

The Highland Council
Resources Committee – 26 November 2014

Agenda Item	9
Report No	RES/63 /14

Finance Service - Quarterly Performance Report

Report by Director of Finance

Summary

This report provides a summary of key and statutory performance indicators for the Finance Service as at 30th September 2014.

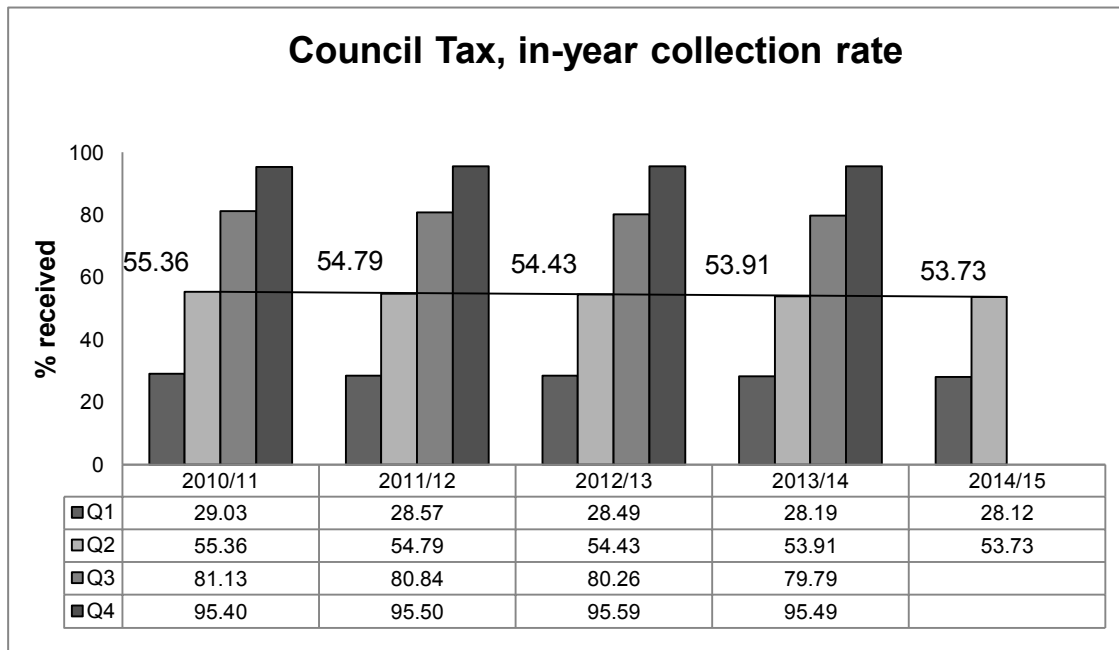
1. Background

- 1.1 This report includes performance against the Accounts Commission's Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) together with key performance measures for the Finance Service.
- 1.2 Current year figures are compared with those from the corresponding period in the previous financial year where these are available. In addition, figures from previous years are included where appropriate so that trends may be identified.
- 1.3 Where definitions have changed, direct comparisons can only be made within the time period to which that definition has applied.
- 1.4 Reports will continue to be brought to Committee on these performance indicators on a quarterly basis so that trends can be monitored.
- 1.5 A list of the current SPIs for the Finance Service is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 1.6 Detailed information on payment of invoices for all Services within the Council is provided in **Appendix 2**.
- 1.7 Although performance is generally very good across the range of indicators presented within this report, the Finance Service continues to look at unit costs. The Service is undertaking further work in this area as part of the requirement to deliver further efficiency savings.

