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**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC GROWTH, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE ON 8 JUNE 2021**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2021**

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

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to the end of March 2021.

1.2 This report is submitted to the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability 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 Economic Development and Infrastructure, Community Services (Housing and Property) and Finance (budget, capital and revenue monitoring) (para 9 of the minute refers).

**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 2021;**
- (ii) **notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required; and**
- (iii) **approves suggested changes to indicators for the 2021/22 reporting period.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

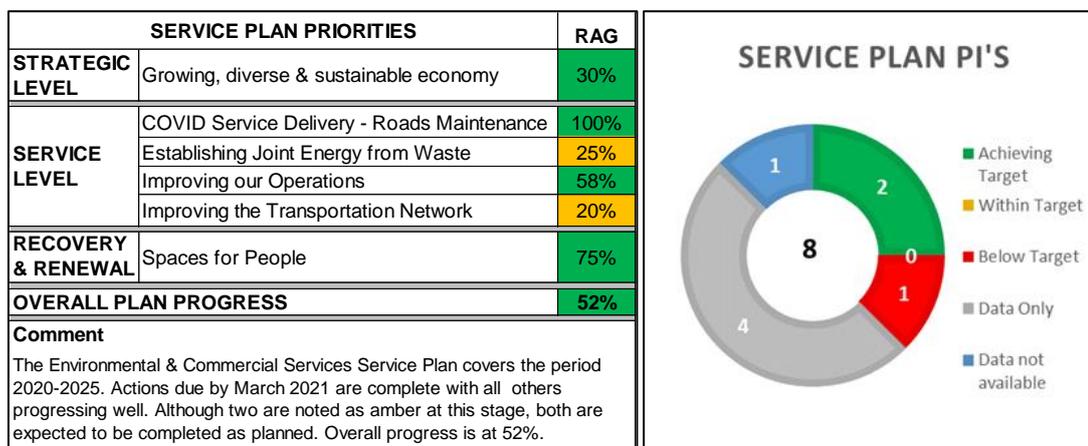
3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Moray Council approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

**4. SERVICE PLANNING**

4.1 Each service plan sets out the planned strategic and service level priorities and outcomes it intends to deliver in the coming year aligning closely with financial planning, corporate and community planning partnership strategic

priorities. This report provides an interim update on progress on the service plan, key outcomes and performance indicators. Committee is invited to review progress to secure assurance that is satisfactory and to provide scrutiny and further direction where performance requires attention.

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



### Strategic Outcomes - successes

- 4.3 The development of Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs) is progressing well at 50% complete. The Forres scheme is still outstanding due to a delay in receiving data from Scottish Water. In the meantime, all projects within the SWMPs that have an appropriate Benefit Cost Ratio have been submitted for funding and it is anticipated the Strategy will be published as planned by December 2021. The information received from Scottish Water will be used to develop the SWMP for Forres and any potential schemes identified through this process will be prioritised for Cycle 3 (2028 – 2034).

### Strategic Outcomes - challenges and actions to support

- 4.4 COVID restrictions have impacted on active and green travel plans. Delivery of Bikeability sessions to all primary schools has not been achieved with just 27% of schools taking part. Outfit Moray deliver all Bikeability sessions and plans are in place to progress with these once restrictions allow. Electric car charging points due to go online within the public car park at Council HQ were delayed. Additional EV points were added at Lossie Green and Moray Street car parks and final work on those at Council HQ will resume in quarter 1 2021/22. Monitoring reductions in vehicle emissions due to increased school Active Travel journeys will be reviewed during quarter 1 2021/22. (Action ECS20-25 Section 4a, PIs Envdr246, Envdr265a)

### Service Level Outcomes - successes

- 4.5 Contributing to recovery, the capital and revenue programme for 2020/21 was reprioritised with 60% due to be delivered by March 2021. Despite periods of winter weather, the reprioritised work has been completed as planned. Remaining work from the original programme will be carried forward to 2021/22. (Action ECS20-25 Section 5a, PI Envdr272)

