

Agenda Item	12
Report No	RES/09/18

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Corporate Resources Committee

Date: 28 February 2018

Report Title: Corporate Resources Service - Quarterly Performance Report

Report By: Depute Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Resources

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides performance information against the Accounts Commission's Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) together with key performance measures as at 31 December 2017.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

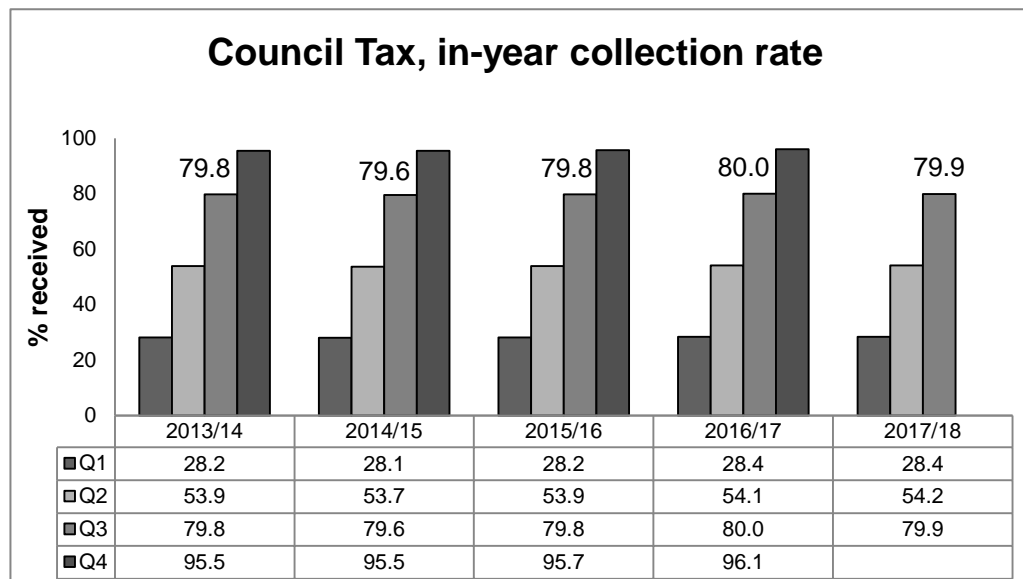
- i. consider these statutory and key performance indicators.

3. Background

- 3.1 This report includes performance against the Accounts Commission’s Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) together with key performance measures.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Where definitions have changed, direct comparisons can only be made within the time period to which that definition has applied.
- 3.4 Reports will continue to be brought to Committee on these performance indicators on a quarterly basis so that trends can be monitored.
- 3.5 A list of the current SPIs for the Finance Service is attached as **Appendix 1**.

4.1 Council Tax In-Year Collection Rate

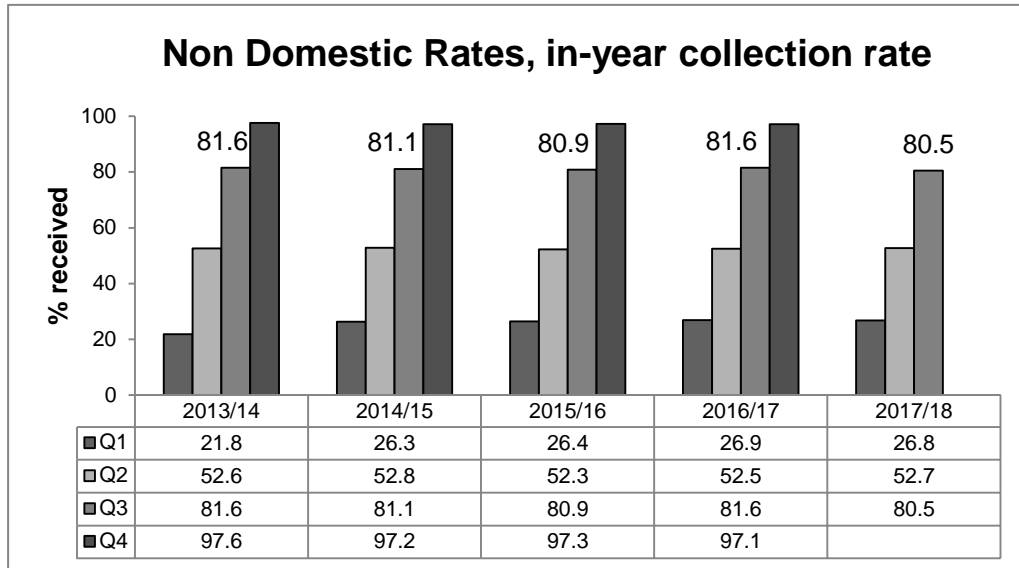
4.1.1



- 4.1.2 Council Tax in-year collection rate is 79.9%, which is comparable with prior year. Compared to prior year, it should be noted that there has been a 0.9% increase Council Tax payers paying over 12 months rather than 10 months.
- 4.1.3 Total direct debits now make up 71.8% of bill payment representing 82.4% of receipts. These report an improvement on the prior year position of 70.5% and 80.9%, respectively.

