

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Agenda Item	9
Report No	RES/08/19

Committee: Corporate Resources Committee

Date: 27 February 2019

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 2018.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

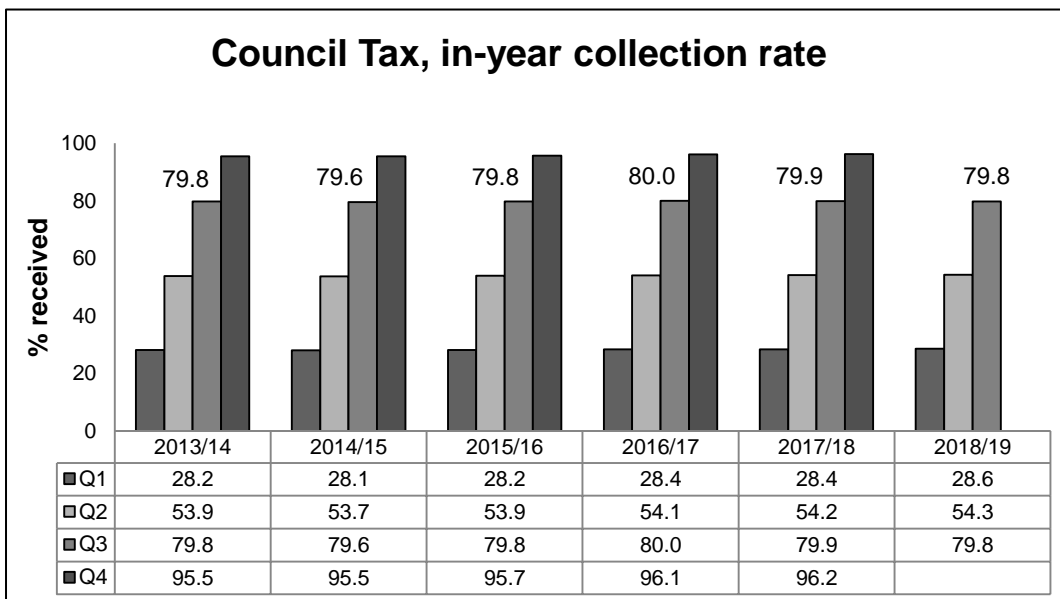
- i. consider these statutory and key performance indicators.

3.0 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

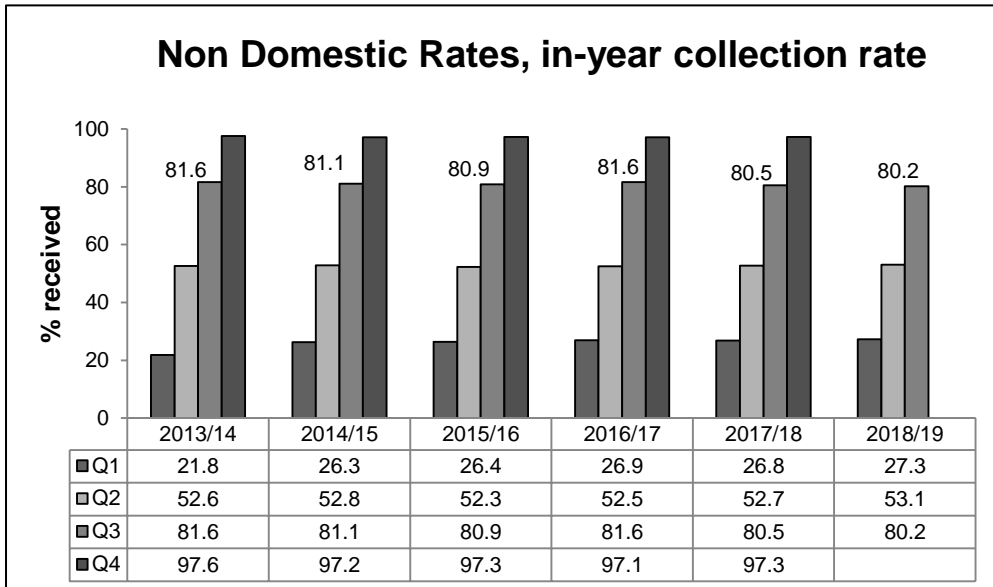
4.1.1



- 4.1.2 Council Tax in-year collection rate is 79.8%, which is comparable to previous years for Q3. This continues the positive trend in overall collection levels achieved. There has been an increase of 1.1% in payers paying over 12 months rather than 10 months, compared to this time last year which can affect payment profiling.
- 4.1.3 Direct debits now make up 72.8% of bill payment representing 83.3% of receipts. Increased Direct Debit take-up supports collections performance and reduces bank charges, enabling financial savings to be made.

4.2 Non Domestic Rates in-Year Collection Rate

4.2.1

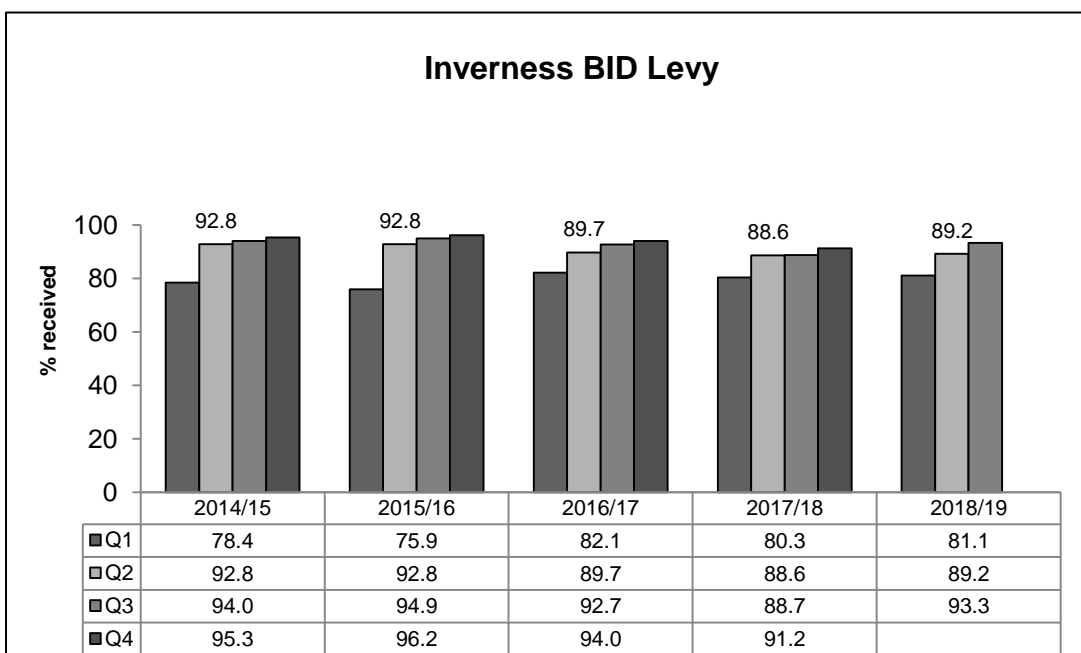


4.2.2 The NDR in-year collection rate for Q3 is 80.2% compared to 80.5% prior year.

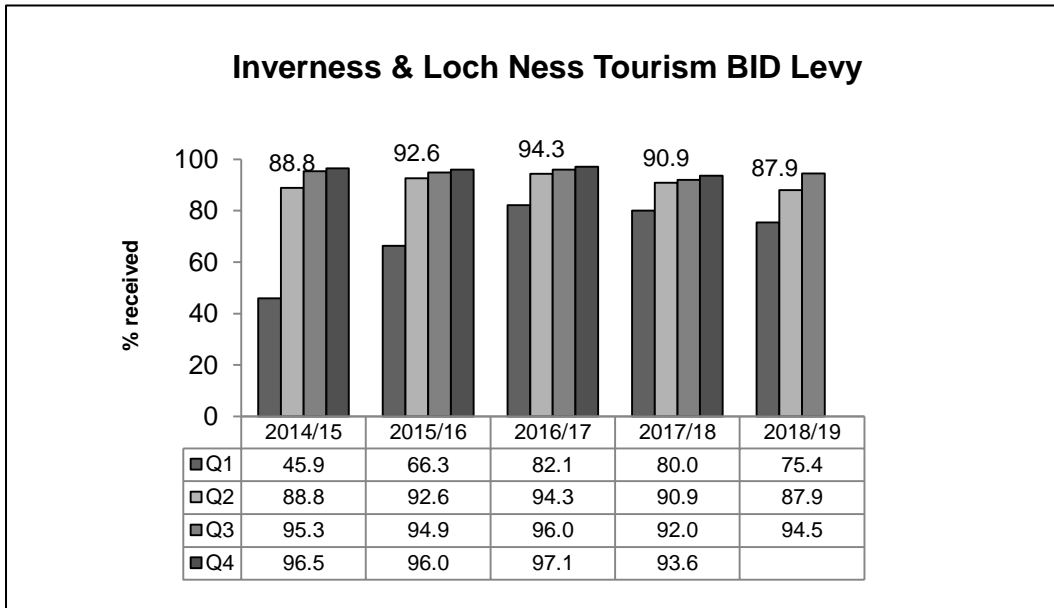
4.2.3 The Council continues to use all relevant measures available under the Rating regime to assist local businesses including encouraging payment by monthly instalments and directing businesses to available rate relief schemes such as the Small Business Bonus Scheme and Transitional Relief (for 18/19). Claims can be made on-line on the Council's web-site (or via paper if businesses so require).

4.3 Business Improvement District (BID) Levies

4.3.1



4.3.2



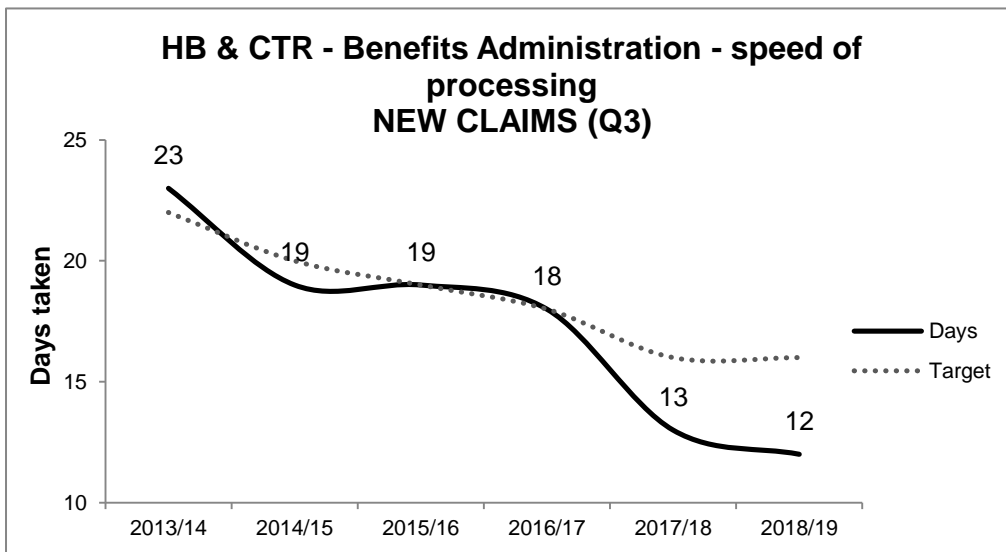
4.3.3 The collection rate for the Inverness BID levy was 93.3% compared to 88.7% prior year.

4.3.4 The collection rate for the Inverness & Loch Ness Tourism BID levy was 94.5% compared to 92.0% prior year.

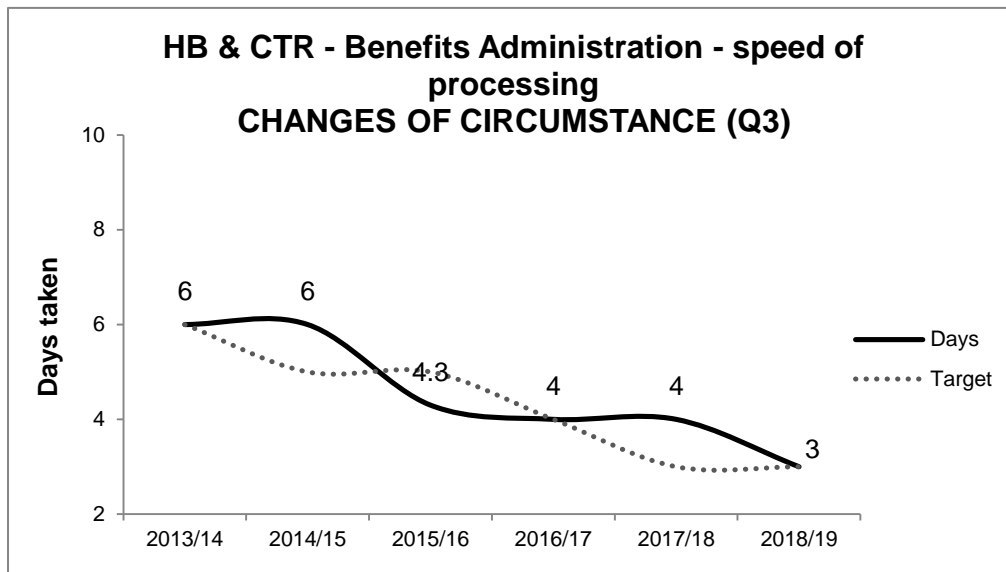
4.3.5 Bills were also issued in October 2018 for the recently established Nairn Business Improvement District – **Nairn Connects**. As at December 2018, the collection rate for this BID levy was 57.0%. As with the 2 other BIDS, the Council recovers in full collection & administration costs.

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 In Q3, the average processing speed for new claims was 12 days and 3 days for changes of circumstance.

4.4.5 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.

4.4.6 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have recently reported 18/19 national Housing Benefit processing performance to 30 September 2018 The table below details the performance comparing Highland to Scotland, and Highland’s ranking.

Housing Benefit - Days to process 2017/18										
2017/18	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Year End	
	New Claims	CIC	New Claims	CIC	New Claims	CIC	New Claims	CIC	New Claims	CIC
Highland	15	3.9	12	4.1	12	4.5	13	1.9	13	3.1
Scotland	22	6.2	21	7.8	22	8.6	22	3.2	22	5.4
Rank	1st	3rd	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st

Housing Benefit - Days to process 2018/19										
2018/19	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Year End	
	New Claims	CIC	New Claims	CIC	New Claims	CIC	New Claims	CIC	New Claims	CIC
Highland	12	3	12	4						
Scotland	23	7	21	7						
Rank	1st	1st	2nd	1st						

4.4.7 Housing benefit overpayments generally occur when the claimant delays or fails to notify the Highland Council of a change in their circumstances that affects their entitlement, e.g. a change in earnings or household composition. Housing benefit decision notices highlight claimants’ responsibilities to notify changes in circumstances and provides examples of the types of examples

that should be reported.

To help mitigate the volume of housing benefit overpayments, there are a number of measures in place. The DWP has data sharing arrangements in place with all local authorities which improves the overall integrity of the data used to determine Housing Benefit entitlement.

The number of days taken by the local authority to process changes in circumstances also impacts of the value of the overpayments. As detailed in paragraph 4.4 in today's report, Members will note the impressive processing times including change in circumstances which is consistently the best in Scotland.

In addition to the above, case management checks are undertaken and the DWP also sample a number of cases for accuracy. The outcomes of such checks provides the necessary assurances that benefits processing is managed correctly and promptly within The Highland Council.

