

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy and Resources
DATE	19 th April, 2016
DIRECTOR	Richard Ellis, Interim Director of Corporate Governance
TITLE OF REPORT	Corporate Governance and Office of Chief Executive Service Plans
REPORT NUMBER	CG/16/21
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report outlines the work undertaken on the individual Service Plans for the Corporate Governance Directorate and Office of Chief Executive.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee are asked to note the information contained in the report relating to the development of Service Plans for the Corporate Governance Directorate and Office of Chief Executive.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific legal, resource, personnel, property, equipment, sustainability and environmental, health and safety and/or policy implications arising from this report.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Corporate Governance comprises many support functions, enabling frontline teams to deliver excellent service to our internal and external customers. It provides the backbone of the organisation, not only supporting frontline delivery but also ensuring effective governance across the council.

The directorate is supported by 699 employees and is responsible for the delivery of a wide range of services:

- Commercial & Procurement Services*
- Finance (including council tax & benefits)
- Legal and Democratic services (including Archive services)
- Human Resources
- Customer Service
- IT
- Transformation

* Currently shared with Aberdeenshire Council

The Office of Chief Executive comprises 63 employees who support the Chief Executive, provide a range of corporate and civic services and deliver the Council's Communications and Promotion service. The Office of Chief Executive is structured as follows:

- Office of Chief Executive
- Communications and Promotion

Audit Scotland in July 2015 published an 'Audit of Best Value and Community Planning' for Aberdeen City Council. The audit recognised that good progress had been made since 2009 in financial planning and management but that more needed to be done to consolidate the improvements (a golden thread reflecting all plans).

The findings of particular relevance to the Corporate Governance Directorate and the Office of Chief Executive are: the increased focus on ensuring the council's overall strategic priorities are translated into objectives and targets which are linked to service plans; taking further steps to encourage and consolidate elected members' ownership of the Council's vision; ensuring that elected members are receiving consistent information on service performance to enable them to discharge their scrutiny role effectively; review and strengthen arrangements for employee engagement and communication to ensure all employees have a full understanding of the Council's vision and priorities; review how the priorities of The Council's Strategic Business Plan: "Aberdeen: the Smarter City", the Strategic Infrastructure Plan, the City Region Deal and the City Centre Masterplan are linked through the service plans; implement plans to refocus performance measurement on outcomes; and ensure clear links between the performance information submitted to members for scrutiny and the Council's strategic plan.

“Aberdeen: the Smarter City” outlines the Council’s policy priorities, included within are 6 ‘Smarter’ themes: Smarter Governance; Smarter Living; Smarter People; Smarter Environment; Smarter Economy & Smarter Mobility.

Whilst the Corporate Governance Directorate directly impacts a number of these priorities, its primary role is to provide efficient and effective support functions. Through the council’s organisational plan “Shaping Aberdeen”, programmes of work are in place to ensure that we have all the components of a fit for purpose organisation to deliver outcomes.

These programmes include modernising, innovating and transforming ‘How we do business’ and also changing our culture to ‘improve customer experience’, ‘improve staff experience’ and ‘improve use of our resources’.

As a result, the Council’s Strategic Framework has been reviewed and overhauled to make the linkages between policy priorities, strategies and plans clearer and more defined.

The Council at its Budget Meeting on the 25th of February, 2016 noted the content of the refreshed Strategic Business Plan 2016-2017. All Members were also circulated (via the Information Bulletin) copies of the individual Directorate Plans which provided more detail on the progress made and the future activity against the 6 “Smarter” themes.

The 5 Service Plans for the Corporate Governance Directorate and the Office of Chief Executive Service Plans are contained in the Information Bulletin for Members to note the detail. The 7 Heads of Service have been using the Service Plans to further embed the “golden thread” through aligning individual objectives for staff members in the Council’s Performance, Review and Development process to the goals in the Service Plans. The individual Plans have been standardised in their format and layout for continuity purposes and have been peer reviewed to ensure that the objectives in the Strategic Plan and Corporate Governance Directorate Plan are evidenced in the Service Plans. The plans have performance measurements which link to overall strategic objectives of the Council.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience –

The Service Plans will improve the Customer Experience by providing support functions in the roll out of the Customer Experience Programme, leading to:

- Improved customer satisfaction

- Improved customer service- efficiently managed customer data and greater understanding of customer needs
- Improved use of resources through efficiencies in customer management
- Increased access to services digitally (24/7)

Improving Staff Experience –

The Service Plans will improve the Staff Experience by providing support functions in the roll out of the Staff Experience Programme, leading to:

- Increased staff satisfaction as measured through pulse checks and Employee Opinion Survey
- Reduced Sickness Absence
- Alignment of Shaping Aberdeen vision with recruitment, development and internal promotion
- Increased staff retention
- Ability to recruit better staff
- Achieve Times 100 best organisations to work for

Improving our use of Resources –

The Service Plans will improve the Improving our use of Resources Programme by providing support functions in the roll out of the Programme, leading to:

- Improved use of resources impacting positively on all finance and corporate financial KPI's and reducing finance risks
- Improved customer satisfaction ratings from CG customer survey
- New medium term financial plan and long term financial plans developed
- Improved financial processes, reducing bureaucracy and delivering efficiencies
- Improved customer satisfaction ratings from Finance budget holder survey

Corporate -

The refreshed Strategic Plan that was submitted to Council on the 25th of February reviewed progress in delivering the Council's vision, 'Aberdeen – The Smarter City', and set out the Council's priorities for the 2016/17. It explained how the Council is transforming the way it does business and delivers services and it showed, through clear and measurable objectives and targets, how we intend to deliver these priorities during 2016/17 and beyond. By refreshing the Plan we are ensuring that it is up to date and continues to be relevant to the challenges and opportunities we currently face as a City. To meet these challenges, this Strategic Business Plan is supported by

Directorate and Service Business Plans which provide detail of how the council will make the best use of available resources, bringing modern and innovative change, to ensure that we can continue to effectively deliver our vision.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

In order to achieve our objectives, we need to identify and manage the risks with the potential to impact them. We will be reviewing our overall Risk Management framework, to define our approach to risk and our overall risk appetite, which will significantly influence our decision making processes. It will also determine the levels of risk we are prepared to tolerate and the circumstances in which we may take calculated risks in pursuit of transformation and innovation agendas. The goals documented in the Service Plans have shaped the risks in our Operational Risk Register and by monitoring the implementation of the plans' activities, we will ensure those risks are properly managed. The Operational risk registers will be updated for the start of the new 2016 financial year.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen City Council Strategic Business Plan Refresh
Corporate Governance Directorate Plan

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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