

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 28 August 2018

6.00 pm

Committee Room 1, City Hall

Membership:	Councillors Bob Bushell (Chair), Naomi Tweddle (Vice-Chair), Kathleen Brothwell, Sue Burke, Chris Burke, Gill Clayton-Hewson, Helena Mair, Lucinda Preston, Alan Briggs, Christopher Reid and Hilton Spratt
Substitute member(s):	Councillor(s) Gary Hewson
Officers attending:	Democratic Services, Angela Andrews, James Wilkinson, Daren Turner and Martin Walmsley

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Please note that, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, when declaring interests members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest, and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) or personal and/or pecuniary.	
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Present: Councillor Bob Bushell (*in the Chair*)

Councillors: Alan Briggs, Kathleen Brothwell, Gary Hewson, Helena Mair, Lucinda Preston, Hilton Spratt and Naomi Tweddle

Also in Attendance: None.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Sue Burke, Councillor Chris Burke, Councillor Gill Clayton-Hewson and Councillor Christopher Reid

1. Confirmation of Minutes - 3 April 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2018 be confirmed.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

3. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee were noted.

Councillor Bob Bushell, Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee, took this opportunity to welcome Councillors Alan Briggs and Hilton Spratt to their first meeting of the Committee since their election to the Council in May 2018.

4. Feedback from Executive

Councillor Bob Bushell, as Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee, had presented the Committee's findings and recommendations to the Executive at its meeting on 29 May 2018 following the scrutiny review into Inclusive Growth.

The Executive supported the outcomes and recommendations of the review and commended the work undertaken by the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee on the issue of Inclusive Growth.

5. An Introduction from the Chair

Councillor Bob Bushell, Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee, set out the local community impact of welfare reform as a proposed topic for consideration as a scrutiny review. This was something that had been highlighted as part of the previous review into Inclusive Growth in terms of how welfare reform impacted the community and whether there was anything the Council could do to mitigate that impact.

This meeting would consider whether the topic of welfare reform and the impact on the local community should be investigated further as part of a formal scrutiny review by the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee.

6. **Local Community Impact of Welfare Reform - Overview**

James Wilkinson, Strategic Development Project Manager, provided the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee with some background information regarding key changes to welfare provision, including the benefit cap, the spare room subsidy and the roll out of Universal Credit, together with possible areas for the Committee to consider reviewing further as part of its scrutiny review.

With the introduction of Universal Credit to Lincoln in March 2018, the wider impact of welfare reform and the high demand for affordable housing in the city, it was accepted that the topic of welfare reform was broad ranging. Two particular strands, however, had emerged which provided opportunities for review:

Universal Credit

Areas for review could include:

- background to Universal Credit;
- the role of key support teams and agencies in responding to Universal Credit;
- how Universal Credit had impacted these key teams and agencies, as well as any broader welfare reform;
- the impact of Universal Credit and welfare reform on communities;
- how teams and agencies worked together to meet demand, fill gaps and avoid duplication.

Housing

- background on housing and its affordability, including its link to Universal Credit and welfare reform;
- demand for affordable housing in the city;
- the Council's role as landlord and as an enabler of affordable housing;
- how affordable housing was encouraged in the city and what impact this was having;
- the role of planning policies in delivering affordable housing.

Background information relating to Universal Credit and general indicators of financial affordability were also included in the report.

Daren Turner, Assistant Director, Strategic Development, outlined that other organisations helping to deliver key aspects of welfare reform were critical partners to the Council, such as the Department for Work and Pensions and the Citizen's Advice. It was agreed that representatives of these organisations should be invited to future meetings of the Committee in order that their contributions could be taken into account as part of the scrutiny review.

The Council's Welfare Advice Team was also an important part of delivering welfare reform, particularly Universal Credit. The impact of welfare reform and Universal Credit on that team's work on a day to day basis would also be of interest to the Committee. In addition it was agreed that representatives of that team should be brought before the Committee in due course in order that members could better understand their experiences.

The Committee was supportive of the proposed approach to a scrutiny review on welfare reform and the impact on the community, particularly in relation to the two strands and key witnesses that had already been identified.

7. Intelligence from Key Witnesses

It was noted that Graham Metcalfe, Partnership Manager for the Department for Work and Pensions at the Lincoln Jobcentre, and Laurence Waylett, Quality and Service Manager of Citizens' Advice, had been unable to attend this meeting but would be invited to attend a future meeting of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee.

Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits, provided the Committee with a presentation which included information on the following aspects of welfare reform:

- summary of key welfare reforms, including:
 - the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act 2012;
 - Government targets implemented to reduce the benefits bill;
 - the introduction of a benefit cap for working age people;
 - removal of the Spare Room Subsidy;
 - the introduction of Localised Council Tax Support Schemes;
 - the introduction of a benefits 'freeze'.
- key statistics for Lincoln in relation to:
 - the benefit cap;
 - the Spare Room Subsidy;
 - Council Tax Support caseload;
 - Discretionary Housing Payments expenditure.
- a timeframe for Lincoln in respect of the introduction and implementation of Universal Credit;
- local statistical information between April 2018 and June 2018 for Universal Credit, including:
 - average time spent with customers;
 - average age of customers;
 - number of cases requiring Assisted Digital Support;
 - number of cases requiring Personal Budgeting Support;
 - number of cases requiring both Assisted Digital Support and Personal Budgeting Support;
 - total number of cases;
 - number of cases whereby the person was a Council tenant;
 - a breakdown of arrears in respect of the number of cases and respective amounts;
- Universal Credit sanctions in Lincoln;
- Initial comments from the Local Department for Work and Pensions office in respect of arrears and Universal Credit;
- a link to the National Audit Office report on Universal Credit dated 15 June 2018 acknowledging that local authorities were not being supported enough in respect of funding for necessary support, with little evidence demonstrated of value for money or boosting employment as a consequence.

Members were taken through a case study from the Council's Universal Support Team, reflecting a real anonymised case, which highlighted the amount of time the team had spent with the customer through the entirety of their case. This also identified the complexity of the advice that officers were required to provide to customers, together with the amount of time spent with a single customer, the number of times they made contact with the team to resolve their case and the number of different issues that the team resolved for the customer in a holistic manner.

The following questions were asked by members and responses provided throughout the presentation:

Question

Were Discretionary Housing Payments likely to continue given that they were intended to be transitional and would the payments continue to be administered by local authorities?

Response

The future of Discretionary Housing Payments and who would administer them was unclear at this stage, with further clarity around this issue awaited from Government.

Question

When would the current allocation run out for Discretionary Housing Payments?

Response

The current funding allocation was over a five year period, with the final allocation being in March 2021. However, a Discretionary Housing Payments scheme had been in place since 2001.

Question

The Universal Credit Support Team was very good. Was this shared between the City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council and did the support provided to customers depend on which boundary they lived within? How was the team paid for?

Response

The team was shared between the City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council as part of the Shared Revenues and Benefits Service, with the money for the team placed within the Shared Service's budget. The team would support any customers that contacted it, with 30% of postcodes in West Lindsey District Council and a proportion of postcodes from East Lindsey District Council regularly using the service. Additional funding would be allocated to the Shared Service on a case by case basis for any case the team dealt with from a postcode outside of the City of Lincoln or North Kesteven local authority boundary.

Comment

People did not always apply for Universal Credit straightaway and expected payments to be backdated, which did not always happen. This had been experienced numerous times through the Council's Housing Appeals Panel. Approximately 600 cases would shortly transfer from 'live' Universal Credit to 'full' Universal Credit and it would be interesting to see how many actually transferred within the timeframe.

Response

357 of the people concerned had been contacted directly by the Shared Service, which had resulted in interviews being scheduled for 65 people so far. These statistics were based on the previous week, with updated figures being available in due course. There was a four week period for this transition to take place within and the Shared Service had been proactive in contacting people through a City of Lincoln social media post to highlight this. A reminder would be sent out after 14 days with their Universal Credit potentially being cancelled within 32 days if they did not respond, meaning that they would be required to reapply and go through the process from the beginning. Universal Credit did mean that information was collated in 'real time' with changes in circumstances being reassessed more quickly and people able to update their information using their own computers, tablets or phones rather than physically visiting the office or making a telephone call.

Question

Why were letters being sent out to people? Universal Credit was promoting online transactions and online activity so why was this not sent out via email?

Response

It was the Department for Work and Pensions that sent the initial letter out as it was their benefit which they administered. The Shared Service's proactive work was in addition to that letter to ensure that people knew what was happening with their particular cases. The Shared Service was doing everything it could in order to help people.

