

Agenda item	15.
Report no	RES/30/18

Committee: Corporate Resources Committee

Date: 24 May 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 March 2018.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

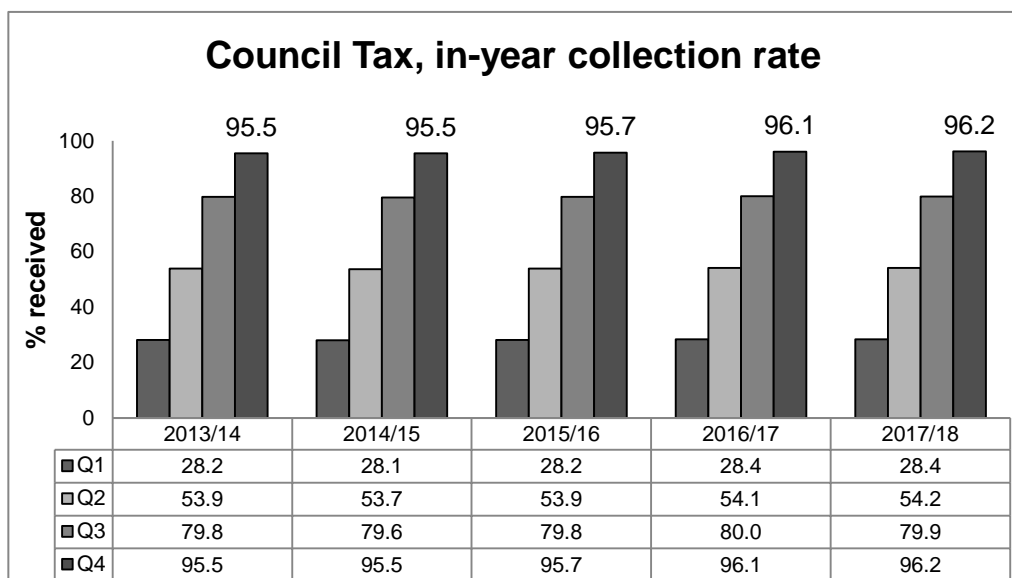
- i. consider these statutory and key performance indicators.

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 Corporate Resources Service is attached as **Appendix 1**.

4.1 Council Tax In-Year Collection Rate

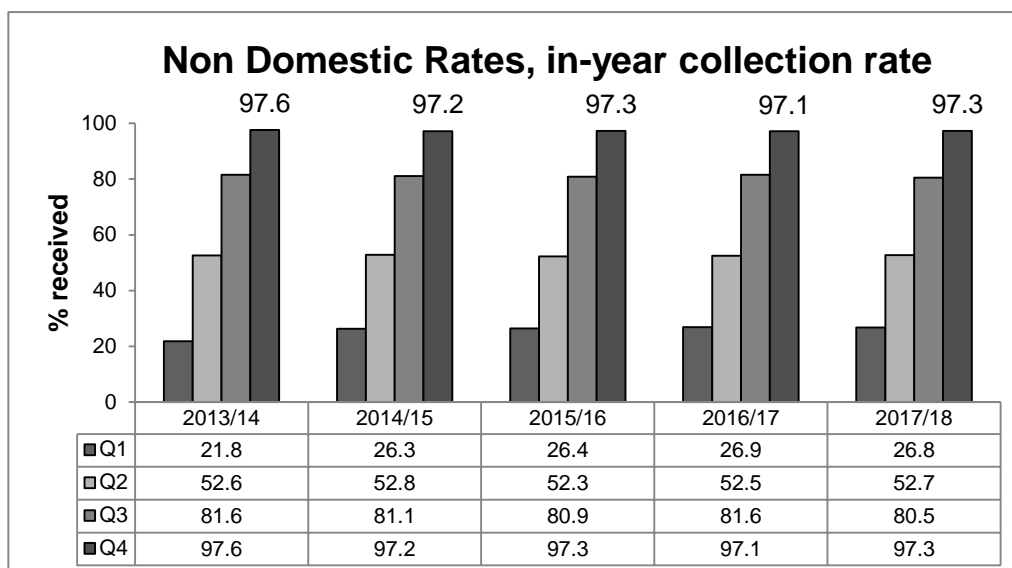
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- 4.1.2 Council Tax in-year collection rate is 96.2%, which continues the positive trend in collection levels achieved over the last 4 years. The improvements are mainly attributable to ongoing improvement in business processes and resource management.
- 4.1.3 Total direct debits now make up 70.7% of bill payment representing 82.8% of receipts. These report an improvement on the prior year position of 69.4% and 81.4%, respectively.

4.2 Non Domestic Rates in-Year Collection Rate

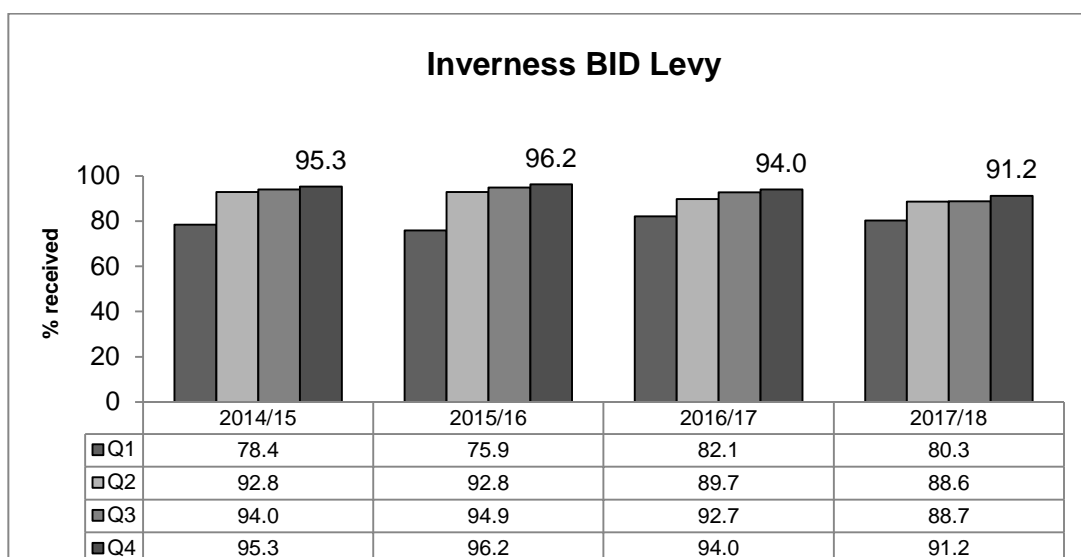
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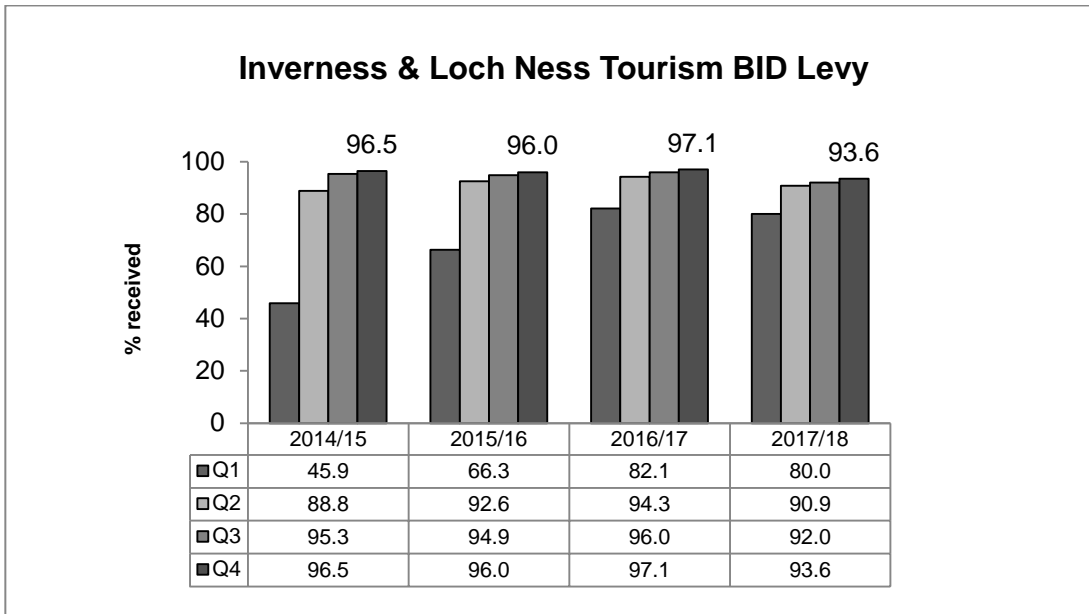
4.2.2 The in-year collection rate is 97.3% compared to 97.1% prior year. The Council continues to use all relevant measures available under the Rating regime to assist local businesses in difficult times including encouraging payment by monthly instalments and directing businesses to rate relief schemes such as the Small Business Bonus Scheme and Transitional Relief.

4.3 Business Improvement District (BID) Levies

4.3.1



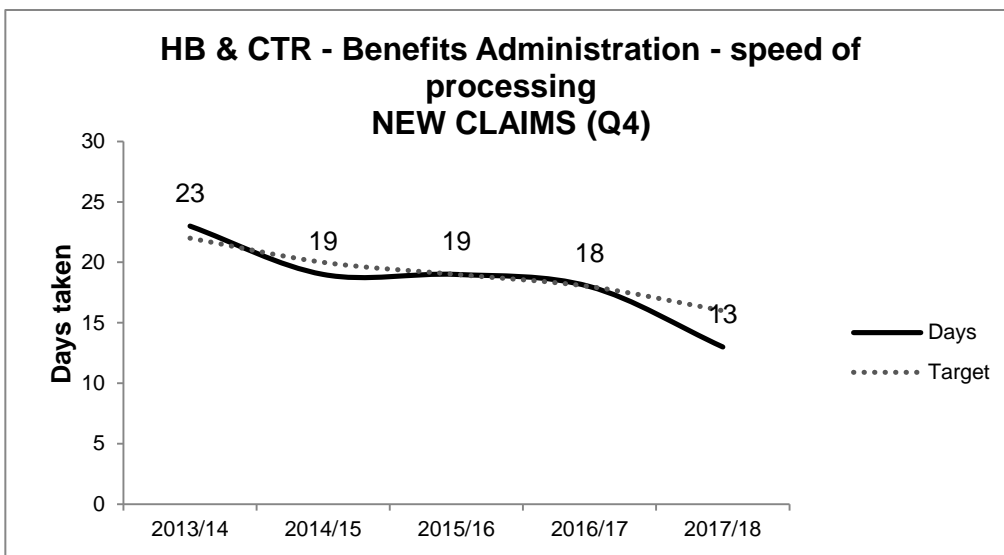
4.3.2



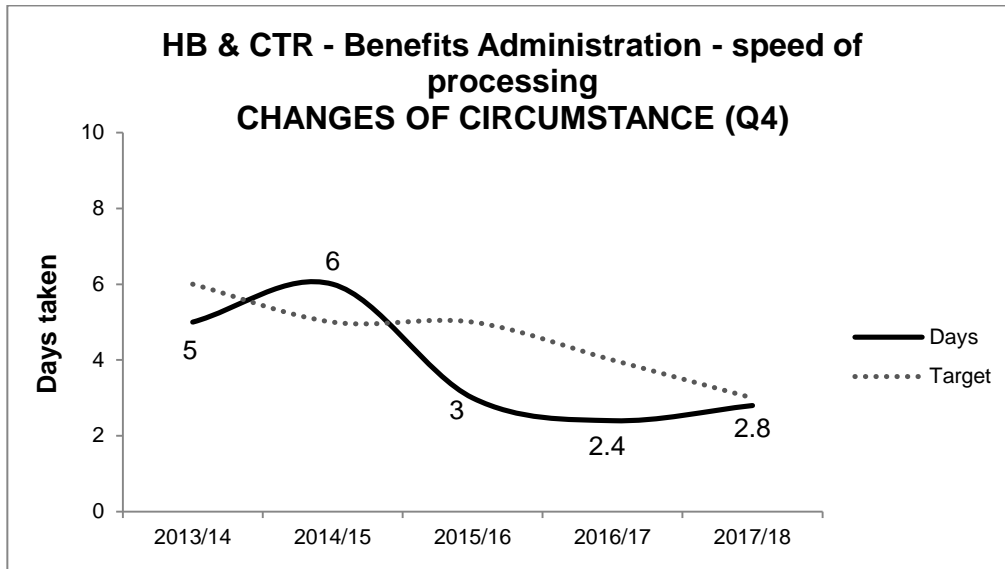
4.3.3 In 2017/18, the collection rates for Inverness and Inverness & Loch Ness Tourism BID levies were 91.2% and 93.6%, respectively. Council staff continue to work with the BID management team and Sheriff Officers to ensure payment rates are maximised.

