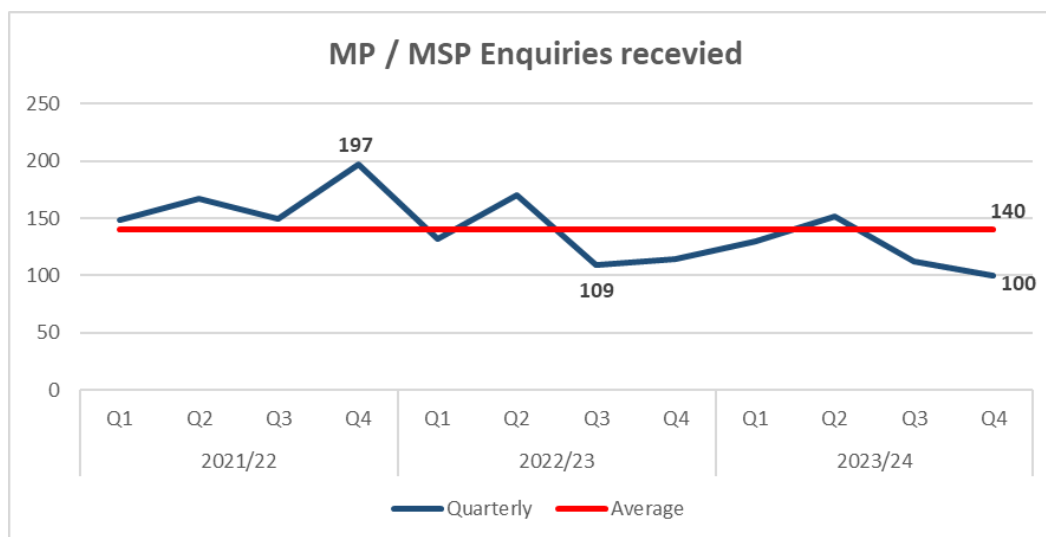
- 5.5 As at March 2023, the proportion of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Funding spent improved to 79.8%, below both national and family group averages, ranking 28 of 32 local authorities. Discretionary Housing Payments are administered by Councils to households who require financial assistance towards their housing costs and are an important tool to prevent homelessness and help struggling households to sustain tenancies. The national budget available to DHP has increased significantly since 2019/20 however there has been a reduction in the overall proportion of the budget spent, likely due to the timing of the provision of additional allocation and pandemic related delays in processing. The service continues to monitor to payments made.

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 A total of nine complaints were received during the second half of 2023/24, with eight complaints closed. All complaints were resolved at Frontline stage. Four complaints were upheld and four were not upheld. Half the complaints were resolved within the 5 working day target timescale, with the overall average time taken to respond to complaints being 6 days. The four complaints upheld all related to communication issues, including delay in responding to initial enquiry, tone of advisor when speaking to customer and incorrect information given to a complainant. All were acknowledged with an apology and reinforcement action dually taken.

- 6.3 Four MP/MSP enquiries were received during the second half of 2023/24 for Governance, Strategy and Performance. Over the full year the service received nine MP/MSP enquiries, all were responded to and closed.
- 6.4 Across the council, over the last three years the Council have dealt with 1,680 non-statutory MP/MSP enquiries, in addition to over 1,600 statutory complaints received over a similar period, that are subject to the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP). The following graph shows the volume of enquiries received each quarter since quarter 1 2021/22.



On average each quarter the Council receive 140 enquiries. Over 80% of enquiries were directed to Economy, Environment and Finance. All enquiries follow a similar process to that of complaints in being formally logged and responded to.

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) 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 Caroline O'Connor, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 As at March 2024, overall progress against the service plan for 2023/24 was 55% complete. A number of actions have been subject to slippage due to lack of available resourcing and competing priorities. All outstanding actions will be carried forward to the 2024/25 Service Plan.

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

Ref:



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 11 JUNE 2024

SUBJECT: HUMAN RESOURCES, ICT AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE STRATEGY 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 2024-2025.
- 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 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 It should be noted that actions from the Best Value Action Plan agreed by the Corporate Committee on 23 April 2024 (item 5a of the Agenda refers) will be monitored and reported out with the Service Plan process.
- 3.3 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.

- 3.4 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 such as Public Sector Improvement Framework (PSIF) or other equivalent service improvement tool, 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.
- 3.5 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 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 milestone are provided.
- 3.6 A summary of progress is given below based on the annual reviews carried out for each of the service areas.
- 3.7 Reference is also made to the report to Moray Council on 28 February 2024 when the Council agreed the Corporate Plan for 2024-2029 and that the approach to delivery and performance management through service and strategic plans, which contain specific actions that support the delivery of priority areas in the new council corporate plan. This plan focusses on the period from April 2024 to April 2025.

2023/24 Updates

3.8 Human Resources, ICT and Organisational Development

Progress on planned work (success)

3.8.1 ICT

- digital approach has expanded this year with 105 services now available online, ranging from school and nursery registrations, benefits applications and corporate complaints forms
- the move to M365 is reported as 90% complete
- cyber resilience work including training
- connectivity is available for NHS staff within council offices and WiFi access in schools extended.

3.8.2 HR and OD

- review of Transform is complete with Change Management policies and guidance updated to accommodate the adoption of the No Compulsory Redundancies principle
- Smarter working project
- work to support the implementation of the council's Health and Work policy is complete
- Skills for Change workshops delivered in support of Transformation work

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

3.8.3 ICT

- it has not been possible to undertake all ERDPs within the service however a revised timetable has been put in place to ensure all remaining ERDPs are completed by the end of Q1.

3.8.4 HR and OD

- sickness absence levels across the Council have increased. This is a national trend but will be identified for action in the workforce plan and has been highlighted across services as an area for attention
- it has not been possible to undertake all ERDPs within the service and a revised timetable has been put in place to ensure all remaining ERDPs are completed by the end of Q1.
- incidents of violence and aggression against Moray Council employees continue to exceed target. There is specific ongoing work in place aimed at improving this, including the ASN review work.

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

3.8.5 ICT

- Cyber security – development and implementation of enhanced measures to manage cyber security and resilience risks including completion of the Cyber Resilience Action Plan.
- Digital development – development of the Council's approach to expanding the use of digital technology across services and to support efficiency and Transformation.

3.8.6 HR and OD

- Leadership development – programme of development established that ensures leaders are developed to lead the response to the challenging agenda so that the Council is prepared for the future and progressing improvement and transformation work.
- Recruitment – to ensure the Council attracts high calibre candidates and that services are well resourced to enable key corporate projects to be progressed and outcomes achieved.
- Support for change (including budget) and transformation – develop initiatives that prepare employees for change through encouraging flexibility, adaptability and are empowered and enabled to embrace change.

3.9 Strategy, Governance and Performance

3.9.1 **Progress on planned work (success)**

- Tendering and initial roll out of the Corporate printing/copying contract.
- Completion of a business case for a digital assistant for the contact centre.

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

- The Benefits eform has been a recurring action for the past 3 years. It proven more complicated than originally anticipated due to involvement of a number of sections. Good progress has been made and it is expected that it will be brought to a conclusion this coming year.
- The transfer of burial ground administration from Registrars to Lands and Parks was not achieved due to staffing and budget pressures. It is expected that this action will complete in the coming year.
- The review of second tier governance documents has commenced but has slipped due to intervening corporate pressures.
- The service level agreement for Moray Citizens Advice Bureau stalled due to budget setting issues which are linked to the funding.

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

- Governance improvements identified in the Council's Best Value Action plan including timely performance reporting and clarity on the function of Audit and Scrutiny Committee.
- Digital improvement and transformation projects identified in Transformation Strategy.
- Finalising a service level agreement with Moray Citizens Advice Bureau in conjunction with budget setting process.

Service Plans for 2024/25

- 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 beyond those previously reported to service committees 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.

However, there are a number of areas for development that have been identified where there are concerns about the availability of resources to deliver the required outcomes within an acceptable period of time. For example, leadership development, absence management, central capacity to support services and developments in ICT including the capacity for digital development that supports transformation. It may be necessary to report back to committee to consider resources or re-prioritisation of work to ensure adequate progress on these key priorities.

Workforce Planning takes place with service management teams and includes review of workforce data such as turnover and absence, identification of key posts for planning, recruitment issues and plans, training and development requirements in the context of council and service priorities. As a result, the following points are noted as issues for the services to address and are included in the service workforce plans.

HR, ICT&OD

- Ensure training and development opportunities support staff to improve their performance and do their jobs better.
- Staff employees to consider range of development opportunities including both formal and informal.
- Ensure workload issues are addressed to ensure sustainability and resilience.
- Ensure links with corporate priorities and transformation work are clear to teams.
- Apply LEAN processes across the service to help create capacity for value adding service development activities.

Governance Strategy and Policy

- Difficulty in recruiting suitable candidates for vacancies in professional posts, particularly acute within Legal Services
- Managing workload with planned and unplanned absence within small teams.
- Limited training budgets.
- Age profile of workforce giving longer term resilience issues.

It is also of note that the services are carefully prioritising work to reflect the restricted capacity of their teams. This is exacerbated by hard to fill vacancies, absence, and pressing operational work that cannot be re-prioritised (e.g. processing peaks of employee contractual work and payments; legal cases). Legal services have an arrangement with an external Legal provider to assist in accommodating work, however, this requires contract and case management activity to ensure it is as effective as possible.

(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 service priorities targeted for 2024/25. 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:

Ref: SPMAN-1108985784-949

HR & OD SERVICE PLAN

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: 39.95 FTE Budget: Capital £000 Budget: Revenue £000: £2.9M

3. What have we identified for improvement in 2024/25	What evidence did we use to identify this improvement? Please add benchmark information wherever available and relevant to the improvement.
Leadership Capacity and Development	Workforce and OD Strategy 2023-2026 BV Consolidated Action Plan 2024 Corporate Plan 2024-2029 Employee Survey 2023 Management of workforce implications linked to budget savings HR metrics Feedback from Trades Union Representatives and Managers Health & Safety Annual Report 2023
Workforce Planning and Change	
Organisational Development	
Recruitment and Retention	
Health and Well-being	
Gender Pay Gap	

HR & OD SERVICE PLAN

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) Strategic Framework: Financial, Workforce, Digital, Transformation Strategies. Performance Management Framework	Establish leadership development programme to address corporate and individual leadership needs.	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 e.g. distributive, collaborative and adaptive leadership skills that foster and enable a culture of transformation and change, innovation, strategic decision making. Range of leadership development activity in place across management tiers. Leaders developed to lead challenging agenda with feedback on positive impact made, measured by skills analysis surveys at key points to illustrate	Dec 2024	H/HR, ICT & OD / ODM	1

HR & OD SERVICE PLAN

			<p>development and appraisals with a 360 degree element to capture personal growth and impact</p> <p>Numbers of 1/2/3 tier managers trained and showing improvements in awareness of key learning points (measured through skills analysis survey)</p> <p>Employee survey question(s) on management impact to provide baseline and show improvement over time.</p>			
(CP) Strategic Framework: Financial, Workforce, Digital, Transformation Strategies. Performance Management Framework	Review and refresh recruitment and 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 and youth employment.	<p>Recruitment attracts high calibre candidates and council services are well resourced.</p> <p>Key corporate priorities and projects are appropriately resourced to ensure completion and achievement of objectives and outcomes.</p> <p>Un-resourced areas are flagged for consideration</p>	<p>Increased number of candidates 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 higher turnover –</p>	March 2025	HRM	1

HR & OD SERVICE PLAN

		with risks, issues and impacts noted.	<p>e.g. number of leavers within year 1 of employment in Education reduced.</p> <p>Reduced number of repeat adverts and reduction in time taken from advert to first day of employment Feedback of positive impact from managers through Personnel Forum.</p> <p>Number of career progression opportunities are increased.</p>			
(CP) Strategic Framework: Financial, Workforce, Digital, Transformation Strategies. Performance Management Framework	Have in place fair and competitive pay and conditions that are recognised and free of bias.	Assessment of gender pay gap and equality issues	<p>Actions developed and implemented to address issues identified.</p> <p>Improvement in Moray's Ranking for Local Government Benchmarking Framework PI CORP3c The gender pay gap (%) CORP3b % of the highest paid 5% employees who are women</p>	March 2025	HRM	2

HR & OD SERVICE PLAN

			including within Family Group. Increased number of applications and subsequent appointments from ethnic minority groups.			
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5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating (1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing, 5 for on hold)
Workforce Transformation and Change	Continue to use Transform approach to change management and relevant recruitment	Workforce change is managed in a structured and consistent way achieves the desired change and reduces the headcount where necessary in accordance with agreed policy approach	Reduced number of employee relations cases related to workforce change Reduction in headcount where required Improved feedback from Trades Unions representatives in relation to change management exercises	Mar 2025	H/HR	1
Organisational Development	Develop and implement initiatives to create a culture where employees are prepared for change. Encourage flexibility and adaptability to support employees to adapt to	Employees are empowered, prepared and enabled to embrace change.	Employee survey questions establish baseline for monitoring improvement on:	March 2025	ODM	1

HR & OD SERVICE PLAN

	new ways of working, including embedding digital skills and competence, to improve efficiency and levels of service.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact of training and development to support new ways of working - Levels of confidence in being supported to be flexible and adaptable - Levels of confidence in improved efficiency and levels of service achieved as a result of change <p>Positive feedback from change exercises</p>			
Communications and Engagement	Review and refresh communication and engagement approach that supports corporate and service specific priorities	Corporate vision and priorities are positively promoted in public communication and engagement activities including use of a range of platforms e.g. social media	<p>% of engagement levels increase for public and community-based consultations</p> <p>% of engagement levels increase for participatory budgeting exercises</p> <p>75% of employees aware of council priorities (employee survey question)</p> <p>Citizens engagement as measured by the Scottish Social</p>	March 2026	H/HR ODM	2

HR & OD SERVICE PLAN

			Attitudes Survey will increase			
Health and Wellbeing	Pro-actively support the health and well-being of employees through increased awareness of mental health	Absence is managed effectively and levels of absence are reduced efficiently and timeously	% of managers and employees trained in mental health first aid	March 2025	HRM ODM	2
	Review proactive measures to reduce sickness absence rates including Day One notification for focus on short term absence.		Reduction in number of days absence per employee			
	Ensure revised operational implementation of absence management procedures are applied by managers		CORP6a Sickness absence days per teacher reduced by 0.5 days per fte			
	Provide support for reducing incidents of violence and aggression in schools as set out in the agreed ASN action plan, working collaboratively with Trades Unions to identify specific actions to help address short term absence	Measures are deployed that support school-based staff to feel safe at work and feel equipped to manage challenging behaviour appropriately	CORP6b Sickness absence days (non-teacher) reduced by 0.5 days per fte	Dec 2024	H/HR&HRM	2
			Reduction in time taken to manage absence	Oct 2024	HRM/ODM	1
			Sickness absence due to incidents of challenging behaviour is reduced.			
Best Value Actions	Implement workforce related actions contained within the Best Value Plan in accordance with the agreed timescales	Effective distributive leadership and collaborative working	Employee survey results show greater than 20% improvement in leadership question results	Dec 2024	H/HR, ICT/OD	1
		Organisational capacity to deliver services, communication that promotes an improvement				

HR & OD SERVICE PLAN

		focused culture and effective arrangements to support transformation	Culture of co-operation and partnership evidenced in leadership survey results New Workforce Strategy and Plan agreed and implemented in support of the Transformation Strategy	Sept 2024	H/HR, ICT/OD	1
Continuous Improvement	Undertake self-evaluation e.g. PSIF to measure and evidence continuous improvement	Assurance of continuous improvement that demonstrates Best Value	PSIF completed and reported with clear actions where required.	Dec 2024	H/HR, ICT/OD	2

ICT SERVICE PLAN

<p>1. Service Definition:</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>2. Service Resources:</p>	<p>Service Resources: 47.3 FTE Budget: Capital £350k Budget: Revenue: £3,929k</p>

<p>3. What have we identified for improvement in 2024-25</p>	<p>What evidence did we use to identify this improvement? Please add benchmark information wherever available and relevant to the improvement.</p>
<p>Transformation of Council services</p>	<p>Corporate Plan 2024-2029 Best Value Assurance Report 2024 ICT & Digital Strategy 2023-2026 Improvement and Modernisation Programme Education ICT Strategy ICT Security Policy National direction for ICT National Cyber Resilience programmes and lessons learned</p>
<p>Business Intelligence and Insight</p>	
<p>Digital Culture</p>	
<p>Assurance</p>	
<p>Future Advancement Planning</p>	

ICT SERVICE PLAN

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) Strategic Framework: Financial, Workforce, Digital, Transformation Strategies. Performance Management Framework	<p>Develop and expand the Council's digital approach including potential use of AI, IoT and data (e.g. Power BI), also using the Digital Maturity Assessment to facilitate collaboration with shared best practice.</p> <p>Increase the pace of change by contributing to the implementation of the Transformation Strategy projects e.g. digitisation, digitalisation, LEAN in planned programme of work, ensuring un-resourced areas of digital expansion are clearly highlighted at early stage in design and planning.</p>	<p>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> <p>Project success rate maximised through sufficient capacity without detracting from business as usual</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 2026</p> <p>Mar 2027 or as confirmed by Education Digital work</p> <p>Mar 2026 or as confirmed per project</p>	Information Systems Mgr	1
(CP) Strategic Framework: Financial, Workforce, Digital, Transformation Strategies. Performance Management Framework	<p>Develop a data approach to enhance the value of data through robust, open and transparent access and that forms the basis of a foundation that supports key corporate priorities e.g. Transformation through the use of e.g. data analytics, Power BI</p>	<p>Data and information is held, accessed and made available to improve understanding and better inform decisions in a safe and lawful way.</p>	<p>Develop and implement a corporate a data strategy and plan for big data to connect data, develop analytics to inform and drive service efficiency</p>	March 2026	Information Systems Mgr	1

ICT SERVICE PLAN

(CP) Strategic Framework: Financial, Workforce, Digital, Transformation Strategies. Performance Management Framework	Support and contribute to development of Education ICT Strategy that ensures readiness for future digital development that enhances learning and teaching including the potential as well as the possible impact of developing technologies such as AI	ICT infrastructure has the technology and the capacity required to support future digital development opportunities to facilitate enhanced digital learning and teaching that suits long term educational requirements.	Bandwidth increased across school estate (SWAN 2) Digital learning devices and use of technology increased	Aug 2026/27 (as part of SWAN 2)	ICT Infrastructure Manager	1
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5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
Transformation	Support the Smarter Working Project Phases with hybrid working established as the norm.	Hybrid working rolled out across satellite properties. Council has the capacity to flex and Contract homeworking in line with the organisational, national and regional requirements	All eligible satellite properties equipped to support hybrid working.	March 2025	Infrastructure Mgr	2
Service Development	Support services to fully utilise systems and platforms to enhance service delivery to the public e.g. Gladstone in Sport and Leisure, Spydus in Libraries, Lagan (Customer Services).	Service specific systems are fully functional and downtime is minimised. Enhancements and upgrades are supported.	% of downtime is reduced. Enhancements and upgrades are completed within prescribed timescales per system.	March 2027 (or per contractual requirements)	Information Systems Mgr	1