Question

The Universal Credit Support Team currently consisted of a Team Leader, two officers and an apprentice. Was this sufficient?

Response

The establishment of a small team was a deliberate decision, with people having been seconded into the team from existing teams within the Shared Service. This provided the team and management with flexibility, maintaining a balance within existing resources, which worked very well. The team would grow in due course and an additional team member already supported the team as required.

Comment

Taking into account the case study that was shared as part of the presentation, issues needed to be identified and addressed early. There were numerous examples through the Council's Housing Appeals Panel where early interventions would have made a huge difference to a person's circumstances.

Response

There was a good level of understanding with all stakeholders in respect of Universal Credit and welfare reform, but people did rely on agencies and organisations referring people into the system.

Comment

The case study highlighted how many steps and stages a person had to go through in order to reach a resolution. This must be quite a dizzying and intimidating experience.

Response

It was reassuring that the person was able to contact the team on more than one occasion, ensuring that they were taken through the process, provided with necessary advice and support and that a resolution was reached.

Comment

Were private landlords as understanding of the situation as the Council was through its Housing Appeals Panel process, particularly with regard to delays in people receiving their Universal Credit?

Response

A private sector landlord forum was held earlier in the year but, essentially, it would be up to the individual landlord as to how they managed their tenants cases.

Question

Was the statement that people received for their Universal Credit clear in respect of what they were receiving it for and how it was broken down?

Response

The statement was as clear as it could be, but there was a lot of statutory information that had to be included. This was also the case for housing benefit notifications.

Comment

Food banks had been very proactive in their support for people. A representative of Lincoln's foodbanks or the community larder should be invited to meet with the Committee.

Question

Private landlords were still required to issue statutory notices in respect of evictions. Were people contacting Citizens' Advice upon eviction to ensure that due process had been followed?

Response

Tenancy laws applied to private landlords and people did report issues to Citizens' Advice which was the correct organisation to contact in such circumstances.

Question

Would a case be referred to the Council's private landlord team if an unlawful eviction had occurred?

Response

Yes such cases would be referred to and investigated by the private landlord team. There had been a change in the city over the last few years in that a significant amount of student accommodation had been built. This impacted the private sector rental market in the city with students no longer requiring as many privately rented houses due to the availability of purpose built student accommodation.

Question

Were there any statistics available regarding single working parents.

Response

Although no statistics were available for this meeting, this issue had been tested locally and some single working parents would be worse off under Universal Credit.

Comment

The Government's thinking behind Universal Credit was to encourage people to get back into work. People were not being encouraged but, in some instances, forced to get back into work.

Question

What could the Council and its partners do to ensure that people got onto Universal Credit as soon as possible?

Response

Over 90% of employers now provided information directly to the Department for Work and Pensions, which helped significantly. Partnership working was essential, with strong links already in place between the Shared Service and the Department for Work and Pensions and Citizens' Advice. The dedicated Universal Credit Support Team was also a vital resource for the Shared Service.

Comment

The case study was very interesting and it would be useful for the Committee to receive other anonymised case studies to better understand the type of cases the Universal Credit Support Team was considering and the advice and support that were providing.

Response

This could be done for Universal Credit cases but the information would not be available for facilitating case studies in respect of Personal Independence Payments. It may be that Citizens' Advice could provide some anonymised case studies as to how rewards were made or not made in respect of Personal Independence Payments.

Comment

The Personal Independence Payments process was very stressful for some people, especially in relation to those people who were in poor health. Some health professionals had highlighted that people were struggling through the system. It may therefore be worthwhile for the Committee to meet with health professionals as part of the scrutiny review.

Comment

A person in private rented accommodation on Universal Credit whose housing element of the benefit did not cover the remainder of their rent may be in a position where they had to make a choice between paying the rest of their rent and feeding their family.

Question

In terms of the purpose built student accommodation effectively bringing the private rental housing market down, was there any information available in relation to supply and demand to substantiate this?

Response

Unfortunately the Shared Service would not hold this information in terms of the shortfall of housing supply as a result of increased levels of purpose built student accommodation.

In closing, it was noted that the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service had been shortlisted as finalists for the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation Awards 2018 in the following categories:

- Benefits and Welfare Reform Team of the Year;
- Most Improved Team of the Year;
- Excellence in Partnership Working.

RESOLVED that the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee undertakes a formal scrutiny review into the local community impact of welfare reform.

8. Next Steps

It was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair would work with officers to arrange a programme of meetings to accommodate internal and external key witnesses as part of the scrutiny review into the local community impact of welfare reform.

9. Work Programme 2018/19

RESOLVED that the work programme be approved, subject to the inclusion of the following items for consideration at future meetings of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee:

- city centre environment;
- social mobility;
- education standards.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE – COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Purpose of the Committee:	
1.	To actively promote and strengthen the City of Lincoln Council's community leadership role of speaking up for the people of Lincoln on any matters which affect their well being.
Terms of Reference:	
1	To engage and consult with Lincoln residents to assist the Council in being fully aware of their issues, concerns and aspirations so these inform the policies and decision making of the Council, giving particular attention to the needs of disadvantaged groups.
2	To engage with all relevant stakeholders including all public, private and third sector organisations, seeking to promote effective partnerships for meeting the needs of the City.
3	To exercise the powers granted to the Council by Parliament for the scrutiny of the decisions of external organisations or groups whose decisions appear to have an impact on the people of the City of Lincoln and seek to influence these in the interests of local people.
4	To enhance the transparency of local decision making by enabling elected members to have the opportunity to hold service providers to account for their performance.
5	To scrutinise any emerging legislation which directly impacts on people in Lincoln, seeking to exert influence on behalf of local people.
6	To respond, in collaboration with the Council's Executive to any Government or other external consultation process ensuring that the Council's voice is heard on all matters affecting the well being of the City.
Membership:	
1.	The Committee will consist of 8 Elected Members.

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SUBJECT: OVERVIEW OF LOCAL IMPACT OF WELFARE REFORM

DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S AND TOWN CLERK

REPORT AUTHOR: JAMES WILKINSON, STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT MANAGER

1. Background

- 1.1 On 3 July 2018, Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee (CLSC) met to consider the feedback from Executive on the citywide review of inclusive growth. In addition, CLSC discussed the background to welfare reform, particularly focusing on;
- a) Changes brought about by the Welfare Reform Act 2012
 - b) Government targets implemented to reduce the benefits bill
 - c) The introduction of a benefit cap for working age people
 - d) Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy
 - e) Introduction of the localised Council Tax Support Scheme
 - f) Introduction of a benefits 'freeze'
- 1.2 Members also considered a case study of a resident in Lincoln that had received help from the city council's Universal Credit (UC) Support Team. This case study highlighted the complexity of issues faced, and the level of intensive support needed in assisting them. As an outcome of that discussion, CLSC agreed to lead an investigation into the local community impact of welfare reform, with a particular focus on UC.

2. Commonly Cited Challenges of Universal Credit

- 2.1 Two challenges often cited with UC are;
- A claimant must wait one month until their first payment is made, which is referred to as the 'assessment period'. It can then take up to seven days for the payment to be received in the claimant's bank account.
 - The original delay in payments was six weeks, but this was changed to five weeks in the Autumn Statement 2017 by the removal of the initial seven day waiting period at the beginning of the benefit claim.
 - UC is paid directly to people's bank accounts. Whilst this may be a positive in some circumstances, some tenants struggle to budget or make their money last the whole month, and may fall into arrears or debt as a result.
- 2.2 There are options available within the welfare system to help respond to both of

these concerns;

- In cases where a claimant is struggling with the cost of living during the initial five week waiting period, an advance payment of UC can be requested on the grounds of financial hardship. This advance will, however, need to be paid back a bit at a time from future UC payments, which could cause some financial issues later on.
- If a tenant is having difficulty paying their rent, or has a history of arrears, their landlord can request for a Managed Payment to be set up, which involves the landlord being automatically paid the rent due from a tenant's UC.

3. The Scale of Universal Credit in Lincoln

3.1 This data is from the first UC Quarterly Dashboard prepared by the UC Support Team and covers April 2018-June 2018. In the future, it will be possible to trend this data as subsequent quarterly dashboards are produced. However, an additional snapshot of some data from July 2018 has been captured for this committee meeting, and is included in Section 4.