- 4.6 Improvements to communication regarding the Waste Service are now complete. Better work practices between the Waste Team and the Contact Centre have been introduced and the council's online Service Disruption Page used more efficiently. Compared to 2019/20, complaints relating to Household Collections and Recycling have fallen by 20% this year, double the anticipated 10% reduction. However, as the impact of COVID appears to have affected complaints to Environmental & Commercial Services with large declines recorded during the two national lockdowns (para 6.2), it is too early to be sure if the reduction in complaints regarding the Waste Service is due to the improvements made or the pandemic. (Action ECS20-25 Section 5e, PI Envdr274)

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

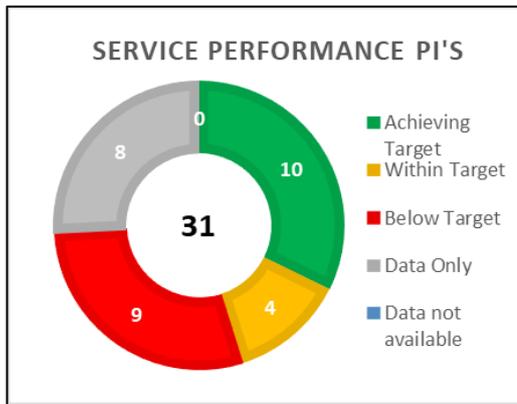
- 4.7 The target to achieve 63 principal bridge inspections in the year to March 2021 was not achieved. Due to recruitment and training of 2 new members of staff, the start of the inspection programme was delayed. However in the 6 months to March 2021, 32 inspections have been completed and it is anticipated this work rate will continue and next year the target will be met. Bridges not inspected this year will be incorporated into the 2021/22 programme with priority given to those deemed highest risk. (Action ECS20-25 Section 5d, PI Envdr273).

### **Recovery and Renewal – success**

- 4.8 Delivering spaces for people to allow social distancing was implemented during summer 2020 through temporary road closures and parking restrictions in Elgin Town Centre that ended in October 2020 and other temporary changes that ended in December 2020. The remainder of the project relates to infrastructure to encourage cycling (Action ECS20-25 Section6a)

## **5. SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

- 5.1 In line with the 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 Initial publication of 2019/20 Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators in February 2021 will be refreshed in early May. The full suite can be viewed using the [My Local Council](#) tool.
- 5.3 Reporting is by exception, however links to backing tables for all [Service Performance Indicators](#) is provided.



### Operational Indicators -successes

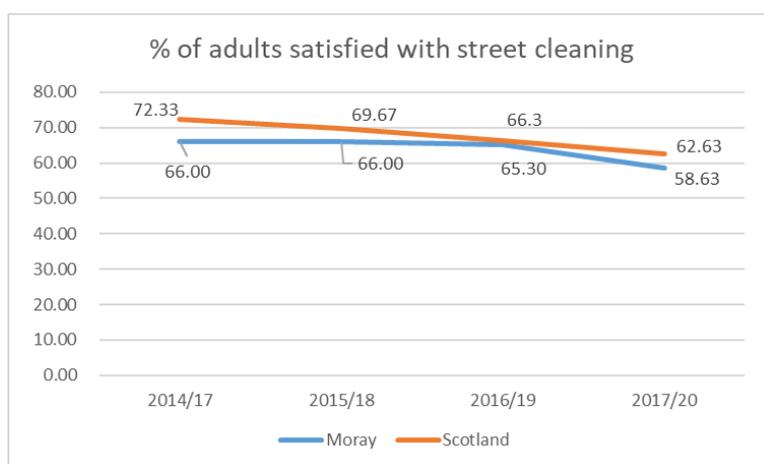
- 5.4 The cost of parks and open spaces per 1,000 premises has fallen by 23% in 2019/20, from £13,663.38 to £10,468. This decline has moved Moray's ranking against all other authorities up 1 place to 6<sup>th</sup>. The national average is £20,107. At the same time, the percentage of adults satisfied with these spaces in Moray (82.43%) has remained around the same as the national average (83.5%) (PIs Envdr214 and Envdr215)
- 5.5 Net street cleaning costs have fallen by 18% from £8,655 in 2018/19 to £7,107 with Moray now ranked in 3<sup>rd</sup> against all other local authorities. (PI Envdr218)
- 5.6 Net costs of waste collection and disposal per premise in Moray have both reduced during 2019/20 compared to 2018/19. In particular, collection costs have fallen by 28% from £52.68 to £37.82, improving a ranked position from 6<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>. Disposal costs have declined by 11% from £108.36 to £96.65 improving the ranking position from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> (PIs SENV01a and SENV02a)

### Operational Indicators - challenges and actions to support

- 5.7 Uptake of primary school meals has been significantly affected by the second lockdown. Compared to quarter 3, uptake by P1-3 pupils fell from 58.3% to 28.4% while across all Primary years, uptake fell from 52.1% to just 18.9%. During this period, the Catering team planned improvements to the service and devised a new menu in line with the national 'Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020'. A parent/carer survey, attracting 850 responses, provided positive comments and constructive points for improvement, some of which have been incorporated into the new menu including the introduction of a meat free day and increased vegan options. (PIs Envdr071 and Envdr249)
- 5.8 Pool car usage declined due to pandemic restrictions, net savings have fallen by 51% from £268,044 to £130,987. To improve efficiencies in the reporting period, Fleet Services reviewed car mileage and personal mileage claims and cars were moved to where they could be better utilised. As a result the impact of ongoing restrictions has been minimised as much as possible and although below target, savings have still been achieved. (PI Envdr224)
- 5.9 Again as a consequence of pandemic restrictions, average occupancy for paid car parks during the year was 36%; 18% less than 2019/20 and 14% below

target. The reinstatement of car parking charges in October did provide an income of £101,347, however due to compensation payments covering loss of Cooper Park Trust income, maintenance costs of £114,218 were recorded, resulting in a net loss for car park income of £12,870. (PIs Envdr232 and Envdr233).

- 5.10 Throughout COVID restrictions, all routes for the Dial M Services have continued, ensuring public transport was available to those who need it. With low passenger numbers this year, net unit costs have been consistently high peaking at £30.08 in quarter 4. This result reflects some outstanding payments in relation to Support Grants and Free Bus Reimbursements which will be adjusted when all payments are received. With only essential journeys permitted in the second lockdown, to provide options for passengers, cross boundary zone journeys were introduced along with a service to the Fiona Elcock Vaccination Centre. As leisure travel opens up as restrictions ease, there are concerns around customer confidence which the current thorough hygiene regime will hopefully address. (PI Envdr257)
- 5.11 The Local Government Benchmarking Framework indicator relating to satisfaction with refuse collection shows that during the 3 year rolling period 2017-20, satisfaction rates fell by 11% to 73.5%, below the local target of 93% and the national average of 74% and moving Moray into a third quartile ranking. It is anticipated that the completion of the Service Plan action to improve satisfaction levels (para 4.6 refers) will be reflected in future LGBF results. (PI Envdr220).
- 5.12 During the period 2017/20, the percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning has declined to 58.63% ranking Moray 26<sup>th</sup> compared to 22<sup>nd</sup> the previous year. This decline in satisfaction follows a similar trend to that noted across Scotland in recent years and perhaps relates to the fall in street cleaning costs (para 5.5. refers). (PI Envdr221)



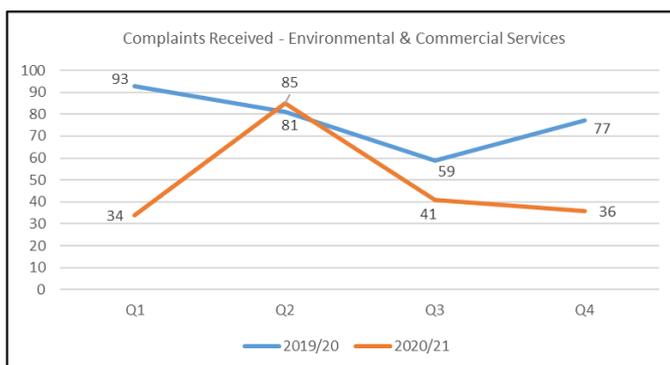
- 5.13 Operational performance indicators reported to this Committee for Environmental and Commercial Services are reviewed on an annual basis. Proposed changes for the 2021/22 reporting period are detailed in the table below.