ICT SERVICE PLAN

<p>Assurance</p>	<p>Cyber Resilience - Implement enhanced measures to manage cyber security and resilience risks</p>	<p>Implementation of Cyber Resilience Plan completed.</p> <p>Business Continuity Plans / work for corporate and service cyber resilience completed.</p>	<p>Plan implemented for enhanced risk-based approach.</p> <p>80% of online workforce completed e-learning modules</p> <p>Improved self-assessment tool ratings including certifications (e.g. PSN Accreditation, Cyber Essentials/Plus)</p> <p>Reduced number of high risk actions arising from annual health IT health check</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<p>Infrastructure Mgr</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Forward Planning</p>	<p>Identify, plan, schedule and support large scale corporate system replacements</p>	<p>Corporate system replacements (Lagan, Care First, Content Management System) are replaced efficiently and timeously in accordance with agreed council procedures.</p>	<p>Systems replaced within scheduled timeframes</p> <p>Compliance with procurement procedures and due technical diligence</p>	<p>March 2025 or as confirmed per project</p>	<p>Information Sys Mgr</p>	<p>2</p>

ICT SERVICE PLAN

Best Value Actions	Implement ICT and digital related actions contained within the Best Value Plan in accordance with agreed timescales	Resilience plans in place for information systems as part of wider Digital/Resilience Strategy	Complete implementation of Cyber Resilience Plan Complete Business Continuity Plans/work for corporate and cyber resilience	Mar 2026	H/HR and ICT Infrastructure Manager/Information Security Officer	1
Continuous Improvement	Undertake self-evaluation e.g. PSIF to measure and evidence continuous improvement	Assurance of continuous improvement that demonstrates Best Value	PSIF complete and reported with clear actions where required	Dec 2024	H/HR, ICT & OD	2
Health and Wellbeing	Ensure revised operational implementation of absence management procedures are applied by managers	Absence is managed effectively and levels of absence are reduced efficiently and timeously	Reduction in number of days absence per employee	March 2025	HOS and Service Managers	2

GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE SERVICE PLAN

<p>1. Service Definition:</p>	<p>Governance Strategy and Performance</p> <p>Services to the public: Customer Services (Contact Centre, Reception and Print room), 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 & Copy Shop, SharePoint, Customer services Support, Strategy and Performance, Audit and Risk, Records Management</p>
<p>2. Service Resources:</p>	<p>Staff 135 FTE Budget Capital: Budget Revenue:</p>

<p>3. What have we identified for improvement in 2024/25</p>	<p>What evidence did we use to identify this improvement? Please add benchmark information wherever available and relevant to the improvement.</p>
<p>Implement framework for Continuous Improvement across council services</p>	<p>Best Value report (Feb. 2024) highlighted need for improved process / programme for self-evaluation.</p>
<p>Digital transformation</p>	<p>Council Transformation Programme</p>

GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE SERVICE PLAN

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) Strategic Framework: Financial, Workforce, Digital, Transformation Strategies. Performance Management Framework	Strategy and Performance Re-establish a framework for Continuous Improvement across council services with a timetable and guidance.	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	October 2024 6 monthly going forward	Strategy and Performance Manager	1 BV action plan 1.4 Transformation Strategy Transforming Council
Choose an item.	Establish Corporate reporting regime to drive performance improvement.	Timely reporting that identifies issues and contributes to improvement.	Performance reports for benchmarking, Corporate Plan and LOIP are met	December 2024	Strategy and Performance Manager	1 BV action plan 1.5
	Investigate “one plan” position for Moray (to potentially Act as Corporate Plan and LOIP	Council and community partners decide if there is merit in having a shared strategic plan	Council and CPB decision	December 2024	tbc	
	Implement governance and committee issues identified in Collaborative Leadership issues – to be defined.		tbc	tbc		
	Internal Audit Clarify the remit of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee with further training for members.	Councillors are clear role on the role of the committee.	Survey of members confirms role clear.	October 2024	Head of GSP	2 BV Action Plan 2.1

GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE SERVICE PLAN

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
Digital Transformation and Efficiency	Customer Services: Identify and develop opportunities for the use of Artificial Intelligence for Customer Contact channels(AI)	Service efficiency, Improved Customer self-service	Identify opportunities and deliver business case.	March 2025	Customer Services Manager	3 Transformation Strategy - Transform Council
	Customer Services: Introduce an updated or new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution	Improved customer experience, service efficiencies, increased customer self service.	Reduced call and email waiting times and number of abandoned calls	March 2025	Customer Services Manager	2 Transformation Strategy - Transform Council
	Customer Services Review out of hours phone service along with housing	Calls are rationalised and a less time intensive move from housing out of hours service to a	Successful move onto a new	April 2025	Customer Services Manager	2 Transformation Strategy - Transform Council
	Benefits / Money Advice: Develop Benefits e-form	Service efficiency savings Improved customer service	% of total applications successfully completed through e-form Reduction in application processing time	December 2024	Benefits and Money Advice Manager	2
	Benefits/Money Advice Establish whether there is a viable case for further centralisation of means testing.	Determine whether a staffing efficiency and maximisation of council resources is achievable	Completion of business case	December 2024	Benefits and Money Advice Manager	3

GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE SERVICE PLAN

	Registrars: Transfer of burial grounds administration to Lands and Parks Service	Service efficiency savings Improved customer service	Review costs of service and fees / Consult on fees Transfer calls to Lands and Parks Records accessible online	December 2024	Democratic Services Manager	4
Improved Governance	Democratic Services: Continue review programme of second tier governance documents	Clarify the respective roles of Councillors and Officers	All priority A documents to be reviewed	March 2025	Head of GSP / Democratic Services Manager	2
	Internal Audit Clarity of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee with further training for members.	Councillors are clear role on the role of the committee.	Survey of members confirms role clear.	October 2024	Head of GSP	2 BV action plan 2.1
	Internal Audit Work with services to ensure business continuity arrangements are up to date.	Business Impact Assessments reviewed for all critical services and business continuity plans updated as appropriate.	To aid appropriate response to unplanned events and circumstances.	March 2025	Audit and Risk Manager	2 BV action plan para 2.3
Performance Management	Strategy and Performance: Finalise Delivery Frameworks and reporting arrangements following review of LOIP	Board can measure progress against agreed outcomes.	Agree suitable indicators	December 2024	Strategy and Performance Manager	2
Health & Wellbeing	Ensure revised operational implementation of absence management procedures are applied by managers	Absence is managed effectively and levels of absence are reduced efficiently and timeously	Reduction in number of days absence per employee	March 2025	Head of Service	2



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 11 JUNE 2024

SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK 2022-23 AND 2021-22 RESULTS

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The reason for this report is to present to the Committee a corporate overview of benchmarking performance data for the period 2022-23 and 2021-22.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III A (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to monitoring performance in accordance with the Council's performance management framework.

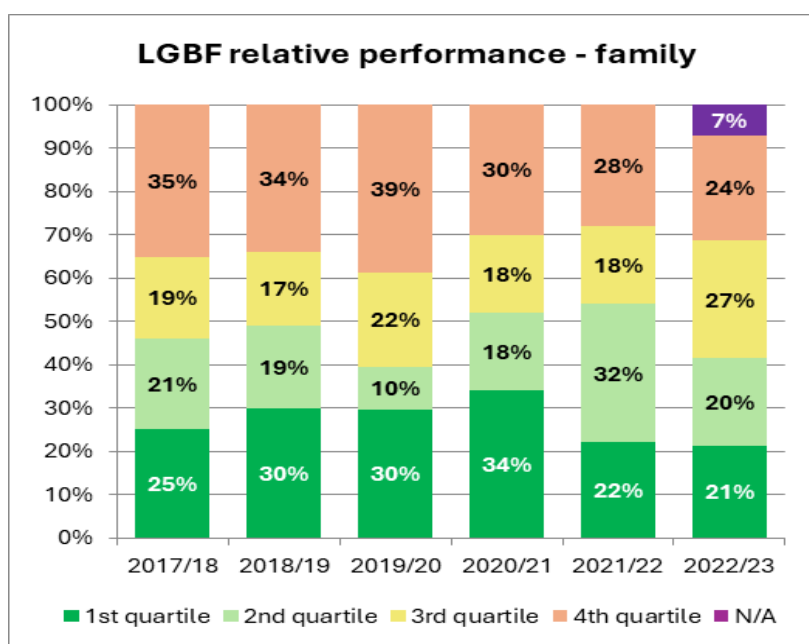
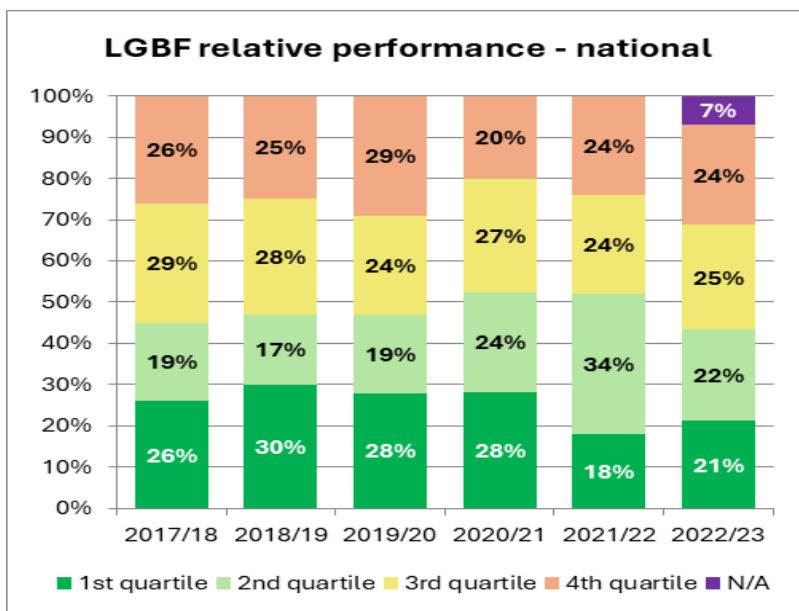
2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider and note the Council's performance in terms of a corporate overview of benchmarking results.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) data, most results are published annually by late summer that informs the National Benchmarking Overview Report. Results are gathered from national sources following annual data submissions that are subject to extensive validation processes, a contributory factor to the time-lag in publication and reporting. A limited number of results are supplied directly by local authorities. The full suite of benchmarking data can be viewed using the [LGBF Dashboard](#).
- 3.2 Results and commentary on benchmarking performance are included in Quarter 4 performance reports submitted to service committees in line with the Council's performance management framework.
- 3.3 In response to previous member comments, for indicators in the lowest quartile, where a more up to date position has been reported to service Committee, this has been reflected in the narrative.

- 3.4 With work relating to budget savings and the corporate plan taking priority in the latter part of 2023, reporting of the 2021/22 corporate overview of benchmarking data was delayed to such an extent most results for 2022/23 have been published, therefore 2021/22 data is provided for information and to show performance trends, however the narrative and focus presented in the corporate overview relates to 2022/23, addressing the requirements of the Council's Performance Management Framework.
- 3.5 Nine indicators are not due for publication in 2022/23 due to national reporting timescales, or they are no longer being collected locally. The remaining seven indicator results yet to be published cover child poverty, housing energy efficiency and carbon emissions. Results will be reported when they are published.
- 3.6 The summary (**Appendix 1**) for 2022/23 includes –
- i) notes to results by exception (indicators ranked in lowest quartile);
 - ii) bullet points highlighting results that have improved / worsened by 5% (based on previous year);
 - iii) tables detailing all indicator results presented by service themes for both years.
- 3.7 The summary (**Appendix 2**) for 2021/22 includes –
- i) notes to results by exception (indicators ranked in lowest quartile);
 - ii) bullet points highlighting results that have improved / worsened by 5% (based on previous year).
- 3.8 Caution is advised on making direct comparison between years due to significant impact of Covid-19 on more recent results, however an assessment based on available 2022/23 results can be inferred to an extent. The tables show that, for indicators currently published (92), there has been an overall drop in performance with indicator result values worsening to a greater margin (53%) than those that have improved (46%).
- 3.9 Assuming no significant change in rankings for the seven indicators yet to be updated, a shift towards the lower quartiles can be inferred in both national and family groupings.



3.10 Indicators featuring in the lowest quartile (ranked 25th to 32nd) have been scrutinised in relation to improvements by the relevant Service Committees as part of 2023/24 Quarter 4 Performance Reports, links where available are provided as background papers. **Appendix 1** provides a commentary on these indicators and the actions that are planned to address them. However, it is recognised that a number of the indicators have been consistently reported for some time. Therefore, the current position will be reviewed further by the Corporate Management Team to scrutinise and ensure actions to secure improvement in priority areas and the outcome of this will be reported to a future committee to ensure that the council is focussed on continuing to improve performance to meet its priorities.

4 **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

The Council and its partners have agreed priorities in the LOIP, with a range of outcome targets included for each of the priorities. It will be important that service committees keep those targets in mind when reviewing the performance data in the national benchmarking results, for two reasons:

1. To recognise that to achieve success the targets might mean weaker performance in non-priority areas, and
2. To consider whether the priorities and targets should be reviewed or amended in light of the information contained with the national benchmarking results.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council has a statutory obligation to publish a range of information that will demonstrate that it is improving local services and local outcomes, demonstrating best value and assisting in comparing performance both over time and between authorities where appropriate.

(c) Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no direct risk implications arising from this report although effective performance management assists in the management of risk.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report.

(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 issues.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None.

(i) Consultations

Heads of Service and Service Managers have been consulted on reports submitted to relevant service committees.

5. **CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 In 2022-23, based on publication of results to date, 43% of Local Government Benchmarking Framework indicator results feature in the top 16 of 32 Scottish councils compared to 52% in 2021-22.
- 5.2 When compared to national and comparator performance, there may be slight movement in rankings towards the lower quartiles in 2022-23 following a shift from first to second quartiles in 2021/22 results.
- 5.3 The Corporate Management Team plan to undertake further review of performance information and proposed improvement actions to ensure that priority is given to improving in areas to ensure the Council priorities are met and the outcome of this will be reported to a future committee.

Author of Report: Louise Marshall, Strategy and Performance Manager
Background Papers: [National Benchmarking Overview Report 2021-22](#)
[National Benchmarking Overview Report 2022-23](#)
[LGBF Dashboards](#)
[Performance Report \(Financial Services\) Period to March 2023 and March 2024](#)
[Performance Report \(Human Resources, Information Communications Technology and Organisational Development\) Period to March 2023 and March 2024](#)
[Performance Report \(Governance, Strategy and Performance\) Period to March 2023 and March 2024](#)
[Performance Report \(Economic Growth and Development Services\) - Period to March 2023 and March 2024](#)
[Performance Report \(Environmental and Commercial Services\) - Period to March 2023 and March 2024](#)
[Performance Report \(Housing and Property Services\) – Period to March 2023 and March 2024](#)
[Performance Report \(Education\) - Period to March 2023 and March 2024](#)
[Performance Report \(Education Resources and Communities\) - Period to March 2023 and March 2024](#)
[Performance Report \(Children and Families and Criminal Justice Social Work\) - Period to March 2023](#)

Ref: SPMAN-2045703626-406 / SPMAN-2045703626-405 / SPMAN-2045703626-391



Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)

Benchmarking Overview 2022-23



Preface

All 32 Scottish councils signed up to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, that provides a common approach to benchmarking, which is grounded in reporting standard information on services councils provide to local communities across Scotland.

The core purpose of local government's efforts through this work is to support all councils to improve their services by working and learning together. By engaging in benchmarking, services will learn how to continue to improve their use of performance information; improve their understanding of variations which affect achievements and enabling the opportunity to share effective service practices across councils. This information is made publically available, so that the public in turn can hold services to account for what is achieved on their behalf. The public are encouraged to use the information to ask questions of services in order to engage with services in the improvement process.

When reading the information, it is important to remember though that councils across Scotland do not have common service structures. Each council has the structure and service arrangements that it believes are the most appropriate and cost effective to support its local community. Equally, all councils report their performance locally within developed and agreed public reporting frameworks. Therefore, to ensure comparability across councils, it has been necessary to develop standard service definitions, and standard classifications for spending and performance.

Councils developed a process to drill into the information collated through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework to understand, in more detail, why variations occur. The process was organised around 'family groups' of councils so that councils similar in terms of the type of population that they service (e.g. relative deprivation and affluence) and the type of area in which they serve them (e.g. urban, semi-rural, and rural) can compare. This allows improvements to the benchmarking framework to be identified and good practice to be shared between councils.

The indicators in the Framework cover how much councils spend on particular services; service performance and how satisfied people are with the major services provided. All the information that this report draws upon uses standard definitions and is therefore comparable to a high degree of accuracy.

The indicators in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework are designed to focus questions on why variations in cost and performance are occurring between similar councils. They do not supply the answers, those emerge as councils engage with each other to drill down and explore why these variations are happening. The LGBF Workshop Programme has been added to the platform for learning and improvement.

Our ambition in undertaking benchmarking is to continue to increase the quality of life and develop the well-being of everyone in Moray.

All of the information generated by the Framework has been placed in a dedicated website [LGBF Dashboard](#) showing movement on indicators across themes, times and all councils.

Summary

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) data provides evidence of trends in how resources are allocated, performance of services and levels of customer satisfaction. This year's results introduce data from 2022/23 and provides an evidence-based picture of the impact of the pandemic as well as the extraordinary effort and achievement during this exceptional period.

Exceptions based on 32 local authorities; areas of service delivery ranked in the lowest quartile are presented below as Notes to Benchmarking Results. Care should be taken when making comparison over time and with others due to the complexities around altered delivery and operating landscapes during the reporting period.

The [National Benchmarking Overview Report 2022/23](#) is available here.