4.2 Non Domestic Rates in-Year Collection Rate

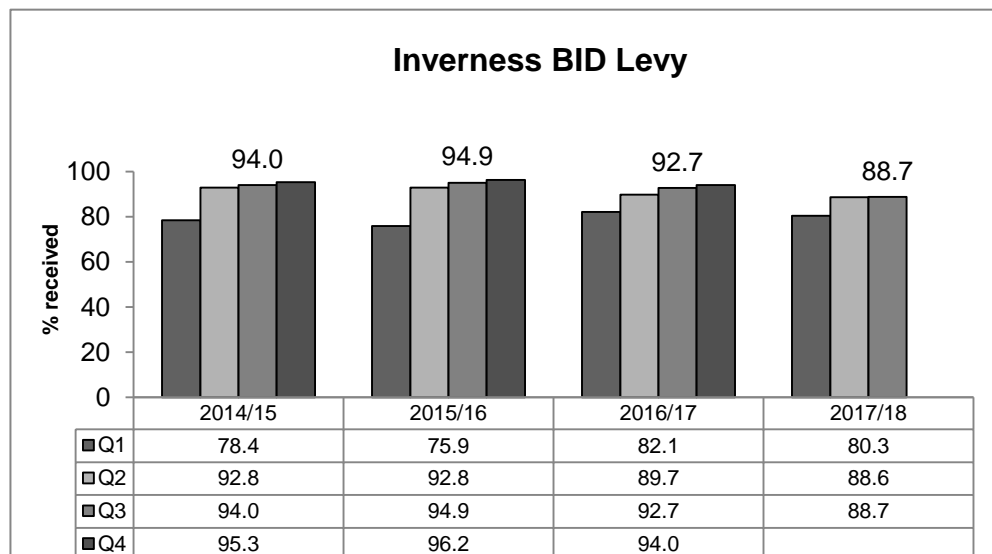
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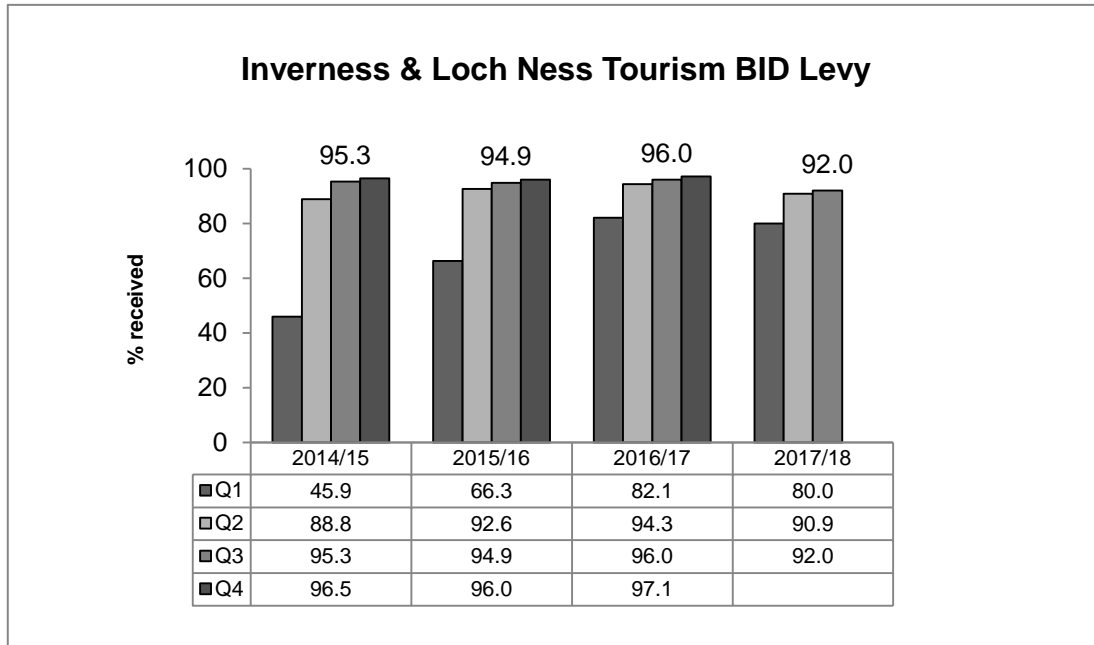
4.2.2 The in-year collection rate is 80.5% compared to 81.6% prior year. The Council continues to use all relevant measures available under the Rating regime to assist local businesses in difficult times including encouraging payment by monthly instalments and directing businesses to rate relief schemes such as the Small Business Bonus Scheme and Transitional Relief.

4.3 Business Improvement District (BID) Levies

4.3.1



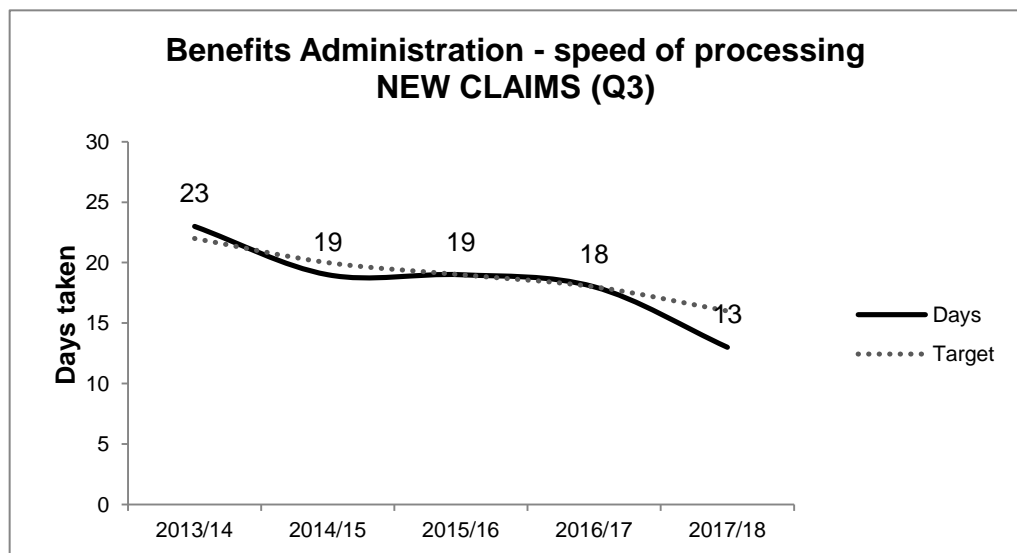
4.3.2



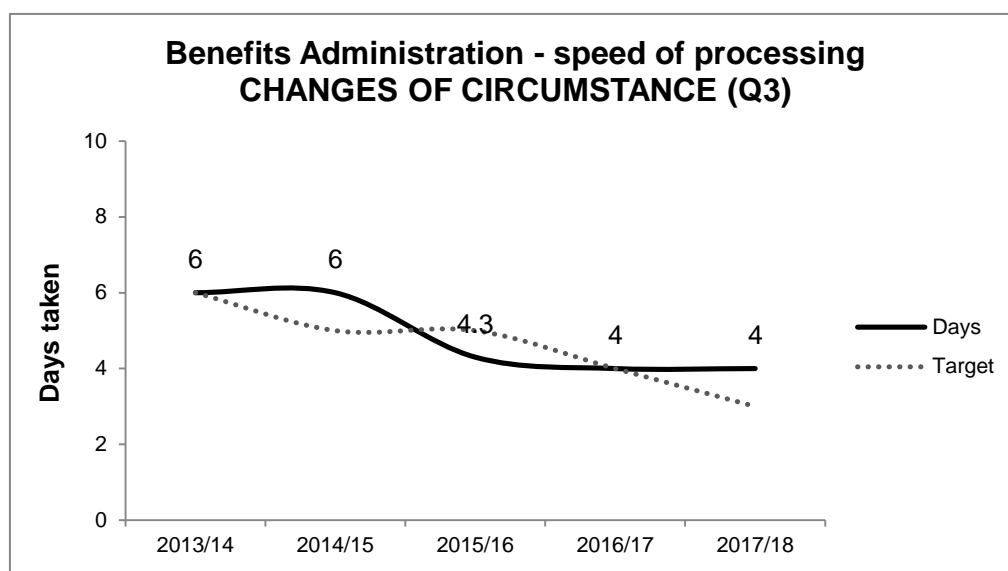
4.3.3 In Q3 2017/18, the collection rates for Inverness and Inverness & Loch Ness Tourism BID levies were 88.7% and 92.0%, respectively. Reflecting a number of new properties within the Inverness & Loch Ness Tourism BID area in particular, the nett amount to be collected has increased by nearly 3% during 17/18. A like for like collection comparison would be approximately 94.5% (compared to 92%). Council staff continues to work with the BID management team to ensure payment rates are maximised.

