

APPENDIX 2

Audit Report	Risk to continuous improvement	Responsible officer	Completion date	Action	Update
Risk 1 Page 8	There are no benefit performance indicators in the Corporate Services Service Plan 2017/18, and the service is not formally reporting performance to the Policy and Resources committee. Therefore, there is no evidence that the service is being recognised for delivering good performance, or that it is being challenged and supported when performance is below expectations.	Norma Matheson, Benefits Manager	28 Feb 2018	A suite of routine performance information for the various sections within Corporate Services is collected quarterly and reported as follows: • Each quarterly report goes to the Corporate Services Management team/ Corporate Director for scrutiny. • A report goes to Policy & Resources committee twice a year with the 2 previous quarterly reports. Any performance information which is not included within that suite is subject to “exception reporting”. A report will be normally submitted to the Corporate Management Team with details of any poor performance. Findings of external audit reports are also reported to the Policy & Resources and Audit & Scrutiny committees. It is recognised that performance information for Housing Benefits is not included in the routine performance information reported above (although it is subject to exception reporting). This omission could be simply remedied by the quarterly reports being expanded to include: • Average number of days to process HB (cumulative from start of year)	Completed – PI’s have now been added to corporate system and will be reported to Policy & Resources Committee on a quarterly basis.

				• Total new HB overpayments created this quarter • Total HB overpayments recovered this quarter • Total HB overpayments outstanding at the end of the quarter	
Risk 2 Page 8	Although the service reports the value of overpayments raised, recovered and written off as part of the online performance management tool, recovery performance is not reported regularly to senior management or elected members.	Norma Matheson, Benefits Manager	28 Feb 2018	See above	Completed – PI's have now been added to corporate system and will be reported to Policy & Resources Committee on a quarterly basis.

Risk 3 Page 11	Speed of processing performance in 2017/18 is in decline, and there is a significant risk that the level of processor resources within the benefit service is insufficient to maintain or improve on previous performance levels.	Norma Matheson, Benefits Manager	2018/19	The main causes of the deterioration in speed of processing during 2017/18 were the additional processing required to fully implement the incorporation of free school meals and school clothing grants and a reduction in overall productivity due to the introduction of two new members of staff to the team due to the loss of experienced processors. It is not proposed to adjust the processing team FTE staffing as it is clear from the information about FTE availability over the two year period that in normal circumstances the resource is sufficient to deliver a satisfactory service. The implementation of measures to incorporate free school meals and clothing grants initiated the blip in speed of processing performance. However the main risk to future improvement and then maintaining continuous improvement is minimising the level of staff turnover. The reality is that Moray is unable to attract experienced Benefit staff from other authorities. Whilst the service has tried to plan for workforce change (such as a recent management vacancy arising due to retirement), promoted posts are normally filled from staff within the service which, during 2017/18, has accentuated the level of turnover. However some Benefit Processors have also been lost to other slightly higher graded posts within the Council. • The salary grade for the Benefit processor	All vacancies have now been filled and the member of staff on maternity leave has returned to work. There is no significant backlog of claims. Claims are currently being processed within targets of 23 calendar days for new claims and 11 calendar days for changes. Targets have been reduced for 2018/19 to 21 calendar days for new claims and 9 calendar days for changes.
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Risk 4 Page 12	The council is not fully utilising the automated function within the DWP's ATLAS facility, and is therefore missing an opportunity to reduce the manual workload for the service, and free up resources to carry out other benefit-related tasks.	Norma Matheson, Benefits Manager	30 Oct 2018	post has been subject to review and will move from Grade 3 to Grade 4. This may help recruitment and retention. - Recruitment to vacancies is in progress to maximise resources over the next six month period. - The backlog of claims has been reduced. Currently there are 177 cases awaiting processing. 66 are within 10 calendar days old, with the oldest case one month from date of receipt. The service managers will continue to closely monitor workloads and resources in this area.	The DWP's Performance Development Team (PDT) have recently reviewed our system parameters and have recommended some changes which may reduce the number of cases having to be assessed manually. They have also provided an overview of the new data hub process for the implementation of Universal Credit full service and I am confident that ongoing communications with PDT will help to improve automation.
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