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**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 26 MAY 2021**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND  
PERFORMANCE – PERIOD TO MARCH 2021.**

**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 2021.
- 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:**

- i) scrutinises performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of March 2021; and**
- ii) notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

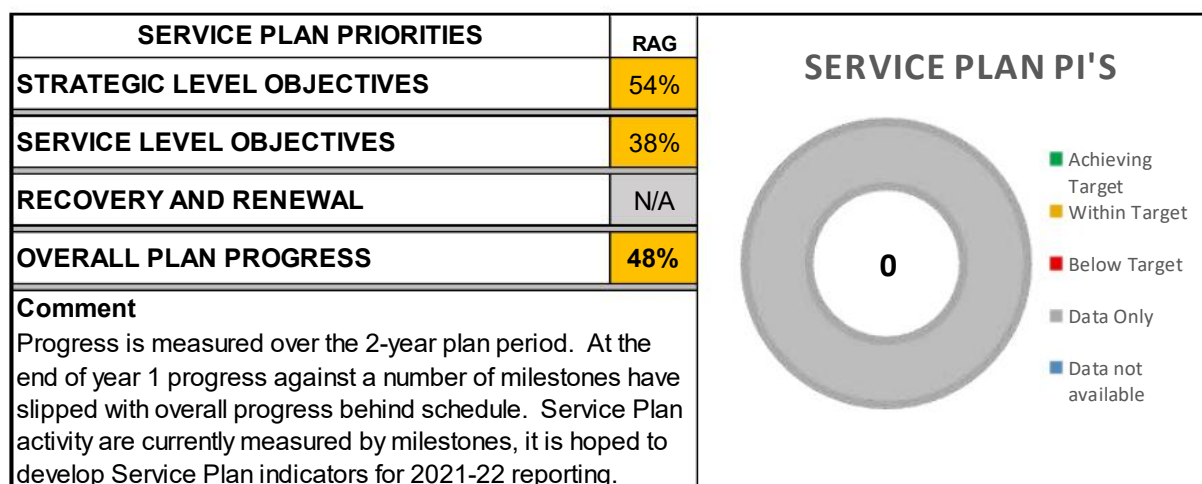
- 3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Council, approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

**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](#) is provided.



- 4.3 As reported in the previous performance report to this committee on the 3 February (para 8 of the minute refers), there continues to be significant impact on services ability to progress strategic and service plan activity as a result of the Council Covid-19 response. Many services are continuing to deal with changes in their day to day activities to meet the additional demands.

#### Strategic Outcomes - successes

- 4.4 At the meeting of Council on 20 January 2021 (para 11 of the minute refers), it was agreed to continue with the temporary committee structure due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. This will be reviewed at the meeting of Council on 30 June 2021. The Governance Review will then consolidate and refresh the Councils Second Tier Governance document and specifically:
- upgrade guidance on the relationship between Councillors and officers
  - formally adopt a Virtual Meetings Protocol
  - clarify the working arrangements of the Group Leader Forum
  - clarify the process for agreeing councillor senior responsibility allowance (GSP20-22.Strat-4.1)
- 4.5 As part of the roll-out of the Performance Management Framework the 2019/20 Annual performance report was published this quarter and the 2020/21 Corporate Plan report will go to Full Council committee on 30 June 2021. Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) performance indicators have been incorporated into the half yearly performance reports to support service plan / performance priorities. A series of LGBF online workshops are scheduled from May 2021 targeting at sector policy, strategic and performance leads and will explore the short and long-term impacts of the pandemic, share practice in responding and to consider future challenges / opportunities / new ways of working. Streamlining and refinement of performance reporting to committee will continue into 2021/22. (GSP20-22.Strat-4.3a-c, GSP20-22.Strat-4.2a-d)

#### Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.6 Work has continued in drafting the final Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) Delivery Framework documents, however prioritisation of workload relating to the Covid-19 pandemic responses have impacted on delivery timescales. Documents were considered by the Community Planning Board (CPB) in April 2021 which will enable routine reporting against planned priorities and outcomes. (GPS20-22.Strat-4.4a-d)
- 4.7 Limited progress has been made around Modernisation and Improvement activities to redesign customer contacts, in particular the focus on Council Access Points. While the Forres access point model was established prior to Covid-19 lockdown, access points have remained closed since March 2020 with staff redeployed to email and call handling duties. It is hoped that recruitment to the Customer Development Manager post will accelerate progress. (GSP20-22.Strat-4.5a-c)

#### **Service Level Outcomes - successes**

- 4.8 The revised 'Model Complaints Handling Procedure' (MCHP) was approved by this committee on the 31 March 2021 (para 11 of the minute refers). The MCHP provides a standardised approach to dealing with customer complaints across Scottish local authorities. Work progresses in the following areas:
- Staff training will be introduced to cover the changes to the MCHP
  - Complaints leaflet and complaints website will be updated. (GSP20-22.Serv-5.2a-b)