Notes to Benchmarking Results (indicators ranked in the lowest quartile)			
No	Challenges	Actions to improve	Outcome
Children's Services			
3	The proportion of children being looked after in the community has seen a significant decrease to 75.3%, the lowest level recorded. A shortage of specialist foster carers has led to children and young people with complex needs being accommodated in residential settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased focus and resources on the recruitment of foster carers, drawing on the assistance of local, regional and national partners. Identify and address the training and development needs of foster, kinship and residential care workers employed. Better understand what peer support foster and kinship carers want. Embed the learning from PACE in policies and procedures relating to the placement of children and young people in care. With care experienced children and young people develop a local maintaining relationships policy with a specific focus on siblings. <p><i>(Source: Children's Service Plan 2023-26 (short term actions))</i></p>	<p>The number and range of placements available meets the needs of children and young people in need of care.</p> <p>Siblings are supported to maintain positive relationships with one another.</p>
1	The proportion of secondary leavers achieving 5 or more awards at Level 6 have fallen for the second consecutive year to 28%, in line with similar trends witnessed nationally and within our family group. 2020/21 and 2021/22, where there was no formal examination diet, are not comparable with the current period. Performance in 2022/23 is broadly in line with pre-COVID levels, again similar trends were	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting it right for every child so that we continue to improve attainment for all. Further develop the curriculum in the BGE and Senior Phase taking account of the national review and international research including project based learning. 	<p>Improved attainment at both Broad General Education (BGE) and Senior Phase.</p> <p>Improved curriculum offer in line with national advice.</p>

Notes to Benchmarking Results (indicators ranked in the lowest quartile)			
No	Challenges	Actions to improve	Outcome
2	witnessed nationally and within our comparator group. Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) leaver attainment across secondary schools in Moray was reported to the Education, Children's and Leisure Service Committee on 14 May 2024 (item 12 of the Agenda refers) in the continued focus on improving outcomes and raising attainment through the actions noted in the report. Similarly, the proportion of leavers from the most deprived 20% achieving 5 or more awards at Level 6 has also decreased to 12%. Differences in cohort numbers have a significant impact on proportions. What appears to be a significant reduction relates to one less child achieving at this level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through renewed focus on the Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model with specific regard to outcomes at school/community and regional levels 	<p>Meet stretch aims.</p> <p>Increased attendance, reduced exclusions.</p>
4,5,6,7,8	Tariff scores allows examination of how different ability cohorts are attaining in relation to the appropriate family and national cohorts by allocating a specific number of points to each qualification (including non-examination, unit-based courses). More demanding qualifications gain more points than less demanding ones and in graded courses, a grade 'A' is equivalent to more points than a grade 'C' for example, within the same course. The number of qualifications and units available for a young person to complete varies significantly due to the number of different curriculum structures there are across Scotland. In Moray, scores decreased overall and in across SIMD Quintiles 1-5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent work on curriculum choice and innovations, working with Education Scotland in collaboration with Moray Secondary Schools and an ADES-Education Scotland Collaborative Improvement event focused on Senior Phase Curriculum will progress further work on curriculum design for strengthened consortia working and senior phase offers to improve scoring. <p><i>(Source: Education Service Plan 2024-25)</i></p>	<p>Increase in subjects, courses and accreditation</p>
9,10	The percentage of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Levels in Literacy and Numeracy made further improvement to 67.9% and 75.5% respectively, exceeding Stretch Aims targets and gaining ground on national averages. Support and challenge discussions between the central Quality Improvement Team and Head	<p>Ongoing work to build and maintain improvement is detailed in the Initial Analysis of Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels 2023 submitted to Education, Children's and Leisure Service Committee on 20 February 2024 (para 3.38 of the report refers).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early intervention addressing whole family well-being to ensure that children can reach their full potential 	<p>Improved attainment at both Broad General and Senior Phase identified through ACEL measures.</p>

Notes to Benchmarking Results (indicators ranked in the lowest quartile)			
No	Challenges	Actions to improve	Outcome
	Teachers. Roll-out of Seemis Progress and Achievement for Tracking and Monitoring was completed in June 2023 and a data analysis tool (AnalyseM) was developed and training completed in December 2023.	<i>(Source: Education Service Plan 2024-25)</i>	
11,12	The percentage point gap in between the least and most deprived pupils in the P1, P4 and P7 combined in literacy (75.5%) and numeracy (32.1%) increased to proportionately a greater degree than national increases.	In collaboration with the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor, schools continue to be supported with their Pupil Equity Funding planning, allocations, and spending in enacting interventions to close identified poverty gaps based on intelligence and data.	Improved attainment at both Broad General and Senior Phase identified through ACEL
13	Funded early years provision which is graded good/better improved slightly to 87.5%. The increase duty brings significant challenges around workforce expansion, building and expanding provision, whilst simultaneously maintaining and improving the quality is challenging, faced with significant shortages in the availability of qualified staff and seeing the average experience level of the workforce lowered.	Early years provision not reaching grade 4 good/better receive support from the respective Continuous Improvement Officer and the Early Years Teaching and Learning Teacher to address the required actions resulting from recommendations or requirements.	Improve quality of leadership, learning, teaching and assessment Improve self-evaluation profiles leading to change
Corporate Services			
14	There has been an improvement in the Council's gender pay gap to 5.3%. Improvement is partly down to pay deals which disproportionately affect female dominated jobs. Across Scotland, results range from -6.2 to 11.4, reinforcing the likely variations in methods of calculation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have in place fair and competitive pay and conditions that are recognised and free from bias. <i>(Source: HR & OD Service Plan 2024-25)</i>	Improved assessment of gender pay gap and equality issues.
15	Teacher absence levels increased in 2022/23 to 7.9 days per teacher and are now higher than pre-pandemic levels and the highest recorded since benchmarking began. Pressures exacerbated by the pandemic, treatment delays and increasing mental health issues are compounded by a skills shortages and recruitment challenges, all contributory factors to increased absence.	<p>Policy and practise review as well as supporting and developing wellbeing initiatives continue in response to these significant challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro-actively support the health and well-being of employees through increased awareness of mental health. • Review proactive measure to reduce sickness including Day One notification for focus on short term absence. • Review and streamline implementation of absence management procedures to ensure effective management of absence while reducing the resourcing impact on managers. 	<p>Employees are supported to attend work and managers are supported to proactively manage sickness absence.</p> <p>Managers are enabled to support employees to attend work and manage any absence efficiently and timeously.</p>

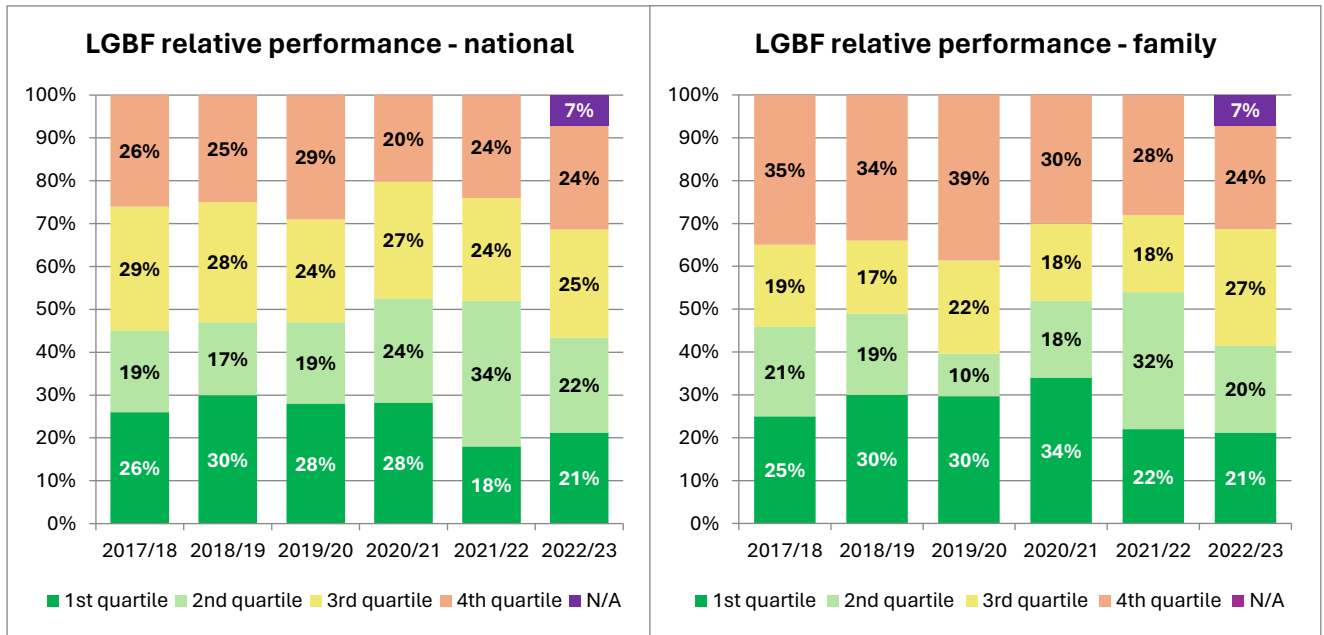
Notes to Benchmarking Results (indicators ranked in the lowest quartile)			
No	Challenges	Actions to improve	Outcome
		<i>(Source: HR & OD Service Plan 2024-25)</i>	
16	Discretionary Housing Payments are administered by Councils to households who require financial assistance towards their housing costs and are an important tool to prevent homelessness and help struggling households to sustain tenancies. The national budget available to DHP has increased significantly since 2019/20. In Moray, 79.8% of the overall proportion of the budget was spent, likely due to the timing of the provision of additional allocation and pandemic related delays in processing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish whether there is a viable case for further centralisation of means testing. <i>(Source: GS&P Service Plan 2024-25)</i>	<p>Maximise use of funding to benefit those that require financial assistance to meet housing cost.</p> <p>Determine whether a staffing efficiency and maximisation of council resources is achievable</p>
Assets			
17	There has been a slight improvement to 56.3% in the percentage of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition. The Moray Learning Estate is a significant contributory factor to the operational building condition indicator and with half of the 54 schools having condition surveys within the last 5 years, there is a risk that the results could worsen as condition surveys are completed.	<p>All condition surveys anticipated to complete by September 2024.</p> <p>Moray Learning Estate Strategy 2022-2032 sets out the steps needed to develop a long-term strategy for the learning estate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackle the affordability and standard of our schools and the buildings they operate from, deal with changing demographics and demands. <i>(Source: ERC Service Plan 2023-24)</i>	<p>Transforming Education: To have high performing schools that are fit for the future and financially sustainable.</p> <p>Children and young people in Moray are learning in the best learning environments.</p> <p>Learning environments service the wider community and where appropriate are integrated with the delivery of other public services.</p>
Culture & Leisure			
18	The cost per library visit has increased significantly to £6.55 due to a reduction in the number of visits recorded. The service reviewed the virtual visit definition for this indicator and are now counting launches or interactions with a page / post rather than the number having seen a page / post. In 2022/23, the number of physical visits increased by 62% to 234,213. Following the review, virtual visits in 2022/23 were 127,347 in comparison with 485,283 in 2021/22. Across Scotland, results range, perhaps suggesting there are similar variations in calculation methods. At the time of submitting attendance results, Libindx results were not available, these would improve the cost per	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transform our Libraries, Learning Centres & Heritage service provision to ensure a sustainable council for the future 	Alternative delivery options: Create a sustainable future for our services




Notes to Benchmarking Results (indicators ranked in the lowest quartile)			
No	Challenges	Actions to improve	Outcome
	visit slightly from £6.55 per library visit to £5.88, ranking remains unchanged.	<i>(Source: ERC Service Plan 2023-24)</i>	
Housing Services			
19	In 2022/23 982 of 6,342 (15.5%) properties within scope met the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SQHS).	The Scottish Housing Regulator invited landlords to reassess compliance with electrical inspections, in Moray most properties fell slightly short of the required standard, frustrated by factors such as the availability of qualified contractors; an improvement action plan is in place to ensure compliance by November 2024. In addition, compliance with Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) is a contributory factor in achieving SQHS, significant programmes of work have not progressed as planned. The Scottish Government plan to review for ESSH2 to strengthen and realign the standard with the target for net zero heat in Housing to 2040.	Phased improvement of energy efficiency within corporate buildings and housing stock
Economic Development			
20	There were 107 Business Gateway Start-Ups in the year to March 2023, below the local target of 130, noting that there was just one Business Adviser in the latter half of the year. There remains uncertainty which has increased the risk of starting a business, labour shortages and disrupted supply chains have increase barriers for business start-ups. It is unlikely that performance will improve in the short term.	Moray Economic Strategy, Moray Growth Deal and other programmes are intended to stimulate this area, but any improvement will only become evident in the longer term.	Achievement of Moray Growth Deal Outcomes relating to job creation and skills uplift.
21	87.2% of properties in Moray receive superfast broadband. Moray retains a higher proportion of properties without access to sufficient broadband speeds than across Scotland as a whole.	The Scottish Government's R100 programme is targeted to addressing this issue. However, despite the R100 North Lot contract being awarded to BT in December 2020, there have been no properties served locally through the rollout of the main contract, with many not scheduled to be served until 2028. Even then, several properties will remain without access to superfast broadband as the cost of delivery is deemed too significant but will be eligible to access support via the Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme. In Moray, a new project has been funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund aimed at increasing awareness and uptake of this scheme.	Full connection to superfast broadband
Financial Sustainability			

Notes to Benchmarking Results (indicators ranked in the lowest quartile)			
No	Challenges	Actions to improve	Outcome
22	The measure of Uncommitted General fund Balance as a percentage of council annual budgeted net revenue provides an indication on the level of uncommitted reserves, a low level may be a sign that the council could struggle if any unknown financial surprise were to occur. Moray achieved a result of 2.1%.	The Council's reserves policy was approved by Council on 15 September 2021 (para 29 of the Minute refers) is to hold £5 million as free reserves, around 2% of budgeted revenue expenditure on General Services, therefore the reported level remains within that threshold.	Ensure a financially sustainable future
23	Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream is an indicator of affordability, it 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. Moray reported a ratio of 8.7.	Prudential Indicators were reported to Council on 1 March (para 6 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. This is factored into the Council's financial planning and is used as a tool for assessing affordability of the capital plan,	Ensure a financially sustainable future
24	The need for budgets and forecasts to reflect actual spending becomes increasingly important with decreasing or lower levels of usable reserves to draw on and is measured in the Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure. Moray achieved an Actual outturn of 93.4%.	Patterns of budgeting spend are impacted across all local authorities, albeit in different ways, although an increase in the level of reserves held was a common feature. Budget manager training, key to an accurate forecast was reviewed and updated.	Ensure a financially sustainable future

Caution on making direct comparison over time in the charts below due to the significant impact of Covid-19 on more recent results. With around 7% of indicators yet to be published (9 indicators not due for publication in 2022/23), it can be inferred that performance has dropped with a greater percentage of indicators in the bottom two quartiles than the top two in the context of national and family groupings. A drop in indicator results appears to have had an impact on rankings both nationally and within the family group. Based on the data published, results have slightly worsened to a greater margin than those that have improved.

Relative performance: Percentage of indicator rankings by quartiles –






2021/22 vs 2022/23		
 Results improved 41 indicators	 Results worsened 49 indicators	 No change 2 indicators N/A Not yet published ¹ 7 indicators

¹Excludes 9 indicators not due for publication in 2022/23

Moray appears in the following Benchmarking Family Groups –

People Services (A)	Other Services (B)
Includes education, social work and housing. The benchmarking clubs are based on the average social context of the local authority population (using data from SIMD 2012).	Includes environmental services and culture/leisure services. The benchmarking clubs are based on the dispersion of the local authority population (using data for the Grant-Aided Expenditure indicator for population dispersion).
Angus Argyll & Bute East Lothian Highland Midlothian Moray Scottish Borders Stirling	East Ayrshire East Lothian Fife Moray North Ayrshire Perth & Kinross Stirling South Ayrshire

Table Legend			
Relative Change	Short Term Trend	Rank 2021/22	
2020/21 to 2021/22	Result to Previous Year	Local Authorities (32)	Family Group (8)
Result improving by 5% or more	 improved	1 st quartile	1 st quartile
Result worsened by 5% or more	 worsened	2 nd quartile	2 nd quartile
	 no change	3 rd quartile	3 rd quartile
		4 th quartile	4 th quartile

Results improved / worsened (past 12 months)

Results that improved by 5% or >

- The gross cost of both residential and community placements reduced significantly, residential costs by 32% and community placements by 8%.
- No children were re-registered on the Child Protection Register within 18 months.
- 10% reduction in the cost of collecting Council Tax per dwelling, with the overall cost reducing and a slight increase in the number of dwellings.
- £590k of Scottish Welfare Fund was spent, 124% of budget.
- Homecare costs per hour for people aged 65 or over decreased due to a 10% increase in care hours against a slight increase in total homecare expenditure.
- Increased attendance has resulted in a reduced cost per attendance at sports facilities.
- Net expenditure for waste disposal decreased resulting in a reduced cost of disposal per premise.
- A 14% reduction in gross expenditure in Environmental Health, has resulted in a decrease in cost per 1,000 population across indicators.
- Proportion of recycled household waste increase by 6%, highest rate nationally
- Average working days to complete non-emergency repairs fell by 41% and the number completed dropped by 18%, resulting in an overall reduction in the average time taken.
- Gross expenditure on Economic Development & Tourism increased from £4.5m to £7.8m, increasing investment per 1,000 population to £80,510, albeit performance remains below the national average and in the bottom quartile.
- Proportion of people earning less than the living wage improved to 13.8%.

Results that worsened by 5% or >

- The percentage of children from the most deprived 20% gaining 5+ awards at level 6 fell by 7%.
- The proportion of Looked After Children in community-based placements, rather than residential accommodation decreased by 5.3%, with an increase of 10 children placed in residential placements since 2021/22.
- Tariff scores have dropped across all six measures, and by over 5% in four. All but one feature is the lowest quartile.
- The percentage point gap between the least and most deprived pupils in literacy and numeracy (P1, P4 and P7 combined) has widened further, with results ranked in the lowest quartile.
- School exclusion rates have increased by 6 per 1,000 showing a 42.4% increase from the previous period recorded 2020/21. A similar trend is witnessed nationally and within our family group with increases of 39.5% and 55.1% respectively.
- Sickness absence increased for both teaching and non-teaching staff back to pre-covid levels.
- The proportion of Community Care Grant decisions made within 15 days reduced by 5.7% to 89.3%. It should be noted that recently released figures for 2023/24 show the proportion has increased to 98.5%.
- Residential cost per week per resident for people aged 65 or over have increased by around one third, principally due to increase in gross expenditure.
- 74% of care services inspected were graded good or better by the Care Inspectorate, a slight decrease from previous years' results.
- Number of days that over 75-year-olds spend in hospital when ready to be discharged, expressed per 10,000 population increased significantly.
- Cost per library visit doubled due to around a 50% reduction in visits against a slight increase in net expenditure. A review of the indicator definition has refined the count of virtual visits.
- Net cost of Waste collection per premise increased slightly, this indicator remains within the top quartile.
- Costs of roads per kilometre increased slightly due to rise in gross expenditure, the indicator result remains in the top quartile.
- Cost of Trading Standards, Money Advice & Citizens Advice per 1,000 population increased slightly due to rise in gross expenditure.
- A 20% drop in the number of Planning Applications decided against a slight decrease in gross expenditure has resulted in an overall increase in cost per application.
- The number of business start-ups decreased by 10% to 11.1 per 10,000 population

N/A¹ Data no longer collected nationally / locally.

N/A² Result below 5; not published to protect confidentiality.

N/A³ Data not yet published.

Overview of Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicator Results

	Note	Indicator Description	Moray					National Average	Relative Change 2021/22 to 2022/23		Rank 2022/23	
			2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	% change	Short Term Trend	Nat (32)	FG (8)
Children's Services (A)		CHN 1: Cost per primary school pupil (£)	5,437	5,677	5,776	6,272	6,562	6,841	4.6	↓	8	2
		CHN 2: Cost per secondary school pupil (£)	7,965	8,062	7,864	8,161	8,364	8,495	2.5	↓	15	3
		CHN 3: Cost per pre-school education place (£)	3,687	5,749	8,091	10,108	10,324	11,002	2.1	↓	11	4
		CHN% of secondary pupils achieving 5 or more awards at Level 5	62	62	66	63	63	62	-1	↓	23	6
	1	% of secondary pupils achieving 5 or more awards at Level 6	30	34	34	30	28	38	-2	↓	31	8
		% of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas Gaining 5+ awards at Level 5	N/A ²	N/A ²	62	52	N/A ²	50				
	2	% of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas Gaining 5+ awards at Level 6	N/A ²	N/A ²	19	19	12	22	-7	↓	26	7
		Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in Residential Based Services per child per week (£)	4,814	5,394	5083	4,403	2,989	4,804	-32	↑	9	4
		Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in a Community Setting per child per week (£)	457	472	435	474	435	422	-8	↑	18	6
	3	% of children being looked after in the community	79.1	81.4	82.2	80.6	75.3	89.2	-5.3	↓	31	8
		% of adults satisfied with local schools (rolling 4 years)	74.6	77.0	79.3	79.3	76.7	73.7	-2.7	↓	15	4
		% of pupils entering positive destinations	92.8	93.1	94.1	96.2	95.1	95.9	-1.1	↓	22	5
	4	Overall average total tariff	814	799	876	882	830	915	-5.9	↓	27	7
		Overall average total tariff SIMD Quintile 1	826	939	887	735	561	658	-23.7	↓	21	4
	5	Overall average total tariff SIMD Quintile 2	573	687	635	637	580	781	-8.9	↓	31	8
	6	Overall average total tariff SIMD Quintile 3	830	729	868	868	814	905	-6.2	↓	28	7
	7	Overall average total tariff SIMD Quintile 4	838	836	954	944	917	1051	-2.9	↓	30	7

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N/A³ Data not yet published.

