



Harborough District Council,

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council,

North West Leicestershire District Council,

Working in Partnership to provide better services...

Meeting	Joint Committee
Time/Date	4.30 pm on Thursday, 5 SEPTEMBER 2019
Location	Room 313, The Symington Building, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough
Officer to contact	Democratic Services (01530 454512)

All persons present are reminded that the meeting may be recorded and by attending this meeting you are giving your consent to being filmed and your image being used. You are kindly requested to make it known to the Chairman if you intend to film or record this meeting.

The Monitoring Officer would like to remind members that when they are considering whether the following items are exempt information under the relevant paragraph under part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 they must have regard to the public interest test. This means that members must consider, for each item, whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption from disclosure outweighs the public interest in making the item available to the public.

AGENDA

Item		Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE		
	To receive and note any apologies for absence.	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST		
	Under the Code of Conduct members are reminded that in declaring disclosable interests you should make clear the nature of that interest.	

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3. MINUTES	
To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2019	3 - 6
4. UNIVERSAL CREDIT - UPDATE	
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8. FORWARD PLAN	
To note the Joint Committee's Forward Plan	43 - 44
9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS	
4.30pm -Thursday, 21 November 2019 – North West Leicestershire District Council	
4.30pm -Thursday, 23 January 2019 – Atkins Building, Hinckley	
4.30pm -Thursday, 23 April 2019 – Harborough District Council	
4.30pm -Thursday, 25 June 2019 – North West Leicestershire District Council	

Circulation:

Councillor R Ashman
 Councillor R D Bayliss (Chairman)
 Councillor D Bill (Deputy Chairman)
 Councillor P Dann
 Councillor J Hallam
 Councillor K Lynch

MINUTES of a meeting of THE LEICESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP REVENUES AND BENEFITS JOINT COMMITTEE held in the Atkins Building, Lower Bond Street, Hinckley on THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2019

Present: Councillors R D Bayliss (North West Leicestershire), D Bill (Hinckley and Bosworth), P Dann (Harborough) and J Hallam (Harborough)

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

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Nominations were sought for the Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

It was moved by Councillor P Dann that Councillor R D Bayliss be appointed as Chairman.

The motion was seconded by Councillor D Bill.

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor R D Bayliss be appointed Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Nominations were sought for the Deputy Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

It was moved by Councillor P Dann that Councillor D Bill MBE be appointed as Chairman.

The motion was seconded by Councillor J Hallam.

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor D Bill MBE be appointed Deputy Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors R Ashman & K Lynch.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared.

5. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2019.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor J Hallam and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on the 25 April 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. INTRODUCTION TO THE PARTNERSHIP

Mrs S O'Hanlon gave a presentation to Members on the service and its delivery (Copy of the slides retained with the official minutes).

She outlined to Members:

- The history and background to the service (including the areas that were covered) and the Partnership.
- The objectives and results of the Partnership.
- Governance of the Partnership and the role of the Joint Committee.
- Projects that were being undertaken.
- Service Plan for 2019-20

Councillor P Dann thanked officers for the presentation and asked if a detailed synopsis could be provided with the slides as it would be a useful learning tool.

In response to a question from Councillor D Bill, Mrs S O'Hanlon advised Members that Universal Credit had been rolled out at different times across all three partner authorities, however it still had not been rolled out to everyone yet in accordance with the DWP's delivery programme

Members welcomed the content of the presentation and the progress and the success of the Partnership so far.

7. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE TO MARCH 2019

Mr A Wilson presented the report to Members. He advised then that there were a couple of issues to be considered within the recommendations, which included increasing the transfer to the ICT earmarked reserve by £35k to cover ICT costs expected in future years and redistribution of year-end savings as detailed at option B in table 4. He informed Members that at the year end the partnership had a net underspend of £309,124. This included an underspend in salaries of £171,000, in FERIS of £46,000 due to posts being filled part-time rather than full-time (FERIS funding was ring fenced), in training of £11,000 and in postage savings of £32,000. This was due to lower than expected annual billing costs. He explained the tables set out in paragraph 3.7 outlined the budgeted, actual and proposed positions and that table 4 provided the two options dependent on the decision that the committee made in relation to increasing the ICT earmarked reserve.

He advised Members that a revised budget would come back to the next meeting and that by the end of year earmarked reserved balance would be back down to £50,000k

Councillor R D Bayliss felt that option b as detailed in the report would be the soundest option.

In response to questions from Councillor P Dann:

Mr A Wilson advised that it had been hoped to recruit to the vacant posts in year however, staff with the required skills set had not come forward and when the partnership had, approached agencies but again there appeared to be a shortage.

Mrs S O'Hanlon advised that the partnership had managed and that it had looked at the posts and assessed whether they were required. However, there were some posts that required a specialised skill and therefore the job descriptions had been looked at and re-evaluated to a higher salary. In relation to postage savings she advised that many landlords now used on-line billing and that, following changes to matching rules, bills to the same address could now go out together rather than separately.

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

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The financial performance of the Partnership be noted,
- b) The preferred option of increasing the transfer to the ICT earmarked reserve by £35,000 to £135,000 to cover ICT costs expected in future year be approved, and
- c) The level redistribution of year-end savings back to partner bodies as note in table 4 below (Option B) be approved.

8. PERFORMANCE SUMMARY REPORT MARCH 2019

Mrs S O'Hanlon presented the report to Members. She advised that some Members had already seen the report at the last meeting, which enabled the previous Members to see the outturn for the year. She outlined the areas covered by the report and informed Members that all three authorities had met or exceeded their key processing targets for Council Tax and Housing Benefits, adding that it was also the case with business rates. She was pleased to advise the Committee that in relation to the Council Tax figures, the partnership was the only one in Leicestershire that had not seen a decrease in their collection rates and that all three authorities had met their respective targets to be below the threshold for LA error. She stated that the sickness was monitored and then managed through the respective authorities.

Members congratulated officers on the performance results.

In response to a question from Councillor R D Bayliss, Mrs S O'Hanlon advised that the same process was followed by all three authorities in relation to collection of the business rates, however due to the different demographic of the three areas there were different challenges due to different types of businesses located in the area, especially if a company went into administration.

Mrs S O'Hanlon also advised the Members that the staff within the revenues teams were very passionate and ensured that they did all that they could to collect the money in.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Performance Summary Report March 2019 be noted.

9. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2019/2020

Mrs C Hammond presented the report to Members. She advised Members that the date of the November meeting should read Thursday, 21 November 2019 not the 11th as stated in the report. She advised that should Members wish to continue to hold the meetings in rotation at the three partner authorities then the September meeting would be held at Harborough District Council.

By affirmation of the meeting.

RESOLVED THAT:

The schedule of meetings for 2019/2020 be approved with the November meeting amended to the 21st.

10. 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 3.32 pm



Leicestershire Partnership Revenues & Benefits

Universal Credit – Update

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update to Joint Committee on the DWP arrangements for the managed migration of working age claimants onto Universal Credit

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the content of the report is noted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Currently those moving onto Universal Credit will do so as a consequence of making a new claim or having a change in their circumstances. The migration thus far has been carefully managed as it has been determined by postcodes within a jobcentre.

That leaves those 2.87 million claimants who are currently on legacy benefits and it's the DWP's intention to have the migration regulations in place by 2019 that will allow those claimants on the following benefits to migrate over a four year period between 2019 and 2023:

- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Working Tax Credit and
- Child Tax Credit

From January 2019, the DWP had intended to start testing the full managed migration process on a small scale, with the intention of increasing volumes by July 2019. This will enable them to evaluate the initial process to ensure that it supports claimants effectively.

The DWP had estimated that, by the end of the process, 2.09m households would have been migrated, involving 2.87m individuals, the majority of whom would have come from either tax credits (54 per cent) or ESA (36 per cent).

The government also announced that it will not begin the incorporation of Housing Benefit for pensioners into Pension Credit until the completion of the Universal Credit timetable so we can expect to be delivering HB for pensioners for some years to come.

HMRC have now set out their plans to end tax credits which is now given as 2025 due mainly to the DWP's approach to rolling out Universal Credit.

- 3.2 The Claimant

To prepare them for the transition to UC the claimant will be given a period of around four to six months to get used to the idea that they are moving from legacy benefits and will need to make a claim for UC. They will also be provided with advice outlining any additional support they can access during their migration to help them make a UC claim and what activities they can undertake prior to that migration to help them make their new UC claim, e.g. open a bank account or ensure that they have appropriate means of identification. They will also be warned that their existing entitlement to legacy benefits will be ending. Subsequently, a deadline date of at least one month

will be set by the Department who will engage with claimants to help them through the process of claiming UC.

If, however, no claim for UC had been made by the deadline date (extended by a possible one month if grounds for backdating could be established), any award of an existing legacy benefit would be terminated. Any subsequent claim for UC would be dealt with in the normal way, but would not have any of the transitional protections available to those who made a claim on time.

3.3 Transitional Protection

Transitional protection (TP) means that a monetary sum would be included within the UC award to ensure that, in cases where UC entitlement would otherwise have been less than the entitlement to legacy benefits at the point of change, entitlement would remain at the same level. The intention behind the TP rules was to follow the UC ethos of keeping it simple, so that, although the amount could be recalculated if required, a straightforward one-off comparison between legacy benefit entitlement and an indicative UC entitlement at the point of migration would provide the basis for the TP calculation. Tax credit claimants with capital in excess of £16,000 would have their capital above £16,000 disregarded for a period of 12 months in order to avoid being disentitled to UC on the grounds of failing to meet the financial conditions of entitlement.

In addition transitional protection for those that have lost the amount their severe disability premium would have given them is in the process of being put in place and awaiting approval from Parliament though no date has been set for this.

These plans also include proposals to compensate those that have already moved on to UC and lost their severe disability premium, a process will be set up to identify the eligible customers and pay on going equivalent monthly amounts and a lump sum for the backdated period since migrating to UC.

3.4 The requirement to claim

The decision to require people to make a claim for UC rather than simply transfer them has been taken because the DWP wanted to make sure that a claimant's circumstances had been accurately captured at the start of their UC award.

It was feasible that the information historically held in relation to existing awards of legacy benefits would be insufficient for the DWP to make a UC assessment. For example, no information on capital or other benefits received is held in respect of claimants in receipt of tax credits.

The information provided in connection with a new claim for UC might also bring out some existing errors where, for example, previous changes of circumstance had not been declared. It would also allow the DWP to inform claimants more fully as to what the new UC regime would entail for them, since it was likely to be very different from their existing benefit arrangements..

Additionally, the DWP could not simply assume that all existing claimants would want to claim UC - some form of formal consent from a claimant was needed, and requiring a claim did that.

3.5 Engagement - a significant challenge!

One of the most difficult challenges for the DWP is to ensure that claimants engage particularly those who might not have had any previous contact with the DWP, or who are anxious about the changes. There are no two ways about it this is going to be a massive exercise, encouraging millions of people to make a brand new claim, provide all the evidence about their personal circumstances, rent and identity all by a set date.

3.6 No way back!

The DWP have confirmed that once a claim to UC has been made the gateway to legacy benefits is closed. In practice, the UC claim triggers the termination notice (known as an HB Stop Notice). Even if a claimant withdraws or ends their UC claim (regardless of whether they have received payment), they cannot choose to claim, re-claim or seek re-instatement of a legacy benefit. This continues to apply irrespective of whether the legacy benefit termination has been actioned 'on time'.

3.7 Those not migrating

In addition to pensioners and those living in temporary accommodation claimants entitled to the Severe Disability Premium (SDP) as a component part of their existing benefit will not be migrating to UC as part of the managed migration.

3.8 Backdating

The requirement to make a new claim is pretty unique in migrating claimants from one benefit to another and representations were made to the DWP about making the backdating provisions more generous. .

The DWP has, however, taken the view that a deadline was needed in order to achieve the desired result. The approach was therefore to provide the necessary support before the deadline was reached but still allow a one month backdate if appropriate. However it's likely that there will be flexibility for this period to be extended, if it is identified that certain claimants require a longer time to make a new UC claim, e.g., those who are vulnerable or have complex needs.

3.9 Personal Budgeting Support

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has recently announced a new partnership between the DWP and Citizens Advice Bureau to deliver universal support from April 2019. Currently this support is provided by LA's and a total of £51m will be paid to the CAB partly to help them get ready for delivery next year.

4.0 The Future

The DWP have confirmed that the fundamental principles behind UC including the monthly assessment period, the principal of digital by default and claimant responsibility for managing their own finances will not be changing.

However the timetable for implementation has been beset by problems UC should have been up and running by April 2017 and is now not expected to be fully operational until December 2023.

It has recently been announced that benefit claimants in Harrogate who still receive old style benefits will be the first people moved onto Universal Credit.

Amber Rudd has previously confirmed that up to 10,000 claimants across the country who are on the old system would be moved to Universal Credit under a pilot scheme to start in July 2019 once regulations have been passed in the House of Commons.

More than 1.6 million people currently claim Universal Credit, but these are new claimants or people who have had a change in circumstance. All new claimants in the United Kingdom now go straight onto Universal Credit.

.All those in Harrogate moving to Universal Credit will be personally supported by Jobcentre Plus staff to ensure they get the best possible service.

The goal of the pilot is to learn as much as possible about how to help people to move onto Universal Credit. We will increase numbers as slowly and gradually as necessary, expanding to further locations as required

4.1 The Budget

The Chancellor has announced that the Treasury will provide an additional £6.6 billion over the next six years to smooth the introduction of UC.

The changes will include:

- the amount that households with children, and people with disabilities can earn before their Universal Credit award begins to be withdrawn – the Work Allowance – will be increased by £1,000 from April 2019. This means that 2.4 million households will keep an extra £630 of income each year
- Building on the Autumn Budget 2017 announcement that Housing Benefit claimants will receive an additional payment providing a fortnight's worth of support during their transition to Universal Credit, the government will extend this provision to cover the income-related elements of Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance, and Income Support. This will be effective from July 2020, and benefit around 1.1 million claimants.
- From October 2019, the government will reduce the maximum rate at which deductions can be made from a Universal Credit award from 40% to 30% of the standard allowance. This will ensure that those on Universal Credit are supported to repay debts in a more sustainable and manageable way. From October 2021, the government will also increase the period over which advances will be recovered, from 12 to 16 months.

5.0 Partnership impacts

Requests to the LA for information and the sharing of Universal Credit award details are received via an electronic file as part of the Universal Credit Data Share arrangements (UCDS) .

Whilst some of this work has started to be automated we currently allocate 3 FTE's to deal with the average of 99 files received per day. Whilst not strictly within our jurisdiction we have to be mindful that some claimants may find the transition from HB to UC extremely complicated and as a last resort and where appropriate we will speak with the DWP on a customers behalf to help resolve any issues that we feel are not being dealt with correctly.

This has been brought into focus by a recent report from the Work and Pensions Committee who after taking evidence in its first session have pressed the Secretary of State to provide answers as to why:

- Jobcentres have been moving claimants to Universal Credit even when their circumstances have not changed.
- There is still confusion amongst Job centres as to what specific changes in a claimant's circumstances mean that they need to claim Universal Credit. The critical element for the claimant is that if that if they move to UC before natural migration they lose 'transitional protection'.
- Employment support allowance claimants who are appealing a decision that they are not entitled to ESA are encouraged to claim UC and if they win the appeal are not able to return to legacy benefits which means they are significantly worse off.

Additionally we are still responsible for the administration of Universal Credit DHP's and that as the migration of claimants onto U/C increases, the reductions seen in amounts of U/C awarded (for those with a housing element) compared to previous Housing Benefit awards is resulting in more and more U/C claimants applying for help through the Discretionary fund.

6.0 Customer Impacts

A number of questions have been raised around the extent to which claimants may be worse off because of the migration to UC. The easiest way to explain this is by making a direct comparison between entitlement under Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

- Within UC non-dep deductions (NDD) will be replaced by housing cost contributions (HCC), accept there is only one rate of HCC whereas within HB the deduction will be dependent upon the gross income of the non-dependent
- Under 21s will not have to pay a HCC, however all over 21's will have to pay a HCC including students and the contribution for all over 21's is around £73 per month
- There is no 13 week protection in UC – Within HB full rent could be paid for 13 weeks if customer had not claimed HB in past 52 weeks and could not afford rent
- Bereavement protection reduced to 13 weeks rather than 52 in HB. Full entitlement of HB will continue to be paid for 52 weeks if partner passed away.
- Households where there is a room kept available for a student while away studying will still not be deemed as under occupying but only for 6

months under UC if they intend to return within that time. This compares with 52 weeks if on HB

- There is no payment on two homes for unavoidable overlapping liability – where customer has to move in order not to lose home and rent is still due on old home
- No extended payment under UC – customer could receive 4 weeks worth of HB when moving off benefits into work

7.0 Customer Service Impacts

Customer service teams have provided details of how their service area has been affected.

- We've dealt with many confused claimants – especially those who aren't IT literate and those who have disability, unable to read and write
- Impact of needing to create email accounts when customers aren't able or have no way to access them again without support
- Expectation that all claimants have a mobile phone to receive texts
- Customers not remembering their usernames, passwords, email address and email password
- Long wait when phoning UC helpline (seems to have improved lately)
- JCP referring customers to Customer Services – customers not knowing why they've been sent to us for help (raised with JCP Manager as required)
- Lack of provision of initial training/online training for Customer Services to provide digital support
- Customer expectation that CSAs can access their UC account information and perception that HDC administrate UC
- Higher volume of requests for food parcels both during application process and when claim in place ensuring benefit lasts for 1 month

Generally speaking there has been a reduction in the number of enquiries that customer service teams are dealing with but it appears that the roll out of UC is having a much greater impact on our vulnerable customers

8.0 The Latest Position (July 2019)

8.1 Migration

Universal Credit (UC) is a radical change to the existing welfare system.. Claimants receive a basic amount (“the standard allowance”) alongside additional payments if, for example, they are disabled, are entitled to support with rent or have children. Claimants are paid monthly in arrears and are expected to manage all of their household living costs and expenses. This includes housing costs, which were usually paid direct to the landlord for social housing or for vulnerable tenants under the system UC replaces (the

“legacy system”). The process of transferring people claiming legacy benefits onto Universal Credit is called “migration”.

Migration can happen in two ways:

- Through ‘natural migration’. This is when existing claimants have a change in their circumstances (e.g. a partner moves in/out) and they try to make a new claim for a legacy benefit. They discover that they can only claim UC instead; or
- Through ‘managed migration’, where claimants of legacy benefits will be moved by the Department from legacy benefits to UC without a change in circumstances.

The Government has said repeatedly that once the roll-out of Universal Credit (UC) is complete, it will be more generous than the system it replaces. But it is not more generous for everyone. While some people are entitled to more money under UC than they would have received in the previous benefits system, many will be entitled to less.

Some of the Department’s plans for moving people to UC recognise that some claimants will be worse off. For instance, the Department plans to take a cautious approach to what it calls “managed migration”—the process of moving claimants on existing benefits to UC. It plans to provide claimants who move to UC in this way with transitional protection—payments to ensure they do not lose income overnight—and other support to minimise any stress or adverse effects of the move.

But the majority of claimants on existing benefits will move, or have already moved, to UC through a process known as “natural migration”, which usually happens when their circumstances change. For these claimants, there is no transitional protection. People naturally migrate to UC when they have a change in their lives which would require a new claim for a legacy benefit. There are a vast number of changes which can lead to natural migration. By contrast, there are very few which can end transitional protection under managed migration. This is because the Department deliberately selected the few circumstances in which to end transitional protection, whereas the natural migration process, by its own admission, was based on its own administrative needs.

The Department argues that it is fair that claimants who experience a “significant” change in their circumstances should not receive transitional protection, on the grounds that it has always been the case that new claims for legacy benefits would be assessed on a claimant’s new circumstances. It is difficult to reconcile this explanation, however, with the fact that the design of UC—which, unlike the legacy system, now represents all, or the majority, of a claimant’s income—means that any change in a claimant’s circumstances exposes them to all aspects of UC, which may be less generous than the legacy system and which may not be related to their specific change. For example, a disabled claimant who moves home could lose their disability premiums, even though their disability remains the same. What is more, the disparity between the changes that can lead to natural migration and those that can end transitional protection mean that some claimants will lose out simply because of when their circumstances change. Therefore, when managed migration begins, households with the same circumstances will be receiving different amounts of Universal Credit—not

because their needs are different, but because of the route by which they moved to Universal Credit.

For claimants, some of the changes that can trigger this move will not seem significant. For example, moving house within the same local authority area does not trigger migration to Universal Credit—but moving to a different local authority does. That means in practice that someone who moves to a different local authority area loses their entitlement to transitional protection.

The Department has made some effort to mitigate the impact of the initial five-week wait for a Universal Credit payment. Additional payments of two weeks of Housing Benefit, known as a “run-on”, are already available to claimants who migrate naturally. The Department has also announced run-ons of income-related Jobseeker’s Allowance, Employment Support Allowance and Income Support—but these will not be available until 2020. The Department’s explanation for the delay is that it cannot make the necessary changes to its IT systems until then.

8.2 The Harrogate Pilot

The managed migration pilot which started in Harrogate on the 24 July 2019 is already facing criticism because of the lack of vulnerable claimants within that area.

The Chair of the parliamentary Social Security Committee Frank Field M.P. made the following statement in July.

“The government has wilfully missed the point, and this is becoming a distressing pattern. We, like so many others, have asked the government not to move to 'managed migration until it demonstrates it is ready to do so safely, without exposing a single claimant or their children to debt, hunger, or homelessness. The government doesn't seem to understand that this is not the same as showing us how many staff it has trained up, how many stakeholders it has briefed, or that it has managed to get its computers working.

What matters, and what the Department should be testing and learning from, is the outcome of all of this for claimants, particularly the most vulnerable claimants - of whom there are disproportionately few in Harrogate. To put it bluntly: without looking at outcomes for claimants there is no point, for anyone other than the Department itself, of these tests or what it intends to learn from them. How does the government hope to get the regulations it needs through parliament when it blithely ignores all this?”

8.3 Severe Disability Premium

The High Court has decided that the universal credit migration arrangements for those who previously received the severe disability premium and naturally migrated to universal credit before 16 January 2019 are unlawful. The differences between the two groups would be significant in financial terms; the amount of compensation DWP have announced they intend to pay to those already getting UC would not be enough.

Following that ruling the Secretary of State for Social Security made an announcement in Parliament on 22 July.

“We have revised our approach to claimants who are entitled to the severe disability premium. The regulations that I am laying today will enable us to begin to provide support for claimants who were entitled to the premium and have already moved to universal credit. From 24 July 2019, those claimants will be considered for backdated payments covering the time that has elapsed since their move. They will also gain access to ongoing transitional payments that reflect the severe disability premium to which they were previously entitled.

We have reviewed the rates of those payments to enable the most vulnerable to receive increased support. Claimants will now receive payments of up to £405 per month alongside their universal credit awards, increased from the previous proposed maximum of £360. We estimate that by 2024-25, approximately 45,000 of the most vulnerable claimants will benefit from this package of support, worth an estimated £600 million over the next six years”.

8.4 Fraud within Universal credit

The levels of fraud within UC are becoming increasingly high profile a BBC report aired on the 8 July 2019 claimed that “tens of millions of pounds of public money is believed to have been stolen” through Universal Credit fraud. Commenting on the Department’s 2018-19 accounts, which showed error and fraud at DWP running at the highest levels since it began counting, Committee Chair Frank Field said:

"In the Department's fantastical predictions, Universal Credit was supposed to reduce error. Instead it is the most error-riddled of all benefits, and it's only getting worse.

Latest data on overpayments on Universal Credit were at their highest recorded rate, increasing from 8.3% in 2017/18 to 8.6% in 2018/19, which is equivalent to £680m out of the £8.0bn paid in 2018/19

8.5 How does this compare with other welfare benefits?

Welfare Benefit	Expenditure	Fraud Value	Claimant Error	Official Error	Total Value (%)
Housing Benefit	£20.8bn	£860m	£360m	£110m	£1.33bn (6.4%)
Pension Credit	£5.2bn	£120m	£70m	£70m	£260m (5.0%)
Employment Support Allowance	£14.8bn	£310m	£150m	£140m	£600m (4.0%)
Job seekers Allowance	£1.3bn	£60m	£0	£20m	£80m (6.5%)
Universal Credit	£8.0bn	£460m	£50m	£170m	£680m (8.6%)
Personal Independent Payments	£10.6bn	£170m	£170m	£30m	£370m (3.5%)

Source: DWP Fraud & Error in the Benefits System (2018/19 estimates)

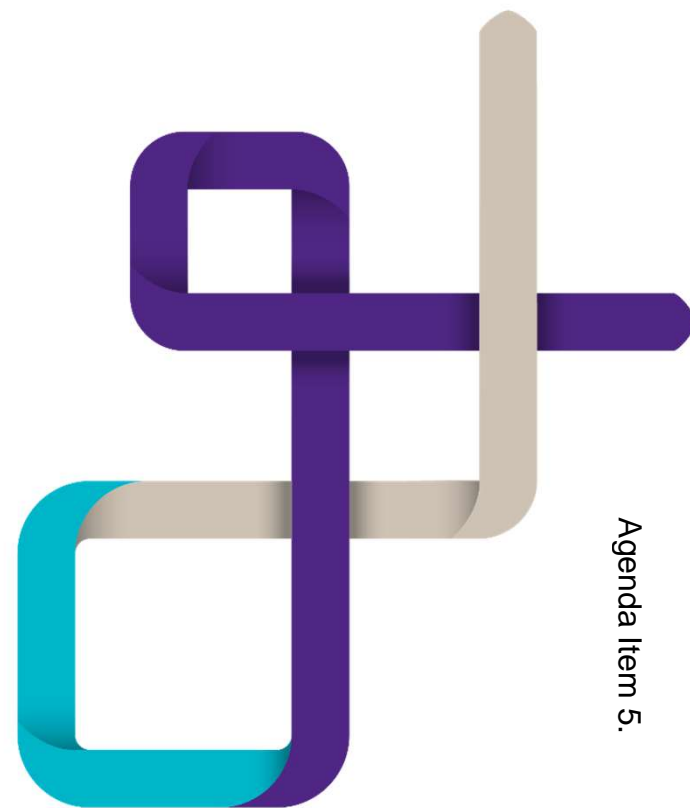
8.6 The Future

Its highly unlikely that Parliament will agree to the full roll-out of Universal credit until the errors concerned with the calculation of Housing Costs and the five week wait for a first payment have been resolved..

Audit Planning Brief

Revenues and Benefits Internal Audit Review

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
June 2019



Agenda Item 5.

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1 About the review

2 Audit logistics

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It is the responsibility solely of the Council's management and directors to ensure there are adequate arrangements in place in relation to risk management, governance, control and value for money.

About the review

Introduction

Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth and North West Leicestershire Councils are jointly responsible for managing the revenues and benefits services through partnership arrangements. In 2018/19 the partnership budgeted £3.6m for managing the services. At the year end there was a caseload of 14,235 benefits claimants.

The operations of the partnership is overseen by the management board, comprising officers from all three councils and a joint committee which meets quarterly, and reviews the financial and operational performance of the partnership.

Hinckley and Bosworth Council are the host body for the partnership and, as their auditors, we will undertake our review and report our findings to the management board and the joint committee. Our report will be considered by the head of Internal audit for each council when forming their opinion for the 2018/19 financial year.

There is in place a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the individual local authorities. The partnership has access to data from DWP and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to enable staff to administer:

- Housing Benefit (HB) and any associated counter fraud & error and overpayment recovery activity
- Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR) schemes and any associated recovery of LCTR errors
- Local Welfare Provision (LWP); and
- Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP).

The MOU sets out the framework and operating policy through which an organisation will access, exchange and share DWP, HMRC and appropriate customer data.

The memorandum of understanding must be signed by the operational manager with responsibility for the service area covered and be countersigned by the s151 Officer. The Chief Executive is also expected to understand their obligations.

The DWP may seek confirmation that each local authority continues to comply with the MOU.

Scope & approach

The MOU sets out a number of specific terms and conditions and standards that should be complied with when accessing and sharing information. Each Council should be satisfied that the partnership has regard to, and has adequate processes in place to ensure compliance with DWP requirements, in order to 'sign off' the MOU.

Our review will consider each of the terms and conditions set out in the MOU and we will obtain appropriate evidence of arrangements in place to comply with these standards. Our review will provide each of the partners councils assurance that there are adequate arrangements in place to ensure compliance with the MOU.