2. Finance Service, Quarterly performance reporting

2.1 Council Tax In-Year Collection Rate

2.1.1

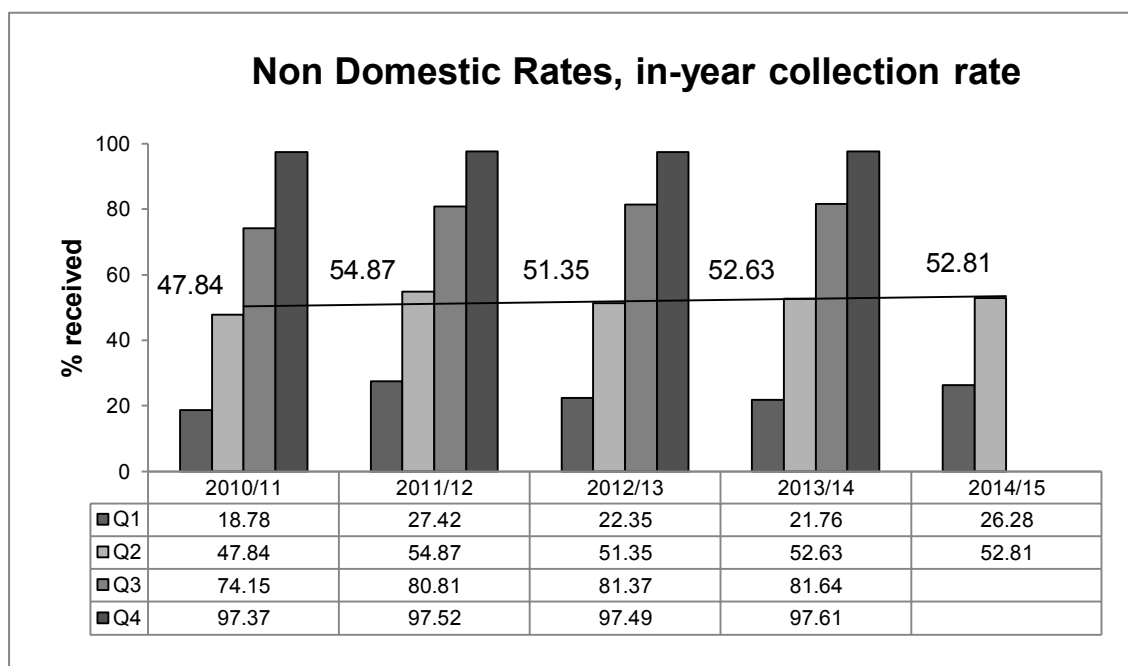


2.1.2 Council Tax in-year collection rate has reduced slightly on 2013/14 to 53.73% but 0.55% increase (from September 2013) in the number of Council Tax payers moving to 12 monthly instalments means a change to the profile of the income.

2.1.3 Direct debits now make up 68.26% of bill payment which represents 78.66% of receipts. The prior year period was 67.1% Direct Debit take-up, and 75.22% of receipts.