4.4 Benefits Administration - Speed of processing (days)

4.4.1



4.4.2



4.4.3 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.

4.4.4 Prompt processing times for New Claims and Change in Circumstances not only helps collection levels but also assists customers in being advised of the outcome of a new claim/ change in their circumstances as quickly as possible.

4.4.5 In Quarter 3, the average processing speed for new claims was 13 days and 4 days for changes of circumstance. The performance can primarily be attributed to the ongoing improvement of both business processes and resource management.

4.4.6 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have recently reported national Housing Benefit processing performance to 30 September 2017. The table below details the performance comparing Highland to Scotland, and Highland’s ranking.

Housing Benefit - Days to process - DWP				
	Highland		Scotland	
Description	Qtr 1 17/18 (ranking)	Qtr 2 17/18 (ranking)	Qtr 1 17/18	Qtr 2 17/18
New Claims	15 (1)	12 (1)	22	21
Change in circumstances	4 (3=)	4 (1=)	6	8

4.4.7 Highland was ranked 1st for new claims for Qtr 2 (as was the case in Qtr 1) and joint 1st on change in circumstances (with North Ayrshire who reported 18 days for new claims).

4.4.8 As reported to previous Committees, Highland has not only seen very good improvements in processing over recent years but also a material reduction

in costs too. For example in 13/14, new claims and change in circumstances performance was 23 days and 6 days, respectively. Administration costs in 16/17 are 24% lower than 13/14, with further savings in 17/18 aiming to be delivered, and continued improvements in processing. Accuracy levels remain high such as 99.85% for 16/17 compared to 99.67% in 14/15.

4.5 Welfare Support

Financial benefit to the customer from advice given (£000)					
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Year to date (1 Apr – 31 Dec)	962	2,809	2,490	3,203	3,927

4.5.2 Welfare Support (formerly Income Maximisation) continues to support customers and maximising benefits awards. For Q3 2017/18, 295 customers have received additional financial gain totalling £1.225m. Of this, £234k relates to back-dated awards and £991k to the annualised weekly gain (i.e. the weekly gain multiplied by 52 weeks).

4.6 TalentLink (Recruitment)

4.6.1 The Council uses CoSLA's on-line recruitment system called *TalentLink*. The system enables applicants to apply for positions online, and allow Council Managers to complete the recruitment process electronically.

TalentLink		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 (Year to date)
4.6.2	Number of posts advertised	2,199	2,403	1,914	1,573
	Percentage of posts advertised on time	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Number (& percentage) of electronic applications	17,301 95.8%	15,217 95.9%	14,427 95.3%	13,614 97.4%
	Percentage of paper applications processed within 2 working days	100%	100%	99.3%	100%

4.6.3 There were 3,636 applications received during Quarter 3; 3,562 (98.0%) were received in electronic format.

4.6.4 Receiving applications electronically provides numerous benefits including significant reductions in paper (and photocopying), increased information security and reduced filing space. Additionally managers are able to access applications in real time, reducing delays and supporting a consistent and auditable approach to the recruitment process. In terms of paper reductions, the annual equivalent exceeds 250,000 pages with a consumables saving of approximately £5k per annum.

4.7 Travel Desk

4.7.1 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.

4.7.2

Travel Desk	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 (to 30/11/17)
Number of requests	6,671	6,965	6,854	5,210
% of requests approved by manager within 5 days of receipt from traveller	-	89%	96%	97%
% requests processed by the Travel Desk within 2 days of approval by the manager	-	72%	89%	91%
% of requests processed by the Travel Desk in time for travel	-	100%	100%	100%

4.7.3 Members will be aware of the Chief Executive's report to The Highland Council on 7 September 2017 regarding the Council's Management structure. This included the transfer of the Travel Desk to Community Services to support the review of fleet management including the hire of plant and machinery. This transfer to the Head of Performance & Resources, Community Services completed at the end of November 2017 and future performance against this area will be reported by Community Services.