We will achieve the objectives of our review by:

- reviewing key documents that support these arrangements such as internal policy and procedure documents in this area;
- interviewing key staff to gain an understanding of arrangements for each standard
- undertaking sample testing, where appropriate, to test compliance.

The findings and conclusions from this review will feed into our annual opinion to the Audit Committee on the adequacy of the Council's overall internal control environment.

About the review

Objectives

Our review will focus on the following potential risks:

- Hinckley Borough Council, as the host organisation, does not have adequate arrangements in place to ensure compliance with the terms of the Memorandum of understanding
- Management is not fully sighted on arrangements and may inappropriately sign off compliance with the terms and conditions, putting the council at risk of the service being withdrawn or facing prosecution.

Limitation of scope

Our findings and conclusions will be limited to the risks identified above. The scope of this audit does not allow us to provide an independent assessment of all risks and controls across the entire management of the MOU.

Where sample testing is undertaken, our findings and conclusions will be limited to the sample tested only. Please note that there is a risk that our findings and conclusions based on the sample may differ from the findings and conclusions we would reach if we tested the entire population from which the sample is taken.

Consideration of other audit points or areas relevant to this review

Not applicable.

Reliance on other audits

Not applicable.

Audit logistics



Andrew Smith, Director

Andrew has overall responsibility for quality assurance. He will ensure the audit scope and approach is appropriate. He will also ensure the delivery of the audit adheres to the agreed internal audit methodology, including review of working papers and draft reports.



Zoe Thomas, Internal Audit Manager

Zoe is responsible for the day-to-day execution of the audit. She will meet with your key officers to agree the scope & supervise our internal auditors. She will ensure appropriate testing of the relevant controls and preparation of the draft report.

Key officers

The key contacts at the Council for this audit are:

- Sally O'Hanlon
- Ashley Wilson, Section 151 Officer

The Council's Executive Lead for this audit is:

- Julie Kenny, Director (Corporate Services)

Reporting

We will report our findings to the joint management board and subsequently to the joint committee

Location

The audit will be conducted at the Atkins building.

Communication

Initial observations will be fed back to management during the fieldwork phase, as and when they are identified. We will then schedule a close out meeting with management and issue a draft report for management comment in line with the timings detailed above.



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Leicestershire Partnership Revenues & Benefits

Financial Performance to June 2019

Joint Committee

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Joint Committee of the financial performance of the Partnership for the period April – June 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- a) That the financial performance of the Partnership be noted.

3. INFORMATION

Budget Position

- 3.1. The original and amended budget for 2019/20 is given in table 1 below. This table notes the changes agreed by the at the June Joint Committee meeting.

TABLE 1	2019/2020 Budget (Original)	2019/2020 Budget (Revised)
	£	£
Employees	2,731,260	2,777,486
Premises Related Expenditure	88,120	88,120
Transport Related Expenditure	20,000	20,000
Supplies & Services	810,700	814,080
Central & Administrative Exp	31,200	31,200
<i>Total Expenditure</i>	3,681,280	3,730,886
Partner Contributions	-3,619,030	-3,498,113
Contributions from Other Bodies	-49,000	-49,000
Contributions from Reserves	-13,250	-134,167
Contributions from Reserves - C/fwds	0	-49,606
Total Funding	-3,681,280	-3,730,886

- 3.2. The financial position of the Partnership has been outlined in **Appendix 1** to this report. The key headlines have been detailed below for information.
- 3.3. As at June 2019, the Partnership had a net overspend on budget of £205,799. After adjusting for timing difference of £220,062, the remaining net underspend is £14,263. The timing differences will be billed to partners following the quarter end.

Table 2	Budget June 2019	Actual to June 2019	Variance to Date	Timing Differences	Variance after Timing Differences
INCOME	(£1,047,807)	(£396,586)	£651,221	(£602,457)	£48,764
EXPENDITUR E	£1,058,398	£612,976	(£445,422)	£382,395	(£63,027)
Over / (Under) Spend	£10,592	£216,390	£205,799	(£220,062)	(£14,263)

- 3.3 The key variances to the end of June 2019 to bring to the attention of the Management Board are:
- Salaries are underspent by £45,000 due to vacant posts.
- 3.4 There is a direct link between partner contributions and expenditure incurred and therefore partner contributions have been adjusted by £49,000 to reflect the actual expenditure to date.
- 3.5 As at 30 June 2019, if the salary saving continue at the same rate, there will be a significant year-end saving.

Appendix 1: Leicestershire Revenues & Benefits Partnership Monitoring Report to 30th June 2019

Expenditure / Income Type	2019/20 Latest Budget to Date	Actual to Date	Timing Differences	Variance after Timing Differences		2019/20 Total Estimate (Original)	2019/20 Total Estimate (Revised)
	£	£	£	£		£	£
Employees	678,909	256,305	376,811	45,793		2,731,260	2,731,260
Premises Related Expenditure	27,052	24,325	0	2,727		88,120	88,120
Transport Related Expenditure	5,007	831	4,415	-239		20,000	20,000
Supplies & Services	339,630	324,015	1,169	14,446		810,700	814,080
Central & Administrative Exp	7,800	7,500	0	300		31,200	31,200
Revenue Income	-1,005,176	-353,955	-602,457	-48,764		-3,681,280	-3,560,363
Approved Cfwd	-12,402	-12,402	0	0		0	-49,606
Transfer from Reserves	-30,229	-30,229	0	0		0	-120,917
				0			
Other Expenditure - FERIS	4,623	3,672		951		0	46,226
Other Income - FERIS	0	0		0		0	0
				0		0	0
				0		0	0
Sum:	15,215	220,062	-220,062	15,214		0	0

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Timing Differences

	HDC	NWLDC	HBBC	Total
Salaries - Q1 2019/20	164,437	212,374		376,811
Mileage & Disturbance Costs - Q1 2019/20	2,217	2,198		4,415
Supplies & Services - Q1 2019/20	229	940		1,169
Contributions - Quarter 1 2019/20	-157,913	-205,788	-238,756	-602,457
	8,970	9,724	-238,756	-220,062

Explanations

	Variance at 30/06/19(Over) / Under Spend £	Forecast variance (Over) / Under Spend £	Explanation £5k+
Salaries	45,000		Underspend due to a number of Vacant Posts
Other Employee Costs	1,000		Variance > £5k
Premises Related Expenditure	3,000		Variance > £5k
Computer Software Maintenance & Upgrade	5,000		Variance > £5k
Liability Expenses	6,000		The Courts have reduced the summons cost fee per case
Minor Variances	3,000		Variance > £5k
Contributions	-49,000		Reduced due to Court Costs being lower than anticipated
Net Other Expenditure & Income - FERIS	1,000		Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme (FERIS) A budget of £46k has been bfwd from 2018/19
	15,000	0	