Performance Indicator	Amendment	Reason for Amendment
Envdr249 % Primary School Pupils taking School Meals - Uptake in Primary School Meals for Primary 1,2 & 3	Amend wording to: % Uptake in Primary School Meals for FSM Eligible Year Groups	To cover the phasing in of Universal Free School Meals due to begin with P4s in August 2021. Target will also be under review as phasing of free meals is rolled out.
Envdr257 Net unit cost per passenger per trip of the Dial-M Service (which includes Dial-a-Bus and scheduled services)	Target to be amended from £3.25 to £5.20	Target last amended in 2018 when income was particularly high. Long term income trends are steady but there have been cost increases which have been absorbed within budget meaning current target is not sustainable.
Envdr240 Gross unit cost per passenger per trip of school transport	PI to be removed	PI to be removed as all costs are set during the tendering process.
Envdr263 Dredger – Number of days in external ports	PI to be removed	PI to be removed as council priority is now to focus on internal dredging

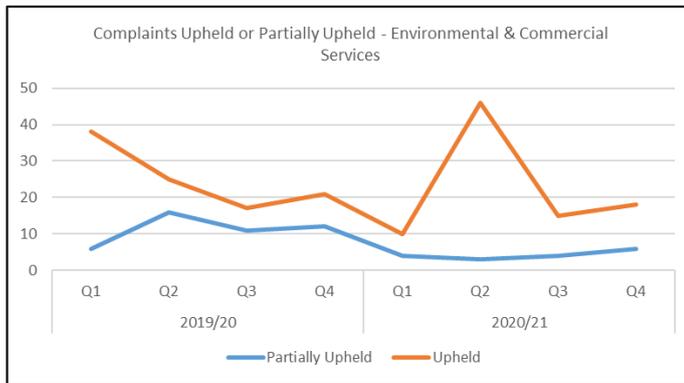
## 6 OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA

### Complaints & MP/MSP Enquiries

- 6.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, complaints are reviewed quarterly by departmental management in terms of time taken to respond, outcome and learning points. Links to backing tables for all [Service Complaints](#) is provided.
- 6.2 Between January and March 2021, Environmental and Commercial Services received 36 complaints; a fall of 53% compared to the same period last year. Looking across the whole year, complaints have fallen by 37% from 310 in 2019/20 to 196 in 2020/21 with the largest declines recorded during periods of national lockdown restrictions in quarters 1 and 4.



- 6.3 During quarter 4, 33 complaints were closed with all dealt with as frontline. Of these 33 complaints, 6 (18%) were partially upheld and 18 (55%) were upheld.
- 6.4 Despite a large spike during quarter 2 (caused by a high proportion of Household Collection complaints, many of which related to the requirement to socially distance staff due to COVID-19), upheld complaints declined this year by 12% from 101 in 2019/20 to 89. Partially upheld complaints were considerably less, declining by 62% from 45 to just 17.



- 6.5 In addition to complaints, 51 MP/MSP enquiries were dealt with during quarter 4; an increase of 9% from the same period last year. Although enquiries increased between January and March, overall for 2020/21 the number of enquiries received fell by 8% from 211 in 2019/20 to 195.