4.8 Single Grant Applications (SGAs)

4.8.1 Business Support provides support to a number of Council staff such as 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.

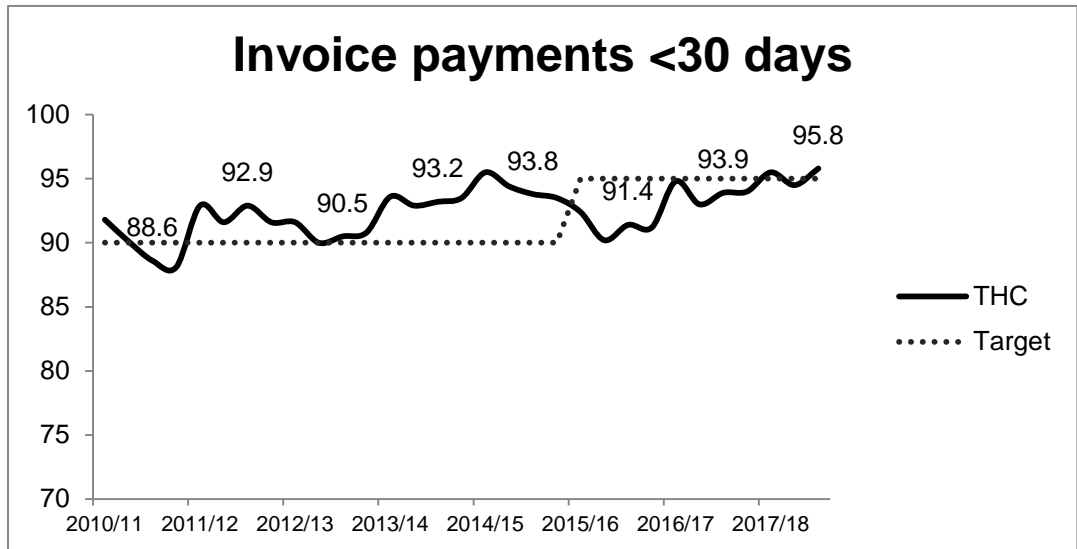
4.8.2 203 Single grant applications were received in Q3, 99.5% of these processed within 5 days bringing the year to date figure (1 Apr 17 to 31 Dec 17) to 98.9%.

4.8.3

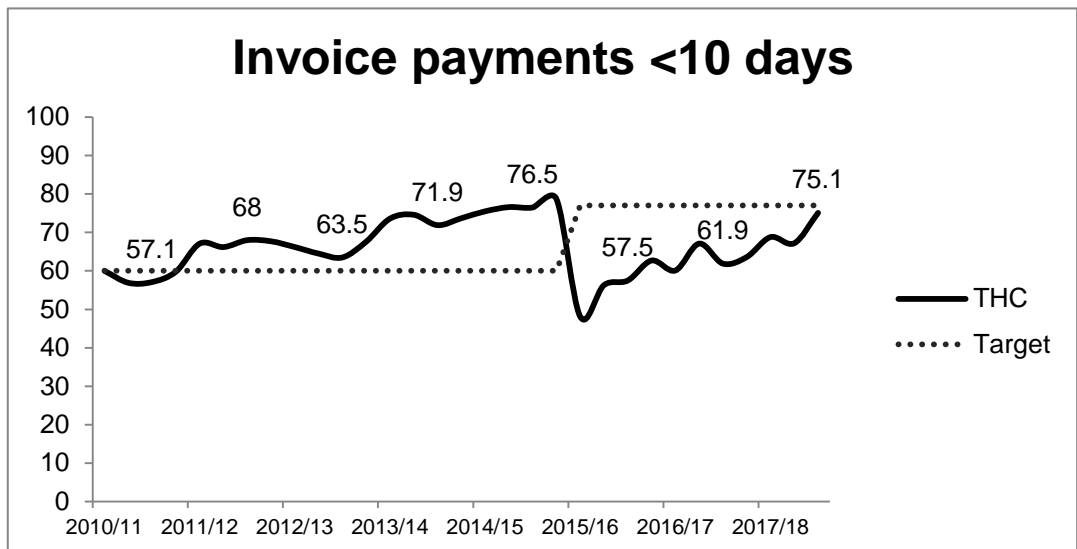
Single Grant Applications	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 (YTD)
Percentage logged, acknowledged & distributed within 5 days	97.7%	97.9%	98.3%	98.9%

4.9 Payment of Invoices

4.9.1



4.9.2



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

4.9.4 Quarter 3 performance reports significant improvements in both 10 and 30 days compared to prior year with 30 days now exceeding the challenging 95% target.

