

**Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017:**  
**Summary of Reports.**

**Performance Update:**

- Details Performance up to the end of Quarter 2 2017/18:
- - Council Tax: City of Lincoln by 0.14%, North Kesteven up by 0.09%;
  - Business Rates:: City of Lincoln up by 1.05%, North Kesteven up by 0.01%, West Lindsey down by 0.29%;
  - Outstanding levels of Revenues customer correspondence increased from the end of Quarter 1 to Quarter 2, but a downward trend shown towards the end of Quarter 2;
  - Housing Benefits Overpayments: In-period collection rates are positive, however there is a continuing rising level of outstanding debt;
  - Benefits – outstanding customers figure much improved compared to the same point in 2016/17. Lincoln New Claims average processing time improved – other average processing measures should improve as reduced capacity issues are addressed.

**Housing Benefit Overpayments Update:**

- Rising levels of Housing Benefit overpayments debt, City of Lincoln £4,121,223 and North Kesteven £1,853,275.
- Different reasons why an overpayment has been created will affect the level of Housing Benefit subsidy due to the local authorities.
- There are a number of tools at the local authorities' disposal by which to collect and recover overpayments – the most effective being deduction from ongoing Housing Benefit entitlement, but this will become less available once certain working age claims move over to Universal Credit.
- Review taking place on recovery rates for overpayments – however, further capacity is needed. Recommendation is to re-allocate a Benefits Officer resource to overpayments work and delivery of an associated action plan.
- Update report and action plan for 2018/19 to be presented to Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

**Financial Monitoring Quarter 2 2017/18:**

- At quarter 2, there is an underspend against the approved budget of £30,977.
- The forecast outturn for 2017/18 predicts that there will be an underspend against the approved budget of £73,178.
- Budget increased by £42,178 through further New Burdens / grants.

### **Welfare Reform Update:**

- Updates on 'live' and 'full' service rollout of Universal Credit, as well as other welfare reform changes.
- 'Full service' Universal Credit (UC) will commence in Lincoln and Sleaford Jobcentres from March 2018 and July 2018, respectively – affecting working age new claims in scope for UC.
- Provides a Universal Credit action plan, as well as updates on the more 'high level' overarching Welfare Reform action plan.

### **Business Rates Update:**

- 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot 2018/19: bid made by Lincolnshire authorities, decision expected December 2017;
- Supporting Small Business Relief Scheme: Has been applied with over £44,000 applied over the three districts so far;
- Support for Pubs Scheme: Almost £87,000 awarded across the three districts to date.
- Discretionary Relief Scheme (for 2017 revaluation transition): 183 awards made so far (City of Lincoln and North Kesteven), totalling £54,664).

### **Invest to Save Update:**

- Additional Business Rates income of £755,571 created so far through this work;
- Council Tax Empty Homes Review – Invest to Save Officer to work with Empty Homes Offer to review associated properties;
- Council Tax Single Person Discount Review – To take place through a managed service in Quarters 1 and 2 2018/19;
- Support sought for 'invest to save' resource for 2018/19.

### **Business Plan 2018/19:**

- Provides a proposed Business Plan for the shared service, for 2018/19;
  - Key features of the plan, are:
  - Key achievements in 2017/18;
  - Savings in 2017/18;
  - Key activities for 2018/19;
  - Strategic priority schemes 2018/19;
  - Towards financial sustainability projects 20178
  - Key risks;
  - Safeguarding;
  - Equality actions;
  - Working in neighbourhoods;
  - Workforce development;
  - Social Value;
  - Data Protection and Information Governance.