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**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**

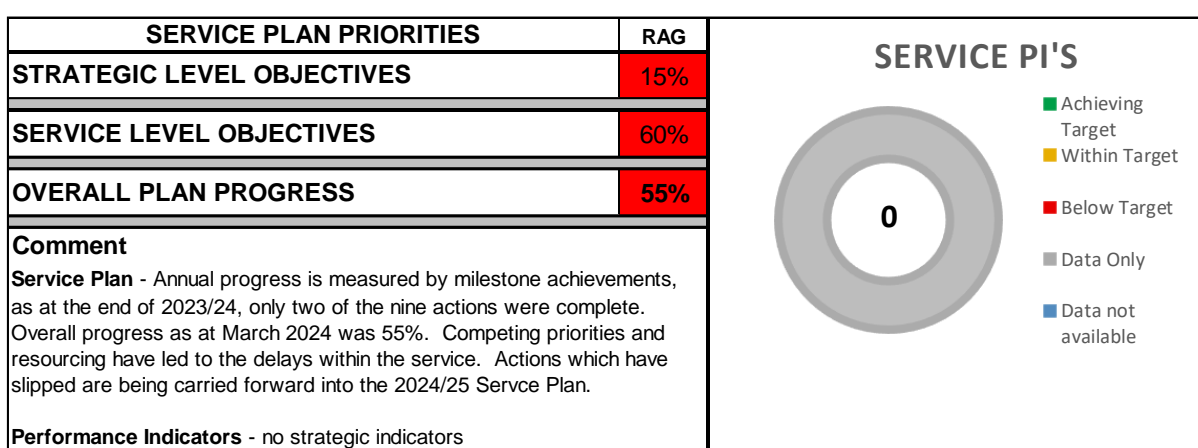
3.1 The Moray Council approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services on 7 August 2019 (para 5 of minute refers) which provides for twice yearly reports to committee on service performance.

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

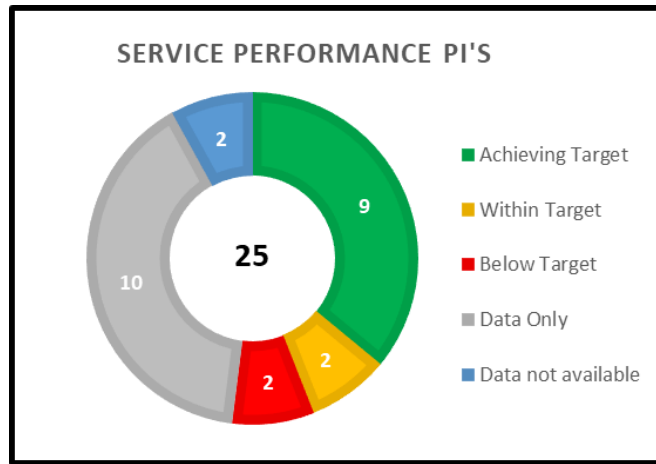
- 4.5 Options for centralising financial assessments within Benefits Team have been fully explored, including a scoping exercise which involved surveying other Scottish local authorities. The next step is to move forward with discussions and planning with stakeholders, where further work may take the 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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)

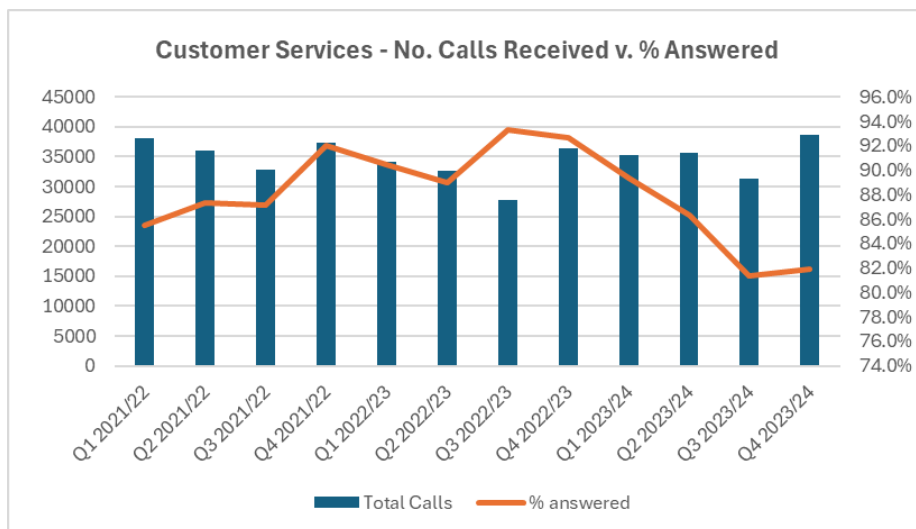
## **5. SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

- 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.



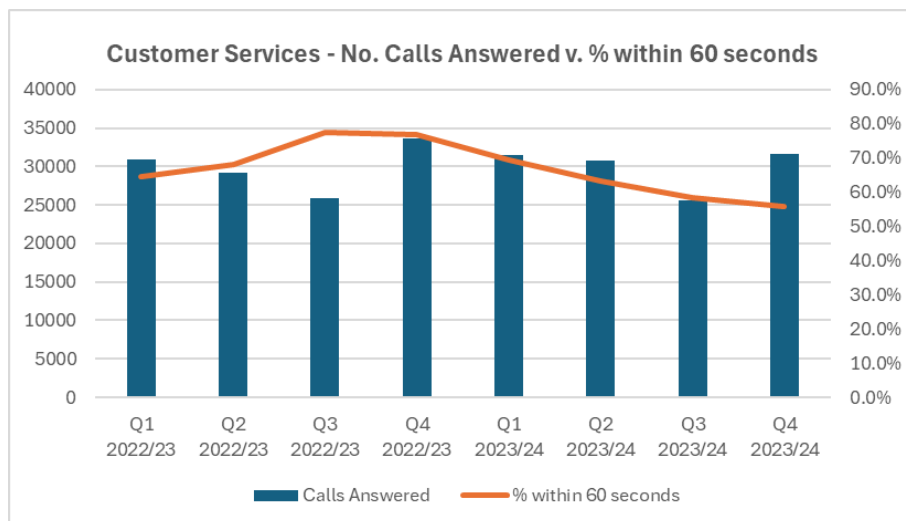
### Operational Indicators - challenges

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**

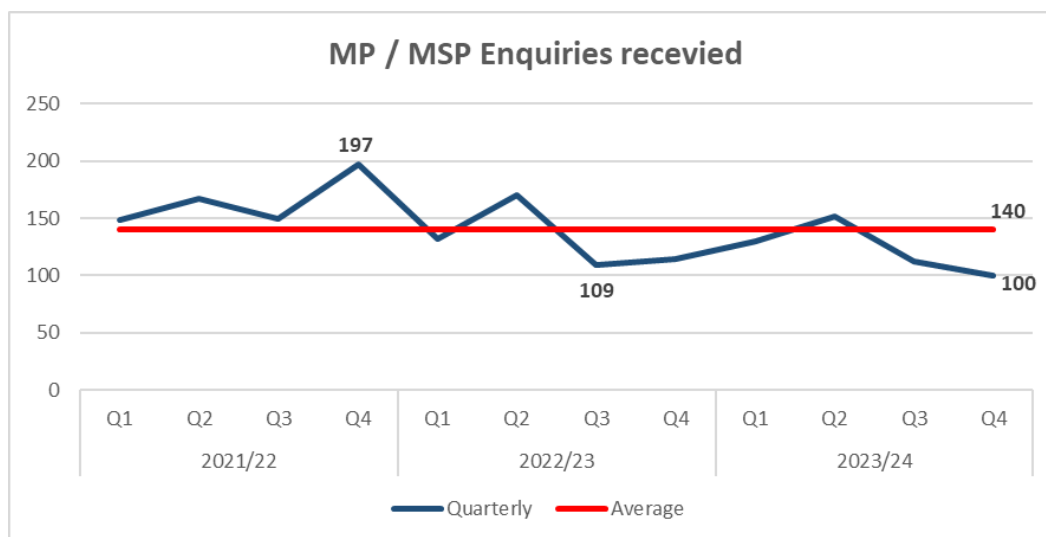
- 5.5 As at March 2023, the proportion of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Funding spent improved to 79.8%, below both national and family group averages, ranking 28 of 32 local authorities. Discretionary Housing Payments are administered by Councils to households who require financial assistance 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: