

To: POLICY AND RESOURCES (FINANCE & CUSTOMER SERVICES) SUB-COMMITTEE	Subject: FINANCE & CUSTOMER SERVICES SERVICE PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT		
From: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CUSTOMER SERVICES	SIX MONTHLY EXCEPTIONS REPORT: APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2014		
Date: 13 NOVEMBER 2014	Ref: AC/EK/VR/DM		

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with details of Finance and Customer Services' performance results for the first half of 2014/15. The report outlines performance relating to service plan activity including progress against the themes within the Corporate Plan, Service Priorities and the indicators contained within the Performance Portfolio.

2. Background

- 2.1 Services produce a plan on an annual basis which outlines the key strategic and operational improvements linked to the Council's strategic objectives. Services are required to provide Members with a six monthly update, outlining progress against the information identified within the 2014/15 plan.
- 2.2 In line with best practice, the information contained within this report provides an overview of all information, with an emphasis on the indicators and actions that are not performing within acceptable thresholds.

3. Service plan progress April to September 2014

3.1 Service Priorities

Service Priorities are actions which have been identified in the Service Plan, as approved by Finance and Customer Services Sub-Committee in February 2014. Finance and Customer Services has highlighted 94 actions of which 17 are not due to start until later in the financial year. From the 77 actions that have commenced, 75 are on track or have been completed and 2 require improvement.

Explanations of the indicators requiring improvement are given in Appendix A, along with details of proposed corrective action to bring these actions back on track, where possible.

Service Priorities: Summary of overall progress				
Service	On Track/ Complete	Require Improvement	Not Yet Started	Total
E Government and Service Development	23	1	4	28
Financial Services	33	0	9	42
Revenue Services	19	1	4	24
Total	75	2	17	94

- 3.2 Committee has previously approved one year extensions to two service priorities (Prepare for move to Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN) in 2015 and Run a procurement process

to identify ICT service delivery partner). These priorities have therefore been removed from this years' actions and will form part of the 2015/16 Service Plan.

- 3.3 There are a small number of Service Priorities which have been carried forward from the previous Service Plan. In the main, they are dependant upon completion of strategic Council wide initiatives. An update on their progress is included in Appendix B.

3.4 Performance Portfolio Indicators

Each Head of Service has performance measures in place which provide them with an indication of how well their Service is performing. Finance and Customer Services has 24 performance indicators; of these 4 are exceeding target, 12 are on track and 8 are requiring improvement. The result for sickness absence is not currently available. Appendices C and D contain information on the indicators which are not performing within acceptable thresholds and of the proposed corrective action where this is required and indicators which are exceeding their thresholds respectively. Whilst Services are required only to report on measures that have exceeded or failed to meet the acceptable threshold, a list of indicators which are on track is attached for information in Appendix E.

Service	Exceeding Target	On Track	Require Improvement	Total
E Government & Service Development	2	4	4	10
Financial Services	1	2	0	3
Revenue Services	1	6	3	10
Finance & Customer Services: Sickness Absence	0	0	1	1
Total	4	12	8	24

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of this report and the current position of the actions and indicators contained with the Service Plan.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CUSTOMER SERVICES

Local Government Access to Information Act: on this report please contact Darren McDowall, Trainee Accountant, Financial Services Tel: 01698 302402.

Appendix A – Service Priorities: Requiring Improvement

Service	Description	Update / Corrective Action
E Government and Service Development	Drive the council-wide adoption of the national Customer Satisfaction Measurement Toolkit	Corporate Service Improvement team are convening A short life working group to bring this initiative back on track.
Revenue Services	Introduce effective working arrangements in respect of Corporate Debt Policy	Group established and working toward completion date of March 15.

Appendix B – Activities Outstanding from previous years

Service	Description	Update/Corrective Action
Financial Services	2013/14 - Undertake self-assessment of Internal Audit	The self-assessment is nearing completion and it was agreed with the Convener that it should be reported to the AGP in November.
Revenue Services	2013/14 - Conduct annual customer satisfaction survey	Survey currently being prepared for issue
	2013/14 - Implement self-service functionality to enable electronic billing & follow-up	Project has commenced but at early initial stages. Aim to implement by March 2015.

