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Harborough District Council,

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council,

North West Leicestershire District Council,

Working in Partnership to provide better services...

Meeting Committee

Leicestershire Partnership Revenues & Benefits Joint

Time/Date

3.30 pm on Thursday, 6 JULY 2023

Location

North West Leicestershire District council

Officer to contact

Rebecca Valentine-Wilkinson

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Councillor P Beadle
Councillor S Bray
Councillor M Graves

Councillor K Lynch
Councillor A Woodman
Councillor M Wyatt

Recording of meetings

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.

We also allow the use of social media during meetings, which helps to bring the issues discussed to a wider audience.

Use of mobile phones

To minimise disturbance to others attending the meeting, please switch off your phone or other mobile device or turn it onto silent or vibrate mode.

Thank you

**LEICESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP REVENUES & BENEFITS JOINT COMMITTEE -
6 JULY 2023**

A G E N D A

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

To appoint a chair and vice-chair for the 2023/24 municipal year.

In accordance with the constitution of the Joint Committee, the chair will be a member of North West Leicestershire District Council and the vice-chair will be a member of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive and note any apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Under the code of conduct members are reminded that in declaring interests they should make clear the nature of that interest and whether it is a disclosble pecuniary interest, registrable interest or other interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 1 - 4)

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.

5. YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT (Pages 5 - 14)

To present the performance information for 2022/23.

6. YEAR END FINANCIAL REPORT (Pages 15 - 20)

To inform members of the financial performance of the partnership for the year to 31 March 2023.

7. PERFORMANCE REPORT MAY 2023 (Pages 21 - 30)

To present the latest performance information.

8. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT (Pages 31 - 42)

To present the council tax and business rates internal audit report.

9. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2023/24 (Pages 43 - 46)

To inform the Joint Committee of the proposed targets for the partnership for 2023/24.

10. PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2023/24 (Pages 47 - 50)

To agree meeting dates for 2023/24.

11. FORWARD PLAN (Pages 51 - 52)

To note the joint committee's forward plan.

12. MATTERS FROM WHICH THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED

To consider the passing of a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 excluding the public from the undermentioned item of business on the grounds

that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 10 (the public interest test) of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act.

13. **FUTURE OF THE PARTNERSHIP (Verbal Report)**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP REVENUES & BENEFITS JOINT COMMITTEE

19 JANUARY 2023 AT 3.30 PM

PRESENT: Cllr P Dann - Chairman
Cllr R D Bayliss – Vice-Chairman

Cllr KWP Lynch

Officers in attendance: Andy Barton, Sophia Baldwin, Carolyn Bland, Julie Kenny, Sally O'Hanlon, Rebecca Valentine-Wilkinson and Ashley Wilson

28. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor DC Bill, and Councillor Ashman.

29. **Declarations of interest**

No interests were declared at this meeting.

30. **Minutes of previous meeting**

It was moved by Councillor Bayliss, seconded by Councillor Dann and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

31. **Budget Setting**

The draft budget was presented for 2023/24.

In response to a question from members around other contributors, it was confirmed that the BID areas were also making contributions to the scheme.
It was

RESOLVED - the 2023/24 budget proposals for the Partnership were approved.

32. **Financial Performance Report**

The report presented the financial performance of the Partnership for the period April to December 2022 and it was confirmed that the budget showed an underspend on the current year. A further report would be submitted to this committee at the July meeting with the final financial position and what to do with the savings over the coming year. It was

RESOLVED – the financial performance report be noted.

33. **Service Plan**

The report presented the service plan 2023/24 for the three Local Authorities within the Partnership.

Better use of IT along with automated systems was an objective for the Partnership and those projects were already underway looking at alternative methods not requiring human intervention.

A number of risks were also identified within the report and this included the effects of the cost of living crisis on collection and increase in benefit claims. The Head of Partnership confirmed they would continue to promote the availability of council tax support and discretionary discounts to mitigate these issues.

In response to a question from members around their concern for self service options, it was confirmed that although some people wanted digital options of choice there were still those vulnerable people that would require help and support and there would still be options for staff to be able to provide this support. It was

RESOLVED – the service plan report be noted.

34. **Performance Report**

This report provided data from April to November 2022 on the performance of the Partnership.

It was confirmed that there was an increase in caseload, with no budget for additional staffing and there were already significant issues with recruitment to the team.

In addition the Partnership was expecting two new schemes coming into effect (“Alternative Energy” and “Alternative Funding”) and these schemes would also have significant impact on resources. It was

RESOLVED – the performance report be noted.

35. **Forward Plan**

Members discussed the forward plan. It was

RESOLVED – the forward plan be noted.

36. **Dates of future meetings**

Members discussed the dates and venues for future meetings and it was

RESOLVED – the dates and venues of future meetings be noted.

37. **Matters from which the public may be excluded**

38. **Confidential item**

The Head of Partnership provided an update. It was

RESOLVED – the verbal update be noted.

(The Meeting closed at 4.08 pm)

CHAIRMAN

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Revenue and Benefit Service

Performance Report
March 2023

Caseload Analysis

Caseload Data													
Position at:	Position at 31/3/19	2018/19 In Year Movement	Position at 31/3/20	2019/20 In Year Movement	Position at 31/3/21	2020/21 In Year Movement	Position at 31/3/22	2021/22 In Year Movement	2022/23			Overall Movement since April 2011	
									Current Position	In Year Movement	In Year Percentage Movement		
Banded Council Tax Dwellings													
HBBC	50,359	453	50,601	242	50,852	251	51,232	380	51,764	532	1.0%	5,592	10.8%
HDC	39,739	650	40,532	793	41,554	1,022	42,590	1,036	43,528	938	2.2%	7,605	17.5%
NWLDC	44,940	733	45,564	624	46,277	713	47,189	912	48,028	839	1.8%	8,002	16.7%
Totals	135,038		136,697		138,683			Current Total:	143,320			Total Movement:	21,199
NDR Rated Assessments									Current Position	In Year Movement	In Year Percentage		
HBBC	3,181	19	3,179	-2	3,224	45	3,262	38	3,298	36	1.10%	422	12.8%
HDC	3,086	46	3,123	37	3,189	66	3,246	57	3,277	31	0.96%	661	20.2%
NWLDC	3,440	23	3,519	79	3,563	44	3,554	-9	3,589	35	0.98%	407	11.3%
Totals	9,707		9,821		9,976			Current Total:	10,164			Total Movement:	1,490
HB/CTLS Live Caseload									Current Caseload	In Year Movement	Caseload %		
HBBC	5,579	-204	5,321	-258	5,257	-64	5,257	-260	5,202	-55		-1,898	-36.1%
					Current Caseload Analysis	Joint HB/CTS		1,892	1,835	-57	36%		
						HB only		301	287	-14	6%		
						CTS only		3,019	3,080	61	58%		
HDC	3,243	-145	3,185	-58	3,210	25	3,210	-198	3,076	-134		-1,113	-36.2%
					Current Caseload Analysis	Joint HB/CTS		1,322	1,233	-89	41%		
						HB only		196	173	-23	6%		
						CTS only		1,692	1,670	-22	53%		
NWLDC	5,413	-283	5,118	-295	4,964	-154	4,964	-312	4,972	8		-2,215	-44.5%
					Current Caseload Analysis	Joint HB/CTS		2,100	2,069	-31	43%		
						HB only		206	197	-9	4%		
						CTS only		2,655	2,706	51	53%		
Totals	14,235		13,624			Current Total:			13,250			Total Movement:	-5,226