	Note	Indicator Description	Moray					National Average	Relative Change 2021/22 to 2022/23		Rank 2022/23	
			2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	% change	Short Term Trend	Nat (32)	FG (8)
Corporate	8	Overall average total tariff SIMD Quintile 5	934	903	959	1,005	974	1,264	-3.1	↓	29	8
	9	% P1, P4 & P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Literacy	64.8	N/A ¹	63.9	65.1	67.9	72.7	2.8	↑	28	5
	10	% P1, P4 & P7 pupils combined achieving expected CFE Level in Numeracy	69.9	N/A ¹	67.8	71.8	75.5	79.6	3.7	↑	27	6
	11	Literacy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 combined) – percentage point gap between the least and most deprived pupils	14.9	N/A ¹	19.8	26.3	32.1	20.3	21.7	↓	29	8
	12	Numeracy Attainment Gap (P1,4,7 combined) – percentage point gap between the least and most deprived pupils	13.8	N/A ¹	17.5	24.7	26.6	17.0	7.8	↓	28	7
	13	% of children meeting developmental milestones	93.2	95.6	96.0	84.9	87.3	82.1	2.4	↑	5	2
		% of funded early years provision which is graded good/better	75.4	78.3	85.2	86.9	87.5	90.1	0.6	↑	25	7
		School attendance (%)	93.9	N/A ¹	93.8	N/A ¹	91.0	90.2	-2.8	↓	8	2
		School attendance rates (LAC, %)	87.4	N/A ¹	89.4	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹				
		School exclusion rates per 1,000 pupils	22.7	N/A ¹	14.2	N/A ¹	20.2	16.6	6	↓	21	5
		School exclusion rates per 1,000 looked after children	180.4	N/A ¹	125.0	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹				
		% participation for 16-19 year-olds	91.3	93.5	91.8	91.6	95.4	94.3	3.9	↑	11	5
		% of child protection re-registrations within 18 months	3.2	7.5	2.3	9.8	0	5.6	-9.8	↑	1	1
		% LAC with more than 1 placement in the last year (Aug-July)	31.0	25.0	14.9	14.5	11.8	17.2	-2.8	↑	6	3
		% of children living in poverty (after housing costs)	21.9	23.4	21.3	24.1	N/A ³	N/A ³				
		Support Services as a % of Total Gross Expenditure	4.3	4.2	4.1	3.9	3.8	4.0	-0.1	↑	18	5
		% of the highest paid 5% employees who are women	54.1	54.7	61.1	62.7	59.5	58.9	-3.3	↓	15	5

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N/A² Result below 5; not published to protect confidentiality.

N/A³ Data not yet published.

	Note	Indicator Description	Moray					National Average	Relative Change 2021/22 to 2022/23		Rank 2022/23	
			2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	% change	Short Term Trend	Nat (32)	FG (8)
Assets (B)	14	The gender pay gap (%)	7.6	6.4	6.2	7.0	5.3	2.5	-1.6	↑	28	7
		Cost of collecting Council Tax per dwelling	10.26	9.50	8.67	8.36	7.54	6.84	-9.8	↑	18	7
	15	Sickness Absence days per Teacher	6.5	6.8	4.5	6.0	7.9	6.8	31.6	↓	27	4
		Sickness Absence days per Employee (non-teacher)	12.5	12.7	8.7	11.1	12.8	13.2	15.8	↓	12	3
		% of income due from Council Tax received by the end of the year	96.9	97.0	95.8	96.7	96.7	96.2	-0.0	▬	15	4
		% of invoices sampled that were paid within 30 days	89.7	87.3	84.0	85.5	89.4	90.6	3.9	↑	23	6
		% of Crisis Grant Decisions within 1 day Note: 2023/24 result 97.0%	92.8	94.3	98.5	98.3	97.8	91.8	-0.5	↓	15	5
		% of CCG Grant Decisions within 15 days Note: 2023/24 result 98.5%	95.3	85.3	91.0	95.0	89.3	87.3	-5.7	↑	19	5
		Proportion of SWF Budget Spent	82.7	84.3	64.3	99.0	123.9	130.0	24.9	↑	19	5
	16	Proportion of DHP Funding Spent	90.8	91.3	90.6	75.6	79.8	94.4	4.2	↑	27	8
Assets (B)		% of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use	98.2	98.2	98.2	97.6	95.7	86.1	-0.1	↓	1	1
	17	% of internal floor area of operational buildings in satisfactory condition	54.2	53.9	66.9	54.9	56.3	90.12	1.3	↑	32	8
Adult Social Work (A)		Home Care costs per hour for people aged 65 or over (£)	39.95	38.45	30.31	25.80	23.94	31.85	-7.2	↑	7	3
		Self-Directed Support spend on people aged 18 or over as a % of total Social Work spend on adults	4.1	4.1	5.0	3.6	4.6	8.7	1.0	↑	22	6
		% of people aged 65 or over with long term care needs receiving personal care at home	65.3	62.2	62.0	61.0	59.8	61.5	-1.2	↓	21	5
		% of adults supported at home who agree that their services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life (rolling 4 years)		79.20		73.25						
		% of adults supported at home who agree that they are supported to live as independently as possible		82.72		79.34						

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N/A³ Data not yet published.

	Note	Indicator Description	Moray					National Average	Relative Change 2021/22 to 2022/23		Rank 2022/23	
			2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	% change	Short Term Trend	Nat (32)	FG (8)
Culture & Leisure (B)		% of adults supported at home who agree that they had a say in how their help, care or support was provided		79.68		70.22						
		% of carers who feel supported in their caring role		30.70		31.59						
		Residential costs per week per resident for people aged 65 or over (£)	453	433	543	473	638	684	34.9	↓	13	3
		Rate of readmission to hospital within 28 days per 1,000 discharges (%)	77.1	77.7	100.9	85.9	82.2	101.7	-4.3	↑	7	1
		Proportion of care services graded 'good' (4) or better in Care Inspectorate inspections (%)	81.8	75.2	79.8	80.0	74.0	75.0	-6.0	↓	23	6
		Number of days people spend in hospital when they are ready to be discharged, per 1,000 population (75+)	1063	768	493	755	1061	919	40.0	↓	23	6
		Note: 2023/24 result 386										
		Gross cost per attendance at Sports facilities (£)	2.26	0.97	20.40	2.83	2.44	4.89	-13.0	↑	5	2
	18	Cost per Library visit (£)	1.48	1.70	3.21	2.93	6.55	2.81	123.5	↓	29	6
		Cost of Museums per visit (£)	2.81	2.41	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹					
	Cost of Parks & Open Spaces (£) per 1,000 population	15,234	11,680	12,955	15,918	15,548	23,311	-2.3	↑	6	2	
	% of adults satisfied with Libraries (rolling 4 years)	74.9	77.6	82.9	82.3	79.3	71.0	-3.0	↓	7	6	
	% of adults satisfied with Parks and Open Spaces (rolling 4 years)	85.1	82.4	85.1	85.7	86.3	87.3	0.6	↑	20	6	
	% of adults satisfied with Museums and Galleries (rolling 4 years)	58.1	60.1	64.1	62.3	58.3	71.3	-4.0	↓	24	7	
	% of adults satisfied with Leisure Facilities (rolling 4 years)	66.4	66.7	72.4	74.7	71.3	71.0	-3.4	↓	17	6	
Environment		Net cost per Waste collection per premises (£)	58.73	42.20	37.93	36.10	38.92	79.20	7.8	↓	6	1
		Net cost per Waste disposal per premises (£)	120.82	107.39	111.23	108.79	98.86	99.76	-9.1	↑	14	5

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	Note	Indicator Description	Moray					National Average	Relative Change 2021/22 to 2022/23		Rank 2022/23	
			2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	% change	Short Term Trend	Nat (32)	FG (8)
		Net Cost of Street Cleaning (£) per 1,000 population	9,650	7,931	7,908	8,501	8,785	16,068	3.3	↓	5	1
		Street Cleanliness Score	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	N/A ¹					
		Cost of Maintenance per Kilometre of Roads (£)	6,835	7,524	4,690	5,508	6,443	12,844	17.0	↓	3	1
		% of A Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment (rolling 2 years)	28.6	29.2	26.6	23.2	24.1	27.4	1.0	↓	14	2
		% of B Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment (rolling 2 years)	25.6	25.8	22.3	18.3	18.4	31.5	0.1	↓	3	1
		% of C Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment (rolling 2 years)	28.1	25.2	21.3	19.3	20.6	32.7	1.3	↓	5	1
		% of unclassified roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment (rolling 2 years)	31.1	35.5	35.0	32.0	30.3	36.4	-1.7	↑	9	2
		Cost of trading standards and environmental health (£) per 1,000 population	22,074	21,521	20,430	25,138	22,944	22,302	-8.7	↑	19	7
		Cost trading standards, money advice & citizens advice (£) per 1,000 population	5,528	5,579	5,104	5,169	5,790	7,060	12.0	↓	12	3
		Cost of environmental health (£) per 1,000 population	16,550	15,943	15,325	19,964	17,156	15,239	-14.1	↑	22	7
		% of total household waste arising that is recycled	57.0	59.0	54.9	52.2	58.0	43.3	5.8	↑	1	1
		% of adults satisfied with refuse collection (rolling 4 years)	82.8	73.5	69.8	71.7	76.0	78.0	4.3	↑	23	6
		% of adults satisfied with street cleaning (rolling 4 years)	65.3	58.6	58.3	58.7	62.7	58.3	4.0	↑	13	5
	Housing Services (A)		Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at year end as a % of rent due for the reporting year	2.4	2.6	3.2	3.8	4.5	9.6	0.7	↓	2
		% of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids	0.8	0.9	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.7	-0.2	↑	7	3
19		% of council dwellings meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standard	92.5	90.7	93.8	6.3	15.5	70.9	9.1	↑	26	6
		Average number of days to complete non-emergency repairs	7.5	9.5	6.1	8.0	5.7	9.7	-28.3	↑	2	1

N/A¹ Data no longer collected nationally / locally.

N/A² Result below 5; not published to protect confidentiality.

N/A³ Data not yet published.

	Note	Indicator Description	Moray					National Average	Relative Change 2021/22 to 2022/23		Rank 2022/23	
			2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	% change	Short Term Trend	Nat (32)	FG (8)
		% of council dwellings that are energy efficient	57.4	54.6	57.4	60.4	N/A ³	N/A ³				
Economic Development (B)		% Unemployed People Assisted into work from Council operated / funded Employability Programmes	3.4	0.6	5.3	5.9	10.1	12.9	4.3	↑	24	8
		Cost per Planning Application	5,285	4,512	4,887	5,426	6,348	5,538	18.0	↓	22	5
		Average time (Weeks) per Planning Application	6.7	6.4	6.7	6.2	6.3	12.0	0.3	↓	2	2
		% of procurement spent on local small / medium enterprises	23.9	21.9	23.6	25.2	24.8	29.6	-0.4	↓	19	3
	20	No of business gateway start-ups per 10,000 population Note: 2023/24 result 3.1	12.6	16.2	9.4	12.4	11.1	14.3	-10.1	↓	29	8
		Investment in Economic Development & Tourism per 1,000 population (£)	25,757	35,414	37,225	46,407	80,510	109,349	73.5	↑	24	6
		Proportion of people earning less than the living wage (%)	27.40	24.00	21.50	19.40	13.8	9.4	-5.6	↑	15	2
	21	Proportion of properties receiving superfast broadband (%)	83.2	84.7	85.7	85.6	87.2	95.5	1.6	↑	26	8
		Town Vacancy Rates (%)	6.9	6.9	10.9	10.6	11.0	12.0	0.4	↓	14	3
		Immediately available employment land as a % of total land allocated for employment purposes in the local development plan	49.0	24.2	34.8	14.9	14.9	22.8	-0.1	▬	20	3
		Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita (£)	23,807	23,742	22,380	23,172	24,282	27,039	4.8	↑	11	3
		Claimant count as a % of working age population (%) Note: 2023/24 result 2.1	2.0	2.5	4.9	3.7	2.4	3.2	-1.3	↑	10	3
		Claimant count as a % of 16-24 population (%) Note: 2023/24 result 2.1	3.1	3.5	6.7	4.5	2.8	3.5	-1.7	↑	11	3
Financial		Total useable reserves as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue	10.5	15.0	25.1	26.3	24.8	24.5	-1.5	↓	16	3
	22	Uncommitted General fund Balance as a % of council annual budgeted net revenue	6.2	7.5	7.2	2.2	2.1	3.2	-0.2	↓	25	8

N/A¹ Data no longer collected nationally / locally.

N/A² Result below 5; not published to protect confidentiality.

N/A³ Data not yet published.

	Note	Indicator Description	Moray					National Average	Relative Change 2021/22 to 2022/23		Rank 2022/23	
			2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	% change	Short Term Trend	Nat (32)	FG (8)
	23	Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	10.0	9.5	8.0	8.3	8.7	5.4	0.5	↓	29	7
		Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream – Housing Revenue Account	20.3	21.5	21.6	20.7	22.0	21.4	1.2	↓	14	5
	24	Actual outturn as a % of budgeted expenditure	100.1	96.0	89.6	91.1	93.4	98.6	2.3	↑	31	7
Climate Change (B)		CO2 emissions area wide per capita	5.11	5.01	4.11	5.11	N/A ³	N/A ³				
		CO2 emissions area wide: emissions within scope of LA per capita	7.77	7.34	6.39	7.39	N/A ³	N/A ³				
		CO2 emissions from Transport per capita	37.2	36.55	29.03	35.31	N/A ³	N/A ³				
		CO2 emissions from Electricity per capita	51.34	41.08	30.06	32.85	N/A ³	N/A ³				
		CO2 emissions from Natural Gas per capita	49.00	45.21	45.09	48.99	N/A ³	N/A ³				

N/A¹ Data no longer collected nationally / locally.

N/A² Result below 5; not published to protect confidentiality.

N/A³ Data not yet published.



Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)

Benchmarking Overview - Summary 2021-22



Summary

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) data provides evidence of trends in how resources are allocated, performance of services and levels of customer satisfaction. This year's results introduces data from 2021/22 and provides an evidence-based picture of the impact of the pandemic as well as the extraordinary effort and achievement during and following this exceptional period.

Exceptions based on 32 local authorities; areas of service delivery ranked in the lowest quartile are presented below as Notes to Benchmarking Results. Care should be taken when making comparison over time and with others due to the complexities around altered delivery and operating landscapes during the reporting period.

The [National Benchmarking Overview Report 2021/22](#) is available here.

Notes to Benchmarking Results (indicators ranked in the lowest quartile)	
No	Comment
Children's Services	
1-10	<p>The percentage of P1, P4 & P7 combined achieving expected CFE Levels for Literacy and Numeracy improved, encouraging given the disruption during Covid and the resulting lockdowns that had a significant impact on learning for children. The percentage point gap in between the least and most deprived pupils in the P1, P4 and P7 combined in numeracy increased against a generally a decreasing national trend.</p> <p>The percentage of secondary pupils gaining 5 or more awards at Level 5 improved and at Level 6 worsened slightly. Five of six average total tariff score measures remain in the lowest quartile.</p> <p>Analysis of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels 2022 was presented to the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 25 January 2023 (item 8 of the Agenda refers). Further analysis at individual school level and support and challenge discussions followed. Quality Improvement visits in primary during Terms 1 and 2 focused on Learning, Teaching and Assessment centred on common areas for development including increased moderation within schools and associated school groups, building practitioner confidence in teacher professional judgements against national benchmarks and cross school and sector moderation activities focused on literacy and numeracy leading to redeveloped action plans. In secondary education, virtual and extended in-person improvement model visits supported by revised processes were undertaken during term 2 and support and challenge visits in term 3 in line with the Secondary Attainment and Performance Framework.</p> <p>Curriculum structures of authorities' impact on tariff points available to students through the number of qualifications they can take, where more demanding qualifications gain more points than less demanding ones and in graded courses, a grade 'A' is equivalent to more points than a grade 'C' within the same course. Therefore in addition, locally complementary tariff scores is measured to apply parity of achievement of young people in their top five qualifications studied.</p>
Corporate Services	
11	The Gender Pay Gap at 6.95% is almost double the national average of 3.54%. The gap in pay is the percentage difference between male employees' average hourly rate of and female employees average hourly rate of pay, where a positive figure indicates male employees are, on average, paid more per hour than female employees. Across Scotland, results range from -6.2 to 11.4, reinforcing the likely variations in methods of calculation.
12	Of the 202k invoices sampled, 85% were paid within 30 days. With all payments made immediately on receipt of authorised invoices from services, a measure taken during the pandemic to support the local economy, the pace of authorisation by budget managers impacts on this result. Heads of Service are periodically informed of the performance of their service in processing in order to improve.
13	Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) may be awarded when the Council considers that a housing benefit or Universal Credit claimant requires further financial assistance towards housing costs. In 2021-22, of the estimated £790k funding available, 76% was spent. Scottish Government has increased funding by around 40% since pre-covid levels. Increased workload and priority being

	given to processing Self Isolation Support Grant impacted on the time available for DHPs, albeit in the reporting period there was less need for DHPs for new tenants or tenants looking to move to new tenancies. Scottish Government have since investigated and will reduce funding provided for future.
Assets	
14	The Moray Learning Estate is a significant contributory factor to the operational building condition indicator result. A programme of Local condition surveys has progressed, to provide a more accurate picture of schools' condition with historical surveys between 5-8 years old. Improvements are ongoing through the upgrade programme.
Adult Social Work	
15	Nationally there is significant variation in both the scale of growth and the pattern of uptake of direct payments (DP) or Personalised Managed Budgets (PMB). In Moray, of the £63m gross social work spend on over 18s, £2.3m was through Self-Directed Support. Self-Directed Support (SDS) Scotland published a report in September 2021, My Support My Choice; People's Experiences of Self-directed Support and Social Care in Moray which considered the views of 54 people in Moray who received SDS reporting positive views across several aspects. The research identified recommendations in response to concerns, which will inform and influence Health and Social Care Moray's ongoing efforts in responding to areas of challenge. Moray was one of three local authority areas chosen to work intensively with the SDS Project Team at Social Work Scotland to test out and develop the approved Framework Standards that will support future practice across Scotland. Locally, work has also progressed in creating an Option 2 Flexible Framework to support greater choice for individuals.
16	The percentage of adults supported at home who agree that their services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life is one of the national core indicators reflecting the aggregate impact of local person-centred work to improve personal outcomes. Moray's result (73.3%), below the national average (78.1%) was reported for the first time to the Integration Joint Board Audit, Performance and Risk Committee in June 2022.
Environmental Services	
17	Adults satisfied with refuse collection improved to 71.7%. The data source is the Scottish Household Survey and results are presented as a rolling average. Typically, responses total around 10,000, however responses were significantly affected during the pandemic when fieldwork was suspended and the survey was carried out using remote interviewing, therefore results are not comparable to previous years.
Housing Services	
18	The requirement for housing stock to meet Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) compliance was introduced in January 2021 and amended fire safety regulation from February 2022, both contributory factors to achieving target. Completion of fire safety upgrades and focus on heating installations will improve performance results in the percentage of council housing stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).
19	Conclusion of a major contract for Warm Homes Round 4 grant funding was delayed throughout the pandemic periods resulting in heating installation work being suspended for several months. Surveys continue and completion of heating systems programme is dependent on Air Source Heat Pumps and boilers availability, also affected by industry shortages therefore it is unlikely to see any significant improvement in the percentage of council dwelling that are energy efficient in the short term.
Economic Development	
20	In the period to March 2022, 88 people were assisted into work from council employability programmes. A suite of employability services is being delivered through the Local Employability Partnership Plan using Scottish Government and UK Shared Prosperity Funding. Annual progress around Employability and Skills was reported within the Information Report: Economic Recovery Plan to Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee on 22 March 2022 (para 11 refers)
21	In January 2021 Moray Speyside were awarded £350k over the next 3 years in support of its Moray Investment in Economic Development & Tourism Recovery Plan. In addition, a successful application was submitted to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) for the Coast to Country project, an integral part of Moray wide strategic staycation programme, in September 2021, that was match funded by the Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. It is anticipated that these opportunities will contribute to improved performance going forward.
Financial Sustainability	
22	The Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream – General Fund is an indicator of affordability and 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. This is factored into the Council's financial planning and will be used as a tool for assessing affordability in reviews of the capital plan.