Appendix C – Performance Indicators: Exceptions

Indicators not meeting the target set: performance is below the acceptable threshold

Key	Ideal	↑	A higher figure is better
	Direction	↓	A lower figure is better

Service	Indicator	Ideal Direction	Actual	Target (Threshold)	Update
E Government and Service Development	Priority 1 outages - number per quarter	↓	16 times	12 times (10-14 times)	An issue with a major network component led to an increase in Priority 1 calls logged this quarter
	MP / MSP / MEP - % of enquiries responded to within 10 working days	↑	88.9%	100% (90%-100%)	The division failed to respond to one enquiry which was commented on in the quarter 1 report, due to the low number of enquiries this has resulted in the indicator still being below the allowed threshold.
	Invoices - % paid within 30 calendar days of receipt	↑	66.7%	93.7% (92.7%-94.7%)	The demand for grants through the Scottish Welfare fund has been steadily increasing throughout the first year and the team who make the decisions on awards are the same team who then administer and process invoices. It has been necessary to prioritise decision making over administration at times of high demand however work is continually ongoing to review processes and automate where possible to reduce the administration timescales
	Gold applications - % availability	↑	99.2%	99.9% (99.4%-99.9%)	Although we had a small number of individual failures, the dip in availability of gold applications was mostly due to the issues we had with a major network component. Following in-depth investigation (by NLC staff, the maintenance company and Cisco) the underlying problem has now been resolved.
Revenue Services	Invoices - % paid within 30 calendar days of receipt	↑	89.9%	91.7% (90.7-92.7%)	The performance reflects an average of 2 invoices per month being processed out-with the expected threshold. Further monitoring of performance has not identified any singular cause and staff and teams have been reminded to prioritise processing over the short-term.
	Debtors - number of debtors days	↓	70 days	52 days (50-54 days)	Performance is affected by the number of high value invoices being issued which are not always being paid on time.
	Housing Benefits administration - average days to process new claims	↓	26 days	23 days (21-25 days)	The quarter 2 performance shows improvement and has surpassed the quarterly target. Revised procedural practices in respect of new claims and the reappraisal of our Standards of Evidence requirements have had a positive effect on this indicator. Increased emphasis upon on-line claiming has also contributed to the improvement.
Finance and Customer Service	Sickness Absence – average no. of working days lost through sickness absence	↓	4.1 Days	3.5 days (3.05-3.95 days)	The performance was adversely affected by a small number of long-term absences, in addition to short-term absences, both of which are being handled in line with NLC's Absence Management Policy.

Appendix D – Performance Indicators: Exceptions

Indicators surpassing the target set: performance is above the acceptable threshold

Service	Indicator	Ideal Direction	Actual	Target (Threshold)	Update
E Government and Service Development	Service desk calls - % customer satisfaction	↑	99.5%	95% (92%-98%)	The threshold was exceeded due to the focus we have on providing customers with a working solution to any identified faults they may be experiencing.
	Service desk - % of reported incidents resolved by service partner within SLA	↑	97.3%	95% (93%-97%)	Continued focus on minimising impact to the business has resulted in us exceeding the threshold for number of reported incidents resolved within Service Level Agreement
Financial Services	Invoices - % paid within 30 calendar days of receipt	↑	98.9%	96.5% (95.5%-97.5%)	Management of payments process has resulted in performance which exceeds target.
Revenue Services	Council Tax % collected in the year	↑	55.8%	54% (52.5%-55.5%)	Collection rates show a 2.68% increase compared to 2013/14 but this is due to the change of payment date from 28th of the month to 1st of the month for Cash and Standing Order Method of Payment and this has increased the collection rate for the year to date. This will be partially off-set by proportionately lower rates during Q4

Appendix E – Performance Indicators: On Track

Service	Indicator	Ideal Direction	Actual	Target (Threshold)
E Government and Service Development	Elected Members - % of enquiries responded to within 5 working days	↑	100%	100% (90%-100%)
	Wide area network - % availability	↑	99.5%	99.9% (99.4%-99.9%)
	Customer Contact Centre - % of calls taken within 20 seconds	↑	85%	90% (84%-96%)
	First Stop Shops - % of customers waiting less than 10 mins	↑	84.0%	85% (82%-88%)
Financial Services	Elected Members - % of enquiries responded to within 5 working days	↑	100%	100% (90%-100%)
	MP / MSP / MEP - % of enquiries responded to within 10 working days	↑	100%	100% (90%-100%)
Revenue Services	Elected Members - % of enquiries responded to within 5 working days	↑	100%	100% (90%-100%)
	MP / MSP / MEP - % of enquiries responded to within 10 working days	↑	100%	100% (90%-100%)
	Employee payments - % employees paid correctly and on time	↑	99.7%	99.8% (99.5%-100%)
	Non domestic rates - % collected during the year	↑	54.1%	53.0% (51.5%-54.5%)
	Housing Benefits administration - average days to change events	↓	11 days	11 days (9-13 days)
	Payment of invoices, council wide - % paid within 30 calendar days of receipt	↑	95.6%	95.0% (94%-96%)