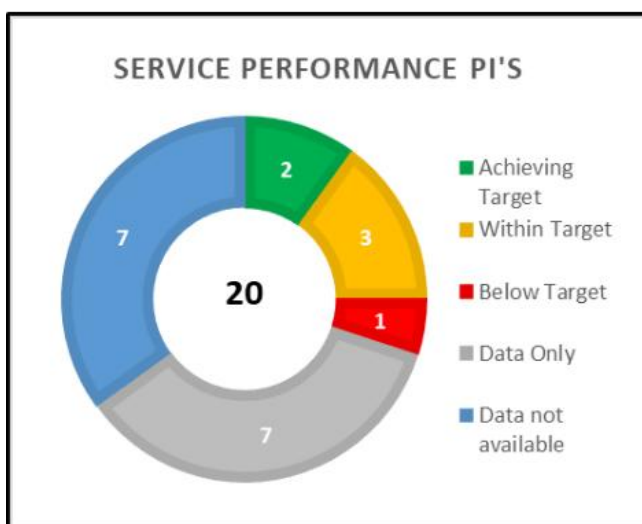
#### **Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support**

- 4.9 The completion of the Council Benefits and Council Tax e-forms has not been achieved as planned. Initial development of the e-forms has begun with a skeleton e-form specification submitted to ICT. Further progress is now dependent on ICT resources which have been diverted during the Covid-19 response. Completion of the e-forms will be carried forward to the 2021-22 Service Plan with a revised due date of April 2022. (GSP20-22.Serv-5.1a-b)
- 4.10 Increasing services using sharepoint as their primary document management system has not been progressed or met the intended due date of December 2020. The team remain focused on Covid-19 phone contact responses with a "care and maintenance" role in place for existing sharepoint builds. Business cases / project mandates will be required for bringing new services onto sharepoint will progress as resourcing allows. (GSP20-22.Serv-5.7)

### **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 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 Report is by exception, however links to backing tables for all [Service Performance Indicators](#) is provided.



#### Operational Indicators - successes

- 5.4 The average number of days taken to process new housing benefits claims and to process notifications of changes of circumstances in housing benefits claims continue to improve. The average processing time for new housing benefits was 19.8 days against a target of 21 days, while change of circumstances in housing claims took an average of 3.4 days against a target of 9 days. The average time taken to process these claims have notably reduced since 2018/19, where average timescales were 24.8 days and 9.4 days respectively. (PIs CPS011, CPS012)

#### Operational Indicators - challenges and actions to support

- 5.5 This reporting period is normally the busiest time of year for Customer Services with all services issuing year end documentation along with the renewal of Garden Waste Permits. In addition the service has had to deal with contacts regarding Scottish Government reliefs and grants, responding to Grampian Coronavirus (Covid-19) Assistance Hub calls and making outbound calls to people self-isolating due to positive Covid-19 tests (such calls can take over 30 minutes). The increased workload along with long term absence and staff recruitment continues to affect the ability to achieve service targets. During the reporting period 88.5% of telephone calls received were answered (CPS058) against a target of 93%. Customer Services indicators will be reviewed and changes may be made to reflect the ways customers are choosing to contact the Council (phone/email/self-service) and how effective and efficient the service is in dealing with the various contact methods. (PIs CPS058, CPS059, CPS062)
- 5.6 The in-year Council Tax collection performance at 31 March 2021 has suffered due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. 95.8% of council tax had been received at the end of the financial year, below the target of 97%. As Council Tax payers became unemployed or furloughed, it reduced the cash available to them to pay bills; the delay in commencement of Council Tax recovery reduced the time to recover unpaid arrears. The number of

Council Tax bills paid by direct debit has also reduced, again impacting on the rate of council tax collection. As Council Tax recovery processes continue, the rate of collection will be closely monitored. Albeit, relating to 2019/20, Local Government Benchmarking Framework data recently published reports performance of in-year council tax slightly above the national average achieving a rank of 7<sup>th</sup> across all local authorities. (SCM6b)

## **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 A total of 24 complaints were received during 2020-21, 15 of which were in quarter 4. The number of complaints is down on those received during 2019-20. In total 19 complaints were closed during 2020-21, 13 of which were in quarter 4. Of the complaints closed, 17 were closed at frontline stage (89%), five were upheld, one was partially upheld and 11 were not upheld. The average time taken to resolve frontline complaints was 6 days, slightly above the target 5 working day timescale. .
- 6.3 Only two of the complaints closed in 2020-21 were categorised as investigative stage. One was upheld and the other partially upheld. On average investigative complaints took 17 days to be resolved, within the target 20 working day timescale.
- 6.4 A total of 15 MSP enquiries were received and closed during quarter 4. On average MSP enquiries took eight days to be resolved.

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

- 6.2 The impacts of the latest lockdown were detailed in the report, Covid Related Pressures and Service Prioritisation (para 9 of the minute refers), presented to Council on 10 March 2021. This services contribution to the immediate and ongoing pandemic response is referenced in that report.

### **Case Studies**

- 6.3 Nothing to report.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

- 6.4 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 (Economy, Environment and Finance), Service Managers, Legal Services, the Equal Opportunities Officer, and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

**8.1 As at the end of the reporting year progress on implementing the strategic and service level actions is slightly behind schedule at 48% complete. Four of the five actions due to be completed by the end of March have slipped but are near completion, while the remaining indicator has not been progressed and will roll over into 2021-22. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been felt across the service, with significant changes to workloads in prioritising the council response to the pandemic.**

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