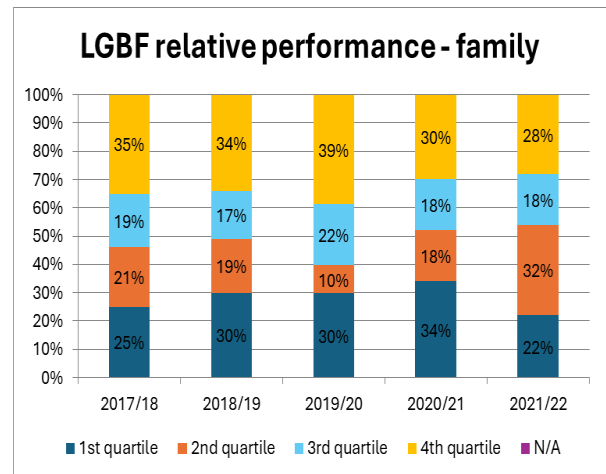
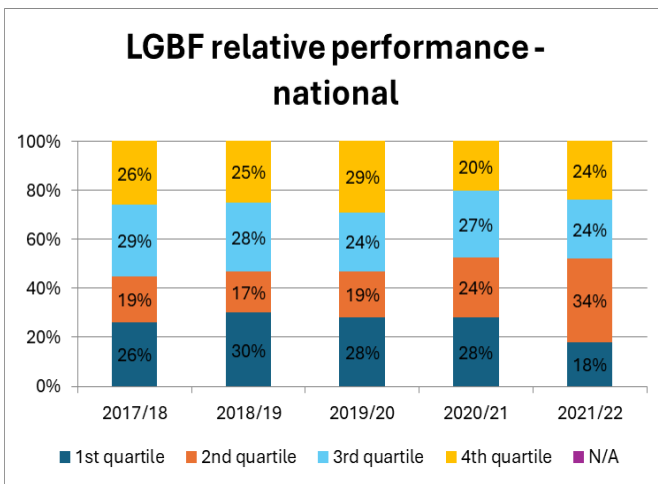
23	Actual Outturn is calculated as the total actual revenue expenditure as a percentage of the total budgeted revenue expenditure. Patterns of budgeted spend are impacted across all local authorities, albeit in different ways, with for an example an increase in the level of reserves held a common feature. Budget manager training is key to an accurate forecasting.
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Climate Change

24	Emissions within scope of Local Authority per capita increased and remain above the national average. The annual report on Energy Strategy/Actions was submitted to the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee on 15 November 2022. Publication of the Scottish Government’s The Heat in Buildings Strategy set the requirement for all local authorities to produce a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) by December 2023. In March 2021 the Council adopted the Climate Change Strategy which set the goal of the Council being carbon neutral by 2030 and approved the Route Map to Net Zero creating a framework for actions aimed at reducing carbon emissions.
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Caution on making direct comparison over time in the charts below due to the significant impact of Covid-19 on more recent results. Results show improving and worsening positions in equal share, but a general shift of results is evident from 1st to 2nd quartile.

Relative performance: Percentage of indicator rankings by quartiles –



2020/21
vs
2021/22



No change
2 indicators

Results improved
48 indicators

Results worsened
49 indicators

Results improved / worsened (past 12 months)

Results that improved by 5% or >

- 10% reduction in the gross cost of looked after children in residential-based services resulted in a fall in the cost per child per week and improvement in ranked position to the lowest recorded in over a decade
- £703k of Scottish Welfare Fund payments were made, 99% of budget, improving on previous years percentage spend
- Homecare costs per hour for people aged 65 or over decreased due to a reduction in total homecare costs and increase in care hours
- 13% reduction in net expenditure on care homes for older people against a small increase in number of long-stay residents gives a low cost per resident
- Significant reduction in rate of readmissions to hospital within 28 days per 1,000 discharges
- Increased attendance and income resulted in reduced cost per attendance at sports facilities
- Proportionately larger increase in number of library visits than net expenditure led to lower cost per library visit
- Increased number of premises for refuse collection against reduction in net expenditure gave a reduced cost of collection per premise, lowest nationally
- Percentage of unemployed people assisted into work from Council operated / funded Employability Programmes improved albeit as a result of a proportionately larger decrease in the model-based unemployment count than those assisted into work
- Slight improvement in average time in processing weeks per planning application
- The rise in the number of Business Gateway Start Ups led to an improved ratio per 10,000 population
- Significant increase in gross expenditure in Economic Development and Tourism resulted in improved investment per 1,000 population, albeit position remains less than half national average and in the lowest quartile
- GVA per capita increased slightly albeit the ranking remained unchanged
- Claimant count as a percentage of working age population reduced due to a significant fall in the claimant count overall and within the 16-24 population

Results that worsened by 5% or >

- 6% increase in gross expenditure and slight decrease in pupil numbers contributed to an overall increase in cost per primary school pupil
- 22% increase in pre-school gross expenditure resulting in another significant rise in cost per pre-school education place
- Reduction in the percentage of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas

- Attainment gap in literacy and numeracy between least and most deprived has widened, is above national average and dropped in ranking to the lower quartiles
- Percentage of children meeting developmental milestones decreased and ranked position dropped to second quartile
- Significant increase in percentage of child protection re-registrations within 18 months
- Sickness absence days per teacher and non-teacher increased because of a 44% and 34% rise in days lost against a 9% and 5% rise in FTE staff numbers respectively to levels similar to pre-Covid. 2020/21 results were unusually low, mirrored nationally
- The proportion of Discretionary Housing Payment funding spent reduced with the result now ranking second lowest nationally
- Drop in overall internal floor area of operational buildings considered satisfactory in condition maintaining ranking of lowest nationally
- Percentages of adults supported at home agreeing that they had a say in how services were provided or that they improved or maintained their quality of life both fell slightly
- Significant increase in the number of bed days people (75 and over) spend in hospital when ready to be discharged, rate per 1,000 population returning to pre-Covid levels, positioned mirrored nationally
- Increase in the cost of parks and open spaces per 1,000 population due to 23% increase in net expenditure against a slight increase in estimated population
- 7% increase in cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population due to slight increases in net expenditure
- 17% increase in the cost of road maintenance per kilometre resulting in an increased cost of maintenance per kilometre
- Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population increased as a result of 24% rise in gross expenditure largely attributed to environmental health
- Properties within scope of housing quality standard increased whilst those meeting standard considerably reduced resulting in drop in performance, a similar position reflected in national results
- Non-emergency house repairs rose considerably in a return to pre-Covid levels whilst working days to complete more than doubled last year, both contributing to an increase in average days to complete repairs
- Slight increase in planning applications against proportionately higher gross expenditure led to an increase in cost per planning application and a drop in ranked position nationally

<p>gaining 5+ awards at Levels 5 and 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross costs of looked after children in a community setting increased slightly against a drop in the number of children looked after resulting in a greater cost per child per week • Drop in overall average tariff SIMD quintile 1 (most deprived), result above national average 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of immediately available employment land dropped by half, albeit remaining in the 3rd quartile • Percentage of uncommitted General Fund Balance against budgeted net revenue fell by five percentage points to below national average and from the top to third quartile • CO2 emissions area wide and within scope of Local Authority per capita increased
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REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 11 JUNE 2024

SUBJECT: WORKFORCE WORKING GROUP

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To update Committee on the progress made and planned areas of work for the Workforce Working Group.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (B) (24) (a) and (c) and (25) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to formulation, supervision and review of the policy and practices of the Council for all employees.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee considers and notes the planned areas of work for the Workforce Working Group and that these will be included in the Workforce Plan and brought forward for future consideration by this Committee.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following consideration of the employee survey results, Corporate Committee on 30 January 2024 (para 12 of minute refers) agreed to establish a Short Life Working Group to consider workforce information which supports the Elected Members and officers to address the issues and take assurance or otherwise of progress being made in the development of the culture the Council wishes to promote.
- 3.2 On 23 April 2024, the Corporate Committee (para 13 of minute refers) agreed the remit of the Group is to consider and review the data and plans the Council has to ensure effective workforce planning to ensure there is organisational capacity to deliver services through the effective use of the Council workforce, including a positive workforce culture. The Committee also agreed the Terms of Reference.

- 3.3 The first meeting of the Group took place on 22 May 2024 to establish the current position and the agenda that the Group would wish to take forward. The Group received a presentation from the Head of Human Resources, ICT and Organisational Development on the workforce data that is available and how it is used to inform workforce planning corporately and within services. It was identified that the data would provide useful background information for consideration of specific priority workforce issues linked to the Workforce Plan.
- 3.4 The Group identified the following themes for consideration for inclusion in the Workforce Plan and future consideration by Committee:
- a. Apprenticeships, young workforce;
 - b. Developing the workforce, career progression, skills development – with a view to assisting with recruitment and contributing to a positive culture;
 - c. Recruitment – addressing the range of challenges across services and jobs;
 - d. Readiness for change – ensuring the workforce culture and skills are in place to enable and support change;
 - e. Absences – noted increasing trend of absence rates and need to tackle from health and well-being and financial perspectives;
 - f. Leadership development (noted as being in Best Value Action Plan).
- 3.5 The above are being incorporated into a draft Workforce Plan which the Group will review at its next meeting on 27 June 2024 and a report will come to this Committee to consider the annual review of the Workforce Plan and Strategy on 27 August 2024.

3 SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Effective workforce planning takes account of council priorities and ensures that the workforce is aligned with these and prepared for their delivery. Therefore, the work of the Group which informs the workforce plan will contribute the achievement of the council's priorities.

(b) Policy and Legal

None.

(c) Financial Implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

Workforce planning uses data to identify organisational risks and issues that may arise associated with the workforce. Therefore, the work of the Working Group will contribute to ensuring that workforce risks are identified and appropriately prioritised for action in the context of the Council's corporate priorities and incorporated into the Workforce Plan.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no specific staff resources allocated for the Workforce Working Group which will limit the work that can be delivered and the timescales for delivery. However, this is recognised and so work is being aligned with the Workforce Plan as far as possible at this stage. It may be necessary to give consideration to how to resource particular areas of work depending on what emerges from the further work of the Group.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no specific socio economic or equalities implications identified as a result of this report.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

There are no specific implications.

(i) Consultations

Trade union representatives are part of the Group and contribute to the development of the work of the Group.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Workforce Working Group has held its first meeting and identified areas for inclusion in the Workforce Plan and future reporting to committee. The next report to this Committee will be on the Workforce Plan on 27 August 2024.

Author of Report: Denise Whitworth, Depute Chief Executive (Education Communities and Organisational Development)

Background Papers:

Ref: SPMAN-1108985784-982



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 11 JUNE 2024

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (FINANCIAL SERVICES) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2024

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 31 March 2024.
- 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 2024; and**
- (ii) **notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

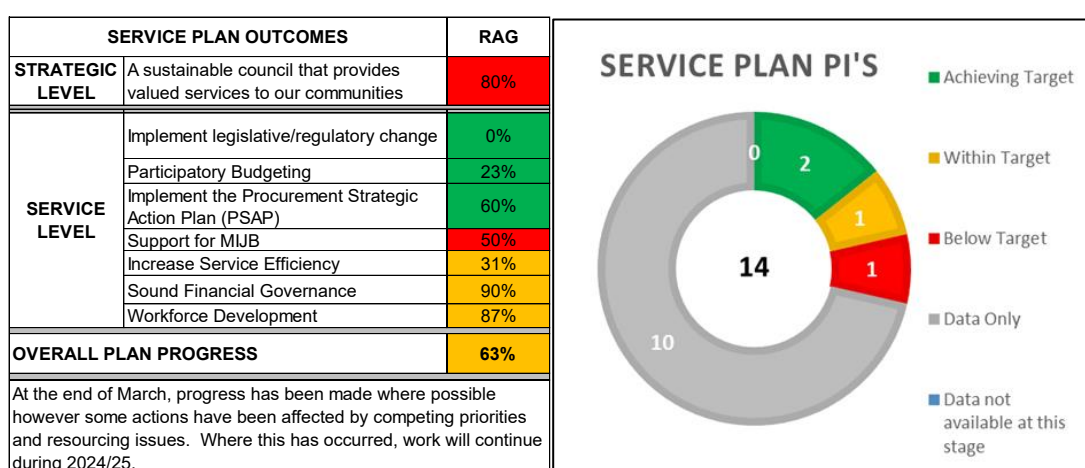
3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Moray Council approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of 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 2022/23, initially published in February 2024, will be refreshed in June. The full suite can be viewed via the [LGBF Dashboard](#). In total, there were eight indicators covering Financial Services published, three indicators ranked in the top 16 local authorities when compared nationally and two indicators ranked in the top 4 when compared in our family group of 8 local authorities. Overall, results improved and worsened from previous year performance equally across four indicators each. Published indicators for this service have been incorporated within the relevant section of this report depending on whether used to evidence progress against strategic, service plan or service performance priorities. 2023/24 LGBF data will be available early 2025.
- 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.



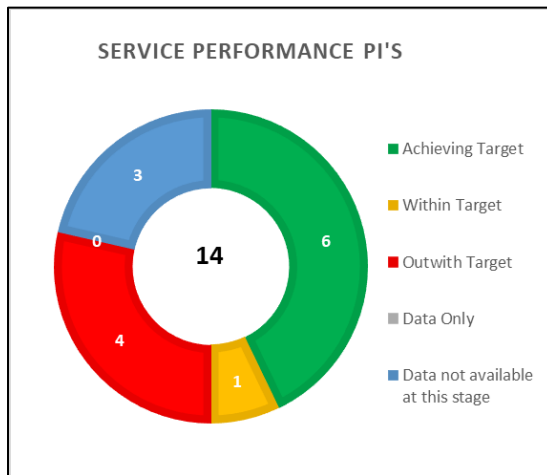
- Strategic Outcomes – successes**
- 4.4 Nothing to report.
- Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support**
- 4.5 With the recent approval of the new Corporate Plan at a meeting of Moray Council on 28 February 2024 (para 5 of the Minute refers), work is ongoing to ensure the medium to long term financial strategy reflects agreed priorities and incorporates the Transformation Strategy. (Action FIN23-24.Strat-4.1).
- Service Level Outcomes – successes**
- 4.6 Development of a new e-form for Accounts Payable is complete with a roll-out in progress across Council departments. Early adopters include those involved with large volumes of invoices, such as Property, Finance, Catering and Health & Social Care. (Action FIN23-24.Serv-5.5g).
- 4.7 Budget Manager Training has been successfully reviewed and delivered to 21 Budget Managers. Feedback continues to be positive with all returned forms scoring the training as good or excellent. (Action FIN23-24.Serv-5.6b, PIs FS017 and FS017b).
- 4.8 Although out-with original target timescales, recruitment to a new trainee position within Accountancy is complete. (Action FIN23-24.Serv-5.7b).

Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.9 Due to other workload priorities and resourcing issues, advance work relating to IFRS 16 was placed on hold. Implementation began on 01 April 2024 and work to ensure this is reflected in the accounts for 2024/25 will recommence following the 2023/24 audit. (Action FIN23-24.Serv-5.1).
- 4.10 Participatory Budgeting allocated spend has fallen this year to 23.12% of the 1% target, with development of the Letterfourie/Netherha playpark now planned for early 2024/25. During quarter 4, work relating to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was finalised with 8 Arts and Culture projects sharing the available £91,000. (Action FIN23-24.Serv-5.2, PI FS215).
- 4.11 Although out with target timescales, support for effective procurement and commissioning to Moray Integrated Joint Board (MIJB) continues in line with the action plan. (Action FIN23-24.Serv-5.4).
- 4.12 Conflicting workload priorities and limited staff resources have resulted in no further progress with six actions relating to increasing service efficiency. Work will continue as other priorities dictate following completion of audits and annual accounts. However, it should be noted that the uptake of e-billing for Council tax is an improving trend with uptake now 9.3% against a target of 7.2%. (Actions FIN22-23 Serv-5.5a-e, PI FICT138).
- 4.13 Following the implementation of a revised Financial Reporting Template, used in reporting to the Moray Growth Deal Board, two projects are now progressing and budgets will be updated when full business case profiles are agreed. (Action FIN23-24.Serv-5.6a).
- 4.14 All ERDPs within Payments and Accountancy are complete for 2023/24. Due to workload priorities and limited staff resources, ERDPs are yet to take place in Taxation. This will be progressed as early as possible in 2024/25. (Action FIN23-24.Serv-5.7a, ERDP.FIN3).

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 For 2022/23, the percentage of invoices sampled that were paid in 30 days has improved from 85.49% to 89.37%, moving Moray out of the lowest quartile and only slightly below the Scottish average of 90.6% and family group average of 91.4%. As this relates to Budget Manager authorisation rather than the performance of Financial Services, it is anticipated this rate will continue to improve with reviewed Budget Manager training now being delivered. (PI CORP8).

Operational Indicators – challenges and actions to support

- 5.4 Low levels of uncommitted general fund balance as a percentage of council annual budgeted net revenue, may mean a Council could struggle if any unknown financial expenditure requirements were to occur. In 2022/23, Moray moved into the lowest quartile with an uncommitted balance of 2.1% against a Scottish rate of 3.2%. With a comparator authority average of 2.7%, Moray is also ranked lowest within the assigned family group. The Council's current reserves policy, approved by Council on 15 September 2021 (para 29 of the Minute refers), is to hold £5m as free reserves, around 2% of budgeted revenue expenditure on General Services, levels remain within agreed tolerances. (PI SFINSUS02).
- 5.5 The ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream is a Prudential Indicator identifying affordability around debt financing costs. It highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure and aims to ensure capital plans are within sustainable limits. With a rate of 8.7%, Moray remains within the lowest quartile against a Scottish average of 5.4% and a family group average of 5.3%. Prudential Indicators were reported to Council on 28 February 2024 (para 9 of the Minute refers) with estimates showing an increase in financing costs over the next 4 years due to the requirement to increase borrowing to fund capital expenditure, particularly in the Learning Estate and Moray Growth Deal. This is factored into the Council's financial planning and is used as a tool for assessing affordability of the capital plan which is under review. (PI SFINSUS03).
- 5.6 To ensure spending is accurately forecast, actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure is recorded. Although actual outturn improved in 2022/23 to 93.4%, Moray remains in the lowest quartile; below both the Scottish average of 98.6% and family group average of 97.6%. Budget

management is key to accurate forecasting. The completed review of Budget Manager training aims to improve knowledge, understanding and awareness, and as a result continuing improvement on actual outturn should follow. (PI SFINSUS05) Part of the underspend arises from the decisions made in year to take a loans pool holiday. The budget was not adjusted to reflect this decision.

