

MINUTES of a meeting of THE LEICESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP REVENUES AND BENEFITS JOINT COMMITTEE held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on THURSDAY, 25 APRIL 2019

Present: Councillor R Hadkiss (Harborough) (Chair)

Councillors R Allen (Hinckley and Bosworth), R D Bayliss (North West Leicestershire) and J Hallam (Harborough)

Officers: Mrs C Hammond, Ms B Jolly (HDC), Mrs S O'Hanlon (Leicestershire Partnership - Revenues & Benefits), Mr T Shardlow (NWLDC) and Mr A Wilson (HBBC)

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors C Ladkin and T J Pendleton.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared.

33. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on the 24 January 2019.

It was moved by Councillor R Hadkiss, seconded by Councillor R D Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on the 24 January 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

34. PERFORMANCE SUMMARY REPORT MARCH 2019

Mrs S O'Hanlon presented the report to Members. She advised that the year-end performance report would go to the annual meeting in June, however the information was ready and it may be a different membership of the committee, Management Board wanted all the latest detail to be reported to appraise Members of a very pleasing outturn for all three authorities with all of the key processing targets. She informed Members that all three authorities had met their respective targets to be below the threshold for LA error, which was always a hot topic during the year, but again the forecast was correct.

She drew Members attention to the note with regard to benefits of which they no doubt would have seen in the press with regard to fraud. One of the primary drivers around Universal Credit (UC) was that it would "dramatically reduce the chances of fraud entering the system (Lord Freud May 2012). She highlighted that the latest statistics showed that the identified fraud rate for UC was 5.3% against 4.5% for Housing Benefit., assuming that it is identified fraud.

It is worth noting nationally that the value of official error for UC is £80m against a spend of £3.3bn compared to HB error value is £90m against spend of £22.3bn

She highlighted the performance against the targets as detailed below:

Council Tax

HDC	Target 98.6%	Outturn 98.6%
HBBC	Target 98.0%	Outturn 98.1%
NWLDC	Target 97.6	Outturn 97.8% - note this isn't actually detailed on the performance report

Business Rates

HDC	Target 99.2%	Actual 99.3%
HBBC	Target 98.3	Actual 99.2" (worth noting exceeded by 0.9%)
NWLDC	Target 99%	Actual 99.1%

Should note NW very close due to one large write off.

In response to a question from Councillor R D Bayliss, Mrs S O'Hanlon said that it would be possible to calculate the target should the write off for NWL have effected it.

Councillor R Hadkiss was pleased that it was the second year running that targets had been achieved which he felt was outstanding. He noted that in the last quarter HDC had to write off a large amount that could have affected the targets but the staff had still achieved.

Councillor R D Bayliss noted that if the amounts had to be written off due to the company not being able to pay it was no fault of the partnership and Members recognised that.

Officers highlighted that early indications showed that the three authorities were, in relation to Council Tax, the only ones with in Leicestershire that had increased/maintained their target figures and where the top three for Business Rates.

Councillor R Hadkiss asked that the thanks of the Committee be passed on to the staff for all their hard work

RESOLVED THAT:

The Performance Summary Report March 2018 be noted.

35. APPROVAL OF PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Mrs S O'Hanlon presented the report to Members. She reminded Members that they had considered the Service Plan at the last meeting and that they were now being asked to approve the proposed targets for the 2019/20 year.

The proposed targets were as detailed below:

Housing Benefit

- Process of new claims would be reduced from 19 days to 17 days.
- Process of change of circumstance would be reduced from 9 days down to 7 days.

Council Tax Collection Rate

- NWLDC would change from to 97.6% to 97.8%
- HBBC would change from 98% to 98.1%
- HDC would maintain at 98.6%

NNDR Collection Rate

- NWLDC would maintain at 99%
- HBBC would change from 98.3% to 98.8%
- HDC would maintain at 99.2%.

Chairman's initials

Mrs B Jolly advised Members that the Partnership already had the highest targets in County.

Mrs S O'Hanlon advised that officers had plotted year on year target trend when looking to revise the targets and had done a piece of work around claims.

Councillor R D Bayliss was pleased with the targets and was confident that they could be met.

Councillor R Hadkiss was pleased to see that the claim processing targets were being lowered.

Officers noted that all three had met the targets and that the new ones were realistic.

It was moved by Councillor R Hadkiss, seconded by Councillor R Allen and

RESOLVED THAT:

The performance targets for 2019/20 be approved.

36. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE TO FEBRUARY 2019

Mr A Wilson presented the report to Members. He advised that as of the end of February the net underspend was £77,309, of which the main variances were an underspend on the FERIS, as the posts were filled on a part time basis and an underspend on salaries, due to vacant posts for much of the year.

He highlighted that the table at 3.7 explained where the savings had been created and that the year-end projected a saving of £165,000. He noted that officers were trying to fill the vacant posts and therefore the year-end position may change. He advised that the outturn would be brought to a future meeting where the use of any additional underspend could be considered.

Councillor R Hadkiss agreed that it made sense to look at the year-end figures and make a decision then the use of the money.

RESOLVED THAT:

The financial performance of the Partnership be noted.

37. FORWARD PLAN

Mrs S O'Hanlon presented the forward plan to Members.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Forward Plan be noted.

The meeting commenced at 3.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 3.26 pm