4.9.5 In Quarter 3 were the invoices currently taking 11-13 days paid within 10 days, performance within 10 days would be improved by a further 8.8%.

4.9.6 Invoices were paid in an average of 9.1days in Q3, compared to 11.4days in Q2 and 11.5days in Q1. The annual average in 2016/17 was of 12.7days.

4.9.7 As reported to previous Committees, Corporate Resources Service staff continues to review all processes looking to deliver improvements wherever

possible including the speed of information coming from Services to enable invoices to be processed.

4.10 Attendance Management

4.10.1

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18		
	FY	FY	FY	Q1	Q2	Q3
Finance	8.7	8.1	6.8	1.6	1.9	1.8
Corporate Development	8.8	8.4	6.1	1.1	1.2	
Highland Council (non-teaching)	9.8	9.7	10.4	2.5	2.5	2.6

4.10.2 For 2017/18, the average number of days lost per employee in Q3 within the Corporate Resources Service was 1.8 days. Performance remains lower than the Highland Council non-teaching average of 2.6 days.

4.10.3 The service continues to keep staff absence as low as possible and following the Council's HR policies and guidance, implementing measures such as "return to work" interviews and discussions with staff.

5. Implications

5.1 Resource – the resource implications are detailed within the report.

Legal – there are no legal implications arising from this report.

Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – the prompt processing of benefit claims and the proactive support to customers from Welfare Support will help to mitigate some of the poverty challenges.

Climate Change/Carbon Clever – there are no climate change / carbon clever implications arising from this report.

Risk – there are no risk implications arising from this report.

Gaelic – there are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

Designation: Depute Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Resources

Date: 09 February 2018

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Corporate Resources

Background Papers: None

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	4.10	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	4.1	Quarterly
The number of invoices paid within 30 calendar days of receipt as a percentage of all invoices paid	4.9	Quarterly
The number of invoices paid within 10 calendar days of receipt as a percentage of all invoices paid	4.9	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	4.2	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)	4.4	Quarterly
Processing time benefit – change in circs (average days)	4.4	Quarterly
Welfare Support	4.5	Quarterly
Business Improvement District (BID) Levy	4.3	Quarterly
Business Support - Talentlink	4.6	Quarterly
Business Support – Travel Desk	4.7	Quarterly
Business Support – Single Grant Applications	4.8	Quarterly

APPENDIX 2

INVOICE PAYMENT <10 DAYS									
DIRECTORATE	TARGET	2016/17					2017/18		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FY	Q1	Q2	Q3
Care & Learning	77%	53.4	63.4	56.2	59.4	57.6	64.4	61.7	71.3
Corporate Development		79.2	72.9	76.5	71.3	75.1	72.2	76.8	79.5
Chief Executive's		80.0	79.1	73.1	72.0	76.7	65.2	73.8	77.9
Community Services		65.7	69.9	64.9	63.1	65.8	72.1	71.7	78.8
Development & Infrastructure		58.2	52.3	51.5	61.6	55.8	65.8	63.6	66.1
Finance		92.8	92.3	87.2	94.0	91.4	84.4	74.9	88.8
Highland Council			61.5	67.1	61.9	63.6	63.3	68.8	67.2

INVOICE PAYMENT <30 DAYS									
DIRECTORATE	TARGET	2016/17					2017/18		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FY	Q1	Q2	Q3
Care & Learning	95%	95.5	93.3	94.6	94.1	94.5	95.5	93.4	95.4
Corporate Development		93.8	91.6	92.9	92.8	92.8	93.8	93.3	95.2
Chief Executive's		95.3	95.7	92.4	92.1	94.1	86.1	91.7	96.8
Community Services		93.5	92.5	93.1	93.3	93.1	95.1	94.6	95.9
Development & Infrastructure		92.9	90.5	90.2	93.3	91.7	95.0	96.6	95.0
Finance		97.8	97.9	98.1	98.9	98.1	98.7	98.8	99.4
Highland Council			94.8	93.0	93.9	94.0	94.0	95.5	94.5

DIRECTORATE	Total number of invoices paid in 2016/17	Total number of invoices paid in 2017/18 (YTD)
Care & Learning	62,484	45,150
Corporate Development	1,941	1,327
Chief Executive's	1,451	784
Community Services	51,333	39,640
Development & Infrastructure	12,643	9,175
Finance	10,107	7,165
Highland Council	139,959	103,241