REPORT TO: **EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ON 3 FEBRUARY 2021**

SUBJECT: **PERFORMANCE REPORT (GOVERNANCE, PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGY) – PERIOD FROM 1 APRIL TO 31 DECEMBER 2020**

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 from 1 April to 31 December 2020.

1.2 This report is submitted to the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee following a decision of Moray Council on 17 June 2020 to agree a simplified committee structure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the case of this committee the combining of the delegated responsibilities of Children and Young Peoples Services, Governance, Strategy and Performance (para 9 of the minute refers).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee scrutinises performance of the Service Plan, Operational Performance Indicators and Complaints to the end of (Month Year).

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Moray Council, approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers). The framework introduced new arrangements for Managing, Delivering and Reporting of Performance with the aim of increasing focus on priority areas, reducing the level of reporting on lower priority indicators and directing scrutiny towards areas of strategic importance trends. Whilst the key performance trends in operational performance will continue to be reported, the focus of committee scrutiny will be on the delivery of priorities in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP), Corporate Plan and Service Plan. This report covers progress in achieving the Governance, Performance and Strategy Service Plan priorities, as well the important trends in the key performance indicators.

3.2   The Performance Monitoring Statements document was developed to support the Performance Management Framework. This half-yearly performance report refers to this document. The document includes tabular updates on actions, indicators relating to Service Plan priorities as well as complaints data, and can be found at: http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_92321.html

4.   SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

4.1   At a meeting of the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee on 18 November 2020, approval was given for the Governance, Performance and Strategy Service Plan covering the period 2020-2022 (para 33 of the minute refers). As per the Performance Management Framework, this Service Plan consists of two distinct sections;

-   Strategic Outcomes - locked down against commitments in National Outcomes, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the Corporate Plan.

-   Service Level Outcomes – reflecting service priorities not covered in higher level plans.

4.2   A total of 25 actions were included in the Service Plan; 3 actions have missed their completion date of December 2020 as highlighted in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 below.

Overall, the Service Plan was 30% complete at the end of Quarter 3 2020-21; on schedule for completion by the end of March 2022.

Level of Action	Number of Actions	Expected completion by end December 2020	Actual completion by end December 2020
Strategic Outcomes	15	2	0
Service Level Outcomes	10	1	0

Effect of COVID-19 response on Service plan and operational activity

4.3   There has been a significant impact on services ability to progress service plan activity and to keep routine services running as normal as a result of the Council COVID-19 response. This is reflected in the data within this report.

4.4   Many services have seen a change in focus in their normal activity. Whilst much of this new activity has been captured and reported through the Emergency Cabinet, Members Briefings and composite reports to the combined Service committees, it has not been formally recorded through performance indicators. The following headings give an indication of the activity and scale of this change of focus within Governance Strategy and Performance Services:

Access points: closed with staff helping to deal with increased email traffic.

Registrars: Adapted so that birth and death registration processes are now mostly online with just a brief socially distanced meeting required.

Research and Information team: collated large amounts of data for Scottish Government, Councillors and CMT on staffing and on the Councils COVID-19 response.

Licensing Team: Coped with a significant increase in support to businesses to navigate their way through constantly changing guidance and restrictions with a significant increase in certain license types as businesses have adapted to the changing landscape.

The Non-domestic Rates team assisted in the administration and payment of 2,000 Scottish Government business support grants,

Contact Centre: Coped with a marked increase in queries about services which have either stopped or changed. They have taken on both incoming COVID-19 assistance calls and outgoing support calls in relation to self-isolation referred by Public Health Scotland, currently around 100 per week.

Benefits and Money Advice Teams have assisted in the distribution of addition school meal payments, Scottish Government food support payments (through the Council's nationally commended Fairer Food fund) and in increase in activity in Scottish Welfare Fund payments.

The Legal team have kept essential court, public inquiry and property processes running despite challenges with the availability of other public agencies.

The Committee Services team have put an online meeting solution in place with some of the best functionality in Scotland and have adapted to a new committee structure and online clerking.

4.5 Some of these changes will be temporary and some will become permanent, influencing the next suite of performance indicators. Staff should be commended for their commitment and adaptability through a very challenging period.

Strategic Outcomes - successes

4.6 **Governance Review**. Contributing to the Corporate Plan priority 'Financial Sustainability of Moray Council', the Governance Review aims to streamline processes including reviews of committee structures, schemes of delegation and reporting to committees. Taking account of the current situation, a preference for a committee structure for the short term has been determined by elected members at the Full Council on 20 January and this will be reviewed when the covid pandemic situation allows. The final phase of review will be to refresh the Council's second tier governance documents. (**ACTION GSP20-22.Strat-4.1**)

4.7 **Revised Service Plans**. As part of the roll-out of the Performance Management Framework, in support of the Corporate Plan priority 'A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities', the 2020-21 Service Plans were approved by Committee in November with key corporate indicators defined. (**ACTION GSP20-22.Strat-4.3**)

Service Level Outcomes - successes

4.8   The review of the Council's complaints handling procedures is almost complete and a report will be submitted to this committee in March 2021, as scheduled. The final stage of the action is to obtain approval from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) for the revised policy, which aims to reduce the number of complaints upheld by SPSO for failure to follow the Council's procedure. Training will be provided for staff on the new procedures once they have been approved. (**ACTION GSP20-22.Serv-5.2b**)

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

4.9   **Performance Management.** Two of the actions associated with the roll-out of the Performance Management Framework were due to be completed by the end of December 2020. However, the routine collection of performance data was deferred due to reprioritising to support pandemic responses. This has delayed the planned work with service managers to review service performance indicators to improve the outcome focus and identification of key performance measures. During the next quarter work will be undertaken with service managers to review service performance indicators to ensure provision of effective measurement of corporate and service priorities. (**ACTIONS GSP20-22.Strat-4.2a and 4.2b**)

4.10   **Modernisation and Improvement.** Three actions that are planned to improve the service to Moray residents when contacting the Council have not progressed since October 2020 following the departure of the Customer Services Manager. The actions are: the redesign of Customer Services of customer contact/face to face (**ACTION GSP20-22.Strat-4.5a**); the move to "digital first" interactions with customers, where possible (**ACTION GSP20-22.Strat-4.5b**); and the use of Forres access point as a model to review customer facing service provision in other locations (**ACTION GSP20-22.Strat-4.5c**). Access points have been closed since March 2020 and a change management plan is under development. It is hoped to recruit a replacement Customer Services Manager shortly to continue with this development work.

Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

4.11   Work on the action to increase the number of services using Sharepoint as their primary document management system did not meet the completion date of the end of December 2020 for 2 reasons. First, the lead officer for this project left the Council in October 2020 and a replacement is being sought. Second, the team has been busy helping with the COVID-19 pandemic response so their efforts have been diverted to other priorities. It is worth noting that the two services that have yet to migrate their files to Sharepoint are education and social work. As these are large services significant resource will be needed to make the planned changes. (**ACTION GSP20-22.Serv-5.7**)

Operational Indicators – exception reporting

4.12 Six of the 20 performance indicators were close to, met or exceeded the required standard. Those with the greatest challenges are detailed below:

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target
● CPS059 Percentage of telephone calls answered within 20 seconds		59.93%	74%

Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target
⚠ CPS058 Percentage of telephone calls answered against those rec...		90.17%	93%
⚠ SCM6b Percentage of current year council tax received (cumulative)		79.9%	81.6%

4.13 **Contact Centre**. The target on Customer Services of responding to 93% of all telephone calls received and answering calls within 20 seconds have proved difficult to achieve over the years and it is proposed to review them. They do not necessarily reflect the efficiency of the Contact Centre in dealing with customer queries. As more customers are choosing to contact the Council by email the balance of calls/email/self-service may be a more useful indicator or an indicator to show the level of unnecessary or repeat contacts made, contacts which could have been avoided. (**INDICATOR CPS059**)

4.14 The response to the COVID-19 pandemic, along with long term absence and staff recruitment continues to affect the ability to meet this target. Since September the Contact Centre has been responsible for taking inbound Grampian Coronavirus (COVID-19) Assistance Hub calls, with no additional staff, and making outbound calls to people self-isolating due to Positive COVID-19 tests. The calls are to establish whether any help is required and, if eligible, take applications for self-isolation Grants. The outbound calls can be lengthy, taking over 30 minutes, and are not included in the above stats as calls made in support of the Aberdeenshire system are made on mobile phones. (**INDICATOR CPS058**)

4.15 **Revenues**. An indication of the financial difficulties that some Moray residents may be experiencing are the slightly reduced levels of Council Tax receipts so far this year. The percentage of tax received so far this year is 79.9% of the expected total, which is 1.7% lower than in 2019-20. (**INDICATOR SCM6b**)

4.16 **Committee Services**. In response to the pandemic the Moray Council committee structure was temporarily amended, which meant that from March to December 2020 Committee Services support requirements changed significantly. Consequently, the indicators used to monitor performance were no longer appropriate for the period covered by this report. (**INDICATORS CS001, CS002 & CS003**)

Complaints & MP/MSP Enquiries

4.17 Between March and December 2020, Governance, Strategy and Performance received 9 complaints. 6 were closed during the same period. Of the closed complaints, 5 (83%) were dealt with at the frontline stage and 1 was investigated further. None was escalated. A total of 3 complaints (50%) were upheld. In addition to the complaints received, 37 MP/MSP enquiries covering a variety of issues were dealt with in the same period.

5   SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

   (a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))
   Performance measurement is used to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of services to meet the Council's priorities in both the Corporate Plan and the LOIP.

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

   (c) Financial implications
   None.

   (d) Risk Implications
   None.

   (e) Staffing Implications
   None.

   (f) Property
   None.

   (g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact
   An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform the Committee on performance.

   (h) Consultations
   The Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance and Service Managers, have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

6.   CONCLUSION

6.1   At the end of the quarter 3 in the financial year 2020-2021 progress on implementing the Service Plan is on schedule at 30% complete, although the 3 actions due for completion by the end of December 2020 still required further work. The Governance, Strategy & Performance Service is meeting, or is marginally below, all but one of its performance targets indicating the service is providing the required level of support to other Council Departments. Responding to telephone calls from Moray residents within 20 seconds continues to be a challenge.

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Background Papers: Held by Author
                        Governance, Performance and Strategy Service Plan

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