



## **SERVICE PLAN 2017/18**

# **The Leicestershire Partnership Revenues and Benefits**

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# 1 Councils' Aims and Priorities:



- Priority 1
- Priority 2
- Priority 3

## **Harborough District Council**

Working with Communities to develop places in which to live and be happy  
Provide public services which are effective and deliver value for money  
Encourage a vibrant and sustainable business community intent on prosperity, employment and learning opportunities



Hinckley & Bosworth  
Borough Council

*A Borough to be proud of*

- Aim 1
- Aim 2
- Aim 3
- Aim 4

## **\*Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council**

Creating a vibrant place to work and live  
Empowering Communities  
Supporting Individuals  
Providing Value for money and pro-active services

\*Please note HBBC's Corporate Plan and aims are currently being redrafted. This will be ratified at full Council in February. All Service Plans will then be aligned to the new aims once agreed.



- Priority 1
- Priority 2
- Priority 3
- Priority 4
- Priority 5

## **North West Leicestershire District Council**

Building confidence in Coalville  
Value for money  
Business and jobs  
Homes and Communities  
Green footprints

<b>OVERALL PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE</b>	To provide a high quality and secure Revenues and Benefits service to our residents and businesses at an economical cost and in accordance with the principles of continuous improvement and customer requirements.
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To assess and pay Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support accurately and, promptly.</li> <li>2) As part of our role to support DWP investigations into cases of alleged housing benefit fraud we will ensure all referrals are made in accordance with the requirements of the DWP.</li> <li>3) To investigate allegations of council tax support fraud and where proven to recommend the appropriate sanction..</li> <li>4) To support the implementation of UC for both live and full service-to include assisting the DWP with complex housing cost queries and to ensure the closure of the claim gateway to prevent duplication of claims.</li> <li>5) To issue accurate and prompt Council Tax and NNDR bills to maximise collection rates, and to deal appropriately with non payers to minimise arrears.</li> <li>6) To provide residents with a choice of how to engage with the service via access channels of their choice e.g. online, e-mail, letter, fax, telephone, face to face or home visit (where appropriate).</li> <li>7) To widely publicise the availability of all discounts, exemptions, reliefs and housing benefit, and to provide informed advice on all Revenues and Benefits matters. To periodically review all discounts and exemptions to ensure that the public purse is protected.</li> <li>8) To ensure that the service observes all statutory requirements including those governing the administration of Revenues and Benefits, Freedom of Information, Data Protection, Human Rights and Health and Safety.</li> <li>9) To adhere to our commitment to promote equality and diversity among our residents and staff.</li> <li>10) To provide and develop innovative facilities for all customers.</li> <li>11) To communicate and consult regularly with our customers and stakeholders, developing our</li> </ol>

	<p>services to meet their changing needs.</p> <p>12) To provide accurate and timely services for our external and internal customers.</p> <p>13) To maximise collection rates whilst having due regard to the difficulties faced by some customers in making their payments.</p> <p>14) Develop our services through well trained, empowered and committed staff who are proud to work for the Leicestershire Revenue and Benefits Service.</p> <p>15) To treat all our customers consistently and fairly.</p> <p>16) To provide Value for Money services by delivering both financial and processing efficiencies.</p>
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<b>Scope of services provided by the partnership</b>	
Council Tax Billing and Enforcement	Housing Benefit administration
NNDR Billing and Enforcement (including BIDs)	Council Tax Reduction Scheme Administration (Council Tax Support)
The investigation of Council Tax Support (CTS) Fraud	Housing Benefit Overpayment enforcement
Provision of customer support and guidance	Welfare advice and support
DWP Liaison in respect of Housing Benefit Fraud	Supporting the delivery of Universal Credit
To investigate CTS fraud and to support DWP investigations into HB fraud on behalf of O& WBC	The provision of revenues and benefits training for the partner and other LA's

### **3. National Agenda Items**

There are currently matters that need to be addressed during 2017 to meet key central government's legislative and operational changes that will be introduced.

The items are:

1. Universal Credit roll out programme
2. Welfare Reform

### **KEY PROJECTS**

In addition to the 'business as usual' projects we are currently working on a number of new projects during 2017/18

What does this mean	Key deliverables (Action)	Responsible Officer	Task/Milestones for 2017/18			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Current Capita server that support our key software applications needs to be replaced	Replace server for core revenues and benefits software applications	LB		New server fully tested then applied to live environment		
To meet new rules being imposed by Royal Mail from January 2018. If not undertaken it will mean that we will incur an additional fee for all unsorted mail	Correct postal addresses on each of our databases	LB			Addresses tidy exercise completed	
Liaison with DWP	Universal Credit	SC	Monitor impact	Monitor impact	Monitor impact	Monitor impact
Making Services available on the web for customers to self serve (Channel Shift)	Complete Channel Shift Modules	LB			All modules implemented	
Supporting Vulnerable Households	Continued support of households who are facing difficulty and unable to meet their Council Tax/Rent liability feel supported	SC	Monitor impact	Monitor impact	Monitor impact	Monitor impact

#### 4. **CUSTOMERS**

##### **Service Standards**

- The Leicestershire Partnership aims to demonstrate its commitment to equality, diversity and fairness by:
  - Providing services which are accessible to all and which meet customer needs. We do this by providing information in different languages, in large type or on tape or using British sign language where appropriate. We also offer visits to discuss any aspect of the service with customers and their advisors.
  - Promoting and demonstrating fairness and equality of opportunity in the employment of staff. This is achieved through a corporate approach to recruitment and staff retention that aims to be inclusive.
  - Being proactive in the promotion of equality and diversity with each council and all its operations.
  - Maintaining and improving turnaround times for new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support.