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	2018/19 (to Q3)
1 Apr–31 March	1,635	3,975	4,015	4,651	6,024	4,520

4.5.2 Welfare Support (formerly Income Maximisation) continues to support customers and maximising benefits awards. For Q3 2018/19, 943 customers have received additional financial gain totalling £1.349m. Of this, £314k relates to back-dated awards and £1.035m 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	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19 Q1	2018/19 Q2	2018/19 Q3
Number of posts advertised	2,403	1,914	1,947	503	404	145
Percentage of posts advertised on time	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number (& percentage) of electronic applications	15,217 95.9%	14,427 95.3%	17,206 97.5%	4,836 98.2%	3,460 96.4%	1559 97.1%
Percentage of paper applications processed within 2 working days	100%	99.3%	100%	100%	100%	97.9%

4.6.3 There were 1606 applications received during Q3; 1559 (97.1%) were received in electronic format. Of the paper applications 1 application was processed in 3 days, just beyond the 2 working day target.

4.6.4 The 145 posts advertised in Q3 represent 106 FTE (full-time equivalent). Of

these, 31 FTE are fixed-term posts, with the majority of the remaining 75 FTE permanent posts being in Care & Learning.

4.6.5 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.

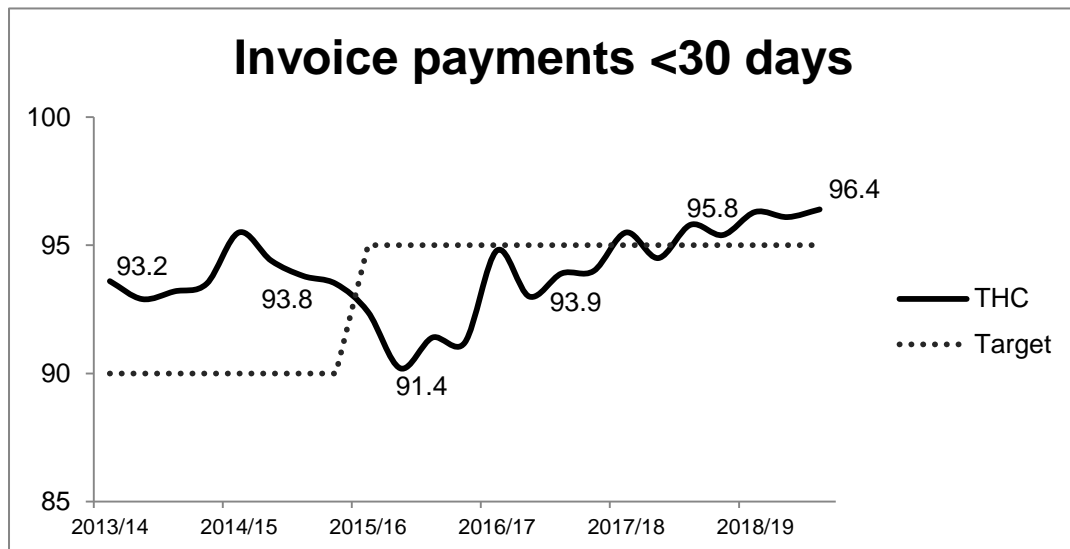
4.7.2 198 Single grant applications were received in Q3, 100% of these processed within 5 days bringing with this totalling the year to date figure to 97.4%.

4.7.3

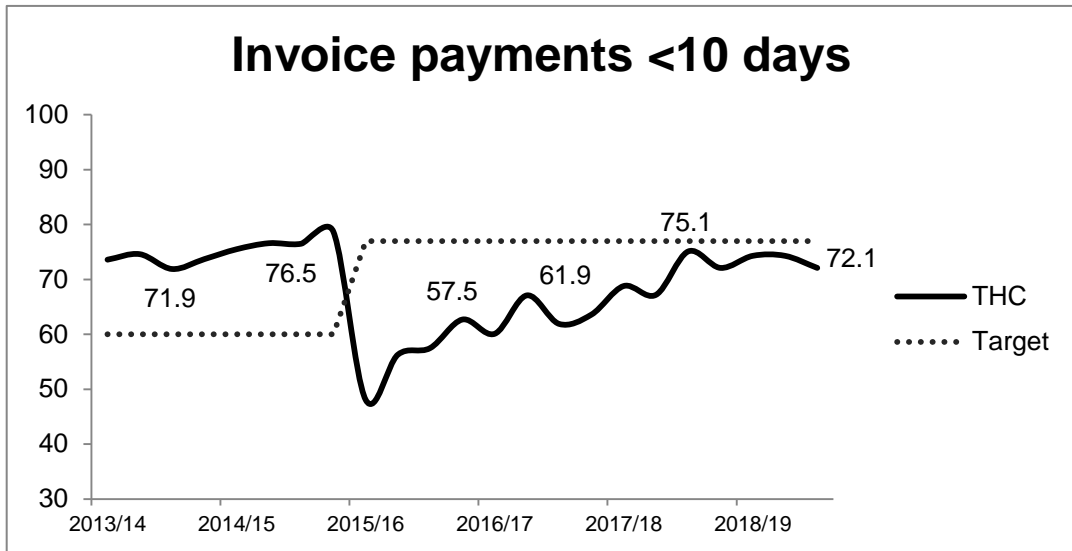
Single Grant Applications	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19 to Q3
Percentage logged, acknowledged & distributed within 5 days	97.9%	98.3%	99.2%	97.4%

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 Performance in Q3 has improved within 30 days compared to prior year and although within 10 days shows a small decline compared to prior year it is a very positive performance standard that is being delivered.

4.8.5 In Q3 were the invoices currently taking 11-13 days paid within 10 days, performance within 10 days would be improved by nearly 9% (80.9% compared to 72.1%).

4.8.6 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.

4.9 Attendance Management

4.9.1

	17/18		18/19		
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Corporate Resources	1.8	2.4	1.7	1.9	1.7
Highland Council (non-teaching)	2.6	3.1	2.5	2.5	2.5

4.9.2 In Q3, the average number of days lost per employee within the Corporate Resources Service was 1.7 days. Performance remains better than the Highland Council non-teaching average of 2.5 days.

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.

5.0 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: 11 February 2019

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Corporate Resources Service

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	4.9	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	4.8	Quarterly
The number of invoices paid within 10 calendar days of receipt as a percentage of all invoices paid	4.8	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
Invoice Payments <10 days

DIRECTORATE	TARGET	16/17		17/18			18/19					
		FY	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FY	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FY
Care & Learning	77%	57.6	64.4	61.7	71.3	64.0	65.7	66.3	62.0	64.5		
Corporate Development		75.1	72.2	76.8	79.5	85.6	78.2	<i>See Corporate Resources</i>				
Chief Executive's		76.7	65.2	73.8	77.9	72.1	72.5	71.4	82.3	74.3		
Community Services		65.8	72.1	71.7	78.8	81.0	76.4	81.6	84.6	80.0		
Development & Infrastructure		55.8	65.8	63.6	66.1	65.3	65.3	70.0	66.7	66.0		
Finance		91.4	84.4	74.9	88.8	80.9	83.0	<i>See Corporate Resources</i>				
Corporate Resources								83.9	74.3	77.6		
Highland Council		63.3	68.8	67.2	75.1	72.1	71.1	74.3	74.3	72.1		

Invoice Payments <30 days

DIRECTORATE	TARGET	16/17		17/18			18/19					
		FY	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FY	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FY
Care & Learning	95%	94.5	95.5	93.4	95.4	94.9	94.9	95.2	93.5	95.3		
Corporate Development		92.8	93.8	93.3	95.2	95.8	94.5	<i>See Corporate Resources</i>				
Chief Executive's		94.1	86.1	91.7	96.8	95.0	92.3	94.3	94.5	94.5		
Community Services		93.1	95.1	94.6	95.9	95.8	95.4	97.4	97.4	97.4		
Development & Infrastructure		91.7	95.0	96.6	95.0	95.2	95.4	96.0	97.6	97.6		
Finance		98.1	98.7	98.8	99.4	98.2	98.9	<i>See Corporate Resources</i>				
Corporate Resources								97.9	98.9	95.9		
Highland Council		94.0	95.5	94.5	95.8	95.4	95.3	96.3	96.1	96.4		