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

- 6.6 Dealing with the initial impact and subsequent recovery from COVID affected all sections of Environmental and Commercial Services. Priorities changed quickly and staff worked hard to introduce new ways of working, ensuring essential services continued to be delivered where possible or were reinstated safely as restrictions allowed.
- 6.7 During the first lockdown of 2020, Catering supported other departments and third party sectors by providing staff resources and meals. Food packages were prepared for those shielding and staff assisted Moray Food Plus and the Bow Café by producing and delivering meals to vulnerable people across Moray. Snacks and packed lunches were provided to all Education hubs and as plans were made to reopen schools, a redesign of the menu was undertaken to ensure meals could be both produced and delivered safely. The dedication and work undertaken by the Catering team to support the local community during the COVID-19 pandemic has recently been acknowledged in a Letter of Commendation from the Lord Lieutenant of Moray.
- 6.8 The start of the pandemic saw the need for all household recycling collections to be suspended and recycling centres closed. To limit the impact this had on the local community, the team worked together to redesign and revise collection routes and schedules ensuring kerbside collections were reinstated within only a few weeks. There was also a complete redesign of process at all 4 public facilities with the introduction of a booking system and controlled access allowing residents to use the centres whilst ensuring COVID guidelines were adhered to. The commitment of all Waste staff to continue delivering a critical service was recently recognised through a Letter of Commendation from the Lord Lieutenant of Moray.
- 6.9 As the impact of COVID became clear, Janitorial and Building Cleaning staff were paramount to ensuring buildings remained safe and accessible. The team were key to assisting in the preparation of the Education Hubs and worked in conjunction with the NHS to provide a safe space to deliver the infant inoculation programme. During the recovery phase, the team assisted with the safe re-opening of schools and offices by ensuring Government guidelines were adhered to in a number of areas including the need for

increased sanitation. To fulfil these requirements, a staff restructure was undertaken and 60+ additional staff were recruited and trained within a very limited timescale.

- 6.10 Working with Education and Janitorial and Building Cleaning staff, Consultancy assisted in the reopening of schools by providing additional storage facilities increasing space for social distancing, procuring and installing automated hand sanitisers, enhanced cleaning equipment and organising the procurement and delivery of information posters and floor stickers.
- 6.11 Despite social distancing measures reducing staff resources, Roads Maintenance, Fleet Services and Transportation worked throughout lockdown assisting with the council's COVID response whilst at the same time continuing to deliver, as best as possible, programmes of planned works. Staff were key to ensuring vehicles were safe and available and essential PPE supplies were sourced and delivered throughout Moray, enabling many council services to continue operating. As schools re-opened, teams also worked hard to deliver a school transportation service that was safe for all.

### **Case Studies**

- 6.12 The Consultancy Section has been involved in a number of high profile projects this year. The team worked with the Lossiemouth Community to successfully secure funding of £1.8million from the Scottish Government for a new footbridge to Lossiemouth East Beach. Construction of the bridge is expected to commence in January 2022. To build on the Staycation Ready Project, Consultancy, in partnership with Lands and Parks and Economic Growth and Regeneration, have developed plans to deliver overnight stopping points and waste disposal for campervans and caravans at various locations across Moray. This project is due to be delivered by summer 2021.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

- 6.13 In response to concerns from local communities and elected members regarding busy roads around schools at drop off and pick up time, the Transportation Section agreed to pilot the 'School Streets' initiative at two schools in Moray; New Elgin and Seafield Primaries. This initiative aims to provide a traffic free environment and promote active travel by closing streets to vehicles within the immediate proximity of the school at drop off & pick up times. Both initiatives began on 22 March 2021 and will be reviewed during 2021/22.
- 6.14 Lands and Parks have been involved in a number of consultations with the local community covering subjects such as the reboot of the Woodland Management Plan and alternative approaches to grass cutting and grounds maintenance. Community concerns relating to play equipment in Lhanbryde were also addressed by the team who worked with local school children to select replacement equipment and evaluate tender submissions. This equipment was installed at the end of March 2021.

## **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 needed because the report is to inform the Committee on performance.

### **(h) Consultations**

The Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Service Managers, Legal Services Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer, and L Rowan, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

### **8.1 As at March 2021, 2 Service Plan outcomes due for completion have been achieved successfully. Overall the plan is 52% complete.**

**8.2 COVID-19 has had a significant impact on Environmental and Commercial Services. Every team faced an unprecedented evolving situation but worked together to ensure services continued as safely as possible. Despite these additional pressures, work in many key areas has continued and the service plan has progressed well. The focus for the year ahead will be the ongoing service recovery and delivering the remaining service plan outcomes.**

Author of Report: Suzanne Wilson, Research & Information Officer

Background Papers: Held by Author

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