

The Highland Council

Finance, Housing and Resources Committee - 5 June 2013

Agenda Item	13.c
Report No	FHR/78/13

Finance Service Performance Report

Report by Director of Finance

Summary

This regular report provides Members with details of Finance Service performance for the quarter to 31 March.

1. Background

- 1.1 This report includes performance against the Accounts Commission's Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) for Finance and Benefit Administration. Current year figures are compared with figures for the same quarter of the last financial year, where available.
- 1.2 Reports will continue to be brought to Committee on these performance indicators on a quarterly basis so that trends can be monitored.
- 1.3 Where definitions have changed, no direct comparisons can be made.

2. Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates

2.1 Council Tax In Year Collection Rate

Performance as at	2012	2013
31 March	95.50	95.59

- 2.1.1 This indicator is a measure of how taxpayers are paying and the effectiveness of the council in collecting Council Tax.
- 2.1.2 At the end of quarter four, the 2012/13 Council Tax in-year collection rate is up by 0.09% compared to the previous year.
- 2.1.3 Since April 2012, the percentage of Direct Debit payers has risen by 1.28% from 63.42% to 64.70%, reflecting the introduction of paperless Direct Debit facilities.

2.2 Non Domestic Rates In Year Collection Rate

Performance as at	2012	2013
31 March	97.52	97.49

- 2.2.1 This indicator is a measure of the effectiveness of the Council in collecting Non

Domestic Rates due in the current year, but can also be a barometer of how businesses are doing locally.

2.2.2 At the end of quarter four, the Non Domestic Rates in-year collection rate shows a slight reduction of 0.03% compared to the previous year.

2.2.3 The Council continues to use all relevant measures available under the Rating regime to assist local businesses in difficult times and up until now this has had a beneficial effect. These measures include encouraging payment by monthly instalments and having the highest take-up rate in Scotland for awarding relief under the governments Small Business Bonus Scheme.

2.3 Business Improvement District (BID) Levy

Performance as at	2012	2013
31 March	94.57	95.09

2.3.1 This indicator is a measure of how relevant businesses in Inverness are paying the Business Improvement District levy.

2.3.2 The 2012/13 collection rate for quarter 4 shows an improvement of 0.52% on the prior year quarter 4 collection rate.

3. Benefits Administration

3.1 Speed of Processing (days)

Performance as at	2012	2013
31 March		
New Claims	20	22
Changes of Circumstance	7	5

3.1.1 These indicators reflect the Council's ability to process work as quickly as possible to ensure applicants receive their entitlement on time and at the correct rate.

3.1.2 Performance for quarter 4 is showing a drop for new claims processing due to changes in working practices prompted by the introduction of new Department for Work and Pensions' software earlier in the year, but is still on target at 22 days. Priority is now given to changes of circumstance. Changes of circumstance processing shows an improvement compared to prior year quarter 4 and is better than the target of 6 days.

4. Customer Income Maximisation and Money Advice

Performance as at	2012	2013
31 March	£1,734,080	£2,303,574

4.1.1 This indicator measures the total annual increased amount of benefit being

awarded in Highland. Gains achieved in 2012/13 reflect a continuing need to assist customers through the complexities of finding out about, and applying for welfare benefits.

4.2 Money Advice

Performance as at	2012	2013
31 March		
Customer Contacts	1,055	1,056
Total debt presented by clients	£6,717m	£7,237m
% queries completed in time from first contact to initial interview of 10 days	98.1	96.33

4.2.1 These indicators measure the number of customer contacts and levels of debt dealt with by the Council's Money Advice Team.

4.2.2 The amount of debt presented is increasing due to economic factors and the pressures upon local families arising from changes to the benefit system.

5. Payment of Invoices

Performance as at	2012	2013
31 March	92.2%	90.7%

5.1 This indicator measures the efficiency of the Council as a whole in paying invoices. It looks at the number of invoices paid within 30 calendar days of receipt, as a percentage of all invoices paid.

6. Attendance Management

Performance as at	2012	2013
31 March		
Council	2.4	2.8
Finance Service	2.1	2.6

6.1 This indicator shows the average number of days' sickness absence per employee for the quarter. The Finance Service performance continues to improve.

6.2 The service aims to keep staff absences as low as possible and follows the Council's personnel policies and guidance, implementing measures such as "return to work" interviews and discussions with staff.

7. Recommendation:

Members are asked to consider the contents of this report.

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Background Papers: None