2.2 Non Domestic Rates in-Year Collection Rate

2.2.1

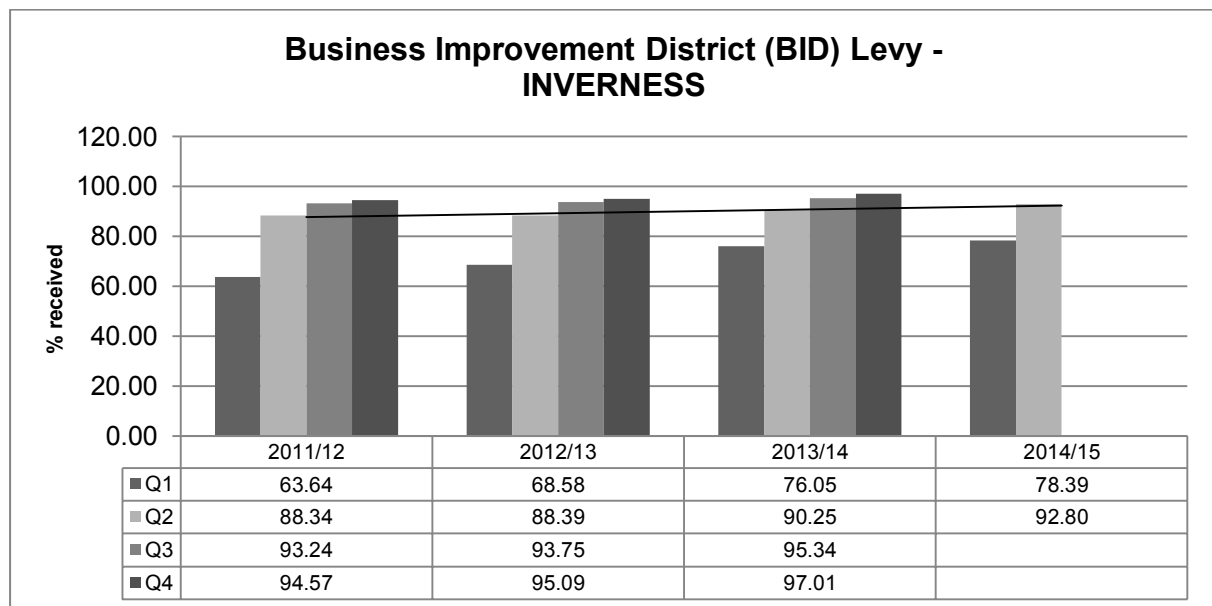


2.2.2 The end of quarter two position shows Non Domestic Rates in-year collection rate increasing by 0.18% on the prior year period.

2.2.3 The Council continues to use all relevant measures available under the Rating regime to assist local businesses in difficult times; measures include encouraging payment by monthly instalments and directing businesses to available rate relief schemes.

2.3 Business Improvement District (BID) Levy

2.3.1



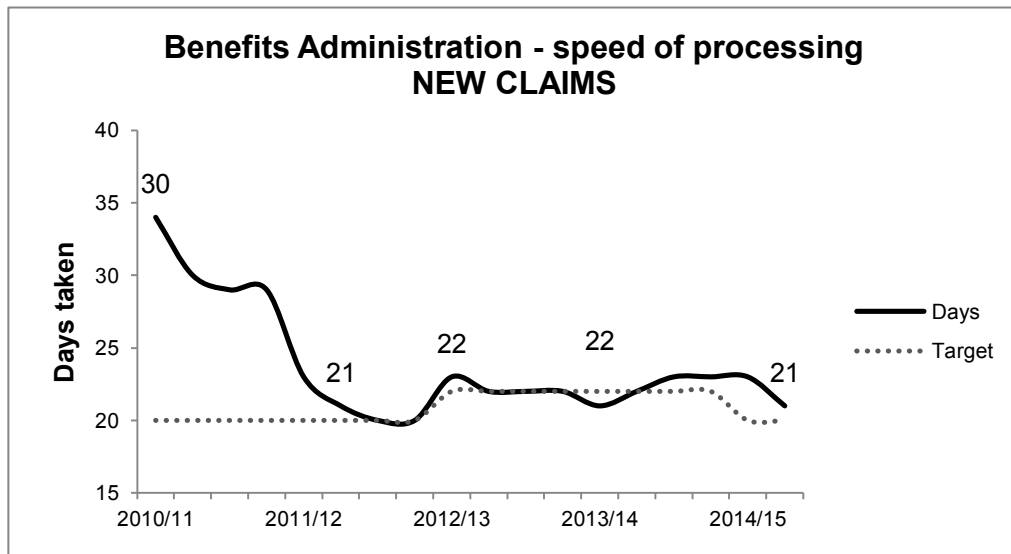
2.3.2 This indicator is a measure of how relevant businesses in Inverness are paying the Business Improvement District levy.

2.3.3 The collection rate for 2014/15 shows an improvement of 2.55% on prior year.

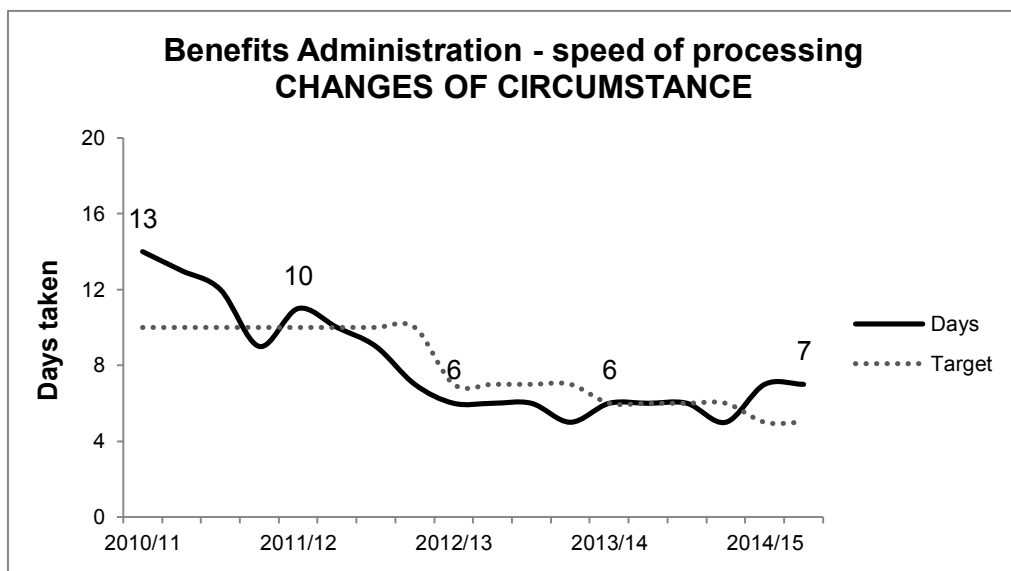
2.3.4 The collection rate for Quarter 2 of the new Loch Ness & Inverness Tourism (Uniqueness) BID is 88.82%. This is the first year of this with initial bills being issued on 8 May 2014. Future reports will include trends when more data is available.

2.4 Benefits Administration - Speed of processing (days)

2.4.1.i



2.4.1.ii



2.4.2 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.

2.4.3 During 2014/15 more challenging targets have been set of 20 days for new claims and 5 days for changes in circumstances. Current performance levels are missing targets by 1 day and 2 days respectively but there are signs that improvements are materialising, with new claims processing for September at 20.7 days.

2.5 Customer Income Maximisation

Financial benefit to the customer from advice given (£000)				
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Quarter 1	294	352	353	719
Quarter 2	573	659	217	1,100
Quarter 3	480	347	392	
Quarter 4	387	945	673	
Year to date	1,734	2,304	1,635	1,819

2.5.2 Income maximisation continues to support customers and maximising benefits awards. 2014/15 performance to date is encouraging including Quarter 2 resulting from improvements in using existing information held by the Council such as Housing Benefit records and a review of existing processes.

2.6 Money Advice

2.6.1

Performance	2013/14				2014/15	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Customer Contacts	257	275	264	479	316	347
Total debt presented by clients (£m)	1,137	1,358	1,779	2,805	1,271	1,619
% queries completed in time from first contact to initial interview of 10 days	100	98.27	97.01	90.55	95.80	96.32%

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

2.7 National Recruitment Portal

2.7.1 The National Recruitment Portal (NRP) is the system used to manage the Council's recruitment; it includes the facility for applicants to apply for positions online, and enables Council Managers to complete the recruitment process electronically which has contributed to a significant reduction in recruitment related printing in excess of 200,000 pages per annum.

2.7.2 Any applications submitted in paper are processed in the Council's Electronic Processing Centre (EPC). EPC staff digitise and upload any paper submissions to ensure Managers/Lead officers have all applications available via one portal regardless of method of submission.

2.7.3

National Recruitment Portal	2013/14		2014/15	
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Number of posts advertised	411	455	630	643
Percentage of posts advertised on time	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number (& percentage) of electronic applications	4,243 (94.2%)	5,349 (96.5%)	6,440 (97.0%)	5,345 (95.75%)
Number (& percentage) of paper applications	247 (5.8%)	194 (3.5%)	193 (3.0%)	228 (4.25%)
Number of paper applications processed within 2 working days	100%	100%	100%	100%

2.7.4 All posts were advertised on time and all paper applications were processed within two working days. The percentage of paper applications received show a slight increase on Q1 but the actual number of paper applications concerned is not significant.

2.7.5 The table below compares the number of posts advertised during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 in 14/15.