3.2 At the end of June 2018, there were 2,090 UC claimants in Lincoln, of whom 769 were in employment, and 1,321 were not in employment. This shows 36.8% of UC claimants were in employment. The highest number of UC claimants was for those aged in their 20s, who accounted for 39.4% of all claimants. The numbers of UC claimants taper across the older age brackets.

3.3 UC claimants are placed into a work condition category for claiming, based on their personal circumstances. The table below shows the majority (53.2%) of UC claimants are out of work and seeking work, and a further 14.0% are in work but are required to work more hours than they currently do (e.g. underemployed).

Category		Claimants #	Claimants %	Example of Category
Not in work	Preparing for work	31	1.5%	A parent with a child aged 1-2.
	Planning for work	40	1.9%	A parent with a child aged 2-3. Receives set hours of free childcare.
	No work requirements	232	11.1%	Not required to work based on personal circumstances e.g. child aged 0-1; or full time carer; or disability.
	Searching for work	1,113	53.2%	Not currently in employment, but looking for employment.
In work	Working with requirements	294	14.0%	Working but not enough hours based on their personal circumstances (e.g. underemployed).
	Working with no requirements	383	18.3%	Working enough hours based on their personal circumstances.
Total		2,093*	100.0%	

*Figure differs slightly from the 2,090 UC claimants referenced in the commentary due to

time of data extraction.

4. Findings from the National Audit Office

4.1 On 15 June 2018, the National Audit Office published its report *Rolling Out Universal Credit*. It identified;

- DWP expects UC will get an additional 200,000 people into work through financial incentives; a simpler and smoother system; and applying conditionality to more claimants.
- DWP acknowledges it cannot measure the 200,000 expectation, as it is unable to isolate the effect of UC from other economic factors increasing employment.
- However, by comparing early adopters of UC Live in north-west England with areas that were still on legacy benefits, findings suggest that, based on claims up to April 2015, UC claimants were four percentage points more likely to have been in work at some point in six months after making their claim than if they were on legacy benefits.
- However, the National Audit Office highlighted the evaluation only compared single claimants without children making new claims to UC and JSA. The employment outcomes for different groups of UC claimants will vary because work incentives differ from group to group.
- The report notes DWP had intended to monitor the employment outcomes for families and couples without children, but has since advised it cannot because control groups of legacy claimants are disappearing as Full Service rolls out.

4.2 The National Audit Office report also identified;

- 60% of new claimants asked for, and received, a UC advance as they wait for their first payment
- Only 54% of UC claimants report they can make a claim online without help
- One in five claimants do not receive their full payment on time, with key reasons including;
 - Incorrect information on what benefit they should be claiming
 - Struggling to complete the requirements to submit a claim e.g. language barriers
 - Not having a bank account or identification

5. The Impact of Universal Credit on Council Tenants

5.1 Two snapshots of data were taken in the lead up to this meeting, one on 30 June 2018, and another on 31 July 2018. This data shows;

- At the end of June 2018, there were 421 city council housing tenants claiming UC. Their combined arrears at the date of their original UC claim was £132,687, which had increased to £182,307 by the end of June 2018. This is

a total increase in arrears since claiming UC of £49,620.

- At the end of July 2018, there were 622 city council housing tenants claiming UC. In total, their arrears at the date of their original UC claim was £191,853, which had increased to £239,899 by the end of July 2018. This is a total increase in arrears since their date of claim of £48,046.
- Whilst both the June and July snapshots show substantial increases in arrears, the data does suggest a marginally improved position one month on, with an average debt per UC council tenant of £433 at the end of June 2018, compared to £386 at the end of July 2018.
- However, the impact from an organisational perspective should also be considered, as the council's arrears amongst UC tenants has overall increased from £182,307 to £239,899.

5.2 It should be noted that two months' worth of data is insufficient to accurately monitor trends due to monthly fluctuations. Future data will need to be analysed to better understand the impact of UC on arrears. However, with increasing numbers of tenants claiming UC, which by its nature is paid one month in arrear, there is likely to be an increasing impact on the authority.

6. Evidence from the DWP

6.1 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) responded to this data to say because UC is paid monthly in arrears, then on paper, arrears will be seen to build up until the UC payment is made, at which point a tenant will pay their rent a month in arrear, and their arrear should therefore reduce. This would be an ongoing monthly cycle of managed arrears under the new welfare system.

- From a community impact perspective, a key challenge may therefore be understanding how the council is able to manage this increase in arrears; and understanding what proportion of the arrears is a result of the new system vs. what proportion is a result of people struggling under UC (this latter group is at risk of being hidden in the data).
- In relation to the question regarding transitions into employment, DWP reported that anecdotal information does support that UC helps people into work faster. We do not have access to local data to show this, for inclusion in this report. However, this should be considered in light of the findings from the National Audit Office highlighted in Section 2.

7. Evidence from the UC Support Team

7.1 There are two frontline teams at the city council that are available to support residents with advice and guidance in relation to benefits and budgeting. These are the Welfare Advice Team based in Customer Services, and the UC Support Team based in Revenues and Benefits.

7.2 Feedback from the UC Support Team shows over the first full quarter since the start of UC Full Service, they have provided 185 residents with digital support, 93 residents with budgeting support, and 32 residents with combined digital and

budgeting support. The average time spent with a customer over this quarter was 42 minutes.

- The majority of people helped with digital support was for processing a new UC claim, or a change of circumstance for UC.
- The most common reason for helping someone with budgeting support was to support them in requesting an advance payment of UC, followed by arranging a Managed Payment directly to their landlord.

7.3 In regard to Zero Hour Contracts, as long as earnings and personal circumstances stay the same, then UC payments should stay the same. If a person's income changes from month to month (e.g. as it would with a Zero Hours Contract), then the UC payment will change to reflect that automatically, based on the person's previous month's earnings. This provides flexibility to take on additional work without needing to re-claim. It does however make effective budgeting vital.

8. Evidence from the Welfare Advice Team

8.1 Feedback from the Welfare Advice Team shows their workload has been at a sustained level for a number of months. This has been achieved by many of the additional UC enquiries being dealt with by the recently established UC Support Team. Feedback was that without the UC Support Team, the workload on Welfare Advice would be extremely difficult. The team identified;

- There has been a general increase in the number of vulnerable customers, who require much more help and assistance in claiming and maintaining their UC. In particular, people with limited literacy; English as a second language; no access to the internet or a device to get online; or people with learning disabilities or serious mental health issues have tended to struggle with the online application process.
- There appears to be a level of errors within the UC application process with time having to be spent picking up basic errors and requesting forms to be corrected. For example, housing costs are frequently calculated incorrectly; and there may be missing elements for certain UC entitlements.
- The Welfare Advice Team is increasingly providing a 'support role'. This is not necessarily as a result of UC, but because there are limited resources in some partner organisations (such as some in the voluntary sector), who may struggle supporting directly with all issues, but instead refer to the city council's Welfare Advice Team.

9. Evidence from the Revenues and Benefits Team

9.1 The Revenues and Benefits Team has had a period of exceptional performance, having significantly reduced its backlog of outstanding customer changes from 2016/17 to 2017/18. It has also been shortlisted for three 2018 IRRV Performance Awards focusing on 'Team of the Year'; 'Most improved Team of the Year'; and 'Excellence in Partnership Working', with IRRV assessors attending City Hall on 14 Aug 2018 to review its strong performance.

9.2 However, the recent introduction of UC Full Service is creating a number of new challenges for this service area.

- Whilst the number of new claims for Housing Benefit is reducing as a result of UC, those claims that are being received are for UC customers where Housing Benefit is still to be claimed (exempt categories). Before processing these claims, councils must first wait for the DWP to take a decision on the customer's UC application, which creates a delay. This delay has contributed to the average cumulative days to process new Housing Benefit claims increasing from 24 days in Quarter 4 of 2017/18, to 30 days in Quarter 1 of 2018/19.
- Additionally, the rollout of UC Full Service has had a significant impact on processing performance, with the section receiving 5,585 UC documents since 01 April 2018. Each of these documents requires assessment, with benefits officers having to review the document and make a decision as to the assessment required.
- The number of Housing Benefit / Council Tax support customers awaiting assessment has increased significantly from 577 in Quarter 1 of 2017/18 to 1,323 in Quarter 1 2018/19. Of the 1,323 customers, 890 are awaiting a first contact from a benefits officer. For the remaining 433 customers, benefits officers have made contact and are now awaiting information from the customer.

9.3 The processes involving UC are much more complex for staff, and require more time to be taken to ensure accurate processing. As a result, overtime has been offered to staff to improve the processing position, and this has been taking place during July and August 2018. Whilst it is expected the outstanding number of customers will reduce, it must be noted that the level of information from the DWP continues to be received at a significant rate.

10 Proposed Next Steps

10.1 On 03 July 2018, Committee agreed for the November 2018 meeting to consider;

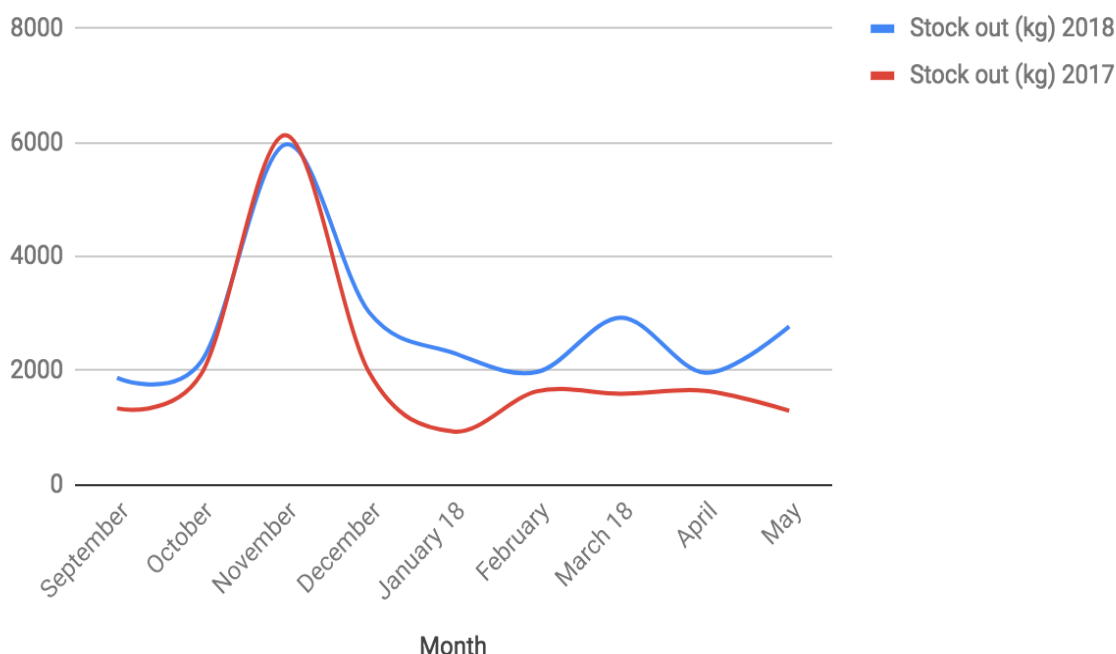
- The background on housing and its affordability, including any link to UC and welfare reform
- Demand for affordable housing in the city
- The council's role as a landlord, and as an enabler of affordable housing
- How affordable housing is encouraged in the city, and what impact this is having
- The role of planning policies in delivering affordable housing

Lead Officer: James Wilkinson, Strategic Development Project Manager
Telephone (01522) 873325

Written Update from Simon Hoare (Trustle Trust) – Food Banks

'Year to Date' chart which compares Foodbank usage 2017 to 2018 (measured by stock out).