## 6 PERFORMANCE

Hinckley & Bosworth	End of Year Target 2017/18	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Council Tax in year collection rate	98%	11%	20%	29.30%	38.40%	48%	57.10%	66.30%	76%	85.10%	94.20%	96.50%	98%
Combined benefits performance	11	14.1	14.8	14.7	11	10.9	10.2	10.8	9.3	10.4	9.8	3.4	10.9
Successful fraud prosecution & sanctions	6	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
NNDR in year collection rate	98.30%	11.20%	20%	28.10%	37.10%	46.00%	55.00%	63.80%	73.00%	82.70%	92.00%	96.50%	98.30%
Housing Benefit overpayments collection rate	36%	5%	9%	15%	19%	23%	25%	27%	28%	30%	32%	34%	36%
Processing new claims	19	24	22	22.9	18.4	16.8	16.7	14.4	15	16.2	17.5	18.9	18.9
Processing of Change of Circumstances	9	13.5	13.7	13.2	9.8	9.8	9.1	10	8.2	9	8.6	2.5	9.4
Sickness Absence	TBC												

Harborough	End of Year Target 2017/18	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Council Tax in year collection rate	98.60%	11.30%	20.80%	29.90%	39.00%	48.30%	58%	67.90%	76.90%	86.10%	96.90%	98.40%	98.60%
Combined benefit performance	11	9.8	11.1	11.9	10.1	10.2	10.8	12	10.8	9.6	9.5	3	8
Number of successful fraud prosecution & sanctions	6	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
NNDR in year collection rate	99.20%	10.60%	19.60%	28.70%	37.60%	46.50%	56.50%	65.30%	74.10%	83.60%	92.40%	96.90%	99.20%
Housing Benefit overpayments collection rate	31%	3%	5%	8%	10%	13%	16%	18%	21%	24%	26%	28%	31%
Processing of new claims	19	20.6	22.6	20.9	18	16.7	18.9	19.3	19.3	19.1	19.2	19.1	19
Processing of Change of Circumstances	9	8.3	9.5	10.2	8.8	8.9	9.4	10.8	8.9	8.5	8.2	3	9
Sickness Absence	TBC												

North West Leicestershire	End of Year Target 2017/18	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Council Tax in year collection rate	97.60%	10.40%	19.50%	28.80%	38%	47.20%	56.40%	65.60%	75%	84.30%	93.70%	96%	97.60%
Combined benefits performance	11	14.9	15.5	15.1	11.5	10.6	9.9	11.1	8.6	10.1	10.2	3	8.3
Number of successful fraud prosecution & sanctions	6	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
NNDR in year collection rate	99%	11.00%	19.00%	31%	39%	47.30%	56.40%	65.60%	74.20%	82.40%	91%	96%	99%
Housing Benefit overpayments collection rate	34%	4%	4%	11%	16%	19%	20%	23%	24%	26%	29%	31%	34%
Processing of new claims	19	21	23	25.1	20.4	20.3	14.6	16.2	13.7	15.9	16.5	15.4	18.5
Processing of Change of Circumstances	9	13.6	14.3	13.3	10.3	9.1	9.2	10	7.7	8.6	8.9	2.4	6.6
Sickness Absence	TBC												

## **Risks**

It is our intention to manage our business risks in a consistent and cost-effective manner.

## **How?**

- Maintain a robust and consistent risk management approach that will identify and effectively manage strategic, operational, partnership and project risks
- Ensure accountabilities, roles and responsibilities for managing risks are clearly defined and communicated
- Consider risk as an integral part of service improvement planning, key decision making processes, and project and partnership governance
- Communicate risk information effectively through a clear reporting framework.
- Increase understanding and expertise in risk management through targeted training and the sharing of best practice.

Risk	Additional Mitigating Actions	Review comments	Last reviewed	Owner
<u>Insufficient Business Continuity arrangements/plans</u>	<u>Business continuity plans developed to ensure minimum resources are available to deliver services</u> <u>Risk Assessment to prioritise resource against priority/critical services using generic corporate risk assessment</u>	Information provided monthly to the partnership management board	Dec-16	MB
<u>Reduced benefit subsidy as a result of a high level of error within the work sampled</u>	Extend the quality checking measures within benefits Refresher training on those areas that were highlighted by the subsidy audit.	QA procedures revised to focus on earnings	Jan-17	SC
Impact of loss of Business rate income (closure of large business , impact of appeals, fluctuations in rating list)	<u>Review and report to stakeholders monthly/quarterly</u>	Finance teams receive monthly detailed analysis	Dec-16	SWL
High levels of sickness absence within the partnership	<u>Continue to set absence targets and monitor against targets. Use of preceptors admin grant funding to secure additional resources.</u>	Information provided monthly to the partnership	Dec-16	Operational Managers
Failure to bring in projects on time	Effective project management and forward planning of available resources.	Monthly update report provided to partnership management board	Dec-16	LB