4.4 Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction 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 assists customers in being advised of the outcome of a new claim/ change in their circumstances as quickly as possible. This also helps collection levels and supports the Housing Benefit budget and maximises Department for Work and Pensions subsidy as discussed earlier in this agenda within the “Corporate Resources Service and Welfare Budget – Near Final Revenue Monitoring for 2017/18” report.

4.4.5 In Quarter 4, the average processing speed for new claims was 13 days and 2.8 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 31 December 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 (rank)	Qtr 2 17/18 (rank)	Qtr 3 17/18 (rank)	Qtr 1 17/18	Qtr 2 17/18	Qtr 3 17/18
New Claims	15 (1)	12 (1)	12 (1)	22	21	22
Change in circumstances	3.9 (3=)	4.1 (1=)	4.5 (1=)	6.2	7.8	8.6

4.4.7 Highland was ranked 1st for new claims for Qtr 3 and joint 1st on change in circumstances (with 3 other Councils who processed in 5.1, 5.2 and 5.4 days; DWP report with no decimal points so the 4 Councils report “5” days in this instance).

4.4.8 Highland Council continues to see good improvements in processing over recent years and a material reduction in costs. 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. Final 17/18 costs per claim will be known when the year-end accounts processes are complete. A further reduction is anticipated given the savings delivered during 17/18 such as the deletion of 23fte posts across the section delivering £556k savings as part of the Council's 17/18 budget savings approved in February 2017.

4.5 Welfare Support

4.5.1

Financial benefit to the customer from advice given (£000) (backdated and annualised)					
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
1 Apr–31 March	1,635	3,975	4,015	4,651	6,024

4.5.2 Welfare Support (formerly Income Maximisation) staff in Revenues & Customer Services continue to support customers and maximising benefits awards by attaining previously unclaimed welfare benefits. For Q4 2017/18, 372 customers have received additional financial gain (previously unclaimed benefits) totalling £2.098m. Of this, £513k relates to back-dated awards and £1.58m to the annualised weekly gain (i.e. the weekly gain multiplied by 52 weeks).

During 17/18 1,366 customers were supported achieving £6.024m financial gain comprising:

- £1.355m backdated awards (with the average backdated award per customer = £991.95)
- £4.669m annualised weekly gains (i.e. the weekly benefit gain multiplied by 52 weeks with the average weekly benefit gained per customer = £65.73)

This success has been delivered during significant welfare reform. Staff continue to provide claimant support at benefit tribunals and to help mitigate some of the impacts of Universal Credit Full Service throughout Highland.

Existing ways of working continue to be challenged looking to identify areas where performance and efficiency can be increased and customer service improved. This has included:

- Intensive staff training to enable the team to undertake additional tribunal appeals;
- Co-location opportunities identified with diary systems implemented to improve efficiency;
- The extended number of co-location arrangements has also enabled more clients to be engaged by taking the service to customers. This can be demonstrated through the partnership approach with Highlife Highland which has allowed the welfare support team to have access to broadband in all libraries within the Highland Council area.
- The co-location of Wick Jobcentre within Caithness House has been very successful delivering advantages to customers, The Highland Council

and DWP. One example is enabling closer working opportunities between DWP and the Council to deliver a 'one-stop' approach to support customers.

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.

4.6.2

TalentLink	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Number of posts advertised	2,199	2,403	1,914	1,947
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%	17206 97.5%
Percentage of paper applications processed within 2 working days	100%	100%	99.3%	100%

4.6.3 There were 3,677 applications received during Quarter 4; 3,592 (97.7%) 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 Single Grant Applications (SGAs)

4.7.1 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.

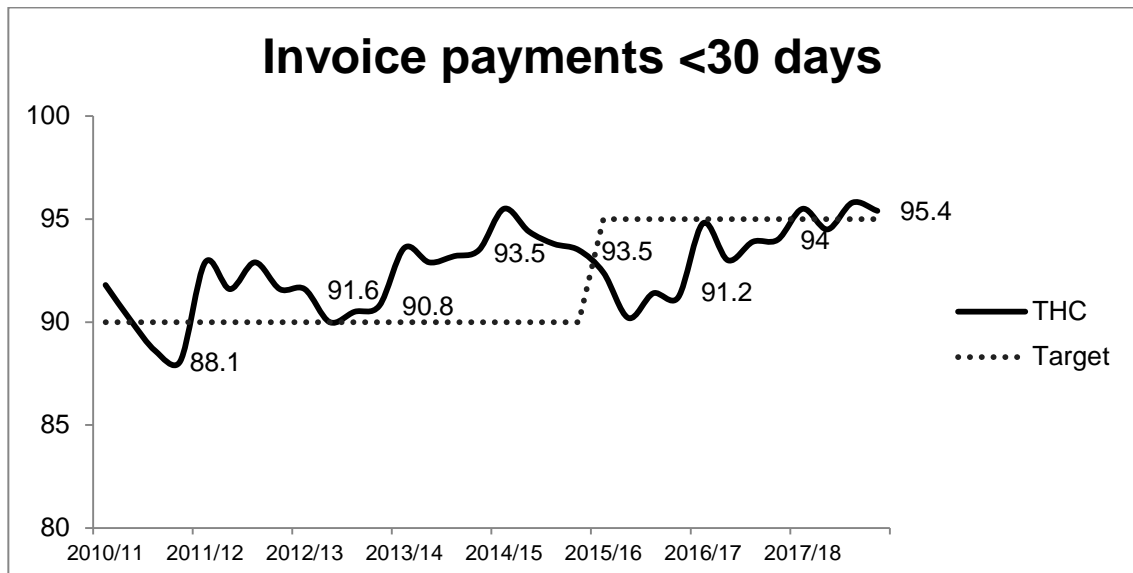
4.7.2 323 Single grant applications were received in Q4, 99.6% of these processed within 5 days bringing the figure to date figure (1 Apr 17 to 31 Mar 18) to 99.17%.

4.7.3

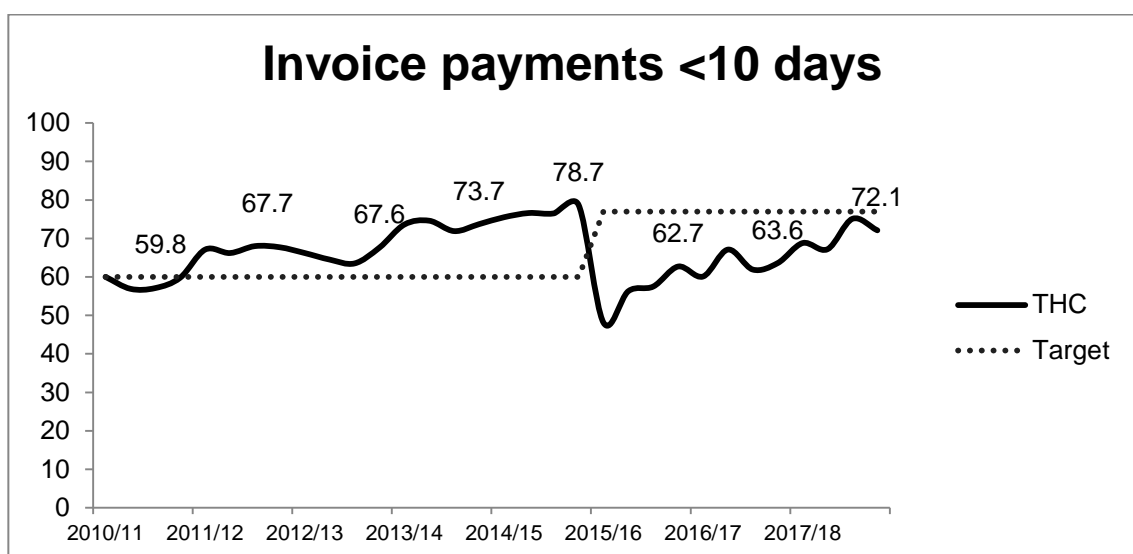
Single Grant Applications	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 (YTD)
Percentage logged, acknowledged & distributed within 5 days	97.7%	97.9%	98.3%	99.17%

4.8 Payment of Invoices

4.8.1



4.8.2



4.8.3 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**.

4.8.4 Quarter 4 performance reports significant improvements in both 10 and 30 days compared to prior year with 30 days exceeding the challenging 95% target.

4.8.5 In Quarter 4 were the invoices currently taking 11-13 days paid within 10 days, performance within 10 days would be improved by a further 8.3% (80.4% compared to 72.1%).

4.8.6 In 17/18 invoices were paid in an average 10.7 days compared to 2016/17 average of 12.7 days.

4.8.7 As reported to previous Committees, Corporate Resources Service staff continue to review all processes looking to deliver improvements wherever possible including the speed of information coming from Services to enable invoices to be processed.

4.9 Attendance Management

4.9.1

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18			
	FY	FY	FY	Q1	FY	Q3	Q4
Finance	8.7	8.1	6.8	1.6	6.8	1.8	2.4
Corporate Development	8.8	8.4	6.1	1.1	6.1		
Highland Council (non-teaching)	9.8	9.7	10.4	2.5	10.4	2.6	3.1

4.9.2 For 2017/18, the average number of days lost per employee in Q4 within the Corporate Resources Service was 2.4 days. Performance remains lower than the Highland Council non-teaching average of 3.1 days. The increase in days lost in comparison to the prior quarter is mainly attributable to the higher than average seasonal colds and influenza that affected much of the country.

4.9.3 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: 3rd May 2018

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Corporate Resources

Background Papers: None

APPENDIX 1

Statutory Performance Indicators	Report ref:	Frequency
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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 – Single Grant Applications	4.7	Quarterly

APPENDIX 2

DIRECTORATE	TARGET	2016/17					2017/18				
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FY	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FY
Care & Learning	77%	53.4	63.4	56.2	59.4	57.6	64.4	61.7	71.3	64.0	65.7
Corporate Development		79.2	72.9	76.5	71.3	75.1	72.2	76.8	79.5	85.6	78.2
Chief Executive's		80.0	79.1	73.1	72.0	76.7	65.2	73.8	77.9	72.1	72.5
Community Services		65.7	69.9	64.9	63.1	65.8	72.1	71.7	78.8	81.0	76.4
Development & Infrastructure		58.2	52.3	51.5	61.6	55.8	65.8	63.6	66.1	65.3	65.3
Finance		92.8	92.3	87.2	94.0	91.4	84.4	74.9	88.8	80.9	83.0
Highland Council		61.5	67.1	61.9	63.6	63.3	68.8	67.2	75.1	72.1	71.1

INVOICE PAYMENT <30 DAYS											
DIRECTORATE	TARGET	2016/17					2017/18				
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FY	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FY
Care & Learning	95%	95.5	93.3	94.6	94.1	94.5	95.5	93.4	95.4	94.9	94.9
Corporate Development		93.8	91.6	92.9	92.8	92.8	93.8	93.3	95.2	95.8	94.5
Chief Executive's		95.3	95.7	92.4	92.1	94.1	86.1	91.7	96.8	95.0	92.3
Community Services		93.5	92.5	93.1	93.3	93.1	95.1	94.6	95.9	95.8	95.4
Development & Infrastructure		92.9	90.5	90.2	93.3	91.7	95.0	96.6	95.0	95.2	95.4
Finance		97.8	97.9	98.1	98.9	98.1	98.7	98.8	99.4	98.2	98.9
Highland Council		94.8	93.0	93.9	94.0	94.0	95.5	94.5	95.8	95.4	95.3

DIRECTORATE	Total number of invoices paid in 2016/17 (FY)	Total number of invoices paid in 2017/18 (FY)
Care & Learning	62,484	61,461
Corporate Development	1,941	1,708
Chief Executive's	1,451	963
Community Services	51,333	55,990
Development & Infrastructure	12,643	12,762
Finance	10,107	7,934
Highland Council	139,959	140,818