Position Type	Qtr 1	Qtr 2
Full-time	53%	37%
Part-time	47%	63%
Total	100%	100%

2.7.6 The first 2 quarters of 14/15 show an overall increase in posts advertised compared to Quarters 3 and 4 in 13/14, which were the first 2 quarters of going live with the NRP. This increase arose from the new posts (Early Years Practitioners) to provide 600 hours of nursery education being recruited to. Pupil Support Assistant vacancies arose as a result of staff being appointed to the aforementioned Early Years posts.

2.8 Travel Desk

2.8.1 The Travel Desk is the corporate delivery model for the arrangement of business travel and accommodation. The booking process incorporates a number of control measures including the requirement for managers to approve the request prior to the commitment of budget.

2.8.2

Travel Desk	2013/14		2014/15	
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Number of requests	1,615	1,918	1,833	1,561
Percentage of requests processed in time	100%	100%	100%	100%

2.8.3 The number of requests received in Q2 show a reduction compared to Q1. This is likely attributable to the seasonal fluctuation due to holidays of

managers/travellers during the summer. The percentage of requests processed on time remains at 100%.

2.9 Single Grant Applications (SGAs)

2.9.1 Business Support provides support to a number of Council staff - including Ward Managers – in the administrative process of SGAs. The role is primarily logging SGAs (onto SharePoint), issuing an acknowledgment to customers and distribution of the SGAs to relevant staff.

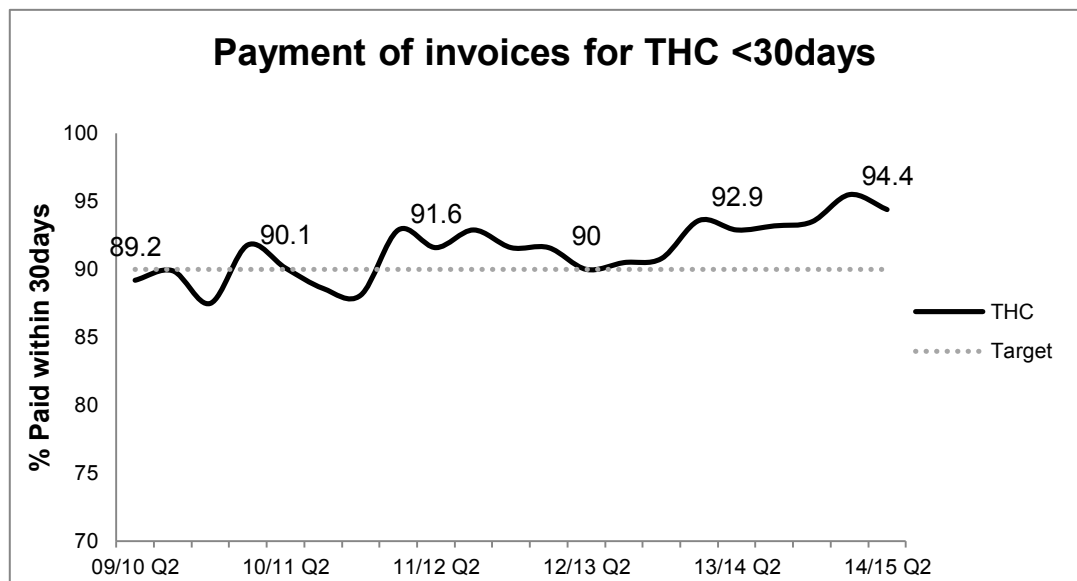
2.9.2 There were 252 applications handled in Quarter 2 2014/15, with 246 in Quarter 1.

