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**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 9 MAY 2023**

**SUBJECT: HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2023-24**

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

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To invite the Committee to consider the Housing and Property Services Service Plan for 2023-24.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (40) to ensure suitable framework is in place for performance management across Council Services.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee considers and approves the Service Plan for Housing and Property Services (Appendix I).**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Service planning is a key aspect of the Council's Performance Management Framework and is undertaken annually to set out the strategic direction for services over the coming months.
- 3.2 The service planning process focuses on forward planning for medium-term activities supporting delivery of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Corporate Plan. The Council planning process also includes team plans that focus on short term tactical and operational activities supporting delivery of the service plan and strategies and Employee Review and Development Plans (ERDP) provide individual planning for employees' activities and development.
- 3.3 As well as identifying service developments and 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.

- 3.4 Setting clear measurable outcomes and defining key indicators by which progress will be assessed is a recognised area for development within the Council and these Service Plans are part of the improvement journey to implement the Performance Management Framework. For some actions it can be difficult to identify a measurable outcome (e.g. a change in legislation that must be implemented, or updating a policy framework). It can also be challenging where there is currently no clear baseline or benchmarking from which informed targets and reasonable steps towards these can be developed. Therefore, as far as possible efforts have been made to set measurable outcomes for service plan actions but in some cases outputs have been used so that it is still possible to measure whether the action has been progressed as intended. In other areas, further work will be required to refine outcomes in future.
- 3.5 A summary of progress is given below based on the annual review carried out for this service area.

### **2023/24 Updates**

#### **3.6 Housing and Property Services**

##### **3.6.1 Progress on planned work (success)**

- Continued work to deliver a reduction in relet time of over 10% and corresponding void rent loss by reviewing voids processes.
- Successful review of the initial 2019-24 Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan submitted to the Scottish Government.
- Acquisition of properties through open market and Ministry of Defence.
- Support for the national response to the crisis in Ukraine, ensuring housing needs continued to be met after initial host arrangements ended.
- Enhanced capacity for Tenant Participation.
- Developed proposals for rent restructure.
- Progressed work on Office Review as part of Smarter Working project.
- Developed an annual review of valuation for the Council's property asset portfolio.

##### **3.6.2 Progress on planned work (areas for development/not delivered)**

- Unable to proceed with elements of industrial estate development in Forbes and Speyside due to site suitability, however this has been re-profiled within our capital programme for future years to enable further market analysis and identification.
- Tenant Participation actions were delayed due to recruitment challenges, however our Customer Engagement Officer is now in post and enhance work is underway.
- Rollout of enhanced Tenant Participation limited by delay with recruitment.
- Progress with depot review made however project timescale extended due to capacity issues.
- Service improvements for Repairs systems and Housing Management have taken longer than anticipated due to absences and management capacity.

### 3.6.3 Planned focus in new plan (reflecting above and challenges to come)

- A change in technical guidance for Electrical Certification has necessitated development of a remedial programme that we are currently investigating.
- Due to budgetary challenges, an in-year review of temporary accommodation charging was required to avoid a deficit position.
- The service experienced a number of absences of staff in key positions within our service which impeded progress in a number of key areas. Succession planning is being developed to mitigate any future recurrence.

### **Service Plans for 2023-24**

- 3.7 The service is continuing to ensure that the council delivers on commitments, such as those relating to energy efficiency, our Homelessness and Rapid Rehousing policies, continuing work in partnership with Health & Social Care Moray to deliver affordable homes at accessible standards and that housing needs are identified through delivery of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS).

## **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

The Service Plan was informed by the LOIP and the Council's 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 plan.

### **(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) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

None.

**(i) Consultations**

The Head of Service has worked with their management team to prepare the service plan attached as **Appendix I** and have contributed to the updates in this report.

**5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The Service Plan has been prepared identifying the improvements targeted for the period up to April 2024, with some horizon scanning going beyond that period. In preparing the plan managers have taken account of risk, performance data (including Best Value), the LOIP, the Corporate Plan and other relevant factors such as audit and inspection outcomes. The service plan identifies the resources allocated to services and how these will be utilised to deliver core service requirements and improvements.**

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Background Papers:

Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1252