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 reporting period, Financial Services received 14 complaints and closed 11. 8 (73%) were closed as frontline with 3 (27%) as investigative. A total of 8 complaints (73%) met the target timescale of either 5 or 20 working days.
- 6.3 2 complaints linked to the Taxation Service were partially upheld due to missed deadlines. Staff have been reminded of the need to deal with all enquiries within agreed timeframes.
- 6.4 Between October and March, no MP/MSP enquiries were received by Financial Services.

Other Performance (not included in the 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 Integrated Impact Assessment is not needed as this report is to inform the Committee on performance.
- (h) **Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**
None.
- (i) **Consultations**
The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Chief Financial Officer, Service Managers, Legal Services, the Equal Opportunities Officer and Caroline O'Connor, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

8. **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 **At the end of March 2024, progress against the Financial Services Service Plan is 63% complete. Several actions have been affected by competing priorities and resourcing issues. Work will continue with these in 2024/25.**

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-1293228629-1092



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 11 JUNE 2024

SUBJECT: FINANCIAL SERVICE PLAN 2024-25

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 2024-25.
- 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.**

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 It should be noted that actions from the Best Value Action Plan agreed by the Corporate Committee on 23 April 2024 (item 5a of the Agenda refers) will be monitored and reported out with the Service Plan process.
- 3.3 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.

- 3.4 As well as identifying service developments and improvement, the Service Plan Framework requires an assessment of the output and outcome requirements for the services based on the Council's priorities, statutory and regulatory requirements and other relevant factors such as Public Sector Improvement Framework (PSIF) or other equivalent service improvement tool 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.
- 3.5 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 the 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 milestone are provided.
- 3.6 A summary of progress is given below based on the annual review carried out for the service area.
- 3.7 Reference is also made to the report to Moray Council on 28 February 2024 when the Council agreed the Corporate Plan for 2024-2029 and that the approach to delivery and performance management through service and strategic plans, which contain specific actions that support the delivery of priority areas in the new council corporate plan. This plan focusses on the period from April 2024 to April 2025.

2023/24 Updates

3.8 Financial Services

3.8.1 Progress on planned work (success)

- Improved financial reporting for Moray Growth Deal with reports meeting target timescales.
- Workforce planning tasks complete including recruitment to new trainee position.

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

- Service efficiency work in relation to Taxation and Accountancy has been slow to progress due to other priorities and reduced staff resources.
- Participatory Budgeting has continued this year with projects for Open Spaces, Active Travel and Arts & Culture but expansion of the process still required.

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

- Strengthening the financial planning and management process to ensure provision of clear, accurate and timely information and sustainability of future service provision in line with the Best Value Action Plan.
- Implementation of IFRS 16 (from 01 April 2024).
- Further develop Participatory Budgeting.
- Progress efficiency work in relation to the digital approach for Taxation and Accountancy.

Service Plan for 2024/25

- 3.9 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 services 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.

However, there are a number of areas for development that have been identified where there are concerns about the availability of resources to deliver the required outcomes within an acceptable period of time. It may be necessary to report back to committee to consider resources or re-prioritisation of work to ensure adequate progress on these key priorities.

Workforce Planning takes place with service management teams and includes review of workforce data such as turnover and absence, identification of key posts for planning, recruitment issues and plans, training and development requirements in the context of council and service priorities. It is also of note that the services are carefully prioritising work to reflect the restricted capacity of their teams. This is exacerbated by hard to fill vacancies, absence, and pressing operational work that cannot be re-prioritised.

f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

g) Equalities

Managers consider equalities issues for staff and service users when addressing 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 Chief Financial Officer has worked with her management team to prepare the Service 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 service priorities targeted for 2024/25. 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. The Service Plan identifies the resources allocated to each service and how these will be utilised to deliver core service requirements and improvements.**

Author of Report:
Ref:

Rhona Gunn, Lorraine Paisey

FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN

1. Service Definition:	FINANCIAL SERVICES: Financial Services provide support to services across the Council, to Grampian Valuation Joint Board and in partnership with NHS colleagues, contribute towards the support of Moray Integration Joint Board. Main functions are Accountancy, Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable, Banking, Insurance, Procurement, Taxation (Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates), Treasury Management and VAT.
2. Service Resources:	FTE 60.36 Budget £2,116,000

3. What have we identified for improvement in 2024/25	What evidence did we use to identify this improvement? Please add benchmark information wherever available and relevant to the improvement.
Ensure financial sustainability by strengthening the financial planning process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refresh the council's short term and medium to long term financial strategies, Capital Strategy and Reserves policy - Identify savings through increased pace of transformation and develop a savings plan for 2024/25 - Review affordability and slippage relating to the capital plan and strengthen capital monitoring - Review the forecasting process to ensure accurate projections 	Identified as an area for improvement in the Best Value Audit Review 2024
Working with communities to further develop Participatory Budgeting	Identified as an area for improvement in the Best Value Audit Review 2024
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

Note: Progress against BV Actions will be monitored and reporting out with Service Plan process

FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN

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) Strategic Framework: Financial, Workforce, Digital, Transformation Strategies. Performance Management Framework	Financial Planning Per detail below	Financial plans show how the local authority will align service provision with funding to ensure the sustainability of its services in the future. Short to Medium Term Financial Plans show a balanced budget with reduced reliance on reserves. Long-term financial plans prepare for a range of funding levels and linked to strategic priorities.	Financial planning is viewed as improving in line with recommendations by reporting of the 2023/24 Annual Audit Review		LP	1 BV 3.3
	Refresh the Council's Short to Medum Term Financial Strategy	Plan reflects approved budget and further SG funding for 2024/25 Revised savings target 2025/26 Thematic approach set out in more detail	Strategy agreed to reduce funding gap in 2024/25 in year and address funding gap for 2025/26 Savings targets agreed	June 2024		

FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN

		Link to latest Medium to Long Term Financial Strategy Savings Plan for 2024/25 agreed	All reserves adequate for purpose	August 2024		
	Review Reserves Policy	Reflect current planned use of ear-marked reserves	Use of ear-marked reserves mapped out	September 2024		
	Refresh the Council's Medium to Long Term Financial Strategy	To reflect Transformation Strategy and Action Plan	Removal of budget gap	October 2024		
	Review affordability of Capital Plan	Develop approach to implement cap	Cap mechanism agreed	August 2024		
		Update Corporate Asset Management Plan	CAMP reflects capital cap	September 2024		
		Revise Capital Strategy	Strategy reflects cap	September 2024		
			Affordable, prioritised capital plan	January 2025		
	Review forecasting procedures for revenue budget	More accurate estimated actual	Estimated actual reported	December 2024		
			Estimated outturn v actual outturn	June 2025		
	Strengthen capital monitoring	Automated monthly monitoring reports	Reports generated per agreed timetable	October 2024		
		More accurate forecasts of capital spend	Lower level of slippage at year end	June 2025		

FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN

(CP) Strategic Framework: Financial, Workforce, Digital, Transformation Strategies. Performance Management Framework	Partnership working (MIJB): Develop arrangement for additional assurance on financial management	Clear and effective governance and accountability arrangements in place for performance monitoring and the early identification of any significant financial risks.	Collective agreement that specific delivery plans in place to reduce budget deficit that can be relied upon for partner financial planning	January 2025	LP	4 BV 2.2
	Further develop Participatory Budgeting	Successful implementation of PB projects within the community	Year on year increase in amount allocated until reach of 1% of budget (as defined by COSLA) is allocated via PB process	March 2025	LP	1 BV5.1
		Capture more information on community led decision making				4

FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating (1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing, 5 for on hold)
Implement legislative / regulatory changes	Implement requirements of IFRS 16 from 01 April 2024	Fully compliant accounts	Audit opinion	September 2026	LP	1
Implement the annual Procurement Action Plan (PSAP)	Implement the actions identified as priorities in the Procurement Action Plan	Strategic Action Plan targets achieved	80% of PSAP indicators achieving or exceeding target	March 2025	LP	2
Implement recommendations from the Annual Audit Report	<p>Implement the actions agreed with the auditors</p> <p>Review GL journals and determine if authorisation can be proportionately introduced</p> <p>Review reconciliation of PPE note to FAR</p> <p>Review assets with nil NBV</p> <p>Review terminology used to describe Group reserves</p>	<p>Improved processes</p> <p>Amend process if considered proportionate</p> <p>Prepare reconciliation</p> <p>Determine if any amendments required</p> <p>Determine is any amendments required</p>	<p>Auditor agreement that actions implemented in full</p> <p>Record review and any process amendments</p> <p>Working paper</p> <p>Audit trail for treatment of assets with nil NBV</p> <p>Amendments made</p>	September 2024	LP	1

FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN

	Review classification of assets under construction	Reclassify any assets which became operational during 2023/24	Assets correctly disclosed			
Implement actions from the Corporate Asset Management Plan	Implement the actions assigned to Financial Services	Improve Asset Management Planning	Actions complete within due dates	March 2025	LP	2
Procurement Support for MIJB	Support and drive forward the working relationships required for effective procurement and commissioning	Reduced backlog of contracts requiring review	Revised contractual arrangements in place	Milestones as per MIJB Action Plan TBC	LP / JH	1
Increase Service Efficiency – Taxation	Increase efficiency and availability of digital processes for Taxation; - Automation of Council Tax back-room processes and promote availability	Develop CT services for delivery on-line	Uptake of self service (currently not available)	March 2025	JT	2
		Bank agreement for DD		30 October 2024		
		Proof of concept for on-line change of address		30 October 2024		
		On-line DD available		31 March 2025		
	- Streamline Council Tax e-billing sign up process	On-line change of address available	31 March 2025			
		Improved e-billing uptake	Increased uptake of e-billing	31 March 2025		3
		Proof of concept Streamlined system operational		30 November 2024		
				31 March 2025		

FINANCIAL SERVICES SERVICE PLAN

	- Non-Domestic Rates e-billing	Introduce e-billing for NDR payers. Proof of concept System operational Once introduced, identify best practice with other LAs to maximise uptake	Generate and maximise uptake of NDR e-billing	30 November 2024 31 March 2025		2
Increase Service Efficiency – Accounts	Increase efficiency and availability of digital processes for Accounts; - Investigate workflow for authorisation database	Introduction of workflow to facilitate management of task	Database up to date	March 2025	LP	2
Increase Service Efficiency - Payments	Increase efficiency and availability of digital processes for Payments; - Roll out e-Accounts Payable form	Introduction of workflow to streamline process for Payments and service departments	More efficient and timely processing of invoices	September 2024	DL	4
Health and Wellbeing	Ensure revised operational implementation of absence management procedures are applied by managers	Absence is managed effectively, and levels of absence are reduced efficiently and timeously	reduction in number of days absence per employee	March 2025	LP and Managers	2



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 11 JUNE 2024

SUBJECT: COMMON GOOD FUNDS – SUMMARY EXPENDITURE FOR 2023/24 AND ESTIMATED DISPOSABLE INCOME FOR 2024/25

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the final position of Common Good Funds at 31 March 2024 and the estimated income available for disbursement in 2024/25.

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (16) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to dealing with the Management and Investment of funds including Common Good.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the disbursements approved for 2023/24 for each of the Common Good Funds shown in APPENDIX 1;**
- (ii) approve the carry forward of the undisbursed balances for 2023/24 for the Buckie, Cullen, Dufftown, Elgin, Forres, Portknockie, Keith and Findochty Funds to be made available in 2024/25;**
- (iii) agree the estimated income available for disbursement in 2024/25 shown in APPENDIX 1;**
- (iv) approve that Millbuies is held separately from Elgin Common Good Fund and that the harvesting income is excluded from the two thirds distribution policy and is re-invested in Millbuies Park as shown in Appendix 1;**
- (v) note the Balance Sheet for each Common Good APPENDIX 2; and**
- (vi) note Common Good Fund asset register APPENDIX 3.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The origins of Common Good Funds in Scotland are late 15th Century and they have been defined as “all property of a Royal Burgh not acquired under statutory powers or held under specified trusts”.
- 3.2 Until 1975, the Town Councils or those Burghs in Moray having Common Good Funds managed them. Moray District Council took over the management until 1996 when this Council took over responsibility. The Members of the Council are in a similar position to Trustees.
- 3.3 The Council must retain the ability to continue to make grants from the Common Good Funds to future generations. For that reason preservation of the Common Good Funds’ Capital is essential.
- 3.4 In addition, it is essential to use the revenue generated from the Funds to maintain the land and buildings held as assets.
- 3.5 The Council is obliged to maintain the Common Good Funds’ Balance whether as land, buildings or cash. Common Good Funds’ cash balances can be applied to acquire assets or to carry out major repairs but Members must be satisfied that such acquisitions or works carried out will provide a long term and lasting benefit to the particular Community as a whole. The same criteria have to apply to any disposal of assets.
- 3.6 The Policy and Resources Committee on 20 June 2001 established the Council’s current policy regarding distribution of the annual income available (paragraph 7 of Minute refers). At that time the Committee noted that the true value of money depreciates over time and in an attempt to keep pace and at the same time to be able to make reasonable levels of grants from the income earned, it agreed a policy of distributing two-thirds of the annual income earned with the remaining one-third being retained to maintain the value of the funds.
- 3.7 The Policy and Resources Committee agreed on 16 January 2002 to continue with the policy of distribution of two-thirds of the estimated annual income available from the Common Good Funds (paragraph 22 of Minute refers). The remaining third was to be re-invested in order to maintain the funds for future generations.
- 3.8 In order to speed up the processing of grant applications, the Policy and Resources Committee delegated authority to the Head of Financial Services in consultation with Local Members to consider grant applications and make appropriate awards. Moray Council agreed on 13 March 2019 (para 10 of Minute refers) that if two thirds or more of local members are in agreement it is sufficient authority to proceed under delegated authority of the Head of Financial Services. If the agreement of at least two thirds cannot be obtained on an application then the application will be reported to Policy and Resources Committee.

- 3.9 The Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 2 September 2008 (paragraph 12 of Minute refers) agreed to allow unspent balances to be carried forward and be available to use in the following two years. Any unused funds after two years are added back to the Fund balance. At the same meeting the Committee also agreed that any overspends at the end of the financial year would be limited to 25% of disposable income in that year and would be replaced over the following two years.
- 3.10 Members should note that the Council is required to account for depreciation on Common Good assets. As this is an accounting entry only, the disposable income continues to be calculated prior to the deduction of depreciation.

4. 2023/24 DISPOSABLE INCOME AND DISBURSEMENTS APPROVED

- 4.1 **APPENDIX 1** shows details of the estimated income and actual disbursements approved for 2023/24 for each of the Common Good Funds.
- 4.2 Elgin Common Good - the 2023/24 variance in Investment Property Income is a result of the tenancy of 239 High Street ending and the delay in leasing to a new tenant due to building works required.
- 4.3 Where rental rebates are awarded, the full amount of the rent is shown as income when calculating the disburseable income and the rental rebate is shown as a disbursement.

5. 2024/25 DISPOSABLE INCOME

- 5.1 **APPENDIX 1** details the current financial position of the Common Good Funds and the estimated disposable income for 2024/25.
- 5.2 The estimated income figure is calculated to assist Local Members' decision making when allocating grants. The figures are only there as a guide. If a supported application would breach the estimated income limit, disbursement can be made but will require Committee approval.
- 5.3 As can be seen in **APPENDIX 1** there are a number of projects which have already been approved by Local Members for 2024/25.
- 5.4 In the calculation of disburseable income it has been assumed that the full amount of rental income due in 2024/25 will be received.
- 5.5 The interest for 2024/25 has been calculated using a two year fixed PWLB rate of 5.41% as at the 1 April 2024.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- (a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**
None.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council's adoption of the policy of retaining one third of disposable income in each financial year will protect the capital for each of the Common Good Funds and ensure their sustainability in the future.

(c) Financial implications

The financial implications are contained in the body of the report and are detailed in the Appendices.

(d) Risk Implications

There is a risk of overspends exceeding 25% of disposable income if any unforeseen emergency major repairs are required for properties owned by Common Good Funds. Close monitoring of costs and the condition of properties will be undertaken by officers in order to mitigate this risk.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

The condition of all Common Good properties will be monitored in order to keep reactive repairs to a minimum.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

None.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

No climate change and biodiversity impacts arise directly from this report.

(i) Consultations

Local Members for each Common Good Fund have been consulted on disbursements for 2023/24 the Legal Services Manager and Democratic Services Manager have been consulted and any comments have been addressed in the report.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The final outturn for 2023/24 and the budgeted income available for disbursement in 2024/25 for each of the Common Good Funds, which the Council administers, is detailed in APPENDIX 1, the Balance Sheet for each Common Good Fund is shown in APPENDIX 2 and the Common Good Fund asset register is shown in APPENDIX 3.

Author of Report: Nicky Gosling, Accountant
Background Papers:
Ref: SPMAN-1293228629-1095

Buckie Common Good Fund

Actual Financial Performance against Estimated Figures for 2023-24

	Estimate £	Actual £	Variance £
Property Income	2,715	2,716	(1)
Investment Income	38,374	38,280	94
	41,089	40,996	93
Less Administrative Costs	2,085	2,029	56
	39,004	38,967	37
Two thirds	26,003		
C/f undisbursed income from prior years	24,611		
	<u>50,614</u>		
Grants Awarded During the Year			
Buckie Royal British Legion	4,000		
Buckie Community Alert Day	1,000		
Buckie & District Seamen's Memorial Chapel	1,200		
Buckie & District Community Council	1,000		
Buckies Roots	5,000		
Buckie & District Community Council-Letterfourie Park	10,000		
The Fisherman's Hall Trust	8,700		
Buckie North Church of Scotland	5,633		
	<u>36,533</u>		
Other Expenditure			
Merson Park Pavilion – site clearance	625		
	<u>625</u>		
Undisbursed Income			
		<u><u>13,456</u></u>	

Estimated Figures for Disposable Income in 2024/25

Buckie	
Estimated Disposable Income	£ 61,437
Undisbursed Income (unused limit carry forward from 2023/24)	<u>13,456</u>
Total Available for Disbursement 2024/25	74,893
<u>Disbursements approved to Date:</u>	
• Buckie Active Schools	688
• Buckie Heritage Centre – Rental Rebate	2,700
• Grounds Maintenance Recharge	6,000
Projected Income Available for Disbursement	65,505

Cullen Common Good Fund

Actual Financial Performance against Estimated Figures for 2023-24

	Estimate £	Actual £	Variance £
Property Income	-	-	-
Investment Income	4,226	4,220	6
	4,226	4,220	6
Less Administrative Costs	41	92	(51)
	4,185	4,128	57
Two thirds	2,790		
C/f undisbursed income from prior years	2,693		
Total Budget Available for Disbursement 2023/24	5,483		
Grants Awarded During the Year			
Robert the Bruce Endowment	2		
Cullen & Deskford Community Council	350		
	352		
Undisbursed Income	5,131		

Cullen Common Good Fund

Estimated Figures for Disposable Income in 2024/25

Cullen	
Estimated Disposable Income	£ 6,596
Undisbursed Income (unused limit carry forward from 2023/24)	5,131
Total Available for Disbursement 2024/25	11,727
<u>Annual Recurring Requests Outstanding:-</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert the Bruce Endowment (This amount is £2.10 accrued annually until sum reaches a reasonable amount to be paid out)	2
Projected Income Available for Disbursement	11,725

Dufftown Common Good Fund

Actual Financial Performance against Estimated Figures for 2023-24

	Estimate £	Actual £	Variance £
Property Income	-	-	-
Investment Income	362	362	-
Other Income	8	8	-
	370	370	-
Less Administrative Costs	4	94	(90)
	366	276	90
Two thirds	244		
C/f undisbursed income from prior years	415		
Total Budget Available for Disbursement 2023/24	659		

Grants Awarded During the Year

-

Undisbursed Income

659

Estimated Figures for Disposable Income in 2024/25

Dufftown	
Estimated Disposable Income	£ 508
Undisbursed Income (unused limit carry forward from 2023/24)	<u>483</u>
Total Available for Disbursement 2024/25	991
<u>Disbursements approved to date:-</u>	
• Grounds Maintenance Recharge	508
Projected Income Available for Disbursement	483

Elgin Common Good Fund

Actual Financial Performance against Estimated Figures for 2023-24

	Estimate	Actual	Variance
	£	£	£
Property Income	32,362	19,864	12,498
Investment Income	37,923	37,301	622
	<u>70,285</u>	<u>57,165</u>	<u>13,120</u>
Less Administrative Costs	2,836	2,770	66
	67,449	54,395	13,054
Two thirds	44,966		
C/f undisbursed income from prior years	53,600		
Less previously agreed expenditure for property repairs	<u>(4,397)</u>		
Total Budget Available for Disbursement 2023/24	<u>94,169</u>		

Actual Grants Awarded

New Elgin & Ashgrove Public Hall

8,000

Moray Firth Credit Union	2,548
Andersons Care Home	7,500
Andersons Care Home	6,000
The Rotary Club of Elgin – Bonfire 2023	5,000
	<u>29,048</u>

Other Expenditure

Contribution to Sonic Seagull Control 2023-24	10,616
Free After 3 Parking Dec 23 - Contribution	11,000
Gull Proof Bins – Elgin Retail Park	4,774
Ladyhill Grass Cutting	600
Cooper Park Aviary Demolition	1,904
Millbuiies Forest Management	9,500
239 High St Repairs	2,299
Council Tax 239 High St, Elgin	1,873
Running Costs 239 High St, Elgin	2,257
	<u>35,323</u>

Undisbursed Income	<u><u>29,798</u></u>
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Estimated Figures for Disposable Income in 2024/25

Elgin	
	£
Estimated Disposable Income	73,691
Undisbursed Income (unused limit carry forward from 2023/24)	<u>29,798</u>
Total Available for Disbursement 2024/25	103,489
<u>Disbursements approved to Date:</u>	
• Parking Enforcement – Police Scotland	10,000
• Sonic Seagull Deterrent	26,760
• Repairs to 239 High Street	30,201
• Grounds Maintenance Recharge	11,000
• Ladyhill Grass Cutting	636
• Mum Days	500
Projected Income Available for Disbursement	24,392

Forres Common Good Fund

Actual Financial Performance against Estimated Figures for 2023-24

	Estimate £	Actual £	Variance £
Property Income	23,151	23,571	(420)
Investment Income	11,068	11,138	(70)
Other Income	-	200	(200)
	34,219	34,909	(690)
Less Administrative Costs	2,631	3,364	(733)
	31,588	31,545	43
Two thirds	21,059		
C/f undisbursed income from prior years	2,919		
Total Budget Available for Disbursement 2023/24	23,978		

Grants Awarded During the Year

Forres Christmas Lights Insurance	600
Forres Heritage Trust Ltd	400
Forres Mechanics	12,500
Forres in Bloom 2023	5,000
Forres Theme Day	1,000
Forres Area Community Trust	1,000
Forres Community Council	500
Forres Community Council – unused grant	(180)
Ewan Watson	500
Forres Rotary Bonfire 2023	1,073
Then & Now Forres House 50th	1,000
	<hr/>
Undisbursed Income	585

Estimated Figures for Disposable Income in 2024/25

Forres	
Estimated Disposable Income	£ 36,410
Undisbursed Income (unused limit carry forward from 2023/24)	<u>585</u>
Total Available for Disbursement 2024/25	36,995
<u>Disbursements approved to Date:</u>	
• FCCA – Public Activity Licence	333
• Forres in Bloom 2024	5,000
• Transition Town Forres – Rental Rebate	8,700
• Grounds Maintenance Recharge	22,962

Projected Income Available for Disbursement	Nil
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Portknockie Common Good Fund

Actual Financial Performance against Estimated Figures for 2023-24

	Estimate £	Actual £	Variance £
Investment Income	1,246	1,246	-
	1,246	1,246	-
Less Administrative Costs	62	12	50
	1,184	1,234	(50)
Two thirds	789		
C/f undisbursed income from prior years	819		
	1,608		
Grants Awarded During the Year		-	
		-	
		1,608	
Undisbursed Income		1,608	

Estimated Figures for Disposable Income in 2024/25

Portknockie	
	£
Estimated Disposable Income	1,915
Undisbursed Income (unused limit carry forward from 2023/24)	<u>1,573</u>
Total Available for Disbursement 2024/25	3,488
<u>Disbursements approved to Date:</u>	-
Projected Income Available for Disbursement	3,488

Keith Common Good Fund

Actual Financial Performance against Estimated Figures for 2023-24

	Estimate £	Actual £	Variance £
Investment Income	277	277	-
Other Income	-	-	-
	277	277	-
Less Administrative Costs	3	322	(319)
	274	(45)	319
Two thirds	183		
C/f undisbursed income from prior years	238		
Total Budget Available for Disbursement 2023/24	421		
Grants Awarded During the Year	-		
Undisbursed Income	421		

Estimated Figures for Disposable Income in 2024/25

Keith	
	£
Estimated Disposable Income	210
Undisbursed Income (unused limit carry forward from 2023/24)	<u>372</u>
Total Available for Disbursement 2024/25	582
<u>Disbursements approved to Date:</u>	
• Grounds Maintenance Recharge	210
Projected Income Available for Disbursement	372

Findochty Common Good Fund

Actual Financial Performance against Estimated Figures for 2023-24

	Estimate £	Actual £	Variance £
Investment Property Income	1,500	1,502	(2)
Investment Income	103	137	(34)
	1,603	1,639	(36)
Less Administrative Costs	126	76	50
	1,477	1,563	(86)
Two thirds	985		
C/f undisbursed income from prior years	1,503		
	2,488		
Grants Awarded During the Year			
	-		
	-		
	2,488		

Estimated Figures for Disposable Income in 2024/25

Findochty	
	£
Estimated Disposable Income	1,164
Undisbursed Income (unused limit carry forward from 2023/24)	1,989
Total Available for Disbursement 2024/25	3,153
Projected Income Available for Disbursement	3,153

Millbuies Country Park

Actual Financial Performance for 2023-24

	Actual £
Tree Felling Income	9,325
Forest Management Fees	<u>9,500</u>
Surplus/(Deficit)	(175)

Estimated Disposable Income in 2024/25

Millbuies Forestry Operations	
	£
Estimated Income	18,933
Loss Carried forward from 2023/24	<u>(175)</u>
	18,758
Estimated Expenditure:	
• Pathworks at Millbuies	11,928
Projected Income Available for Disbursement	6,830

Appendix 2

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024 by Common Good Fund

	Buckie £000	Cullen £000	Dufftown £000	Elgin £000	Forres £000	Portknockie £000	Keith £000	Lossie £000	Findochty £000	Total £000
Fixed Assets	2,359	17	-	11,102	2,029	-	344	1,842	-	17,693
Current Assets										
Debtors and Stocks	1	-	-	8	5	-	-	-	-	14
Loans Fund Balance	1,641	184	16	1,599	483	54	11	-	6	3,994
	<u>1,642</u>	<u>184</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>1,607</u>	<u>488</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4,008</u>
Current Liabilities										
Creditors	6	-	-	2	13	-	-	-	1	22
	<u>6</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>22</u>
Total Net Assets	3,995	201	16	12,707	2,504	54	355	1,842	5	21,679
Financed By:										
Revaluation Reserve	2,314	17	-	9,805	1,044	-	54	1,842	-	15,076
Revenue Balance	1,681	184	16	2,902	1,460	54	301	-	5	6,603
Reserves	3,995	201	16	12,707	2,504	54	355	1,842	5	21,679

Common Good Asset Register

Buckie Common Good

Town House West (Hall), Cluny Place, Buckie AB56 1HB
 Library, Cluny Place, Buckie, AB56 1HB
 Fishing Heritage Centre, Cluny Place, Buckie AB56 1HB
 Town House West (Offices), Cluny Place, Buckie AB56 1HB
 Public Toilets, Cluny Place, Buckie
 Sites Opposite 26 Barron St, Buckie AB56 1XD
 42A Freuchny Rd, Buckie AB56 1TX
 25B East Cathcart St, Buckie AB56 1JP
 Site to rear of 5 Bridge Place, Buckie
 Store, Freuchny Road, Buckie
 Linzee Gordon Park, Buckie - Public Park, Play Area and Pavilion
 Cricket Club Linzee Gordon Park, Buckie
 Pavilion And Football Ground, Merson Park, Barhill Road, Buckie
 Merson Park - Public Park and Play Area
 Buckie Victoria Bowling Club, West Church Street, Buckie
 Heritable Assets - Ansons Collection
 Heritable Assets - Chains of Office

Cullen Common Good

* Market Cross Monument, The Square, Cullen
 Heritable Assets - Chains of Office

Dufftown Common Good

Tininver Park, Tininver Street, Dufftown
 ** Store, Tininver Street, Dufftown
 Woodland Princess Royal Park Conval Street Dufftown
 Woodland Bridge Of Poolinch Dufftown
 Woodland Tininver Brae Dufftown
 Woodland Mortlach Distillery Dufftown

Elgin Common Good

239 High Street, Elgin, IV30 1DJ
 Site Adjacent To 239 High Street Elgin Moray
 Riverside Caravan site, Elgin IV30 8UN
 Field Adjacent to The Oaks, Morriston Road, Elgin
 Field Adjacent to Oakview, Morriston Road, Elgin
 Shooting Acres & Aughteen Park Lands, Pluscarden Road, Elgin
 Moray Leisure Centre, Borough Briggs Road IV30 1AP
 Field at Riverside, West Road, Elgin
 Ground adjacent to The Mansion House, Blackfriars Rd, Elgin
 The Oaks, Morriston Road, Elgin IV30 6UN
 Playing field, Borough Briggs Rd, Elgin
 Lesser Borough Briggs, Borough Briggs Road, Elgin
 Play area, McIntosh Drive, Elgin
 Play area, Ardgilzean Place, Elgin
 Loch and Country Park, Millbuies, Elgin
 ** Field at Country Park, Millbuies, Longmorn, Elgin
 Depot Cooper Park, Elgin
 Greenfingers Nursery, King Street , Elgin IV30 1HU
 Biblical Gardens, King Street, Elgin
 Training Centre, Cooper Park, King Street, Elgin
 Rainbow Castle, Borough Briggs Road, Elgin
 Dovecot Pavilion, Elgin
 Monument, Prospect Terrace, Lossiemouth (Charter of Novodamus)
 Site opposite 2 Seatown, Lossiemouth (Charter of Novodamus)
 Public Convenience, Seatown Rd, Lossiemouth IV31 6JL (Charter of Novodamus)
 Heritable Assets - Chains of Office

Forres Common Good

Forres Mechanics Football Ground, Mosset Park, Lea Rd, Forres IV36 1AU
Forres Bowling Club, St Catherines Rd , Forres
Nelsons Tower
The Greens, Forres
**** Transition Town Forres Car Park, Bogton Road, Forres IV36 3TW
**** Transition Town Forres, Bogton Road, Forres IV36 3TW
Bogton Playing Field and Play Area, Bogton, Forres
Christies Elite Nurseries Limited, Bogton Rd, Forres IV36 3TW
38a Clovenside Road (adjacent to Clovenside Cemetery), Forres
Field, Pilmuir Road West, Forres
Kingsmeadow Field, Forres
Field A Clovenside
Field B Clovenside
Market Cross Monument, High St, Forres
Forres Golf Course, Forres IV36 2RD
Land at mouth of River Findhorn
* Applegrove Garden, Sanquhar Road, Forres
Roysvale Park and Pavillion, Sanquhar Road, Forres
Heritable Assets - Chains of Office

Keith Common Good

Nursery Park, Keith
Show Ground Store, Seafield Park, Keith AB55 5AJ
Pavillion, Seafield Park, Keith
Seafield Park, Keith
Heritable Assets - Chains of Office

Lossiemouth Common Good

Coulardbank Pavillion, Coulardbank Playing Fields, Lossie
Coulardbank Playing Fields, Coulardbank Road, Lossiemouth
** Pitch Coulardbank Playing Fields, Coulardbank Road, Lossiemouth
1st Lossiemouth Scout Hall, Elgin Road, Lossiemouth IV31 6HD
Town Hall, High Street, Lossiemouth IV31 6AA
Lossiemouth Library, High Street, Lossiemouth IV31 6AA
Heritable Assets - Chains of Office

Findochty Common Good

*** Telecommunications Mast, Town Hall, 22 Station Road, Findochty

Burghead Common Good

St Aethans Park and Play Area, St Aethans Rd, Burghead
Heritable Assets - Chains of Office

Assets transferred from Moray Council in 2023-24

* Applegrove Garden, Sanquhar Road, Forres
* Market Cross Monument, The Square, Cullen

New Assets created from existing Assets 2023-24

** Store, Tininver Street, Dufftown
** Field at Country Park, Millbuies, Longmorn, Elgin
** Pitch Coulardbank Playing Fields, Coulardbank Road, Lossiemouth

New Asset created following CAT transfer 2023-24

*** Telecommunications Mast, Town Hall, 22 Station Road, Findochty

Assets renamed in 2023-24

**** Transition Town Forres Car Park, Bogton Road, Forres IV36 3TW

**** Transition Town Forres, Bogton Road, Forres IV36 3TW

Assets removed in 2023-24

CAT Transfer 2023/24

Fishermans Hall, 16 North Pringle St, Buckie



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE 11 JUNE 2024

SUBJECT: PROPERTY ASSET MANAGEMENT APPRAISAL

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides a progress update on outstanding recommendations set out within the Property Asset Management Appraisal (PAMA).
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III B (28) of the Council's Scheme of Administration in relation to asset management.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee considers and notes the progress of outstanding recommendations set out within the Property Asset Management Appraisal and detailed in Section 4 of the report.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 12 December 2018, the Council approved a report which detailed recommendations aimed at improving how the Council manages and maintains its property assets (para 6 of Minute refers). On 29 October 2019, the Policy and Resources Committee approved a report detailing the Property Asset Management Appraisal (PAMA) Improvement Plan with the status of actions (para 13 of Minute refers). On 30 June 2021 the Council approved a report which outlined progress and indicated that delays to progress had been sustained due to the Covid-19 pandemic and changes of senior lead officers (para 14 of Minute refers).
- 3.2 On 30 August 2022 the Corporate Committee approved a report which noted progress on outstanding actions, along with amalgamating the Depot and Store review and moving future reporting of updates on the Depot and Store review and Leisure review to the Improvement and Modernisation Programme (para 7 of Minute refers).
- 3.3 **APPENDIX I** of the report lists those remaining outstanding recommendations from the original 2018 report and provides an update to each recommendation.

4. PROGRESS UPDATES

Recommendation 2 – Devolved School Management (DSM) Tenant Protocol

- 4.1 A new protocol has been developed with formal roll out commencing over the coming months to ensure full understanding for start of new academic year in August. This protocol will have no impact on the tenant budget. It is considered this recommendation is now complete.

Recommendation 10 – Housing Revenue Account Assets

- 4.2 An identification of sites held on the Housing Revenue Account which are not areas of managed landscape has been undertaken and, at this time, there is no requirement to consider any actions in relation to the sites. Currently, the sites come under either the heading of potential future development or are earmarked for development in the short-term where proposals are being progressed to take forward development. Regular reviews of the sites will be undertaken. However, it is considered that this recommendation is now complete.

Recommendation 12 – Develop a Landlord Charter for Property Assets

- 4.3 With the requirement to maximise the use of our buildings to ensure the Council drives maximum benefit from the assets, there is a requirement to ensure there is a corporate approach to our property management. Via the existing structure of the Asset Management Working Group, Services are requested to engage with the Corporate Buildings Asset Management Team early when there is a need for a change to a property. In addition, with the progression of various property reviews including the Office review and Depot and Stores review, the Council is moving to a position that property assets are corporate assets held and managed by the Corporate Asset Management Team in a corporate landlord type system.
- 4.4 To aid clarity on roles and responsibilities, a guidance note is being prepared for Services to share with their Teams occupying properties to ensure there is a clarity on who is responsible for what at each property. It is the intention that this guidance will be rolled out to services over the coming months with support and advice to ensure there is clarity on what responsibilities sit where.

Recommendation 13 – Reduce ICT systems that store property information

- 4.5 Workshops were undertaken with a consultant to establish what property information is held and where. The recommendation from this work is that data should be stored in SharePoint 365 as a Common Data Environment for all property data which should then be capable of being shared with all those who would need access. It is considered that this completes the action from the PAMA which instructed a review of options that will allow the Council to store its property information in fewer ICT systems. The progression of the recommendation is now part of a wider transformation project that includes Building Information Modelling (BIM). A business case is in the process of review and will be reported via the Transform Economy Board.

Recommendation 14 – Baseline performance indicators should be developed

- 4.6 The recommendation from the PAMA was to develop baseline performance indicators for property assets to help manage and monitor the assets. Historically, a number of different performance indicators were collected and reported which created a significant workload with limited use of the outcomes. Therefore, for setting up new performance indicators, it was critical to establish meaningful indicators and also not create a repeat of previous onerous tasks.
- 4.7 In relation to Housing properties the Council is required to report annually to the Housing regulator and therefore it is intended that this reporting basis will be the performance indicators for the Housing portfolio properties.
- 4.8 In the corporate estate very limited data is currently reported, however, there is an annual return on the condition and suitability of the Council's Education properties and an overall rating in relation to the Council's property condition and suitability. Again, it is not intended to replace this. However, it is recognised that performance indicators would be helpful to monitor our asset performance. On that basis the following initial performance indicators will be reported annually where trend analysis will be undertaken:
- Total annual electricity consumption and cost for corporate assets.
 - Total annual gas consumption and cost for corporate assets.
 - Total annual maintenance spend for educational properties.
 - Total annual capital spend on Learning Estate BB upgrade investment against number of schools meeting B for condition at year end.
 - Total annual maintenance spend for non educational properties.
 - Total gross internal floor area of estate.
 - Total annual carbon emissions for the corporate estate.
 - Total income from leased assets.
 - Total occupation of leased assets.
- 4.9 It is intended that these figures will be reported annually in a property performance report each autumn. The first of these reports based on 2023/24 financial year data will be brought to the next meeting of this committee.
- 4.10 It is recognised that some of the above information is also reported in the annual Energy report and the Industrial Portfolio annual report to the Economic, Development and Infrastructure Services Committee. However, both will continue as they include additional information over and above the basic performance information in relation to strategy.
- 4.11 Consideration has been had in relation to comparing with other Local Authorities and via the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) that there is a benchmarking group, however, Moray Council withdrew from the group a number of years ago as a cost saving exercise and the benefit of rejoining and meeting the annual fee of circa £1,000 has not been able to be justified as yet.
- 4.12 Within the annual report there will be a review of the performance indicators and if required they will be extended or reviewed as necessary.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

The Corporate Plan sets out the vision and priorities for Moray Council. One priority is to “Build thriving, resilient, empowered communities” and within the plan the focus for the Council is to “Provide modern and sustainable services, housing and infrastructure that meet the needs of our communities. The appropriate management of our property assets will support the delivery of this.

As indicated in previous reports the Depot and Stores review forms part of the Improvement & Modernisation Programme of Work that supports the Council priority of a financially stable Council.

(b) Policy and Legal

None.

(c) Financial implications

This report has no financial implications. If the Council wishes to join the CIPFA Benchmarking group there would be an additional financial burden on the revenue budget.

(d) Risk implications.

There are no specific new risks outlined in this report.

(e) Staffing implications

There are no staffing implications associated with this report other than the development of an annual report on property performance indicators will require Housing and Property staff resource to prepare and present.

(f) Property

There are no specific property implications in relation to this report although it does provide information on how property assets are managed.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities/socio economic impacts arising from this report.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

The importance of minimising the use of carbon and making our properties as efficient as is viable is an underlying requirement for all Asset Management decisions going forward. This report has no direct impacts however by highlighting our performance in relation to energy usage and carbon usage this should help manage these factors better in the future.

(i) Consultations

Consultations on this report have taken place with the Head of Financial Services, Andy Hall (Programme Manager, Learning Estate), Legal Services Manager, Head of Economic Growth and Development

Services, Head of Environmental and Commercial Services and the Democratic Services Manager and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 This report provides an update of actions to be taken forward as part of the PAMA Improvement Plan and seeks Committee to note the update on progress.

Author of Report: Neil Strachan, Property Asset Manager
Background Papers:
Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1529

1. IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023-24 – LINKED TO THE 20 RECOMMENDATIONS PROVIDED WITHIN THE PAMA

Recommendations from the Property Asset Management Appraisal	IMP reference	Key Milestone	By	Lead Officer	Complete
<p>Recommendation 2 Develop a new protocol for the DSM tenants' budget – linked to Recommendation 1.</p> <p><u>Status as at 14 May 2024</u> Protocol developed and being rolled out.</p>	Section 1.1	New Protocol in place	31 March 2023	Head of Education Resources and Communities	Complete
<p>Recommendation 10 The Council should review the sites that are held within the Housing Revenue Account.</p> <p><u>Status as at 14 May 2024</u> Initial review complete plan to review every 3 years or when required on a site by site basis.</p>	N/A	Review of sites completed	31 March 2024	Head of Housing and Property	Complete

Recommendations from the Property Asset Management Appraisal	IMP reference	Key Milestone	By	Lead Officer	Complete
<p>Recommendation 12 Develop a Landlord Charter to support the management of the Property Portfolio.</p> <p><u>Status as at 14 May 2024</u> Reinforced service engagement with Corporate Asset Management Team, guidance note to be shared with Services.</p>	<p>Section 1.1</p>	<p>Corporate Landlord Charter developed</p>	<p>31 July 2023 revised deadline 30 September 2024</p>	<p>Head of Housing and Property</p>	<p>On going</p>

Recommendations from the Property Asset Management Appraisal	IMP reference	Key Milestone	By	Lead Officer	Complete
<p>Recommendation 13 Review options that will allow the Council to store its property information in fewer ICT systems.</p> <p><u>Status as at 14 May 2024</u> Workshops complete and recommendation that common data environment should be in SharePoint 365. Further work ongoing in relation to BIM to be reported via Transforming Economy Board.</p>	<p>Section 4.1</p>	<p>Recommended common data environment established</p>	<p>31 March 2023</p>	<p>Head of HR, ICT & Organisation Development and Head of Housing and Property</p>	<p>Completed and future updates on transformation project to be reported via Transform Economy Board</p>

Recommendations from the Property Asset Management Appraisal	IMP reference	Key Milestone	By	Lead Officer	Complete
<p>Recommendation 14 The Council should develop baseline performance indicators to allow it to manage and monitor its property assets.</p> <p><u>Status as at 14 May 2024</u> Report includes outline of intended indicators and reporting method.</p>	<p>Section 4.1</p>	<p>Baseline information in place</p>	<p>1 April 2023</p>	<p>Head of Housing and Property</p>	<p>Complete</p>



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 11 JUNE 2024

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 asset transfer requests.
- 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 2023 to 31 March 2024. There is no legal requirement that all asset transfer requests be made under the Act. However, in the interests of transparency and completeness, details of those requests received outwith the Act are also included in the annual report, which is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 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 2023 to 31 March 2024, the Council transferred one property to the community and at the end of the reporting period was in the process of transferring two more. A decision relating to one further request was deferred while an alternative site was investigated. No validated asset transfer requests were awaiting a decision as of 31 March 2024 and no decisions were the subject of a review or appeal during the year.
- 2.6 In addition to the four asset transfer requests referred to above, officers dealt with fifteen formal Expressions of Interest (EOIs) during the reporting period, twelve of which remained live as of 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 has the necessary 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. A re-assessment is carried out on receipt of a formal asset transfer request.

3. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Transferring assets to the community supports the Corporate Plan priority of building thriving, resilient, and empowered communities and the LOIP priority of empowering and connecting communities.

Where a property is held on a Common Good title, the interests of the inhabitants of the former burgh will 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 these 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."

When assets are transferred at less than market value, the disposals must comply with the Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010. These regulations require the Council to be satisfied that the 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 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 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 relation to Public Trust assets.

The Subsidy Control Act 2022 came into effect on 4 January 2023, replacing the previous State Aid provisions. The Act can apply whenever the Council sells or leases a property at less than market value, provided that the conditions for a subsidy are met. In particular, the beneficiary must constitute an 'enterprise' due to its activities involving the offering of goods or services. Section 7(2) of the Act provides that an activity is not to be regarded as an economic activity if or to the extent that it is carried out for a purpose that is not economic. If the activity is not for economic purposes, then the body will not be considered an enterprise and any financial assistance provided would not be considered a subsidy under the Act.

(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/socio-economic 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, Community Services Manager, Property Asset Manager, Legal Services Manager, Susan Souter, Senior Accountant, Community Learning and Engagement Manager, Democratic Services Manager, and Equal Opportunities Officer have been consulted and their comments incorporated in the report.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This report meets the reporting requirements of section 95 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 in relation to asset transfer requests processed from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.**
- 4.2 During the year, officers dealt with four valid asset transfer requests and a further fifteen expressions of interest.**
- 4.3 The 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-1293228629-1089

Community Asset Transfer

Annual Report: 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024



Contents

Empowering Communities	4
Asset Transfer Requests	5
Completed Transfers	6
Approved Transfers	6
Expressions of Interest	7
Simplified Arrangements	7
Contact Us	8
Appendix 1	11
Appendix 2	12

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 building thriving, resilient and empowered communities and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priority of empowering and connecting 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.

Supporting Communities

The Council's Community Support Unit (CSU) provides capacity building support to all community groups throughout 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 necessary to take on an asset and considers any community engagement that has been done by the group. From this, CSU officers can work with the groups on addressing any issues that come to light, e.g. governance, consultation, business planning, etc. The same level of support is available to those taking advantage of the simplified arrangements covered by the CAT scheme.

Officers from the CSU encourage groups to consider the requirements of those most in need in their community. The 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. They 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 for community groups to commission options appraisals and a Social Return on Investment report in support of potential CATs.

Communities can find out more about the Council's land and building assets from its map-based Asset Register. The full register is available to search or download through the Council's Open Mapping Data Portal.



Open Mapping Data Portal:

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



- Fishermen's Hall, Buckie

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.

Asset Transfer Requests

This report covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. During this time, Moray Council successfully completed the transfer of one asset to the community and is currently in the process of transferring two more. A decision relating to one further request has been deferred while an alternative site is investigated. 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

Buckie's Fishermen's Hall was built in 1886 for and by the local fishing community. The Fishermen's Hall Trust was established in 2018 to prepare a request to take the hall into community ownership. The hall was held by the Council on an inalienable Common Good title. In November 2021, the Council issued a Decision Notice agreeing to transfer the hall to the trust subject to the necessary court consent being granted. Subsequently, decree was granted following a successful petitioning of the court allowing ownership of the hall to transfer to the trust in May 2023.

Approved Transfers

Lossiemouth's Coularbank Playing Fields are 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 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 was granted by the court on 12 January 2021 and planning consent was granted on 21 March 2024 allowing the proposed lease of the site to proceed. The lease is now in the process of being completed.

Keith's Longmore Hall is held by the Council as part of the Longmore Trust. In 2018, the Council took the decision to seek a community group to take over responsibility for the day-to-day running of the hall. In response to that decision, the community established Longmore Community Hall as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) for the purpose of running the hall. The SCIO has occupied the hall under a short-term lease since July 2018. The community body's application for longer term lease was approved by the Council in November 2023. The new lease is now in the process of being completed.

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's CAT Team 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 body, 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 four asset transfer requests detailed in Appendix 1, we dealt with fifteen EOIs during the period covered by this report, twelve of which remain current.

Simplified Arrangements

The Council's former Community Rental Grant Scheme was brought within the purview of its CAT Scheme. The extended scheme provides an opportunity to all existing voluntary and community organisations that lease property from the Council to apply for a Community 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.

The community response to the pandemic led to an increase in requests from voluntary and community organisations seeking short term arrangements for the use of temporarily unoccupied Council assets. Given the nature of such requests, a swift turnaround is often necessary and adherence to committee timescales does not facilitate an agile response. Recognising that the level of justification should be proportionate to the nature of the request, a simplified process is now available to organisations seeking a short term or low value concessionary lease.

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 2023 to 31 March 2024. 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

Property	Community Body	Type	2015 Act	Transferred
Fishermen's Hall, Buckie	Fishermen's Hall Trust	Ownership	Yes	19/05/2023

Table 2. Approved Asset Transfer Requests Awaiting Completion

Property	Community Body	Type	2015 Act	Approved
Land, Coularbank Park, Lossiemouth	Lossiemouth Community Development Trust	Lease	Yes	06/10/2020
Longmore Hall, Keith	Longmore Community Hall (SCIO)	Lease	No	07/11/2023

Table 3. Deferred Asset Transfer Requests

Property	Community Body	Type	2015 Act	Deferred
Land, Grant Park, Forres	Forres Skate Park Initiative	Lease	No	27/09/2023

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 2022 to 31 March 2023

Property	Community Body	Request	2015 Act	Transferred
Findochty Town Hall	Findochty Town Hall (SCIO)	Ownership	Yes	21/07/2022
West Dunes Toilets, Findhorn	Findhorn Village Conservation Company	Ownership	Yes	12/10/2022
Garmouth Water Tower	Garmouth and Kingston Community Association	Ownership	No	19/12/2022

Table 2. Asset transfers completed from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

Property	Community Body	Request	2015 Act	Transferred
Cullen Community and Residential Centre	Three Kings Cullen Association	Ownership	Yes	05/11/2021

Table 3. Asset transfers completed from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Property	Community Body	Request	2015 Act	Transferred
Dufftown Sports and Community Centre	Dufftown Community Centre (SCIO)	Ownership	No	05/03/2021
Forres Town Hall	Forres Area Community Trust	Ownership	Yes	26/02/2021
Land, Lesser Borough Briggs, Elgin	Elgin Sports Community Trust	Lease	Yes	23/11/2020

Table 4. Asset transfers completed from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

Property	Community Body	Request	2015 Act	Transferred
Portknockie Bowling Green	Portknockie Bowling and Tennis Club	Ownership	No	08/11/2019
Marine Park, Lossiemouth	Action Marine Park	Ownership	No	05/06/2019

Table 5. Asset transfers completed from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

Property	Community Body	Request	2015 Act	Transferred
Cabrach School and Community Hall	Cabrach Trust	Ownership	No	24/10/2018
Abbeylands School, Kinloss	Morayvia	Ownership	No	05/10/2018

Table 6. Asset transfers completed from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

Property	Community Body	Request	2015 Act	Transferred
Tomintoul Bowling Green	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Bowling Club	Ownership	No	25/05/2017
Tomintoul Youth Hostel	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust	Ownership	No	19/04/2017
Tomintoul Museum	Tomintoul and Glenlivet Development Trust	Ownership	No	19/04/2017





REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 11 JUNE 2024

SUBJECT: INFORMATION REPORT: COMMUNITY RENTAL SUPPORT ANNUAL REVIEW

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides information on the level of rental support awarded to voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) occupying Council property.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Corporate Committee in terms of Sections III (B) (20) and III (B) (30) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the management of Common Good and Trust property and to the monitoring and review of concessionary rents respectively.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 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 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 Minute refers). New lease applications dealt with under the CAT scheme are covered in a separate annual report.
- 2.2 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, do not involve the provision of discretionary rental support. Such leases are outwith the scope of this report.

Legacy Arrangements

- 2.3 **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. In most of these leases, there is no provision to review the rent payable during the lease term. When they come to an end the tenant can negotiate a new lease on commercial terms or apply under the CAT Scheme for a new lease at less than market value.

Community Rent Rebates

- 2.4 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 for a discretionary limited life rental grant or rent rebate. Under these arrangements, the rebate ceases whenever the rent is due to be reviewed. The VCO can then apply for a continuation of the rent rebate. When the lease comes to an end the tenant can negotiate a new lease on commercial terms or apply under the CAT Scheme for a new lease at less than market value.
- 2.5 **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 2023/24 financial year amounted to £25,390. This comprised £7,590 relating to the general fund, £11,400 relating to common good, and £6,400 relating to public trusts.

Short-Term Low-Value Rental Concessions

- 2.6 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 Minute refers). When the value of the rebate reaches the delegated limits, any further application must be brought to committee for determination.
- 2.7 **Appendix 3** lists those leases where the tenant enjoys a rent rebate approved under delegated authority. No applications for short-term low-value rental support were received during the 2023/24 financial year.

3. 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 Corporate Plan priority of building thriving, resilient, and empowered communities and the LOIP priority of empowering and connecting communities.

Where a property is held on a Common Good title, the interests of the inhabitants of the former burgh will 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, any application for financial support must be considered only in relation to these 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 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.”

When assets are leased at less than market value, the arrangement must comply with the Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010. These regulations require the Council to be satisfied that the arrangement is reasonable and that it 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 in this context is taken to imply that the requested discount is the minimum necessary to allow the projected benefits to be realised and that it is proportionate to the costs and benefits.

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.

The Subsidy Control Act 2022 came into effect on 4 January 2023, replacing the previous State Aid provisions. The Act can apply whenever the Council sells or leases a property at less than market value, provided that the conditions for a subsidy are met. In particular, the beneficiary must constitute an ‘enterprise’ due to its activities involving the offering of goods or services. Section 7(2) of the Act provides that an activity is not to be regarded as an economic activity if or to the extent that it is carried out for a purpose that is not economic. If the activity is not for economic purposes, then the body will not be considered an enterprise and any financial assistance provided would not be considered a subsidy under the Act.

(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/socio-economic 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, Community Services Manager, Property Asset Manager, Legal Services Manager, Susan Souter, Senior Accountant, Community Learning and Engagement Manager, Democratic Services Manager, and Equal Opportunities Officer have been consulted and their comments incorporated in the report.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 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.**

Author of Report: Andrew Gray, Asset Management Coordinator
Background Papers: Held by author
Ref: SPMAN-1293228629-1085

Legacy Arrangements – Properties Let at Nominal Rents Reflecting the Award of Financial Support as at 31 March 2024

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. The table below only includes cases involving the provision of financial support. 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 Fund, 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 Fund									
1.	Roths	Roths Bowling Club	Bowling Green, Recreation Park	FRI	01/03/1983	50 years	01/03/2033	£1.00	Lease end
2.	Forres	Forres Thistle FC	Logie Park, Pilmuir Road	FRI	01/06/1988	50 years	01/06/2038	£10.00	Lease end
3.	Mosstodloch	Mosstodloch Amenities Association	Site of Speymouth Hall, Stynie Road	FRI	15/03/1977	99 Years	14/03/2076	£0.01	Lease end
4.	Lhanbryde	Lhanbryde Community Challenge	Site of Village Hall, Robertson Road	FRI	11/11/1977	99 years	11/11/2076	£0.01	Lease end
5.	Portgordon	Portgordon Recreation Committee	Bowling Green, Station Road	FRI	01/09/1978	99 years	01/09/2077	£0.01	Lease end
6.	Fochabers	Fochabers Rifle Club	13 Christie Place	FRI	28/05/2006	99 years	28/05/2105	£1.00	Lease end
Common Good									
7.	Buckie	Buckie Victoria Bowling Club	Bowling Club, West Church Street	FRI	01/04/2005	25 years	31/03/2030	£1.00	Lease end

APPENDIX 1

	Location	Community Body	Property	Lease Type	Date of Entry	Term	Expiry	Annual Rent	Next Review
8.	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									
9.	Aberlour	Aberlour Community Association (Note 1)	Fleming Hall, Queens Road	IRO	01/04/2001	25 years	31/03/2026	£1.00	01/04/2026 or lease end

Notes

1. 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 as at 31 March 2024

Most of the leases listed involve the tenant being fully responsible for all property costs, including repairs and maintenance. The list is grouped by title, i.e. general fund, 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 Fund										
1.	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
2.	Findochty	Findochty Bowling Club	Findochty Bowling Green	18/05/2006	17/05/2031	£400	£400	£0	5 Years	18/05/2026
3.	Buckie	Buckie Skate Park Committee	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						£7,590	£7,590	£0		
Common Good										
4.	Forres	Transition Town Forres (note 1)	Bogton Road	31/03/2009	31/03/2041	£13,200	£8,700	£4,500	3 years	31/03/2026
5.	Buckie	Fishing Heritage Centre (note 2)	Fishing Heritage Centre	01/03/2006	28/02/2036	£2,700	£2,700	£0	3 Years	15/05/2027
Total Values for Common Good						£15,900	£11,400	£4,500		
Public Trusts										
6.	Forres	Grant Park Pavilion Committee	Bowling Pavilion, Grant Park	03/11/2008	02/11/2048	£6,300	£6,300	£0	3 Years	03/11/2026
7.	Elgin	Bowling Club (note 3)	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		
All Ownership Categories										
Total Values for all ownership categories						£29,890	£25,390	£4,500		

Notes.

1. On 23 April 2024, the Corporate Committee agreed to award Transition Town Forres a Community Rent Rebate of £8,700 per annum backdated to 31 March 2023 (paragraph 14 of the draft Minute refers).
2. On 23 April 2024, the Corporate Committee agreed to renew the 100% community rent rebate for a further period of 3 years to 15 May 2027 (paragraph 16 of the draft Minute refers).
3. The Council is liable for maintaining the Bowling pavilion roof but has the option to terminate the lease if it becomes uneconomic to repair.

Concessionary Rentals of Low Value or Short Duration Approved under Scheme of Delegation as at 31 March 2024

The default position where rent rebates are awarded under delegated powers is that the tenant must accept full responsibility for all property costs, including all repairs and maintenance of the property concerned. These are indicated by the letters FRI.

	Location	Community Body	Property	Lease Type	Date of Entry	Term	Expiry	Rental Value	Rebate Value
	General Fund								
1.	Burghead	Burghead and Cummington Community Council (note 1)	Site of Community Shelter, Burghead Harbour	FRI	14/03/2008	20 years	13/03/2028	£175 pa	£175 pa

Notes

1. The rent rebate awarded to the Community Council took effect from 14 March 2021.