Revenue and Benefit Service

Performance Summary Report

June 2019

Caseload Analysis

Position at:	01/04/2016	In Year Movement	01/04/2017	In Year Movement	01/04/2018	In Year Movement	01/04/2019	In Year Movement	2019/20		Overall Movement since April 2011		
									Latest Data	In Year Movement		%	
Council Tax Dwellings													
HBBC	48,810	675	49,488	678	49,906	418	50,359	453	50,424	65	4,252	8.4%	
HDC	37,899	587	38,505	606	39,089	584	39,739	650	39,921	182	3,998	10.0%	
NWLDC	42,405	644	43,204	799	44,207	1,003	44,940	733	45,109	169	5,083	11.3%	
Totals	129,114		131,197				135,038	Current Total:	135,454	Movement	13,333		
NDR Rated Assessments													
HBBC	3,067	99	3,082	15	3,162	80	3,181	19	3,191	10	315	9.9%	
HDC	2,909	74	2,949	40	3,040	91	3,086	46	3,091	5	475	15.4%	
NWLDC	3,249	39	3,287	38	3,417	130	3,440	23	3,453	13	271	7.8%	
Totals	9,225		9,318					Current Total:	9,735	Movement	1,061		
HB/CTLS Live Caseload													
HBBC	6,459	-702	6,280	-282	5,783		5,579	-204	5,459	-120	-1,641	-30.1%	
HDC	3,689	-585	3,599	-169	3,388		3,243	-145	3,249	6	-940	-28.9%	
NWLDC	6,145	-625	5,955	-329	5,696		5,413	-283	5,303	-110	-1,884	-35.5%	
Totals	16,293		15,834					Current Total:	14,011	Movement	-4,465		

Dashboard Performance Summaries for each Council follows below:

Harborough District Council													2019/20	Year -End 2019/20 target	2018/19 Same month cumulative comparison
BENEFITS	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Cumulative		
In month: Right Time (days)	5.7	5.3	6.1										5.7	11	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	8.9	6.9	8.6	7.0	7.8	6.7	8.0	8.9	10.1	9.1	2.7	7.9			8.2
In month: New Claims (Days)	13.6	14.8	12.0										13.3	17	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	17.4	15.7	20.3	15.8	17.3	14.9	17.5	15.5	16.6	16.8	12.7	16.3			17.7
In month: Change Events (Days)	4.9	4.5	5.1										4.8	7	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	7.6	5.9	7.4	5.8	6.0	5.5	6.9	8.1	9.1	8.0	2.3	6.1			7.8
Right Time profiled in month target 19/20	8.9	6.9	8.6	7.0	7.8	6.7	8.0	8.9	10.1	9.1	2.7	7.9			
New Claims profiled in month target 19/20	17.4	15.7	20.3	15.8	17.3	14.9	17.5	15.5	16.6	16.8	12.7	16.3			
Change Events profiled in month target 19/20	7.6	5.9	7.4	5.8	6.0	5.5	6.9	8.1	9.1	8.0	2.3	6.1			
COUNCIL TAX	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
In Year (%)	11.1%	20.4%	29.6%										29.6%	98.6%	
This years profiled target	11.2%	20.5%	29.8%	39.0%	48.2%	57.6%	67.1%	76.3%	85.3%	94.5%	96.7%	98.6%			
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	11.2%	20.6%	29.8%	39.0%	48.3%	57.6%	67.1%	76.1%	85.0%	94.2%	96.6%	98.6%			
Arrears Reduction (£m)	£2.3m	£2.2m	£2.2m										£2.2m	INFO	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	£2.1m	£2.0m	£1.9m	£1.9m	£1.8m	£1.8m	£1.7m	£1.7m	£1.7m	£1.6m	£1.6m	£1.6m			
NON DOMESTIC RATES	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
In Year (%)	10.2%	19.2%	28.9%										28.9%	99.2%	
This years profiled target	9.7%	20.5%	28.7%	37.8%	46.8%	55.3%	65.7%	75.0%	84.2%	92.5%	96.6%	99.2%			
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	10.2%	20.1%	29.1%	38.2%	46.6%	55.8%	65.5%	74.1%	82.6%	91.9%	96.6%	99.3%			
Arrears Reduction (£m)	£0.31m	£0.28m	£0.25m										£0.25m	INFO	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	£0.17m	£0.14m	£0.11m	£0.08m	£0.10m	£0.09m	£0.06m	£0.08m	£0.08m	£0.06m	£0.06m	£0.04m			
HOUSING BENEFIT DEBT	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
HB Overpayments outstanding at year end (Capita)	£0.90m	£0.87m	£0.86m										£0.86m	INFO	
<i>Position for 2018/19 (£m)</i>	£0.96m	£0.95m	£0.94m	£0.93m	£0.92m	£0.90m	£0.89m	£0.91m	£0.91m	£0.93m	£0.91m	£0.90m			
HB Overpayments Recovered	3%	6%	9%										9%	31%	
This year sprofiled target	3%	5%	8%	10%	13%	16%	18%	21%	24%	24%	27%	31%			
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	5%	9%	12%	15%	17%	20%	22%	25%	27%	30%	33%	35%			
FRAUD	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
CTLS Sanctions gained	0	1	0										1	6	
This years profiled target	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0			
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	2	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	11		

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council													Cumulative e2019/20	Year-End 2019/20 Target	2018/19 Same month cumulative comparison
BENEFITS	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
In month: Right Time (days)	6.2	6.1	6.2										6.2	11	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	8.3	6.9	8.9	6.1	6.7	7.4	6.9	8.4	9.2	8.5	2.6	7.8			8.0
In month: New Claims (Days)	13.5	14.5	15.4										14.4	17	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	18.1	14.3	15.4	11.7	12.8	14.2	13.3	14.7	12.5	13.3	12.1	13.2			15.9
In month: Change Events (Days)	5.3	5.3	5.2										5.3	7	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	7.4	6.1	8.1	5.4	5.8	6.3	5.9	7.5	8.6	7.9	2.2	6.7			7.1
Right Time profiled in month target 19/20	8.3	6.9	8.9	6.1	6.7	7.4	6.9	8.4	9.2	8.5	2.6	7.8			
New Claims profiled in month target 19/20	18.1	14.3	15.4	11.7	12.8	14.2	13.3	14.7	12.5	13.3	12.1	13.2			
Change Events profiled in month target 19/20	7.4	6.1	8.1	5.4	5.8	6.3	5.9	7.5	8.6	7.9	2.2	6.7			
COUNCIL TAX	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
In Year (%)	10.9%	20.1%	29.2%										29.2%	98.1%	
This years profiled target	11.0%	20.3%	29.4%	38.6%	47.8%	57.2%	66.4%	75.7%	84.7%	93.8%	96.2%	98.1%			
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	11.0%	20.3%	29.4%	38.6%	47.8%	57.2%	66.4%	75.7%	84.7%	93.8%	96.2%	98.1%			
In Year Arrears Reduction (£)	£3.2m	£3.1m	£3.0m										£3.0m	INFO	
<i>Position for 2017/18</i>	£2.9m	£2.8m	£2.7m	£2.6m	£2.5m	£2.5m	£2.4m	£2.4m	£2.3m	£2.3m	£2.2m	£2.1m			
NON DOMESTIC RATES	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
In Year (%)	11.9%	20.6%	29.9%										29.9%	98.8%	
This years profiled target	11.0%	20.6%	29.9%	39.3%	48.3%	57.3%	66.5%	75.9%	85.3%	94.2%	96.6%	98.8%			
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	11.0%	20.6%	29.9%	39.3%	48.3%	57.3%	66.5%	75.9%	85.3%	94.2%	96.6%	98.8%			
Arrears Reduction (£m)	£0.35m	£0.38m	£0.34m										£0.34m	INFO	
<i>Position for: 2018/19</i>	£0.57m	£0.48m	£0.43m	£0.34m	£0.31m	£0.31m	£0.21m	£0.24m	£0.24m	£0.20m	£0.20m	£0.10m			
HOUSING BENEFIT DEBT	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
HB Overpayments outstanding at year end (Capita)	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.4m										£1.4m	INFO	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	£1.5m	£1.5m	£1.5m	£1.5m	£1.5m	£1.5m	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.4m			
HB Overpayments Recovered	3%	6%	9%										9%	36%	
This years profiled target	5%	8%	11%	13%	16%	19%	21%	22%	26%	27%	30%	36%			
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	4%	7%	10%	13%	16%	19%	22%	25%	25%	28%	30%	33%			
FRAUD	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
CTLS Sanctions gained	1	0	0										1	8	
This years profiled target	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0			
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	8		

North West Leicestershire District Council													2019/20	Year End 2019/20 target	2018/19 Same month cumulative comparison
BENEFITS	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Cumulative		
In month: Right Time (days)	5.8	5.7	6.4										6.0	11	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	9.6	7.5	9.4	7.6	7.8	7.7	7.8	8.8	9.7	7.5	2.4	7.5			8.8
In month: New Claims (Days)	12.5	14.7	15.0										14.1	17	
<i>Position for 2017/18</i>	17.3	16.0	18.9	15.0	14.5	14.9	15.4	13.9	17.2	14.5	11.9	13.0			17.3
In month: Change Events (Days)	5.3	4.7	5.4										5.1	7	
<i>Position for 2017/18</i>	8.7	6.7	8.3	6.6	6.7	6.8	6.5	8.2	8.7	6.7	2.1	6.6			7.8
Right Time profiled in month target 17/18	9.6	7.5	9.4	7.6	7.8	7.7	7.8	8.8	9.7	7.5	2.4	7.5			
New Claims profiled in month target 17/18	17.3	16.0	18.9	15.0	14.5	14.9	15.4	13.9	17.2	14.5	11.9	13.0			
Change Events profiled in month target 17/18	8.7	6.7	8.3	6.6	6.7	6.8	6.5	8.2	8.7	6.7	2.1	6.6			
COUNCIL TAX	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
In Year (%)	10.2%	19.5%	28.5%										28.5%	97.8%	
This years profiled target	10.2%	19.5%	28.6%	37.7%	46.9%	55.9%	65.4%	74.6%	83.7%	93.0%	95.7%	97.8%			
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	10.3%	19.6%	28.7%	37.9%	47.1%	56.1%	65.3%	74.5%	83.6%	92.9%	95.6%	97.8%			
Arrears Reduction (£m)	£3.6m	£3.4m	£3.4m										£3.4m	INFO	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	£3.3m	£3.2m	£3.1m	£3.0m	£2.9m	£2.8m	£2.8m	£2.7m	£2.7m	£2.6m	£2.5m	£2.4m			
NON DOMESTIC RATES	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
In Year (%)	10.0%	19.1%	32.0%										32.0%	99.0%	
This years profiled target	10.0%	20.3%	29.0%	38.7%	48.5%	57.2%	66.2%	75.5%	84.4%	92.7%	96.1%	99.0%			
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	10.6%	20.8%	29.0%	39.8%	47.4%	56.1%	66.3%	75.5%	84.2%	92.7%	95.8%	99.1%			
Arrears Reduction (£m)	£0.42m	£0.39m	£0.57m										£0.57m	INFO	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	£0.51m	£0.57m	£0.53m	£0.33m	£0.37m	£0.30m	£0.27m	£0.26m	£0.26m	£0.33m	£0.32m	£0.27m			
HOUSING BENEFIT DEBT	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
HB Overpayments outstanding at year end (Capita)	£1.3m	£1.3m	£1.2m										£1.2m	INFO	
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.4m	£1.3m	£1.3m	£1.4m	£1.3m	£1.3m	£1.3m	£1.3m	£1.3m	£1.3m			
HB Overpayments Recovered	4%	8%	11%										11%	34%	
This years profiled target	4%	8%	11%	16%	19%	20%	23%	24%	26%	29%	31%	34%			
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	4%	7%	10%	13%	16%	19%	21%	23%	25%	28%	30%	32%			
FRAUD	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
CTLS Sanctions gained	0	1	0										1	6	
This years profiled target	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0			
<i>Position for 2018/19</i>	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	2	10		

DWP Housing Benefit Subsidy impact – ‘Local Authority Error/ Time Delay’

HBBC	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Lower Threshold	£5,143	£9,969	£14,290									
Upper Threshold	£5,786	£11,215	£16,077									
Actual	£438	£1,197	£3,712									
Lower Tolerance	£4,705	£8,772	£10,578	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Upper Tolerance	£5,348	£10,018	£12,364	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
HDC	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Lower Threshold	£3,237	£6,585	£9,505									
Upper Threshold	£3,641	£7,296	£10,693									
Actual	£773	£777	£809									
Lower Tolerance	£2,463	£5,809	£8,695	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Upper Tolerance	£2,868	£6,519	£9,883	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
NWLDC	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Lower Threshold	£5,523	£10,998	£15,786									
Upper threshold	£6,213	£12,373	£17,760									
Actual	£2,625	£5,242	£8,838									
Lower Tolerance	£2,897	£5,757	£6,948	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Upper Tolerance	£3,588	£7,131	£8,922	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0

Sickness

Sickness for June is given below:

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council		Annual Target 8 days	
		Month	
		June	Cumulative
Long Term		0.00	12.00
Short Term		6.00	17.00
	Days lost	6.00	29.00
FTE Average		0.21 Days	0.79 Days
Profiled Target Average		0.67 Days	2.01 Days
Harborough District Council		Annual Target 9 days	
		Month	
		June	Cumulative
Long Term		0.00	15.00
Short Term		9.00	13.00
	Days lost	9.00	28.00
FTE Average		0.49 Days	1.52 Days
Profiled Target Average		0.75 Days	2.25 Days
North West Leicestershire District Council		Annual Target 8.5 days	
		Month	
		June	Cumulative
Long Term		12.26	12.26
Short Term		7.00	14.53
	Days lost	19.26	26.79
FTE Average		0.79 Days	1.10 Days
Profiled Target Average		0.71 Days	2.13 Days

Benefits Operational Team

Processing

All three authorities are meeting their respective targets for processing new claims and change events.

LA error and subsidy

All three authorities are meeting their respective targets to be below the lower threshold for LA error.

Discretionary Housing Payments

The Supreme Court has unanimously ruled that Birmingham City Council was wrong to make a finding of intentional homelessness where the applicant had failed to make up the shortfall between her housing benefit and total rent. The council decided that Ms Samuels was intentionally homeless, on the grounds that the accommodation in West Bromwich was affordable and that the main reason for the loss was the result of her deliberately failing to pay the full rent. In allowing the appeal the Court noted “the question was not whether, faced with that shortfall, she could somehow manage her finances to bridge the gap; but what were her reasonable living expenses (other than rent), that being determined having regard to both her needs and those of the children”.

It's clear the Courts are simply not going to allow Councils to make this argument that claimants should somehow cope....especially where there are children involved. Taking into account benefit income and therefore reducing a DHP award is going to be very difficult to justify.

Attachments

A government pilot scheme to recover unpaid council tax through earnings has recently started in 30 local authorities. HMRC will provide employment details for the debtor and thus allow deductions to be made from earnings. Its highly likely that the scheme will be rolled out in the future.

Revenues Operational Team

(Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments)

Council Tax

In year collection rates position is as follows:

Harborough	In month collection target: 29.8%	Actual:	29.6%
Hinckley & Bosworth	In month collection target: 29.4%	Actual:	29.2%
North West Leicestershire	In month collection target: 28.6%	Actual:	28.5%

35

This year we have:

	Volumes this month
• Issued 10,493 reminder notices	1,610
• Issued 4,778 magistrate court summonses	948
• Obtained 2,712 liability orders	1,613
• Passed 797 cases to DWP for attachment of benefits	255
• Passed 649 cases to employers for attachment of earnings	314
• Passed Nil cases to enforcement agent	Nil
• Issued 1,689 payment arrangements	658

Harborough	Current net collectable debit for 2019/20:	£64.18m
Hinckley & Bosworth	Current net collectable debit for 2019/20:	£68.71m
North West Leicestershire	Current net collectable debit for 2019/20:	£62.20m
Total collectable:		£195.09m

Council Tax Single Person Review

Data files have been validated with 3rd party supplier and where customers have confirmed that they are no longer living on their own the single person discount has been removed. There were 41 cases for Harborough, 45 for Hinckley & Bosworth and 65 cases for North West Leicestershire. We are awaiting the data sets for those cases that will need to be reviewed before the discount is removed it is envisaged there will be around 1,400 for all 3 Councils.

Council Tax Base/Forecasting

Tax base calculations have been extracted and shared with all 3 finance teams to monitor council tax collection funds.

Quarterly returns

QRC1 – in year collection central government return will be submitted next month.

Council tax monitoring spreadsheets will be shared with all finance teams and covers financial and position statements for net collectable debit, arrears, council tax support awarded and discretionary discount awards made.

Enforcement Agents

New cases will be passed next month to both Jacobs and Marston Holdings. New routines have been established with both agents for handling new cases, cases where changes have occurred, posting of income and returned cases.

Liaison meetings are to be arranged with both parties to monitor cases and performance on a quarterly basis

Empty Property Review

Preparations are on the way whereby the visiting team next month will be reviewing empty and second home properties. This is in preparation for central government CTB1 return due in October 2019.

NNDR (Business Rates)

In year collection rates position is as follows:

Harborough	In month collection target: 28.7%	Target exceeded: 28.9%
Hinckley & Bosworth	In month collection target: 29.9%	Target met: 29.9%
North West Leicestershire	In month collection target: 29.0%	Target exceeded: 32.0%

This year we have:

- Issued 835 reminder notices
- Issued 240 magistrate court summonses
- Obtained 108 liability orders
- Passed no cases to enforcement agent

Volumes this month:

143
70
108
Nil

37

Harborough	Current net collectable debit for 2019/20:	£46.09m
Hinckley & Bosworth	Current net collectable debit for 2019/20:	£34.23m
North West Leicestershire	Current net collectable debit for 2019/20:	£62.36m
Total Collectable:		£142.68m

Quarterly Returns

Each finance team has been provided with a position statement for quarter 1 regarding net collectable debit to include list of refunds made for valuation appeals.

In addition completion of data sets for both County Council and finance teams on forecast monitoring and pooling arrangements.

QRC1 – in year collection central government return will be submitted next month.

Enforcement Agents

New cases will be passed next month to both Jacobs and Marston Holdings. New routines have been established with both agents for handling new cases, records where changes have occurred, posting of income and returned cases.

Liaison meetings are to be arranged with both parties to monitor cases and performance on a quarterly basis.

Housing Benefit Overpayments

Harborough

- Debt raised this year £55,418
- Overall debt reduced by £87,638
- Collection rate against all debt (arrears and new) 9%
- Overall Debt stands at £857,976

Hinckley & Bosworth

- Debt raised this year £116,389
- Overall debt reduced by £144,748
- Collection rate against all debt (arrears and new) 9%
- Overall debt stands at £1.39m

North West Leicestershire

- Debt raised this year £126,326
- Overall debt reduced by £155,086
- Collection rate against all debt (arrears and new) 11%
- Overall debt stands at £1.24m

Channel Shift Analysis (Digital Service)

Tables below illustrate how customers are transacting online for setting up direct debits to include payment arrangements, council tax change of address as well as viewing their own records for council tax, housing benefit, council tax support and business rates.

HDC				
Service Subscriptions	April	May	June	
Application	Total No of Subscriptions			Increase since previous month
Council Tax Online	2408	2470	2540	132
Housing Benefit Online	193	198	200	7
Landlord Online	42	42	43	1
Business Rates Online	60	60	62	2
Ebiling & Enotifications				
Application	Total No of Subscriptions			
Council Tax Online	728	744	765	21
Business Rates Online	29	29	29	0
Landlord Online	24	24	24	0
Housing Benefit Online	78	80	80	0
				Total COA
Change of Address	29	44	46	315
DD over the Web				
Council Tax	246	207	153	
Business Rates	6	4	2	

HBBC				
Service Subscriptions				
	April	May	June	
Application	Total No of Subscriptions			Increase since previous month
Council Tax Online	4057	4190	4320	130
Housing Benefit Online	234	243	246	3
Landlord Online	81	82	83	1
Business Rates Online	70	72	76	4
Ebiling & Enotifications				
Application	Total No of Subscriptions			
Council Tax Online	1170	1249	1332	83
Business Rates Online	22	23	25	2
Landlord Online	24	24	25	1
Housing Benefit Online	88	95	96	1
				Total COA
Change of Address	75	86	123	449
DD over the Web				
Council Tax	226	213	217	
Business Rates	1	0	0	

NWL				
Service Subscriptions				
	April	May	June	
Application	Total No of Subscriptions			Increase since previous month
Council Tax Online	2381	2468	2518	50
Housing Benefit Online	250	253	257	4
Landlord Online	61	62	65	3
Business Rates Online	55	56	56	0
Ebiling & Enotifications				
Application	Total No of Subscriptions			
Council Tax Online	1422	1486	1518	32
Business Rates Online	34	34	34	0
Landlord Online	30	31	32	1
Housing Benefit Online	134	141	145	4
				Total COA
Change of Address	57	94	139	387
DD over the Web				
Council Tax	280	219	154	
Business Rates	2	0	0	

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FORWARD PLAN FOR JOINT COMMITTEE 2019-2020

Decision	Date of Decision (approx.)	Contacts
Universal Credit Update	5 September 2019	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Internal Audit Scoping Document	5 September 2019	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer
Performance Report	5 September 2019	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Financial Performance Report	5 September 2019	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer
Performance Report	21 November 2019	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Introduction to the Partnership	21 November 2019	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Financial Performance Report	21 November 2019	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer
Budget Setting Report	23 January 2020	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer
Financial Performance Report	23 January 2020	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer
Service Plan 2020/21	23 January 2020	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Performance Report	23 January 2020	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Financial Performance Report	23 April 2020	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer
Performance Report	23 April 2020	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Annual Meeting		
Schedule of meetings	25 June 2020	Clare Hammond – Democratic Support Officer
Year End Performance Report	25 June 2020	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership

Last update 14/06/19 – SOH

Decision	Date of Decision (approx.)	Contacts
Year End Financial Report	25 June 2020	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer