



CITY OF  
*Lincoln*  
COUNCIL

Portfolio Holder Decision Notice

<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Rosie Kirk, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place
<b>Date of Decision:</b>	15 April 2019
<b>Item Title:</b>	Review of Universal Credit Support Arrangements
<b>Decision:</b>	That the arrangements agreed with Citizens Advice Lincoln and District in respect of delivering Universal Credit support for the period 1 April 2019 to 30 April 2019, assisting this transition up to 1 July 2019, be supported.
<b>Reason for Decision:</b>	<p>The City of Lincoln Council had successfully been operating Universal Credit support arrangements through a dedicated team from the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service with North Kesteven District Council since 7 March 2018 when Universal Credit Full Service commenced in Lincoln Jobcentre Plus. The team had been a real success, which was recognised as a key component in a prestigious national award in October 2018, the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation category of 'Excellence in Partnership Working'. A range of outcomes had also been achieved as part of the team's assisted digital support and personal budgeted support aspect of its service, as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report.</p> <p>On 1 October 2018 the government announced a national one-year contract between the Department for Work and Pensions and Citizens Advice to deliver Universal Credit support from 1 April 2019, but only to offer digital support up to and including a customers' first payment of Universal Credit, known as the 'help to claim' process. National Citizens Advice had advised that subcontracting this service back to the local authority was an option, with Lincoln's local Citizens Advice branch stated</p>

	<p>that this was what it wanted to see happen. Further to ongoing discussions internally and externally and following a submission from Lincoln and District Citizens Advice, on 12 March 2019 the National Citizens Advice announced that the subcontract request had been declined due to a change in national stance in respect of such arrangements. A bid was then made to extend the current local authority arrangements for three months to allow an opportunity for transition for Universal Credit support arrangement from the Council to Citizens Advice, however, on 19 March 2019 this was also declined.</p> <p>After further discussions, on 26 March 2019 an agreement was reached between the Council and Lincoln and District Citizens Advice for officers within the existing local authority Universal Credit Support Team to help deliver a Universal Credit Support Service for the period 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019. This would provide the local Citizens Advice with an opportunity to advertise, recruit and train a resource to deliver Universal Credit 'help to claim' from 1 July 2019.</p>
<b>Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:</b>	Other options explored were set out in paragraph 2.5 of the report considered by the Portfolio Holder at her meeting held on 15 April 2019.
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Martin Walmsley, Head of Shared Revenues and Benefits