2.9.3

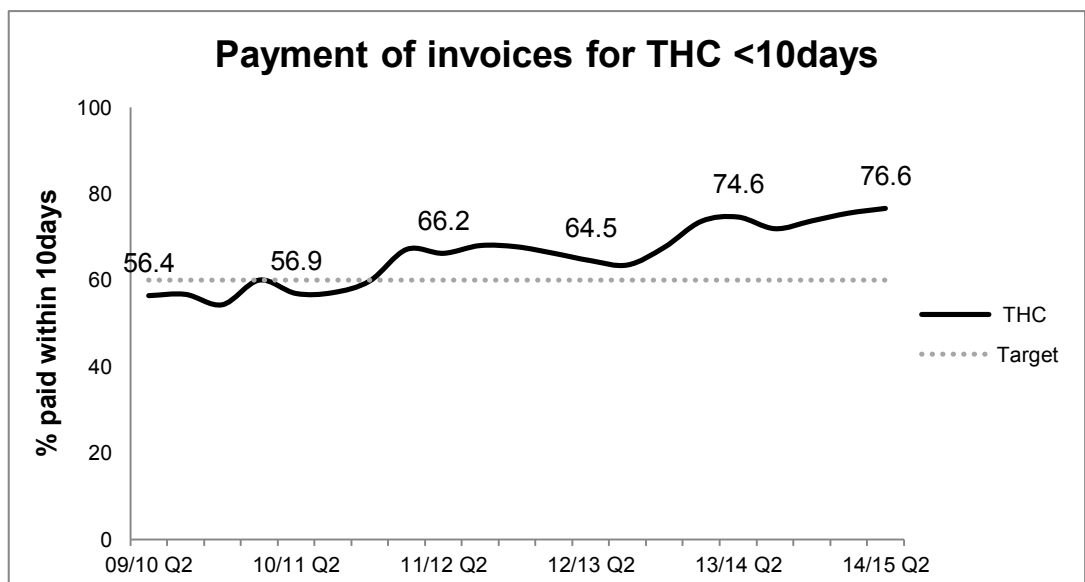
Single Grant Applications	2013/14		2014/15	
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Percentage logged, acknowledged & distributed within 5 days	78.7%	98.9%	97.2%	96.0%

2.10 Payment of Invoices

2.10.1.i



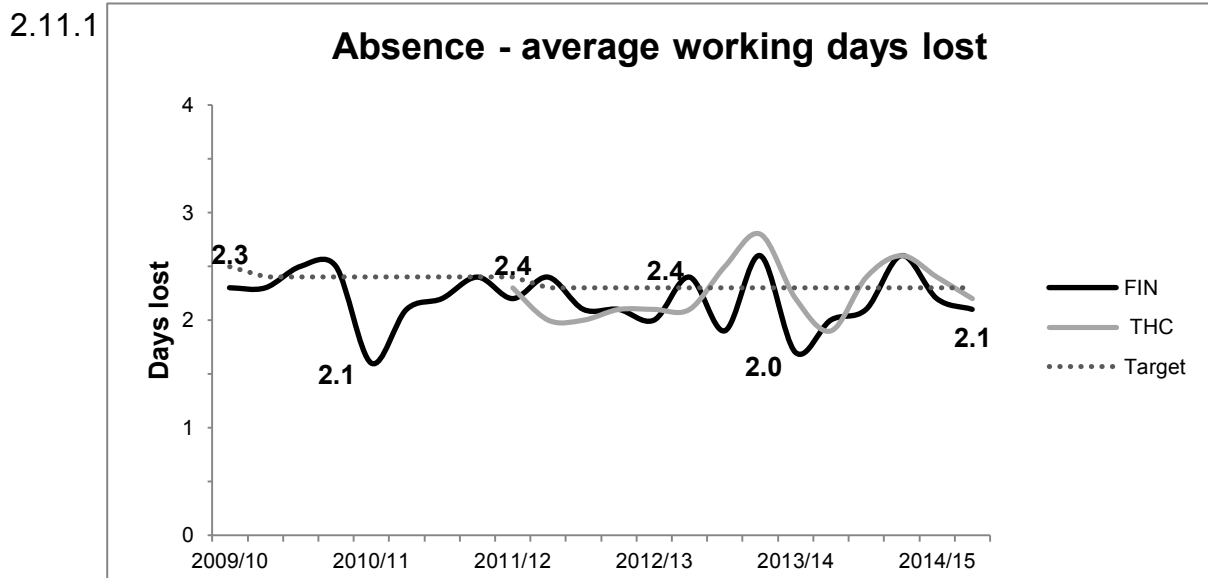
2.10.1.ii



2.10.2 These indicators measure the efficiency of the Council as a whole in paying invoices. They look at the number of invoices paid within 30 calendar days and 10 days respectively of receipt, as a percentage of all invoices paid. Performance at Service level is detailed in Appendix 2.

2.10.3 Improvements have been achieved in the payment of invoices within both 30 days and 10 days compared to prior year's performance.

2.11 Attendance Management



2.11.2 This indicator shows the average number of days' sickness absence per employee for the quarter. The latest statistics for the Finance Service 2014/15 show a slight increase compared to the prior year period in 2013/14 but this figure remains below the Council average (2.2 days). The Finance Service Management Team continues to investigate and implement measures to reduce overall absence figures and ensure it remains below the Council average.

2.11.3 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.

3. Implications

3.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

Recommendations:

The Resources Committee is asked to note these statutory and key performance indicators.

Designation: Director of Finance

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Date: 5 November 2014

APPENDIX 1

Statutory Performance Indicators	Report ref:	Frequency
The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence for: b) All other local government employees	2.11	Quarterly
The gross administration cost per benefits case		Annual
The cost of collecting Council Tax per dwelling		Annual
Current year income from Council Tax: a) The income due from Council Tax for the year, net of relief and rebates b) The percentage of a) that was received during the year	2.1	Quarterly
The number of invoices paid within 30 calendar days of receipt as a percentage of all invoices paid	2.10	Quarterly
The number of invoices paid within 10 calendar days of receipt as a percentage of all invoices paid	2.10	Quarterly
Internal Audit - cost of audit/£1m net expenditure		Annual
Insurance - cost/claim processed		Annual
Creditors - unit cost/creditor invoice issued		Annual
Payroll - cost/payslip produced		Annual
Pensions - cost per member		Annual
Cost of Accounting % Net Rev Budget + HRA		Annual
Cost of completing the Annual Accounts		Annual
Cost NDR collection/chargeable property		Annual
% NDR collected by year end	2.2	Quarterly
Cost sundry debtors/debtors account issued		Annual
% income sundry debtors collected during year		Annual
Cost Corporate Finance % Net Revenue Budget		Annual
Cost Procurement section % Net Revenue Budget		Annual

Other performance measures	Report ref:	Frequency
Processing time benefit – new claims (average days)	2.4	Quarterly
Processing time benefit – change in circs (average days)	2.4	Quarterly
Number of customer contacts	2.6	Quarterly
Total debt presented by clients (£m)	2.6	Quarterly
% Money advice queries completed in time from first contact to initial interview (10days)	2.6	Quarterly
Increase in financial benefit to customers from the advice given	2.5	Quarterly
Business Improvement District (BID) Levy	2.3	Quarterly
Business Support - National Recruitment Portal	2.7	Quarterly
Business Support – Travel Desk	2.8	Quarterly
Business Support – Single Grant Applications	2.9	Quarterly

APPENDIX 2

Due to Council restructuring, performance data against the new Services for prior years is unknown.

INVOICE PAYMENT <10 DAYS					
DIRECTORATE	TARGET	2012/13 Q2	2013/14 Q2	2014/15 Q1	2014/15 Q2
Care & Learning Service	60%			64.0%	63.8%
Chief Executive's Office				73.6%	70.4%
Community Services				85.0%	84.5%
Corporate Development Service				76.0%	73.1%
Development & Infrastructure Service				85.5%	88.0%
Finance Service				93.5%	89.7%
Highland Council			64.2%	74.6%	75.5%

INVOICE PAYMENT <30 DAYS					
SERVICE	TARGET	2012/13 Q2	2013/14 Q2	2014/15 Q1	2014/15 Q2
Care & Learning Service	90%			95.2%	92.9%
Chief Executive's Office				94.7%	93.7%
Community Services				96.3%	95.6%
Corporate Development Service				91.1%	91.3%
Development & Infrastructure Service				92.2%	93.1%
Finance Service				99.2%	98.8%
Highland Council			92.9%	92.9%	95.5%