

REPORT TO: SPECIAL FINANCE COMMITTEE - 28 JUNE 2004

REPORT ON: FINANCE REVENUES SERVICE PLAN 2003-2007 - PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2003/2004

REPORT BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (FINANCE)

REPORT NO: 496-2004

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the performance for 2003/2004 against the performance indicators in the Finance Revenues Service Plan 2003-2007 approved by the Finance Committee on 14 June 2004.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee notes the progress in 2003/2004 towards the performance targets set for each service in the Finance Revenues Service Plan 2003-2007.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 All initiatives introduced to improve performance will be contained within Finance Revenues Revenue Budget for 2004/05.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct Local Agenda 21 implications.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct equal opportunity implications.

6 BACKGROUND

6.1 The Council's Best Value submission to the Scottish Executive on Public Performance Reporting requires an annual report by all departments on the performance indicators in their Service Plans.

6.2 The Finance Revenues Service Plan 2003-2007 approved by the Finance Committee on 14 June 2004 indicated performance reporting requirements would be met mainly by an annual report to the Finance Committee.

7 PERFORMANCE INFORMATION 2003/2004

7.1 The relevant performance information for each performance indicator identified in the Finance Revenues Service Plan has now been tabulated and is enclosed as Appendix I. A brief commentary on initiatives planned to improve performance is provided below.

7.2 Council Tax Collection

The Council has set a target of a Council Tax collection rate of 90% in comparison to an actual collection rate of 85.0%. By the end of 2004 the collection rate had increased to 86.2% which means that 25% of the target rate has already been achieved.

7.3 Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

These indicators have deteriorated in the 2003/2004 financial year due to the implementation of the I-World software which created a substantial backlog which in turn affected performance measures. The backlog was cleared prior to the introduction of the Verification Framework on 1 February 2004. During the year an electronic queuing system was implemented at City Square which allows the monitoring of customer waiting times and the type of enquiry. A new telephone system was also introduced which allows the monitoring of calls, including type, duration, waiting times etc.

7.4 Non-Domestic Rates Collection

Performance for Non-Domestic Rates was broadly the same as the previous year. It is anticipated that this service will achieve its target collection rate. Collection rates remain high with little variation from year to year.

8 **KEY HIGHLIGHTS**

- 8.1 The key highlight for the department this year was the introduction of the Verification Framework which will improve the quality of the service offered by the Council to its customers. Many of the recommendations of the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate were also implemented during the year and a system for the introduction of Tax Credits and Pension Credits put in place.
- 8.2 Work drip-feed was introduced through the Workflow system to assist with work allocation. Counter scanning was also implemented again using the Workflow system. Both these initiatives have helped improve the efficiency of the service.

9 **FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

- 9.1 Developments next year will include the introduction of Performance Standards and the establishment of a separate Revenues Enquiry team. A new initiative will also be put in place to improve the collection of outstanding Council Tax and Poll Tax debt. Staff appraisals will be fully implemented during the financial year 2004/05. The billing and payment of Council Tax by plastic card will be planned for with a target implementation date of 1 April 2005.

10 **CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) have been consulted on the contents of this report.

11 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Finance Revenues Service Plan 2003-2007 – Finance Committee – 14 June 2004

DAVID K DORWARD
DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (FINANCE)

14 JUNE 2004

SERVICE: FINANCE REVENUES

Performance Indicator	Actual 2002	Actual 2003	Actual 2004	Target 2007
Finance Revenues				
1 <u>Council Tax Collection</u>				
i Percentage of income due from Council Tax that was received during year	85.0%	85.7%	86.2%	90%
ii Percentage of income due from Council Tax that was received for the previous five financial years:				
Previous Year	85.5%	85.7%	86.2%	90.0%
Previous Year +1	89.6%	89.9%	90.0%	90.0%
Previous Year +2	93.7%	91.8%	91.9%	96.0%
Previous Year +3	94.5%	94.5%	93.0%	96.0%
Previous Year +4	94.7%	95.9%	95.2%	96.0%
iii Replying to personal correspondence	N/A	N/A	N/A	80%
iv Percentage of telephone calls answered within 5 minutes	N/A	N/A	70%	80%
v Percentage of customers at City Square dealt with within 30 minutes	N/A	N/A	50%	80%
2 <u>Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit</u>				
i Average time taken to process New Claims	55 days	60 days	82 days	36 days
ii Average time taken to process Notification of Changes in Circumstances	16 days	22 days	26 days	9 days
iv Percentage of Benefit claims determined within 14 days of receiving all necessary information.	57%	64%	57%	100%
v Successful benefit fraud prosecutions per annum	N/A	N/A	0	5
3 <u>Non-Domestic Rates Collection</u>				
i Percentage of income due from non-domestic rates that was received during year	93.0%	96.2%	95.9%	97%
ii Percentage of income due from non-domestic rates that was received for the previous five financial years:				
Previous Year	93.0%	96.2%	95.9%	97.0%
Previous Year +1	96.9%	97.2%	97.9%	99.0%
Previous Year +2	98.5%	97.7%	97.5%	99.0%
Previous Year +3	98.4%	98.7%	98.1%	99.0%
Previous Year +4	97.8%	98.5%	98.8%	99.0%