Stock out Comparison 2018 v 2017

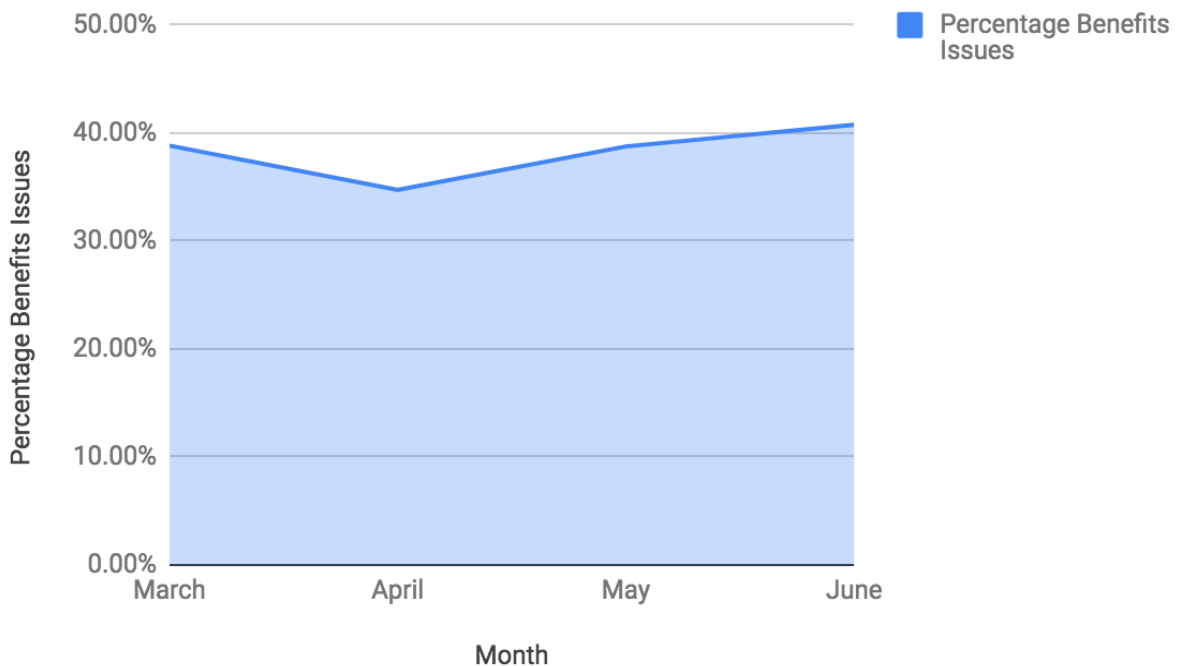


There has been a clear increase in Foodbank usage over this time. We have not increased our marketing and never chase referrals as Foodbank is designed to be wholly reactive. Food parcels are the same size so the chart does reflect an *actual increase in demand*. However, it is hard to pin this increase solely on welfare reform, especially as the rise has been constant even from before the roll out date for Lincoln of March 2018. We did however see a spike in both March and May which might be indicative of people seeking help due to a 'change in benefits'. If people are struggling due to a 'change' then we would expect to see a few spikes, followed by a return to the former average. If people are struggling due to the 'nature of UC' then we'd expect a sustained increase above expected averages.

We will continue to monitor this and can provide future updates as requested. (Note: we always get a Spike in November as stock is shipped out for the December awards - Christmas time).

The table below reflects the % of referrals for reasons relating to benefits (a change or a delay):

Percentage Benefits Issues vs Month



As yet these figures do not represent any significant change from pre-UC referrals so we are unable to pull from this any meaningful impact that the roll out of UC has had on the number of people needing to use Foodbank.

As the previous information suggests, there has been a steady incline over the last 12-24 months of Foodbank usage in Lincoln. We would not at this stage say negatively or positively that UC has had any significant impact. We will probably know more over time so will be monitoring closely and can keep you informed.

**COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

28 AUGUST 2018

SUBJECT: WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2018/19
REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK
LEAD OFFICER: JESS CULLEN, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present members with the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2018/19 (Appendix A).

2. Background

- 2.1 The work programme for the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee is put forward annually for approval by Council. The work programme is then regularly updated throughout the year in consultation with the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee and its chair.
- 2.2 Items have been scheduled in accordance with the existing work programme and officers' guidance regarding the meetings at which the most up-to-date information can be reported to the committee.
- 2.3 The work programme includes the list of portfolio holders under scrutiny.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That members offer any relevant comments or changes on the proposed work programme.

Key Decision No

Do the Exempt Information Categories Apply No

Call In and Urgency: Is the decision one to which Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply? No

Does the report contain Appendices? Yes

If Yes, how many Appendices? 1

Lead Officer: Jess Cullen, Democratic Services Officer
Telephone 873370

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Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – Timetable for 2018/19**12 June 2018 - Deferred**

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2018-19 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report

3 July 2018

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2018-19 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report
Scrutiny Annual Report	Democratic Services Officer	Annual Report

28 August 2018

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2018-19 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report

6 November 2019

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2018-19 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report

8 January 2019

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2018-19 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report

5 March 2019

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Strategic Priority/ Comments
Work Programme for 2018-19 Update	Democratic Services Officer	Regular Report

Suggested topics

- Impact of Welfare and Reform – (PIP)/Advice
- Supported Housing
- Integrated Communities
- Health Inequality
- Transport and Inclusive Growth
- Social Mobility