Leicestershire Partnership - Revenues and Benefits Performance Indicators

Harborough District Council													2022/23	Year -End 2022/23 target
BENEFITS	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Cumulative	
In month: Right Time (days)	6.9	7.1	8.9	7.3	5.3	9.4	10.5	9.6	7.1	10.7	3.3	8	7.8	6
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	12.3	10.9	12.3	7.8	7.1	7.4	5.9	6.6	6.1	7.5	2.1	4.9		
In month: New Claims (Days)	14.7	13.9	16.1	15.5	11.9	17.1	20.5	18.9	13.5	24.2	15	19.1	16.7	15
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	16.8	19.3	15.9	12.0	12.4	17.1	14.0	15.2	14.0	14.0	10.5	12.4		
In month: Change Events (Days)	5.5	6.5	8.1	5.5	4.2	8.1	8.3	7.5	5.7	7.7	2.5	6	6.3	6
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	9.3	10.1	12.0	7.2	6.2	6.1	5.1	5.6	4.5	6.2	1.6	3.9		
Right Time profiled in month target 20/21	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 20/21	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 20/21	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 (%)	10.8%	20.0%	29.2%	38.2%	47.2%	56.4%	65.7%	74.9%	83.7%	92.8%	95.9%	98.3%	98.3%	98.1%
This years profiled target														
<i>Position for 2019/20</i>	11.1%	20.4%	29.6%	38.9%	48.1%	57.4%	66.8%	75.8%	84.7%	93.8%	96.3%	98.4%		
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	10.9%	19.8%	28.9%	38.0%	47.1%	56.3%	65.4%	74.5%	83.5%	92.5%	95.5%	98.1%		
Arrears Reduction (£m) end of month	£3.2m	£3.1m	£3.0m	£2.9m	£2.8m	£2.7m	£2.7m	£2.6m	£2.6m	£2.4m	£2.3m	£2.2m	£2.2m	INFO
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	£3.3m	£3.0m	£2.9m	£2.8m	£2.7m	£2.6m	£2.5m	£2.4m	£2.4m	£2.3m	£2.2m	£2.1m		
NON DOMESTIC RATES	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In Year (%)	9.5%	18.5%	28.4%	37.7%	47.2%	56.6%	64.7%	73.5%	78.3%	85.0%	88.1%	98.6%	98.6%	99.2%
This years profiled target														
<i>Position for 2019/20</i>	10.2%	19.2%	28.9%	39.0%	47.5%	56.8%	65.8%	74.5%	82.9%	92.4%	96.0%	99.1%		
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	8.3%	16.5%	24.2%	33.5%	42.7%	52.2%	61.4%	72.6%	81.4%	89.8%	95.0%	99.2%		
Arrears Reduction (£m) end of month	£1.4m	£0.71m	£0.69m	£0.68m	£0.59m	£0.57m	£0.83m	£0.81m	£1.7m	£2.2m	£2.1m	£0.79m	£0.79m	INFO
<i>Position for 2020/21</i>	£3.4m	£3.1m	£2.7m	£2.6m	£2.1m	£1.6m	£1.2m	£0.49m	£0.44m	£0.57m	£0.49m	£0.46m		
HOUSING BENEFIT DEBT	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
HB Overpayments outstanding	£0.75m	£0.75m	£0.75m	£0.76m	£0.74m	£0.74m	£0.73m	£0.74m	£0.74m	£0.74m	£0.75m	0.75m	£0.75m	INFO
<i>Position for 2020/21 (£m)</i>	£0.76m	£0.74m	£0.74m	£0.75m	£0.75m	£0.75m	£0.75m	£0.75m	£0.74m	£0.75m	£0.76m	£0.75m		
HB Overpayments Recovered end of month	1%	3%	4%	6%	10%	11%	12%	13%	13%	14%	14%	15%	15%	31%
This year sprofiled target														
<i>Position for 2020/21</i>	2%	5%	6%	9%	11%	12%	13%	16%	17%	19%	20%	27%		
FRAUD	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
CTLS Sanctions gained	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	6
This years profiled target														
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council													Cumulative 2022/23	Year-End 2022/23 Target
BENEFITS	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In month: Right Time (days)	6.5	6.9	8.7	6.9	6	9.3	9.3	9.7	7.6	10.8	3	9.1	7.8	6
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	11.0	10.7	12.5	8.7	7.6	7.1	5.6	6.4	6.0	7.9	2.1	5.7		
In month: New Claims (Days)	15.4	14.8	14.8	14.0	12.3	18.9	18.9	20.1	17.3	22.8	15.2	16.5	16.7	15
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	21.5	19.8	15.4	12.7	14.4	17.1	13.5	15.4	10.2	13.2	10.1	11.6		
In month: Change Events (Days)	5.4	6.1	7.9	5.4	4.8	7.4	7.3	7.2	5.0	8.5	2.2	7.2	6.2	6
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	9.3	9.7	12.3	8.1	6.4	5.4	4.7	5.4	5.3	6.7	1.7	4.6		
Right Time profiled in month target 20/21	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 20/21	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 20/21	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 (%)	10.6%	19.7%	28.8%	37.8%	47.0%	56.2%	65.5%	74.6%	83.5%	92.60%	95.40%	97.70%	97.7%	97.6%
This years profiled target														
<i>Position for 2019/20</i>	10.9%	20.1%	29.2%	38.5%	47.6%	57.1%	66.3%	75.4%	84.6%	93.6%	96.0%	97.9%		
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	10.7%	19.7%	28.8%	37.9%	47.0%	56.2%	65.4%	74.5%	83.4%	92.5%	95.2%	97.5%		
In Year Arrears Reduction (£) end of month	£5.2m	£5.0m	£4.9m	£4.7m	£4.5m	£4.5m	£4.4m	£4.4m	£4.3m	£4.3m	£4.1m	£4.1m	£4.1m	INFO
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	£4.8m	£4.6m	£4.5m	£4.4m	£4.2m	£4.1m	£4.1m	£4.0m	£3.9m	£3.8m	£3.7m	£3.5m		
NON DOMESTIC RATES	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In Year (%)	10.4%	18.9%	26.2%	37.1%	46.0%	55.8%	64.5%	75.1%	83.7%	92.3%	95.1%	98.1%	98.1%	98.8%
This years profiled target														
<i>Position for 2019/20</i>	11.9%	20.6%	29.9%	38.9%	48.4%	57.9%	66.7%	75.2%	84.3%	93.5%	96.6%	98.5%		
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	10.8%	19.9%	26.2%	35.1%	43.8%	51.6%	58.8%	67.2%	76.1%	85.6%	94.0%	97.3%		
Arrears Reduction (£m) end of month	£1.3m	£1.3m	£2.3m	£2.2m	£1.4m	£1.3m	£0.72m	£0.67m	£0.63m	£0.62m	£0.56m	£0.55m	£0.55m	INFO
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	£2.9m	£2.8m	£2.3m	£2.2m	£2.1m	£2.0m	£2.0m	£1.7m	£2.0m	£0.78m	£0.78m	£0.76m		
HOUSING BENEFIT DEBT	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
HB Overpayments outstanding end of month	£1.1m	£1.1m	£1.1m	£1.1m	£1.1m	£1.1m	£1.1m	INFO						
<i>Position for 2021/22 £m</i>	£1.1m	£1.1m	£1.2m	£1.1m	£1.1m	£1.1m								
HB Overpayments Recovered	2%	4%	5%	6%	7%	8%	11%	12%	13%	14%	14%	15%	15%	36%
This years profiled target														
<i>Position for 2020/21</i>	2%	3%	6%	9%	10%	12%	13%	15%	17%	18%	21%	23%		
FRAUD	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
CTLS Sanctions gained	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	9	6
This years profiled target														
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0		

North West Leicestershire District Council													2022/23	Year End 2022/23 target
BENEFITS	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In month: Right Time (days)	7.0	6.9	9.2	6.8	5.5	9.2	9.2	10.1	9.4	11.2	2.9	10.5	8.0	6
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	13.0	11.1	12.1	8.7	8.0	7.2	6.1	6.6	7.7	7.7	2.2	5.2		
In month: New Claims (Days)	15.4	13.9	17.2	15.2	12.6	20.4	21.2	18.8	20.2	24	15.3	18.8	17.8	15
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	21.2	19.7	19.2	13.1	15.1	14.5	14.6	15.2	17.0	14.6	9.4	11.7		
In month: Change Events (Days)	5.8	6.2	8.3	5.1	4.5	7.1	7.0	8.0	6.5	7.8	2	7.9	6.3	6
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	11.8	10.3	11.5	8.1	6.8	6.0	5.2	5.5	5.8	6.5	1.9	4.2		
Right Time profiled in month target 20/21	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 20/21	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 20/21	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 (%)	10.0%	19.1%	28.1%	37.1%	46.1%	55.1%	64.2%	73.4%	82.3%	91.4%	94.5%	97.2%	97.2%	97.3%
This years profiled target														
<i>Position for 2019/20</i>	10.2%	19.5%	28.5%	38.0%	47.0%	56.0%	65.4%	74.5%	83.7%	92.7%	95.4%	97.6%		
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	10.3%	19.3%	28.2%	37.1%	46.1%	55.2%	64.2%	73.4%	82.4%	91.2%	94.2%	96.9%		
Arrears Reduction (£m) end of month	£6.2m	£5.6m	£5.5m	£5.3m	£5.2m	£5.1m	£5.0m	£4.9m	£4.9m	£4.7m	£4.4m	£5.0m	£5.0m	INFO
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	£5.4m	£5.2m	£5.1m	£5.0m	£4.7m	£4.6m	£4.5m	£4.4m	£4.3m	£4.3m	£4.1m	£4.0m		
NON DOMESTIC RATES	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In Year (%)	10.0%	18.5%	28.1%	37.9%	46.2%	55.4%	64.4%	73.5%	82.3%	91.3%	95.6%	99.1%	99.1%	99.0%
This years profiled target														
<i>Position for 2019/20</i>	10.0%	19.1%	32.0%	40.4%	48.3%	57.8%	65.7%	74.0%	84.1%	92.5%	96.5%	99.2%		
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	9.3%	18.4%	25.9%	35.3%	43.1%	51.5%	59.8%	68.0%	74.8%	85.8%	93.2%	98.5%		
Arrears Reduction (£m) end of month	£1.7m	£1.1m	£1.2m	£1.1m	£1.0m	£0.98m	£0.85m	£0.85m	£0.71m	£0.58m	£0.42m	£0.51m	£0.51m	INFO
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	£2.5m	£4.3m	£3.9m	£3.2m	£4.6m	£4.3m	£4.5m	£2.7m	£2.6m	£2.4m	£1.84m	£0.39m		
HOUSING BENEFIT DEBT	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
HB Overpayments outstanding end of month	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.3m	£1.3m	£1.3m	INFO
<i>Position for 2021/22 (£m)</i>	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m		
HB Overpayments Recovered	5%	10%	11%	14%	14%	16%	17%	18%	19%	20%	21%	21%	21%	34%
This years profiled target														
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	1%	3%	5%	7%	8%	9%	10%	11%	12%	13%	14%	15%		
FRAUD	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
CTLS Sanctions gained	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	6
This years profiled target														
<i>Position for 2021/22</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		

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

HBBC	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
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Lower Threshold	£4,388	£10,345	£14,448	£18,945	£23,188	£27,574	£31,605	£36,028	£40,476	£44,518	£48,427	£52,405
Upper Threshold	£4,936	£11,638	£16,254	£21,313	£26,086	£31,021	£35,555	£40,531	£45,535	£50,083	£54,480	£58,956
Actual	£719	£941	£1,965	£2,180	£3,972	£5,674	£5,983	£6,425	£6,498	£6,877	£8,442	£8,875
Lower Tolerance	£3,669	£9,404	£12,483	£16,765	£19,216	£21,900	£25,621	£29,603	£33,977	£37,641	£39,985	£43,530
Upper Tolerance	£4,218	£10,697	£14,289	£19,133	£22,114	£25,347	£29,572	£34,106	£39,037	£43,206	£46,038	£50,080

HDC	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Lower Threshold	£2,722	£7,657	£10,478	£13,217	£16,119	£19,068	£21,901	£24,900	£27,633	£30,288	£33,084	£35,775
Upper Threshold	£3,063	£8,615	£11,787	£14,869	£18,134	£21,451	£24,638	£28,012	£31,088	£34,074	£37,219	£40,247
Actual	£9	£197	£43	£43	£51	£291	£42	£47	£47	£116	£994	£1,333
Lower Tolerance	£2,713	£7,460	£10,435	£13,174	£16,068	£18,776	£21,859	£24,852	£27,586	£30,172	£32,090	£34,442
Upper Tolerance	£3,053	£8,418	£11,744	£14,826	£18,083	£21,160	£24,596	£27,965	£31,040	£33,958	£36,225	£38,914

NWLDC	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Lower Threshold	£4,264	£8,281	£14,418	£18,921	£22,850	£27,279	£31,315	£35,315	£38,725	£42,582	£46,421	£50,242
Upper threshold	£4,797	£9,316	£16,221	£21,287	£25,706	£30,689	£35,229	£39,730	£43,565	£47,905	£52,223	£56,522
Actual	£48	£5,135	£5,747	£6,118	£5,949	£9,308	£9,422	£9,728	£9,781	£13,852	£26,782	£32,884
Lower Tolerance	£4,216	£3,146	£8,672	£12,803	£16,901	£17,971	£21,892	£25,587	£28,944	£28,730	£19,638	£17,358
Upper Tolerance	£4,749	£4,181	£10,474	£15,169	£19,757	£21,381	£25,807	£30,001	£33,785	£34,053	£25,441	£23,638

Government Initiatives

Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF) and the Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP) scheme

Following the governments announcements of support to those households who do not have a direct relationship with a domestic energy supplier or those who use alternative fuel it is becoming increasingly obvious that verifying entitlement is significantly more complex than originally anticipated. We have also seen changes made to the guidance and have asked the Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for clarification on a number of questions regarding eligibility. Of significant risk to the Council is the fact that if payments are made incorrectly then they will not be reimbursed for the amount paid out, therefore if there are any concerns around eligibility then these will not be paid until the evidence has been provided.

Annual Billing 2023/2024

The project has been completed and in line with the timetable both the business rate and council tax bills will start to be issued early March.

Projects

There are three projects currently being worked on:

- Automation of unpaid and amendments to direct debits for both council tax and non-domestic rate. This will remove the need for manual intervention in the majority of cases.
- Council tax refunds automation
- Migration of printed correspondence to the mailing house. This will negate the need for any manual packing of documents

Benefits Operational Team
(Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Fraud)

Speed of Processing

When published speed of processing indicators are rounded and on this basis each of the three LA's have met their target for processing 'change events'. All three LAs were marginally behind the target for processing new claims.

State Pension Age

The State Pension Age Review has now been published and the Government has confirmed the State Pension age will rise to 67 by the end of 2028. It is believed that the Government plans to have a further review within two years of the next Parliament to reconsider the rise to age 68. It is anticipated that the spend on state pension and benefits will be £245bn in 2022/2023

Revenues Operational Team
(Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments)

Collection Rates

Council Tax

It is pleasing to report that both Harborough and Hinckley & Bosworth exceeded their council tax collection targets and North West Leicestershire were only 0.1% behind in matching performance for the previous year. Given the difficulties that households are sadly facing in the cost of living crisis performance is to be applauded.

Business Rates

Collection of business rates has been particularly challenging this year brought about by the increasing energy costs that the majority of businesses are facing and in the case of Harborough District in January 2023 we were faced with a significant increase in the debit brought about by the inclusion in the rating list of an industrial unit with an RV of £2.1m

LA	Target	Actual Performance	% behind target	What does this mean in monetary terms(O/S)	Largest debt
HBBC	98.8%	98.1%	0.7%	£259,149	[REDACTED]
HDC	99.2%	98.6%	0.6%	£303,409	[REDACTED]
NWLDC	99.0%	99.1% (exceeded)	N/A		

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Leicestershire Partnership Revenues & Benefits

Financial Performance to March 2023 (Final Outturn)

Joint Committee

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Joint Committee of the financial performance of the Partnership for the year to 31 March 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. That the Joint Committee:
- a) note the financial performance of the Partnership, and
 - b) Approve that earmarked reserves are increased as noted at paragraph 3.4 below.

3. INFORMATION

Budget Position

- 3.1. The financial position of the Partnership for the year is at **Appendix 1** to this report. The key headlines have been detailed below for information.
- 3.2. As at 31 March 2023, the Partnership had a net underspend on the budget of £138,135. There may be some changes as part of the year end close process.

Table 1	Budget to 31 March 2023	Actual to 31 March 2023	Variance to Date	Year End Variance
INCOME AND RESERVES	(£3,893,880)	(£3,882,179)	£11,701	£11,701
EXPENDITURE	£3,893,880	£3,744,044	(£149,836)	(£149,836)
Over / (Under) Spent	£0	(£138,135)	(£138,135)	(£138,135)

- 3.3 The key variances to the end of March 2023 to bring to the attention of the Joint Committee are:

- Salaries are underspend by £100,000 due to vacant posts.
- Premises savings of £37,000 due to the move to the Hinckley Hub
- Car allowances underspend £7,000 and Printing underspend £10,000.
- Use of reserves to cover It automation costs £14,000.

- 3.4 There is a year-end underspend overall of £138,135. Future pressures are the need to invest in Automation to make savings, with associated ICT requirements, and the and movement to a single employer status. Therefore it is recommended that the surplus is added to earmarked reserves to allow these projects to be progressed and adequately funded. This would require a transfer to earmarked reserves of the following:

- Review on Automation £50,000
- ICT Reserve £38,135
- Single employer project management £50,000

Reserves

- 3.5 Table 2 and 3 give a breakdown of reserves, after proposed transfers at the end of 2023, which total £355,369. The joint committee has agreed to keep £50,000 as a general balance, with the rest moved to earmarked reserves.

Table 2: Reserves	General	Earmarked	Total
Balance b/fwd from 2021/22	£50,000	£181,234	£231,234
Review on Automation		-£14,000	-£14,000
Carry forwards used in 2022/23	£0		£0
Underspend in year	£138,135		£138,135
Transfer to Reserves	-£138,135	£138,135	£0
Closing Balance 2022/23	£50,000	£305,369	£355,369

Table 3: Earmarked Reserves at 31/03/2023	Opening	Transfers out	Transfers In	Closing
Review on Automation	£25,000	-£14,000	£50,000	£61,000
Agency Cost Back Fill	£40,000			£40,000
Transfer to FERIS Reserve	£44,626			£44,626
ICT Reserve - ICT Kit & Server	£22,592		£38,135	£60,727
Single employer project management costs	£49,016		£50,000	£99,016
Total	£181,234	-£14,000	£138,135	£305,369

- 3.6 Without these reserves and the proposed actions in terms of Single employer status, automation, with associated IT pressures, then these pressures would have to be invoiced for on top of the current expected contributions. The earmarked reserves help to protect from partners general fund position from these future costs.

Appendix 1: Leicestershire Revenues & Benefits Partnership Monitoring Report to 31st March 2023

Expenditure / Income Type	2022/23 Latest Budget to Date	Actual to Date	Variance after Timing Differences		2022/23 Total Estimate (Original)		2022/23 Total Estimate (Revised)
	£	£	£		£		£
Employees	2,826,560	2,724,649	101,911		2,698,460		2,698,460
Premises Related Expenditure	98,220	61,329	36,891		97,220		97,220
Transport Related Expenditure	15,000	7,789	7,211		20,000		20,000
Supplies & Services	922,900	919,790	3,110		853,190		853,190
Central & Administrative Exp	31,200	30,488	712		31,200		31,200
Revenue Income	-3,893,880	-3,868,179	-25,701		-3,700,070		-3,700,070
Use of Reserves to Cover Automation Costs		-14,000	14,000		0		0
Sum:	0	-138,135	138,135		0		0

Explanations

	Variance at 31/03/23(Over) / Under Spend £	Explanation £5k+
Salaries	100,000	After allowing for Large pay award the underspend is due to vacant posts which are currently being appointed to
Training & Other Employee costs	2,000	Variance > £5k
Premises Related Expenditure	37,000	Savings as a result of moving to the Hub
Car Allowances	7,000	Fewer Miles being done than previously anticipated
Computer Software Maintenance & Upgrade	-15,000	£6k cost of Ascendant CARF software application not covered original budget, £14k Cost of Digital Eclaim to be covered by reserve
Printing & Stationery	10,000	Costs lower than anticipated
Audit Fees (Additional Fees)	-37,000	Additional Audit Fees incurred relating to Grant verifications
Postages	7,000	Postage costs lower than anticipated due to lower volumes and posting unit costs have not increased as much as anticipated
Liability Expenses	27,000	The Courts have reduced the summons cost fee per case
Subscriptions	5,000	Variance > £5k
Flexible working	3,000	Variance > £5k
Minor Variances	3,000	Other Minor Variances
Central & Administrative Exp	1,000	Variance > £5k
Contributions	-26,000	There is a direct link between partner contributions and expenditure incurred and therefore partner contributions have been adjusted to reflect the actual expenditure to date.
Use if Reserves	14,000	to cover cost of Automation
	138,000	

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Revenue and Benefit Service

Performance Report May 2023

Caseload Analysis

Caseload Data															
Position at:	Position at 31/3/19	2018/19 In Year Movement	Position at 31/3/20	2019/20 In Year Movement	Position at 31/3/21	2020/21 In Year Movement	Position at 31/3/22	2021/22 In Year Movement	Position at 31/3/23	2022/23 In Year Movement	2023/24				
											Current Position	In Year Movement	In Year Percentage Movement		
Banded Council Tax Dwellings															
HBBC	50,359	453	50,601	242	50,852	251	51,232	380	51,764	532	51,834	70	1.2%		
HDC	39,739	650	40,532	793	41,554	1,022	42,590	1,036	43,528	938	43,698	170	2.6%		
NWLDC	44,940	733	45,564	624	46,277	713	47,189	912	48,028	839	48,108	80	1.9%		
Totals	135,038		136,697		138,683			Current Total:	143,320	4,637	143,640				
NDR Rated Assessments											Current Position		Current Position	In Year Movement	In Year Percentage
HBBC	3,181	19	3,179	-2	3,224	45	3,262	38	3,298	36	3,298	0	1.10%		
HDC	3,086	46	3,123	37	3,189	66	3,246	57	3,277	31	3,274	-3	0.86%		
NWLDC	3,440	23	3,519	79	3,563	44	3,554	-9	3,589	35	3,580	-9	0.73%		
Totals	9,707		9,821		9,976			Current Total:	10,164	188	10,152				
HB/CTLS Live Caseload											Current Caseload		Current Caseload	In Year Movement	Caseload %
HBBC	5,579	-204	5,321	-258	5,257	-64	5,257	-260	5,249		5,225	-24			
					Current Caseload Analysis	Joint HB/CTS	1,892	1,836			1,822	-14	35%		
						HB only	301	300			283	-17	5%		
						CTS only	3,019	3,113			3,120	101	60%		
HDC	3,243	-145	3,185	-58	3,210	25	3,210	-198	3,076		3,103	27			
					Current Caseload Analysis	Joint HB/CTS	1,322	1,233			1,235	2	40%		
						HB only	196	173			166	-7	5%		
						CTS only	1,692	1,670			1,702	32	55%		
NWLDC	5,413	-283	5,118	-295	4,964	-154	4,964	-312	4,972		4,951	-21			
					Current Caseload Analysis	Joint HB/CTS	2,100	2,069			2,065	-4	42%		
						HB only	206	197			190	-7	4%		
						CTS only	2,655	2,706			2,696	-10	54%		
Totals	14,235		13,624			Current Total:			13,297		13,279				

Leicestershire Partnership - Revenues and Benefits Performance Indicators

Harborough District Council													2023/24	Year - End 2023/24 target
BENEFITS	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Cumulative	
In month: Right Time (days)	8.8	10.2											9.5	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	6.9	7.1	8.9	7.3	5.3	9.4	10.5	9.6	7.1	10.7	3.3	8	7.8	6
In month: New Claims (Days)	22.1	21.8											21.9	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	14.7	13.9	16.1	15.5	11.9	17.1	20.5	18.9	13.5	24.2	15	19.1	16.7	15
In month: Change Events (Days)	7.2	8.6											7.2	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	5.5	6.5	8.1	5.5	4.2	8.1	8.3	7.5	5.7	7.7	2.5	6	6.3	6
COUNCIL TAX	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In Year (%)	10.6%	19.7%											19.7%	
Profiled target (based on 22/23)	10.8%	20.0%	29.2%	38.2%	47.2%	56.4%	65.7%	74.9%	83.7%	92.8%	95.9%	98.3%	98.3%	98.1%
Arrears Reduction (£m) end of month	£3.5m	£3.4m												
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	£3.2m	£3.1m	£3.0m	£2.9m	£2.8m	£2.7m	£2.7m	£2.6m	£2.6m	£2.4m	£2.3m	£2.2m	£2.2m	
NON DOMESTIC RATES	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In Year (%)	7.9%	15.9%											15.9%	99.2%
Profiled target (based on 22/23)	9.5%	18.5%	28.4%	37.7%	47.2%	56.6%	64.7%	73.5%	78.3%	85.0%	88.1%	98.6%	98.6%	99.2%
Arrears Reduction (£m) end of month	£2.1m	£1.7m												
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	£1.4m	£0.71m	£0.69m	£0.68m	£0.59m	£0.57m	£0.83m	£0.81m	£1.7m	£2.2m	£2.1m	£0.79m	£0.79m	
HOUSING BENEFIT DEBT	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
HB Overpayments outstanding	£0.75m	£0.77m											£0.77m	
<i>Position for 2022/23 (£m)</i>	£0.75m	£0.75m	£0.75m	£0.76m	£0.74m	£0.74m	£0.73m	£0.74m	£0.74m	£0.74m	£0.75m	0.75m	£0.75m	
HB Overpayments Recovered end of month	2%	3%											3%	
Profiled target (based on 22/23)	1%	3%	4%	6%	10%	11%	12%	13%	13%	14%	14%	15%	15%	31%
FRAUD	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
CTLS Sanctions gained	0	0											0	
Profiled target based on 22/23	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	6

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council													Cumulative 2023/24	Year-End 2023/24 Target
BENEFITS	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In month: Right Time (days)	9.8	9.4											9.6	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	6.5	6.9	8.7	6.9	6	9.3	9.3	9.7	7.6	10.8	3	9.1	7.8	6
In month: New Claims (Days)	21.7	21.8											21.8	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	15.4	14.8	14.8	14.0	12.3	18.9	18.9	20.1	17.3	22.8	15.2	16.5	16.7	15
In month: Change Events (Days)	8.2	8.1											8.1	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	5.4	6.1	7.9	5.4	4.8	7.4	7.3	7.2	5.0	8.5	2.2	7.2	6.2	6
COUNCIL TAX	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In Year (%)	10.4%	19.5%											19.5%	
Profiled target (based on 22/23)	10.6%	19.7%	28.8%	37.8%	47.0%	56.2%	65.5%	74.6%	83.5%	92.60%	95.40%	97.70%	97.7%	97.6%
In Year Arrears Reduction (£) end of month	£5.5m	£5.3m											£5.3m	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	£5.2m	£5.0m	£4.9m	£4.7m	£4.5m	£4.5m	£4.4m	£4.4m	£4.3m	£4.3m	£4.1m	£4.1m	£4.1m	
NON DOMESTIC RATES	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In Year (%)	10.5%	20.2%											20.2%	
Profiled target (based on 22/23)	10.4%	18.9%	26.2%	37.1%	46.0%	55.8%	64.5%	75.1%	83.7%	92.3%	95.1%	98.1%	98.1%	98.8%
Arrears Reduction (£m) end of month	£1.2m	£1.2m											£1.2m	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	£1.3m	£1.3m	£2.3m	£2.2m	£1.4m	£1.3m	£0.72m	£0.67m	£0.63m	£0.62m	£0.56m	£0.55m	£0.55m	
HOUSING BENEFIT DEBT	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
HB Overpayments outstanding end of month	£1.1m	£1.1m											£1.1m	
<i>Position for 2022/23 £m</i>	£1.1m	£1.1m	£1.1m	£1.1m	£1.1m	£1.1m								
HB Overpayments Recovered	1%	4%											4%	
Profiled target (based on 22/23)	2%	4%	5%	6%	7%	8%	11%	12%	13%	14%	14%	15%	15%	
FRAUD	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
CTLS Sanctions gained	0	0											0	
Profiled target (based on 22/23)	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	9	

North West Leicestershire District Council													2023/24	Year End 2023/24 target
BENEFITS	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In month: Right Time (days)	8.7	9.6											9.1	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	7.0	6.9	9.2	6.8	5.5	9.2	9.2	10.1	9.4	11.2	2.9	10.5	8.0	6
In month: New Claims (Days)	24.3	24.6											24.5	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	15.4	13.9	17.2	15.2	12.6	20.4	21.2	18.8	20.2	24	15.3	18.8	17.8	15
In month: Change Events (Days)	6.9	8											7.4	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	5.8	6.2	8.3	5.1	4.5	7.1	7.0	8.0	6.5	7.8	2	7.9	6.3	6
COUNCIL TAX	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In Year (%)	9.9%	18.9%											18.9%	
Profiled target (based on 22/23)	10.0%	19.1%	28.1%	37.1%	46.1%	55.1%	64.2%	73.4%	82.3%	91.4%	94.5%	97.2%	97.2%	97.3%
Arrears Reduction (£m) end of month	£6.5m	£6.4m											£6.4m	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	£6.2m	£5.6m	£5.5m	£5.3m	£5.2m	£5.1m	£5.0m	£4.9m	£4.9m	£4.7m	£4.4m	£5.0m	£5.0m	
NON DOMESTIC RATES	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
In Year (%)	9.2%	18.0%											18.0%	
Profiled target (based on 22/23)	10.0%	18.5%	28.1%	37.9%	46.2%	55.4%	64.4%	73.5%	82.3%	91.3%	95.6%	99.1%	99.1%	99.0%
Arrears Reduction (£m) end of month	£1.6m	£1.5m											£1.5m	
<i>Position for 2022/23</i>	£1.7m	£1.1m	£1.2m	£1.1m	£1.0m	£0.98m	£0.85m	£0.85m	£0.71m	£0.58m	£0.42m	£0.51m	£0.51m	
HOUSING BENEFIT DEBT	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
HB Overpayments outstanding end of month	£1.3m	£1.3m											£1.3m	
<i>Position for 2022/23 (£m)</i>	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.2m	£1.3m	£1.3m	£1.3m	
HB Overpayments Recovered	1%	3%											3%	
Profiled target (based on 22/23)	5%	10%	11%	14%	14%	16%	17%	18%	19%	20%	21%	21%	21%	34%
FRAUD	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
CTLS Sanctions gained	0												0	
Profiled target (Based on 22/23)	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	6

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	£4,379	£10,586										
Upper Threshold	£4,926	£11,910										
Actual	£547	£2,501										
Lower Tolerance	£3,831	£8,085	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Upper Tolerance	£4,379	£9,408	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0

HDC	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Lower Threshold	£2,716	£7,700										
Upper Threshold	£3,056	£8,663										
Actual	£25	£119										
Lower Tolerance	£2,691	£7,581	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Upper Tolerance	£3,031	£8,544	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0

NWLDC	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Lower Threshold	£4,400	£8,470										
Upper threshold	£4,950	£9,528										
Actual	£9,454	£2,632										
Lower Tolerance	-£5,054	£5,838	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0

Upper Tolerance	-£4,504	£6,897	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
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Recruitment

- Business Development Team Leader – Offer made subject to medical and appropriate checks
- Council Tax Officer (Job share 18.5 hours) – Appointed started 1 June
- Council Tax Officer (Job share 18.5 hours) – Awaiting references
- Revenues and Benefits Manager (Revenues Focus) – Appointment made to start 26 June
- Visiting Officer – Interviews 15 June 2023

Benefits Operational Team

(Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Fraud)

Speed of Processing

The time taken to process new claims and changes has been significantly impacted by the disconnection by Vodafone of the wrong PSN circuit and we were unable to access from 4 April to 3 May. Having access to the DWP searchlight system means that the assessment team can access a person’s entitlement to state benefits immediately when assessing their Council Tax Support/Housing Benefit. In addition, access to their VEP system allows the team to see Real Time information of HMRC records to view up to date earnings and occupational & pensions.

This allows us to process the claims we receive promptly and without the need to request this information from the customer.

In terms of our performance, it has resulted in a potential additional 30 days in processing time in cases where we could not access the information directly.

LA Error and Subsidy

There has been no negative impact on subsidy as all LA’s are currently below the lower threshold for LA error.

Housing Benefit Accuracy initiative

For the second year we are required to comply with the DWP’s Housing Benefit Accuracy initiative which requires us to

undertake activities to identify unreported change of circumstances. New burdens funding has been provided which is ring fenced and intended to support LA's in delivering the project either through overtime or additional resources.

It is our recommendation that the agency member of staff is retained and works on the new cases until the total budget is extinguished (they have until the 30 June to complete any outstanding cases for last year).

Funding for 2023 – 2024

HDC £4,505.74

HBBC £7,411.68

NWLDC £6,230.86

Renters Reform bill

The Renters Reform Bill was presented to Parliament early May whilst it will take some time to become law it will significantly change renting in the UK. Landlords will no longer be able to recover their property on demand for instance. As such, assured shorthold tenancies (6 and 12 months for instance) will disappear and tenancies will in effect be for lifetime or until a prescribed situation arises or the tenant serves notice to leave. Rent increases will also be limited to once a year. Here are ten of the proposed key changes:

1. **S.21 'no-fault' evictions to be scrapped:** Landlords will need to provide a specific reason for evicting their tenant, and rely on the county courts to decide whether a tenant should be evicted.
2. **Introduction of rolling tenancies:** In other words, tenancies will automatically continue rather than being for short fixed terms (e.g. 12 months).
3. **Rent increase notice period to double to 2 months,** and rent cannot be increased more than once a year.
4. **Quicker procedure promised for 'fault-based' evictions is unlikely:** The Government has suggested rent arrears and anti-social behaviour evictions will be fast-tracked, but landlords should expect that in reality the process will be "slow and time-consuming".
5. **Landlords won't be able to 'unreasonably refuse' tenants having pets:** Although a 'pet insurance' can be charged by the landlord to account for the risk of damage.
6. **Landlord portal where tenants can rate them:** Akin to 'Checkatrade' or an 'Uber' rating for landlords, tenants will be able to find out about their landlord's letting history and 'score' a landlord.

7. **Property Ombudsman:** New single ombudsman to be introduced to resolve landlord and tenant disputes. This already applies to landlords with letting agents but will be extended to all private landlords.
8. **Repeated serious rent arrears will be a mandatory ground for eviction:** This will go some way to closing the current loophole where tenants can avoid eviction based on rent arrears provided that they pay the arrears before a possession hearing.
9. **Minimum Housing standards:** Called the 'Decent Homes Standard', this currently applies to social housing but will be extended to the private rental sector.
10. **No ban on benefits or families:** If they can pay the rent, tenants cannot be rejected on the basis they receive benefits or have children.

Revenues Operational Team (Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments)

Collection Rates

Council Tax

Collection is marginally behind that of the previous year. Whilst the numbers of reminders issued at the start of the year are pretty consistent, we had received a request from customer services to stagger the numbers sent so they were better able to cope with the number of enquiries. We have ensured that all reminders due for April were issued before the end of May

Business Rates

Currently it is only HBBC who are exceeding target with NWLDC marginally behind. However, the net collectable debit for HDC has increased from £50.6m in March to £59.8m in April, which has had a significant impact on the collection rate

Enforcement Agent Procurement

The current contract comes to and end on October 31st 2023 and arrangements for the procurement of a new contract are progressing with the support of the Welland Partnership and YPO with Blaby as the lead. The tender will be split into three lots

Lot 1: The Partnership

Lot 2: Comprising Oadby & Wigston, Blaby, Rutland & Melton
Lot 3: Car parking (for Rutland only)

Hotels used by asylum seekers

The VOA have advised that hotels being used by asylum seekers will be moved from the NNDR list to the council tax list from the date that it started to be used for that purpose.



Leicestershire Revenues & Benefits Partnership – Council Tax & Business Rates 2021/22

January 2023

Final Internal Audit Report

Contents

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Disclaimer

This report (“Report”) was prepared by Mazars LLP at the request of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council and terms for the preparation and scope of the Report have been agreed upon with them. The matters raised in this Report are only those which came to our attention during our internal audit work. Whilst every care has been taken to ensure that the information provided in this Report is as accurate as possible, Internal Audit have only been able to base findings on the information and documentation provided and consequently, no complete guarantee can be given that this Report is necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist, or of all the improvements that may be required.

The Report was prepared solely for the use and benefit of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, and to the fullest extent permitted by law, Mazars LLP accepts no responsibility and disclaims all liability to any third party who purports to use or rely for any reason whatsoever on the Report, its contents, conclusions, any extract, reinterpretation, amendment and/or modification. Accordingly, any reliance placed on the Report, its contents, conclusions, any extract, reinterpretation, amendment and/or modification by any third party is entirely at their own risk. Please refer to the Statement of Responsibility in Appendix A1 of this report for further information about responsibilities, limitations, and confidentiality.

01 Introduction

As part of the 2021/22 Internal Audit Plan for Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, resource is included to carry out internal audits on behalf of the Leicestershire Revenues and Benefits Partnership. We have therefore undertaken a review of Council Tax & NNDR. The objective of the audit was to provide members of the Management Board, Joint Committee, elected members of the constituent councils, Chief Executives and other officers with reasonable, but not absolute, assurance as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the key controls relating to Council Tax and NNDR.

We are grateful to all staff interviewed for their assistance during the audit.

This report summarises the results of the internal audit work and, therefore, does not include all matters that came to our attention during the review. Such matters have been discussed with the relevant staff.

02 Background

Council tax is a property tax introduced in April 1993 as a means for local authorities to collect contributions from households towards the cost of local services. Council tax rates are set locally by councils and charged based on the valuation band of each property.

Business rates (non-domestic rates) are levied in respect of most non-domestic properties, unless exempt. The amount to be paid is worked out based on the 'rateable value' of the property which is determined by its open market rental value on 1 April 2015, based on Valuation Office Agency (VOA) estimates, however, a revaluation also came into effect on 1 April 2017 with a further one expected in April 2023.

Council tax and business rates are administered and dealt with by the Leicestershire Revenues & Benefits Partnership. The Partnership manages Revenues and Benefits for the following Councils: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council; Harborough District Council and North-West Leicestershire District Council, and is hosted by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council.

Each Council publishes its Council Tax and Non-Domestic policies and guidance on its respective website, with internal guidance documents available on shared drives.

On a weekly basis, the Valuation Office (VO) posts a valuation update list on its website which details changes to rateable values of individual properties within the boroughs. The VO listing is then downloaded by a NNDR and CTAX officer for their respective area, and changes are input onto the Capita system upon receipt of information.

The Partnership utilises the Capita Academy system as its council tax and NNDR software management system, and uses Enterprise for its document storage. Access to the system should be restricted based on the user's role and access permissions. Capita assigns unique account and property references.

Council Tax and NNDR parameters are updated in the Capita system annually.

Residents for each authority are able to use a self-serve system to register and pay their council tax, set up direct debits, request payment arrangements, view all notices/benefit award letters and request amendments to their accounts.

Each authority sets out its criteria for entitlement to discounts and exemptions on its respective website, including single person discount, disabled band reductions, and for those with severe mental impairments.

Where appropriate residents are required to complete an application form and provide supporting evidence for their discount/exemption request. A review timetable is in place for all discounts and exemptions, stating when the type of discount/exemption should be reviewed.

Individual councils can offer a relief for, or charge a premium on, empty domestic properties subject to Council Policy.

There is an annual billing timetable in place for both council tax and business rates, with bills sent out in advance of charges becoming due. Actual notice/award letters generated are reconciled against those sent to the mailroom for their dispatch to ensure all correspondence has been dispatched.

All income due should be received and recorded accurately, with the Partnership providing Finance with monthly reconciliations.

Council tax and business rate refunds are processed automatically on a weekly basis. Refunds must be input by one officer and approved by another before being issued.

Debt management timetables are in place for both council tax and business rates which set out stages of recovery and key timescales. Stages of recovery are processed automatically through the system. After the opening bill has been sent around a month later a reminder letter is sent, culminating in a summons if payment is not received.

Write-off procedures are in place for debt related to council tax and business rates, with set approval levels for write offs differing per Council.

Each month, the management board is advised on the Partnership's collection rate and arrears position. Financial statements are also produced and shared monthly with finance, including movement in debt by financial year.

03 Key findings

Assurance Rating



Moderate Assurance

Rationale

Based on the agreed scope and rating criteria (see **Appendix A1** for the detailed scope and definitions of the assurance ratings), there is **Moderate** assurance over the system of internal control evaluated.

We have identified some areas of significant control deficiency and some areas for improvement. Further detail regarding the recommendations is in **Section 04** and a summary of key observations is included below.

Priority	Number of Recommendations
High	-
Medium	2
Low	2
TOTAL	4

3.1 Examples of areas where controls are operating reliably

- Review of the websites for Hinckley & Bosworth, NW Leicestershire and Harborough found that policies are located on each website setting out information related to both council tax and business rates, and that all policies have been updated for 2022/23.
- We selected a sample of six properties (two per Council) with changes to Council Tax banding detailed in the January 2022 Valuation Office (VO) schedule. We confirmed in all six cases that the required changes set out in the VO schedule had been made and reflected in the Capita system.
- We selected a sample of five properties (two per Council, only one change for Harborough) with changes to business rates (NDR) detailed in the July VO schedule. We found in all five cases that the required changes set out in the schedule had been made and reflected in Capita.
- We reviewed the Capita system and through our testing confirmed that each account has a unique account number, and each property has a unique reference number. These numbers are shared between the main system and document management system allowing for searches to be made easily.
- We confirmed via review of the Capita system that parameters 2022/23 had been uploaded.
- Each Council has its own self-serve system available to council taxpayers, we confirmed this was in place for all three Councils.
- Each respective Council has published criteria and guidance notes on its websites for council tax discounts/exemptions, as well as application forms for such discounts.
- The Partnership maintains a review timetable for all discounts and exemptions including dates of review.
- The Partnership has an Annual Billing Timetable in place for 2022/23, which includes anticipated posting dates ensuring that the appropriate notice is given before payments fall due

- We reviewed a reconciliation between actual letters sent/printed and properties on the system during annual billing for 2022/23.
- The Partnership has a debt recovery timetable in place for 2022/23. Our testing found no issues with the Partnership following its debt recovery process, accounting for changes in enforcement action due to Covid-19.
- Suspense account balances for all three Councils did not exceed £8k individually.
- The Partnership issued an Annual Performance report for 21/22 which detailed recovery rates and arrears position.
- We confirmed monthly performance reports had been sent to the Management Board for September, August and July.

3.2 Risk Management

Risks considered as part of the audit included:

- Transactions processed inconsistently with external and internal policies and procedures;
- Loss of income from new / amended properties;
- Discounts / exemptions / allowances invalidly awarded;
- Inaccurate records are maintained;
- Invalid refunds are made leading to loss of income;
- Excessive or inappropriate write-off of debt.

We found that current controls are operating effectively, however, we identified areas for improvement, as detailed in Section 04.

3.3 Value for Money

Value for Money (VfM) considerations can arise in various ways and our audit process aims to include an overview of the efficiency of systems and processes in place within the auditable area.

The partnership delivers Revenue and Benefits across three Councils: Harborough District Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council. The purpose of the partnership is to *‘provide a high-quality Revenues and Benefits service to residents and*

businesses at an economical cost and in accordance with the principles of continuous improvement and changing requirements.’

A shared service allows the partnership to employ staff who work across all three councils and respond to changing needs. We identified that although staff work across councils in their respective areas, some processes are not standardised as in a true shared service. For example, write off and refund authorisation pathways differ across the three Councils.

3.4 Sector comparison

We have taken the findings from this audit and compared them to findings from other audits recently carried out at Local Authority clients. It was found the controls in place with the partnership are broadly similar to those used across the sector.

Redirection of resources and services due to the impact of COVID-19 have affected many local authorities. This has had a significant effect on the functioning and operation of many local authority services.

04 Areas for further improvement and action plan

Definitions for the levels of assurance and recommendations used within our reports are included in Appendix A1.

We identified areas where there is scope for improvement in the control environment. The matters arising have been discussed with management, to whom we have made recommendations. The recommendations are detailed in the management action plan below.

Ref	Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/ responsibility
4.1	<p>Process documents</p> <p>Our review found that there were a number of documents in place highlighting key council tax and business rates processes.</p> <p>We identified that some key processes were not documented such as Valuation Office reconciliations, adding parameters to the Capita system and processes for full refunds.</p> <p>Process documents are not currently on a programme of regular review and are updated on an ad-hoc basis.</p> <p><i>Risk: Processes are carried out inconsistently or incorrectly due to a lack of guidance. Guidance is not reviewed regularly and therefore does not reflect changes in current practice.</i></p>	<p>The partnership should implement standard operating processes for all key council tax and business rate processes and ensure these are easily available to staff for reference.</p> <p>All procedures should be given a review period and be reviewed in line with this schedule.</p>	Medium	Existing procedures are amended when process/ legislation changes. It should be noted that processes for the three LA's are different in some areas. Processes will be reviewed at the point of BPR or changes to legislation and in accordance with the work programme.	Ongoing Head of Leicestershire Revenues and Benefits Partnership
4.2	<p>Empty property relief- Inspection Process</p> <p>We selected a sample of ten empty properties receiving empty property relief and found that five out of ten had been recorded as empty based only on a telephone call. The Revenues and Benefits Manager confirmed that inspections had been paused and communication had moved to phone/email, both in response to Covid-19 and to ensure efficiency in delivery of the service.</p> <p>We also identified two properties that had not been reviewed regularly and status confirmed - one since 2012 and one since</p>	The Partnership should review the inspection process and reintroduce physical inspections where intelligence has not been established, to confirm properties are empty.	Medium	The cases that hadn't been reviewed weren't due to process, but officer error. The process is that when officers are unable to contact via phone and email, they will visit. This is in place. Though, it should be noted if the	Completed

Ref	Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/ responsibility
	<p>May 2021. Management confirmed that the failure to review these properties was due to staff error.</p> <p><i>Risk: Properties are being incorrectly claimed as empty, leading to lost revenue for the Councils.</i></p>			property is empty, it is likely no one will be at the property.	
4.3	<p>Capita Academy Access</p> <p>The partnership operates a number of live and test databases- one live and one test database for council tax and business rates, for each Council. There are a total of six live databases and six test databases that staff are given access to.</p> <p>Through our testing, we did not identify any staff members that had inappropriate access to a system, however, the Business Development and Support Officer advised their preference for a full security review to ensure access across all systems is correct and appropriate.</p> <p><i>Risk: User access is not reviewed, allowing users to inappropriately access reports and transactions</i></p>	<p>The partnership should complete a review of all users with access to the Capita system.</p> <p>The partnership should introduce a periodic reconciliation for users with access to the Capita system.</p>	Low	It is unlikely officers would be able to access reports and there are layers of authentication prior to accessing Academy which manages the risk. Agree an annual review should be undertaken together with a reminder of the process to be followed when an officer leaves the partnership.	<p>June 2023</p> <p>Business Development and support team</p>
4.4	<p>Single Person Discounts</p> <p>The partnership reviews single person discounts every two years, following receipt of information from the National Fraud Initiative.</p> <p>At peers, we see more regular review of single person discounts, in the form of annual credit check reports.</p> <p><i>Risk: Discounts are being incorrectly or fraudulently claimed, leading to lost revenue for the Councils.</i></p>	The partnership should consider reviewing its single person discounts on a more regular basis, using credit reports.	Low	The SPD review is currently managed at a County level with the County Council contributing to the review. The use of credit reports is a direct cost to LA's, and at the point of writing haven't had a response from peers re their process.	<p>September 2023</p> <p>Head of Leicestershire Revenues and Benefits Partnership</p>

Ref	Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/responsibility
				Consideration will be given, with outputs and finding to Management Board.	

A1 Audit information

Audit Control Schedule	
Client contacts:	Leigh Butler: Revenues and Benefits Manager
Internal Audit Team:	Peter Cudlip: Partner Sarah Knowles: Senior Audit Manager Jessica Holt: Assistant Manager Connor Wood: Internal Auditor
Finish on-site / Exit meeting:	16 November 2022
Draft report issued:	22 November 2022 / 5 January 2023
Management responses received:	18 January 2023
Final report issued:	19 January 2023

Report Distribution List		
Report	Name	Job Title
Draft & Final	Leigh Butler	Revenue and Benefits Manager

Draft & Final	Sally O'Hanlon	Head of Leicestershire Revenues and Benefits Partnership
Draft & Final	Ashley Wilson	Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer)
Final	Leicestershire Revenues and Benefits Partnership Board (LRPB) Management Board LRPB Joint Committee	

Scope and Objectives

The overall objective of this internal audit was to provide stakeholders with reasonable, but not absolute, assurance as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the of the key controls relating to Council Tax and NNDR processes. To achieve this, a risk-based audit was conducted.

Our review considered the following areas:

- Roles and Responsibilities;
- Transactions and Records;
- Discounts, Exemptions, Allowances and Premiums;
- Billing and Receipts;
- Refunds;
- Debt Recovery, Enforcement and Write-off; and

Testing performed was carried out on a sample basis by a member of the Internal Audit Team. Our work is limited by the information which we are privy to throughout the audit fieldwork. Our work does not provide any guarantee against material errors, loss or fraud or provide an absolute assurance that material error, loss or fraud does not exist.

Definitions of Assurance Levels	
Level	Description
Substantial	The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.
Moderate	Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control
Limited	There are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.
Unsatisfactory	There are fundamental weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.

Definitions of Recommendations	
Priority	Description
High (Fundamental)	Significant weakness in governance, risk management and control that if unresolved exposes the organisation to an unacceptable level of residual risk.
Medium (Significant)	Weakness in governance, risk management and control that if unresolved exposes the organisation to a high level of residual risk.
Low (Housekeeping)	Scope for improvement in governance, risk management and control.

Statement of Responsibility

We take responsibility to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council for this report which is prepared on the basis of the limitations set out below.

The responsibility for designing and maintaining a sound system of internal control and the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities rests with management, with internal audit providing a service to management to enable them to achieve this objective. Specifically, we assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control arrangements implemented by management and perform sample testing on those controls in the period under review with a view to providing an opinion on the extent to which risks in this area are managed.

We plan our work in order to ensure that we have a reasonable expectation of detecting significant control weaknesses. However, our procedures alone should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses in internal controls, nor relied upon to identify any circumstances of fraud or irregularity. Even sound systems of internal control can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance and may not be proof against collusive fraud. The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our work and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Recommendations for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact before they are implemented. The performance of our work is not and should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound management practices.

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Leicestershire Partnership Revenues & Benefits

Performance Indicators 2023/24

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform the Joint Committee of the proposed targets for the Partnership for the year to 31 March 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1. That the Joint Committee approve the proposed targets as detailed in table 1.

3. INFORMATION

3.1. Historically targets have been set for the Partnership in February for the forthcoming financial year. This was changed during 2022 as it is important to reflect on the outturn to allow informed decision making.

3.2. Table 1 details the targets for 2022/23, the outturn and the suggested targets for 2023/24.

3.3. There has been a robust discussion at the Partnership Management Board where the board have collectively agreed that the targets for 2023/24 will remain the same as the targets for 2022/23.

3.4. The targets are stretching, any variances will be fed back to this committee as appropriate.

3.5 Table 1

HDC			
PI's	TARGET 2022/23	OUT TURN 2022/23	SUGGESTED 2023/24
Right Time(days)	6	7.8	6 **
New Claims (days)	15	16.7	15
Change Events (days)	6	6.3	6
Council Tax Collection (%)	98.1%	98.3%	98.1%
NNDR Collection (%)	99.2%	98.6%	99.2%
Fraud Sanctions (No's)	6	4	6

HBBC			
PI's	TARGET 2022/23	OUT TURN 2022/23	SUGGESTED 2023/24
Right Time	6	7.8	6**
New Claims	15	16.7	15
Change Events	6	6.2	6
Ctax Collection	97.6%	97.7%	97.6%
NNDR Collection	98.8%	98.1%	98.8%
Fraud Sanctions	6	9	9

NWLDC			
PI's	TARGET 2022/23	OUT TURN 2022/23	SUGGESTED 2023/24
Right Time	6	8	6 **
New Claims	15	17.8	15
Change Events	6	6.3	6
Council Tax Collection	97.3%	97.2%	97.3%
NNDR Collection	99.0%	99.1%	99.0%
Fraud Sanctions	6	4	6

3.6 It is proposed the target for Right Time (days) is deleted. This is because the target is a combination of new claims and change events, and primary focus is on two these not right time.

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Proposed Schedule of Meetings 2023/24

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 For the Joint Committee to agree the schedule of meetings for the forthcoming year.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To consider and agree the proposed schedule of meetings for 2023/24 attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

3. MAIN FEATURES OF THE SCHEDULE

3.1 Each year the Committee is asked to approve the schedule of meetings for the forthcoming year.

3.2 The proposed schedule of quarterly meetings for 2023/24 is attached at appendix 1.

3.3 The Joint Committee currently meets 4 times during the civic year and the dates of the meetings have been proposed in order for the committee to consider the quarterly performance reports at the appropriate time during the year.

3.4 Consideration has been given to statutory reports that have to be agreed by set dates.

3.5 Following the revision of the Constitution of the Joint Committee in May 2018, it states that the committee must also hold an Annual Meeting in June wherever possible but no later than July.

3.6 Currently all meetings are held on Thursdays at 3.30pm and are held in rotation around each of the Partnership authorities.

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 Members are asked to consider the dates detailed in the appendices and notify the Democratic Services officer of any issues.

SCHEDULE OF QUARTERLY MEETINGS – THE LEICESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP
JOINT COMMITTEE REVENUES AND BENEFITS

2023/24

Annual Meeting Thursday, 6 July 2023 3.30pm, NWL, Coalville

To be agreed:

Thursday 14 September 2023	3.30pm	Harborough DC
Thursday 23 November 2023	3.30pm	HBBC Hinckley
Thursday 18 January 2024	3.30pm	NWL, Coalville
Thursday 21 March 2024	3.30pm	HBBC Hinckley

2024/25

Annual Meeting Thursday 13 June 2024 3.30pm Harborough DC

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FORWARD PLAN FOR JOINT COMMITTEE 2023-24

Decision	Date of Decision (approx.)	Contacts
Annual Meeting		
Schedule of meetings	July 2023	Democratic Services
Year End Performance Report	July 2023	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Year End Financial Report	July 2023	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer
Future of the Partnership (Confidential Item)	July 2023	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Financial Performance Report	September 2023	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer
Performance Report	September 2023	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Future of the Partnership (Confidential Item)	September 2023	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Financial Performance Report	November 2023	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer
Performance Report	November 2023	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Future of the Partnership (Confidential Item)	November 2023	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Budget Setting Report	January 2024	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer
Financial Performance Report	January 2024	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer
Service Plan 2023/24	January 2024	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Performance Report	January 2024	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Future of the Partnership (Confidential Item)	January 2024	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Financial Performance Report	March 2024	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer

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Decision	Date of Decision (approx.)	Contacts
Performance Report	March 2024	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Internal Audit Report	March 2024	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Future of the Partnership (Confidential Item)	March 2024	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Schedule of meetings	June 2024	Democratic Services
Year End Performance Report	June 2024	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership
Year End Financial Report	June 2024	Ashley Wilson – Section 151 Officer
Future of the Partnership (Confidential Item)	June 2024	Sally O’Hanlon – Head of Partnership