



**REPORT TO: SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 2
OCTOBER 2019**

SUBJECT: CORPORATE SERVICES: SERVICE PLANS 2019-20

BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (CORPORATE SERVICES)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To invite the Committee to consider the Corporate Services Department Service Plans for 2019-20.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (34) 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 within the Corporate Services department.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Service planning is undertaken annually to set out the strategic direction for services over the coming months. Typically, actions will be with some level of detail and certainty in the short term but work will continue beyond a 12 month period and will feature in plans for more than a single year. The service planning process takes into account a range of factors used by managers to identify changes required to services i.e.

- Council priorities
- Moray Council corporate plan
- Resource changes
- Legislative changes
- Council policy changes
- Risk
- Customer and staff engagement
- Quality, performance and self-evaluation

- 3.2 Service plans represent a demonstration of good management practice. In this regard the Corporate Management Team has established minimum standards for services as noted below. A standard template for monitoring this is in use
- Self-assessment (Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF)) will be updated at least every third year;
 - Risk registers will be prepared and updated at least annually.
- 3.3 As well as identifying improvements, the service plan framework requires an assessment of the output and outcome requirements for services based on the Council's priorities, statutory and regulatory requirements and other relevant factors and matching of resources to these priorities. Priority outcomes are those included in the Council's corporate plan that directly relate to the service or are influenced by the service and should be clearly identified. A summary of progress is given below for each of the service areas.

2018/19 Updates

- 3.4 Financial Services: Highlights of the last year have been successful support to major projects, particularly NESS Waste Project and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of town halls and community centres, and a successful outcome to the VAT review for leisure services, which will generate significant savings for the Council. The council's budget setting process was supported and a balanced budget approved by Council. Not all targeted improvements to budget monitoring have been achieved – these are partly dependent on other departments and are being carried forward in the Accountancy team plan. Due to staffing resources, limited progress was made on the Procurement Action Plan.
- 3.5 The other area where progress was limited was Phase 2 of the new HR/Payroll system. This joint project with HR is carried forward in the Financial Services service plan for 2019/20 in recognition of the projects cross-service importance to the council. If the recommended amendments to the council's structure are approved the Financial Service contribution to this project will be much smaller in scope.
- 3.6 Human Resources (HR) progress was largely dominated by the impact of budget savings whereby a reduced workforce plan was agreed as a result of this. Progress was achieved with the successful management of the workforce implications of the budget savings, continued support to managers for change through restructuring and service redesign, progressing the leadership and management development activity using an increasingly collaborative approach and continuation of the employee engagement and culture work.
- 3.7 The biggest challenges have been managing the impact of budget savings within the HR service while supporting the workforce related work to deliver the savings in other services, as well as dealing with an increased level of employee relations issues and more complex employment issues.
- 3.8 Looking forward, the HR Service will be continuing to support the improvement, modernisation and transformation work being undertaken within and across services under the various themes of the workforce strategy and

plan with a particular emphasis on ensuring the workforce is equipped to work with an increased focus on customer service, digital and being prepared for change.

- 3.9 ICT Services: A number of areas were progressed in the last plan including the new service desk managing 2,000 calls per month and the closure of the digital public services project which has introduced a secure personal account and approximately 100 online services benefitting the customer and providing efficiencies within the service. Some areas of the planned work had to be reviewed to avoid duplication of effort such as the acceleration of the virtual desktop programme which was suspended in favour of the Windows 10 migration which is required for compliance reasons. Regular re-prioritising of workload was also required to reflect shifting priorities of the council such as the introduction of charges for garden waste permits.
- 3.10 This was a challenging year for the ICT Service coping with the impact of previous budget savings within the ICT Service, dealing with uncertainties as work progressed on a major restructuring within the service and responding to other service requirements arising from their own budget savings.
- 3.11 The nature of the ICT workload is unlikely to change significantly in the coming months and years as technology underpins much of the work contributing to the Improvement & Modernisation agenda of the council. This, together with the need to comply with new and emerging standards related to ICT, particularly cyber resilience, will be a major focus for the ICT Service and plans will need to be fairly fluid as the Council moves forward.
- 3.12 Legal, Democratic and Customer Services managed to achieve the majority of goals which were identified. Notable achievements were: delivering most of the agreed budget savings within time; improving collection rates for Council Tax; improving turnaround times for benefits applications; and successful implementation of IT systems to improve efficiency including IDOX for licencing and a Committee Management Information System (CMIS).
- 3.13 Progress was made on encouraging digital self-service for Council Tax but there is still work to be done in this area which has been taken forward into next year's plan as part of the Transformation programme.
- 3.14 Some goals were not achieved as planned including digitisation of burial grounds and benchmarking for legal services, largely due to factors outwith the control of the Council. They have been taken forward onto this year's service plan.
- 3.15 Looking forward it is anticipated that a significant amount of time will be spent on the budget setting process. So it is important to be realistic about what can be achieved and to concentrate efforts on goals which align with the Council's priorities or improve efficiency.
- 3.16 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 taking account of the direction in the new corporate plan. On this basis, the 4 service Plans for Corporate Services are attached to this report as follows:

- Appendix 1: Financial Services
- Appendix 2: HR
- Appendix 3: ICT Services
- Appendix 4: Legal and Democratic Services

3.17 It should be noted that the Internal Audit function submits an annual plan and progress reports to Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The annual plan for 2019-20 was submitted to a meeting of Moray Council on 28 June 2018 (paragraph 16 of the Minute refers).

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 updated Corporate Plan. Primarily Corporate Services seek to support the achievement of council and community planning partnership priorities. As such, the services lead on a number of the organisational development and resource planning aspects of the Corporate Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

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

(c) Financial implications

No additional financial resources are required to support the service plans.

(d) Risk Implications

Up to date risk registers are maintained and considered as part of the service planning process.

(e) Staffing Implications

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

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities

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

(h) Consultations

The Corporate and Senior Management Team has been consulted on the key issues identified within the Corporate Services service plans. Any comments received have been reflected in the report.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Service plans have been prepared for the services provided by the Corporate Services Department identifying the improvements targeted for the year to September 2020. In preparing the plans managers have taken account of risk, self-evaluation (PSIF), the LOIP, the Corporate Plan and other relevant factors such as audit outcomes. The service plans identify the resources allocated to each service and how these will be utilised to deliver core service requirements as well as improvements during the year.**

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Background Papers: None

Ref: H:\Management\Acting Director\Reports\P&R\Service Plan 2019-20 (02-10-19).docx