

## **A G E N D A**

### **ANGLIA REVENUES & BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE**

**DATE & TIME** Tuesday, 17th December, 2019 at **11.00 am**

**VENUE:** Level 5 Meeting Room, Breckland House, St Nicholas Street, Thetford  
IP24 1BT

**For the attention of:**

Mrs S. Broughton, West Suffolk District Council (Chairman)  
Mr J.P. Cowen, Breckland Council (Vice-Chairman)  
Mr D Ambrose Smith, East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Mr M. Cook, East Suffolk Council  
Mrs J. French, Fenland District Council

#### **PART A** **ITEMS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**1. MINUTES**

Due to the previous meeting being inquorate, the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2019 could not be agreed (see attached).

Additionally, only notes could be taken at the meeting held on 17 September 2019 and the notes have been attached for Members information.

a) 11 June 2019

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2019.

b) 17 September 2019 - Notes

To consider the **NOTES** of the meeting held on 17 September 2019.

**2. APOLOGIES**

To receive apologies for absence.

**3. URGENT BUSINESS**

To note whether the Chairman proposes to accept any items of urgent business pursuant to Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Page(s)  
herewith

1 - 10

11 - 15

	<u>Page(s)</u> <u>herewith</u>
<b>4. <u>DECLARATIONS</u></b>	
<b>5. <u>GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS RELATING TO INTERNAL AUDIT</u></b> Report of Siobhan Martin, Head of Internal Audit (East Suffolk Council).	16 - 18
<b>6. <u>REVIEW OF THE ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP CONSTITUTION</u></b> Report of Rachel Mann, Assistant Director (Resources & Performance) - West Suffolk District Council.  Due to the 17 September 2019 meeting being inquorate the recommendations could not be approved and it was agreed that the report should be brought back to the December meeting.  If approved the Agreement will have to be endorsed by all partner Councils.	19 - 76
<b>7. <u>PERFORMANCE REPORT AND SERVICE UPDATES</u></b> Report of Stuart Philpot, Strategic Manager (Support).	77 - 109
<b>8. <u>ARP FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE</u></b> Report of Christine Marshall, Executive Director Commercialisation (ARP Treasurer).	110 - 114
<b>9. <u>WELFARE REFORM UPDATE (STANDING ITEM)</u></b> Report of Adrian Mills, ARP Strategic Manager (Billing & Benefits).	115 - 118
<b>10. <u>ARP STRATEGY REFRESH</u></b> Report of Tom Darling-Fernley, Programme Manager (ARP).	119 - 133
<b>11. <u>THE ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP (ARP) SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN</u></b> Report of Paul Corney, Head of ARP.	134 - 140
<b>12. <u>ARP JOINT COMMITTEE PARTNERSHIP BUDGET</u></b> Report of Christine Marshall, Executive Director Commercialisation (ARP Treasurer).	141 - 144
<b>13. <u>JOINT COMMITTEE ARP BROCHURE</u></b> Report of Stuart Philpot, ARP Strategic Manager (Support).  Appendix A to this report is by way of an online link to the <a href="#">ARP Brochure</a>	145 - 162
<b>14. <u>FORTHCOMING ISSUES (STANDING ITEM)</u></b> To note any items.	
<b>15. <u>NEXT MEETING</u></b> To note the arrangements for the next meeting to be held on Tuesday, 24 March 2020 at 11am, Level 5 Meeting Room, Thetford.	

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**  
**EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**EAST SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**WEST SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Held on Tuesday, 11 June 2019 at 10.30 am in the**  
**Level 5 Meeting Room, Breckland House, St Nicholas Street, Thetford IP24 1BT**

**PRESENT**

Mr D Ambrose Smith  
Mrs S. Broughton  
Mr J.P. Cowen

Mrs J. French  
Mr S. Gallant

**In Attendance**

Sam Anthony  
Jo Andrews  
Paul Corney  
Emma Grima

Nick Khan  
Jill Korwin  
Christine Marshall

Adrian Mills  
Stuart Philpot

- Head of HR & OD
- Strategic Manager (Revenues)
- Head of ARP
- Director of Commercial Services (East Cambs District Council)
- Strategic Director (East Suffolk)
- Director (West Suffolk District Council)
- Executive Director Commercialisation (S151 Officer)
- Strategic Manager (Benefits) ARP
- Strategic Manager (Support Services) ARP

**Action By**

**11/19 CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

After being duly proposed and seconded and with no other nominations being made it was:

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Sarah Broughton be appointed as Chairman for the ensuing year.

After being duly proposed and seconded and with no other nominations being made it was:

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Phil Cowen be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

**12/19 TREASURER (AGENDA ITEM 2)**

After being duly proposed and seconded and with no other nominations being made it was **RESOLVED** that:

Breckland Council be appointed as Treasurer for the ensuing year.

**13/19 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 3)**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2019 be approved.

**Action By**

**14/19 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 4)**

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer (S151) for Fenland District Council and Siobhan Martin, Internal Auditor for East Suffolk District Council.

**15/19 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

None.

**16/19 DECLARATIONS (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

None declared.

**17/19 GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS RELATING TO INTERNAL AUDIT (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

This item had been deferred until the next meeting on 17 September 2019.

**18/19 PERFORMANCE REPORTS (AGENDA ITEM 8)**

**(a) Joint Committee Performance Report April 2019**

Stuart Philpot, the Strategic Manager (Support Services) ARP, presented the report.

It was noted that the Local Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefits indicators for both East Suffolk and West Suffolk had been amended since the publication of the agenda and new up-to-date versions would be attached to the Minutes accordingly. This had been due to the work carried out in respect of the merger between the two Councils.

The first part of the new style performance report featured the performance of all partners combined which also included the fraud and compliance figures for the month of April.

It was explained that the 'green dots' within the performance charts represented being on target.

It was noted that due to various refunds, the Council Tax collected for Breckland Council was below target but would recover later in the year. The Vice-Chairman explained that this was largely due to pre-payments.

Referring to the figures under fraud and compliance for East Cambridgeshire District Council, it was explained that these were much lower in comparison to the other partners due to the funding to support Single Person Discounts from Cambridgeshire County Council being stopped.

In relation to the performance information in respect of the business rates target for Fenland District Council, Members were informed that this result had been due to a successful appeal.

There was some discussion on time limits for appeals and the impact they had on the authority. It was noted that a reassessment was on-going as to whether hospitals could claim business rate relief, as the Doctor surgeries

**Action By**

had, which in turn had created a significant impact on local authorities. It was further noted that the Finance Officers would build in provision for this if it should happen. Christine Marshall, the Executive Director for Commercialisation & S151 Officer for Breckland Council, advised that Reserves would have to be utilised too.

It was noted that the next business rates revaluation should take place in 2021, followed by another in 2024.

The Vice-Chairman felt that renewable energy could be a further risk to take into consideration. It was noted that Sizewell power station in Suffolk could be an issue. The Executive Director for Commercialisation & S151 Officer for Breckland Council explained that when local infrastructure became national infrastructure the business rates collected would be lost. Business Rates were now being looked at like a budget comprising of different segments and the risks associated with them i.e. such as hospitals.

Jo Andrews, the Strategic Manager for Revenues (ARP), presented the Service updates as at April 2019-20.

The Enforcement Team continued to perform well, having collected £16.157M since the Team started of which £5.669M had been collected in the last financial year.

ARP had dedicated Officers working within the Further Recovery Team. The Team had its best year for collection in 2018/19 collecting £1,111,595 which exceeded the amount collected the previous year by £203k. The Team was partly funded by Norfolk and Suffolk County Council and this funding would continue to be provided un March 2021 from Norfolk County Council and March 2020 from Suffolk County Council. Cambridgeshire County Council had ceased funding from April 2018 and therefore the work the Team could do was fairly limited.

Referring to the report, the Vice-Chairman asked a question about the charging orders and at what point possession came into effect. Members were informed that a sale of the property could be enforced and the debt could then still be collected; however, arrangements for the debt to be paid were put in place and most were collected - possession was always the last resort.

The Strategic Manager (Support Services) ARP then provided Members with an update on the annual billing project. The annual billing 2019/20 project had been completed as planned with over 340,000 bills and notifications sent out in one week and on time.

The Anglia Revenues website had been enhanced and was now much more transactional and had proven a success with over 250,000 hits with the most being on the payment page.

As far as the Customer Survey was concerned, a new shared ARP satisfaction survey had been trialled with encouraging initial results including quite a positive feedback. The new Customer Group was already putting together the next survey; looking at the reason why some people were not using on-line services.

**Action By**

(b) Presentation of Data Q4 FINAL 18-19

The final data for Q4 was noted.

(c) ARP Financial Out-turn 2018-19

The Executive Director for Commercialisation & S151 Officer for Breckland Council presented the ARP Financial outturn report.

The under-spends for each authority totalling £91k were highlighted. These surplus amounts would be shared between the partner authorities in the approved shares.

The transformation funding on page 78 of the agenda pack was also highlighted.

All costs in the table showing the actual full year financial performance as at 31/3/2018 had been split based on the Joint Committee Agreement.

In response to a question, Members were informed that the Mitel Join Up unified essential communications into a single application and prevented ARP sharing the resource on answering all telephone calls.

The Vice-Chairman mentioned robotics and artificial intelligence data that had been gathered from various bodies and had noticed that the Partnership had not been included on the list and felt that it should respond. Paul Corney, the Head of ARP pointed out that the Operational Improvement Board (OIB) had been working on this but unfortunately, had not fed into it.

The report was otherwise noted.

**19/19 SERVICE PLAN AND RISK UPDATE (AGENDA ITEM 9)**

Paul Corney, the Head of ARP presented the report.

In accordance with the ARP Agreement the Service Delivery Plan had to be revised and agreed by the Joint Committee by the end of December each year and the Risk Register has to be reviewed on a six monthly basis.

Information contained in the report at section 1.2.1 of the report highlighted that the ARP had achieved significant success in the last year. In addition to service aims and objectives the Service Plan included a risk assessment and details of the major projects that the ARP would be implementing in the next 12 months. Other achievements had been listed under section 1.2.2 to 1.2.6 of the report. Referring to section 1.2.4 of the report (a major initiative going forward), rebates totalling £40k had already been achieved in respect of the development of online forms that had been integrated with the Capita system.

A proposal would be taken to OIB to develop on line forms and transactions to further improve the customer journey.

The ARP had entered into an agreement with DWP to jointly help customers to make the transition to Universal Credit; a Universal Support Partnership had been set up and agreed; however, this expired 31 March 2019 when

**Action By**

DWP moved the funding to Citizen's Advice. Members were reminded of the pilot scheme in Harrogate of which up to 3,000 existing benefit claimants would be moved to the six-in-one system from July, in the first test of "managed migration". Adrian Mills, the Strategic Manager (Benefits) would be working on the managed migration on behalf of ARP.

Norwich City Council had delegated their enforcement work to Breckland Council who would be passing this work to the ARP Enforcement Agency from July 2019. Other Councils were interested in delegating their services to partner Councils leading to ARP collecting the debts and growing the resilience of the Enforcement Team.

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor Cowen, was aware that the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) had been given a pot of cash to deal with the migration of customers to Universal Credit for a year only and wanted to know how this would affect the ARP once the monies had been used. The Head of ARP advised that there was a great deal of uncertainty in respect of Universal Credit implementation and uncertainty over future Government funding but all matters had been included on the Risk Register (see page 87 of the agenda pack).

Following further discussion, it was

**RESOLVED** that:

1. the progress in respect of the December 2018 Service Delivery Plan be noted; and
2. the revised Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register at Appendix A of the report be approved.

**20/19 WELFARE REFORM UPDATE (STANDING ITEM) (AGENDA ITEM 10)**

Adrian Mills, the Strategic Manager (Benefits) ARP, presented the report and provided Members with a detailed overview and update on the following matters:

- Universal Credit – situation to date
- Discretionary Housing Payment
- Benefit Cap; and
- Social Rented Sector Rent Restrictions

In terms of Universal Credit, DWP had started work on a managed migration trial at Harrogate Jobcentre that was scheduled to commence July 2019; subject to Parliamentary approval. On 15 May 2019, DWP had introduced new legislation that would mean that new claims from mixed age couples, where one partner was a pensioner and the other working age, must claim UC and be subject to UC conditionality rules, with certain exceptions. Given benefit rates were higher for existing pensioners, this would have the effect of reducing benefit entitlement.

The Chairman asked if the Discretionary Housing Payment grant from DWP was capped. Members were informed that if the grant was not totally spent it would have to be paid back. For 2018/19 ARP had achieved a near full spend.

The report was otherwise noted.

	<u>Action By</u>
<b>21/19 <u>FORTHCOMING ISSUES (STANDING ITEM) (AGENDA ITEM 11)</u></b>	
Councillor Steve Gallant asked if all Members were content with the Terms of Reference and the structure of the ARP.	
Members were informed that the Partnership Agreement would be reviewed and was already scheduled to come back to the Joint Committee in the autumn.	All to Note
<b>22/19 <u>NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 12)</u></b>	
The arrangements for the next meeting on Tuesday, 17 September 2019 at 10.30am, Level 5 meeting room in Thetford were noted.	All to note

The meeting closed at 11.30 am

CHAIRMAN

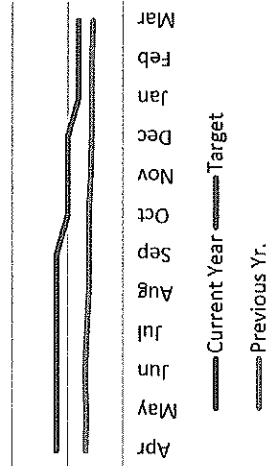


## Local Council Tax Reduction

Days to process Local Council Tax Support				
	Apr-19	Q2	Q3	Q4
2019/20	14.60	0.00	0.00	0.00
Target	12.00	12.00	10.00	8.00
2018/19	6.63	6.12	5.65	5.41

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>8</b>
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### Local Council Tax Reduction



#### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Council Tax reduction new claims and change of circumstances.

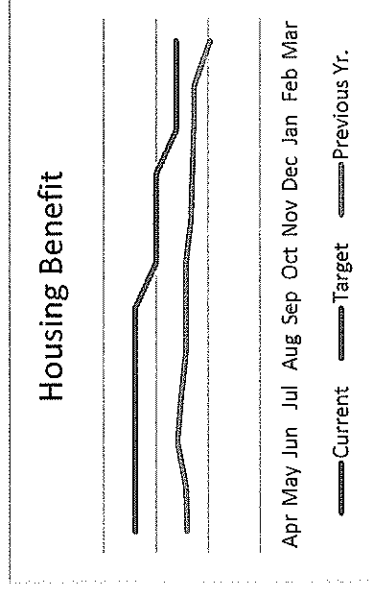
#### Narrative

Whilst this indicator has not been met for April, it should be noted we do not expect to achieve the target for quarter 1 due to the downtime associated with the merger of East Suffolk and West Suffolk systems. During the first three weeks of April we were not able to process East Suffolk cases, and although we are working to recover the position following the merged systems, inevitably this may cause delays. We are targeting cases to minimise customer impact and are expecting we will achieve the annual target at the end of the year.

## Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit				
	Apr-19	Q2	Q3	Q4
2019/20	12.23	0.00	0.00	0.00
Target	12.00	12.00	12.00	8.00
2018/19	6.96	7.90	7.05	4.80

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>8</b>
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### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances.

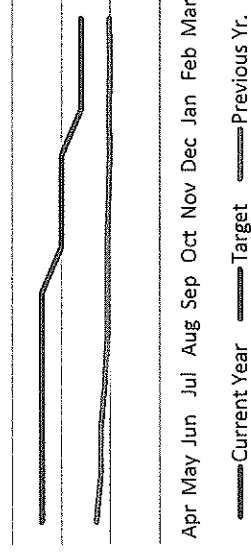
### Narrative

Whilst this indicator has just been exceeded for April, it should be noted we do not expect to achieve the target for quarter 1 due to the downtime associated with the merger of East Suffolk and West Suffolk systems. During the first three weeks of April we were not able to process East Suffolk cases, and although we are working to recover the position following the merged systems, inevitably this may cause delays. We are targeting cases to minimise customer impact and are expecting we will achieve the annual target at the end of the year.

Days to process Local Council Tax Support				
	Apr-19	Q2	Q3	Q4
2019/20	11.68	0.00	0.00	0.00
Target	12.00	12.00	10.00	8.00
2018/19	6.43	5.29	5.05	5.11

Year End Target	8	●
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### Council Tax Support



#### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Council Tax reduction new claims and change of circumstances.

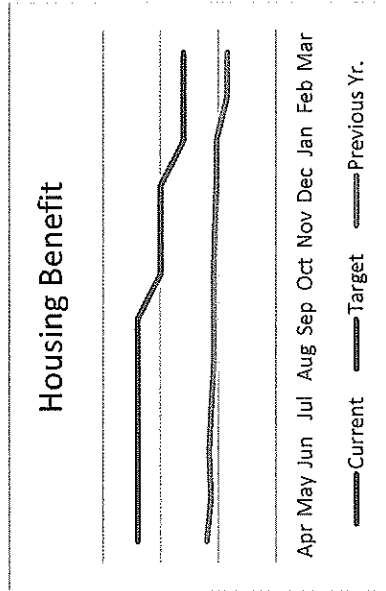
#### Narrative

Whilst this indicator has been met for April, it should be noted, due to the three week downtime in April associated with the merging of systems, the target may not be met for the first quarter of the year. We are working to recover the position following the merged systems, inevitably, this may cause delays, although we are targeting cases to minimise customer impact. We expect the annual target to be met at the end of the year.

## Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit				
	Apr-19	Q2	Q3	Q4
2019/20	9.74	0.00	0.00	0.00
Target	12.00	12.00	10.00	8.00
2018/19	5.98	5.36	5.14	5.14

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>8</b>
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### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances.

### Narrative

Whilst this indicator has been met for April, it should be noted, due to the three week downtime in April associated with the merging of systems, the target may not be met for the first quarter of the year. We are working to recover the position following the merged systems, inevitably, this may cause delays, although we are targeting cases to minimise customer impact. We expect the annual target to be met at the end of the year.

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**  
**EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**EAST SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**WEST SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**  
**ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Held on Tuesday, 17 September 2019 at 11.00 am in the**  
**Level 5 Meeting Room, Breckland House, St Nicholas Street, Thetford**  
**IP24 1BT**

**PRESENT**

Mrs S. Broughton (Chairman)      Mr D Ambrose Smith  
Mr J.P. Cowen (Vice-Chairman)      Mr M. Cook

**In Attendance**

Peter Catchpole	- Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer (S151) (Fenland)
Nick Khan	- Strategic Director (East Suffolk)
Ian Smith	- Principal Accountant (East Cambs)
Jo Andrews	- Strategic Manager (Revenues)
Alison Chubbock	- Chief Accountant (Deputy Section 151 Officer) (Breckland)
Paul Corney	- Head of ARP
Rachael Mann	- Assistant Director (Resources & Performance) (West Suffolk)
Adrian Mills	- Strategic Manager (Benefits) ARP
Stuart Philpot	- Strategic Manager (Support Services) ARP
Julie Britton	- Democratic Services Officer

**Quoracy of Meeting**

The meeting was inquorate; therefore, no decisions could be made and no votes could be cast.

Written notes were taken.

**23/19 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2019 could not be confirmed due to the meeting being inquorate.

**24/19 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)**

Apologies for absence had been received by Cllr French, Fenland District Council and her substitutes.

**25/19 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 3)**

None.

**26/19 DECLARATIONS (AGENDA ITEM 4)**

None declared.

**Action By**

	<u>Action By</u>
<b>27/19 <u>GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS RELATING TO INTERNAL AUDIT (AGENDA ITEM 5)</u></b>	
<p>Due to the absence of Siobhan Martin, Head of Internal Audit for East Suffolk Council, this agenda item was deferred until the December meeting. A written report was requested.</p>	Siobhan Martin
<b>28/19 <u>JOINT COMMITTEE ARP BROCHURE (AGENDA ITEM 6)</u></b>	
<p>The Operational Improvement Board of the Anglia Revenues Partnership had asked the Senior Management Team to produce a brochure to outline the work carried out by the Partnership.</p>	
<p>It was noted that the brochure would be mainly an internal document and would be used for:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members - New ARP Joint Committee members could receive a copy of the brochure as part of their induction;</li><li>• Members at each partner Council for awareness of how the Revenues and Benefits service was delivered by the ARP for their own authority;</li><li>• Partner Authority staff who either worked as part of the ARP or other services within partner authorities for staff awareness of how the Revenues and Benefits service was delivered by the ARP;</li><li>• Included within material for ongoing recruitment; and</li><li>• External Councils' awareness of the successful services available from the ARP, for example The Anglia Revenues Partnership Enforcement Team.</li></ul>	
<p>Cllr Ambrose-Smith was relieved to hear that this brochure was not going to be used as a sales brochure. He asked how many copies would be printed. Members were informed that it would be mainly electronic and therefore only a few copies would be printed. The Chair, Cllr Broughton, felt that it would be useful to send the brochure to all Councils in the District. It was noted that the brochure would have to be amended slightly if it was going to be used to attract more trade. The Vice-Chairman was pleased to see that it had been designed in a digital format as it read very well on an iPad.</p>	
<p>It was agreed that the brochure would be brought to the ARP Joint Committee every six months.</p>	
<p>It was further agreed that a foreword from the Chair of the ARP Joint Committee would be produced and added to the brochure. Wording for this foreword would need to be agreed. <i>The Chair and each Member to provide their photograph to go into the brochure.</i></p>	Stuart Philpot
<p>A number of typographical errors were highlighted.</p>	
<p>The recommendations were noted.</p>	
<b>29/19 <u>PERFORMANCE REPORT AND SERVICE UPDATES - JULY 2019 (AGENDA ITEM 7)</u></b>	
<p>The Strategic Manager (Support Services) ARP presented the performance reports and Service updates to Members.</p>	
<p>The amount collected for all partner Councils combined was highlighted.</p>	

**Action By**

The Council tax collection target for Breckland Council was behind target due to the first summonses for non-payments being delayed by a month by the Court and an increase in the amount of pre-payments for the current financial year.

Under local Council tax reduction, whilst this indicator had been exceeded, it was noted that Breckland Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council and Fenland District Council had actually overachieved due to the downtime associated with the merger of East and West Suffolk systems and the re-focusing on resources to the other partners.

The Service updates as at July 2019 were highlighted and the elements in relation to the 'Better Customer Journeys Programme' was explained. The Chair pointed out that improvements for the customer were still required as she was still receiving many emails from the public about the E.forms being too complicated to complete and felt that these on-line forms should be looked at again. It was agreed that this matter would be brought to the next meeting in December 2019.

**Stuart  
Philpot**

The Head of ARP stated that stories of customer experiences of completing on-line forms etc was included as part of the better customer journey work. The Strategic Manager (Support Services) ARP advised that by following customer journeys on the website from start to finish there would most probably be recommendations stemming from that. The Chair still believed that the process was too complicated and looked forward to seeing any progress made.

The final element of the service update was in respect of the external mailing contractor. The contract had been extended for another 3 years with an option/ a get out clause, to extend or not for a further 2 years.

The performance reports and service updates were otherwise noted.

**30/19 ARP FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE (AGENDA ITEM 8)**

The Chief Accountant (BDC) presented the update on the budget performance based on information as at 31 July 2019. The latest forecast showed a small overspend against budget of £19k.

The risks at section 1.2 of the report were highlighted. The appendix to the report provided more detail and highlighted the level of Reserves held.

The Chair asked why there was so much of a delay with the enforcement cases. The Strategic Manager for Revenues (ARP) explained that Norwich City Council had referred a number of cases and an increase was expected in November 2019. The Head of ARP pointed out that although he had no concerns due to the value of income expected - the issue would be closely monitored. The Chair asked if any further enforcement work would be sought in addition to Norwich City Council. Members were informed that ARP would eventually start to receive a regular stream of work from the City Council and the reason for the delay had been due to lack of resource at the City Council. The Vice-Chairman had concerns in respect of the delays and asked about the legal agreement. He also wanted to know how the staff would cope once the work started to come through. The Strategic Manager for Revenues (ARP) said that staff were working on getting all other cases up to date in

**Action By**

preparation for the enforcement cases submitted by Norwich City Council.

In response to a concern, it was noted that Norwich City Council had ended its contract with other enforcement/bailiff providers and delegated responsibility for this function to the ARP.

The Chief Accountant (BDC) pointed out that it also benefited Norwich sending their cases through to the ARP.

Councillor Ambrose-Smith asked for this matter to be brought back to the December meeting for an update.

The report was otherwise noted.

**Alison  
Chubbock/  
Paul  
Corney/Jo  
Andrews**

**31/19 WELFARE REFORM UPDATE (STANDING ITEM) (AGENDA ITEM 9)**

The Strategic Manager for Benefits (ARP) presented the welfare reform report and drew Members attention to new matters arising at section 2.2 of the report in respect of Universal Credit and the migration trial at Harrogate Jobcentre.

It was advised that the results of the trial would go back to Parliament in due course.

ARP was actively working with those involved since the new legislation for Universal Credit was introduced on 15 May 2019 for mixed age couples. The Chair asked if this could lead to more fraudulent cases. Members were informed that DWP data sharing should reduce that risk.

Councillor Ambrose-Smith pointed out that CAB customers were being directed back to East Cambridgeshire District Council for advice. The Strategic Manager for Benefits (ARP) advised that this had been raised with the Partnership Manager and was being monitored but on a local level such matters needed to be raised with the CAB Manager.

The Vice-Chairman knew that filling in any form at a CAB office could take up to 2 hours and staff were not being properly remunerated for the increase in workload. He also felt that CABs were not set up to deal with such matters and he did not believe that this problem would go away. The Strategic Manager for Benefits (ARP) shared the Vice-Chairman's concerns but pointed out that local CAB bureaux were having on-going conversations with national CAB concerning their funding share for delivering the service.

It was noted that a six month review would be taking place and as the CAB only had a one year contract there was uncertainty as to what was going to happen next.

The report was otherwise noted.

**32/19 REVIEW OF THE ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP CONSTITUTION (AGENDA ITEM 10)**

As the meeting was inquorate the recommendations could not be approved; therefore, the report would be deferred until the next meeting on 10 December 2019. If approved the Agreement would have to be endorsed by all partner Councils.



	<u>Action By</u>
<p>Discussions still took place particularly on the subject of quoracy and it was suggested that the quorum be changed from 5 to 4 Joint Committee Members with a discretionary provision included for the Chair to revert to 5 Joint Committee Members for a decision where it was considered appropriate (taking into account the views of the Joint Committee Members).</p>	<p><b>Rachael Mann</b></p>
<p><b>33/19 <u>FORTHCOMING ISSUES (STANDING ITEM) (AGENDA ITEM 11)</u></b></p>	
<p>None.</p>	
<p><b>34/19 <u>NEXT MEETING AND PROVISIONAL MEETINGS FOR 2020/2021 (AGENDA ITEM 12)</u></b></p>	
<p>The date of the next meeting on Tuesday, 10 December 2019 was noted.</p> <p>It was agreed that all future meetings would commence at 11am.</p> <p>The 2020/2021 meetings dates were discussed and it was agreed that the 16 June 2020 meeting would be changed to enable the meeting to be quorate.</p> <p>All other dates were noted and agreed.</p> <p>It was further agreed that paper copies of the agenda would be sent to Councillors Broughton, Ambrose-Smith, Cook and French.</p>	<p><b>All to Note</b></p>

The meeting closed at 12.15 pm

CHAIRMAN



## Briefing Note - Internal Audit Services Provided to the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP)

**Issued to:** Anglia Revenue Partnership – Joint Committee

**Issued by:** Mrs Siobhan Martin, Head of Internal Audit (East Suffolk Council)

**Date:** 17 December 2019

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### 1. Briefing Note Objectives

The purpose of the Briefing Note is to:

- a) Provide clarity to the ARP Operational Improvement Board and the Joint Committee over the functions of Internal Audit Services provided according to the 'Agreements' in operation, and
- b) Provide clarity over the responsibilities of the Operational Improvement Board and Joint Committee in relation to Internal Audit Reports.

This Briefing Note lists extracts from the 'Agreements' in operation and is not an opinion-based document. This paper was presented and discussed at the ARP Operational Improvement Board on 13 November 2019.

### 2. Background

The ARP is a group of five district councils (Breckland District Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, East Suffolk Council, Fenland District Council and West Suffolk Council) working together to provide a shared revenues and benefits service to their residents.

Over time ARP main systems have been centrally located (Breckland District Council), which has enabled all sovereign Councils Heads of Internal Audit to work collaboratively when planning work, to ensure efficient and effective reviews take place to support all stakeholders.

A Service Level Agreement for the provision of Internal Audit Services is in operation and was refreshed and agreed in 2019. This Service Level Agreement is supplementary and

complementary to the 'ARP Reconstitution Agreement 2015' currently under review and entitled 'ARP Reconstitution Agreement 2019'.

### 3. ARP Reconstitution Agreement

The ARP Reconstitution Agreement is the primary document which sets out the role of ARP Management, Operational Improvement Board (OIB) and Joint Committee (JC). All references to the ARP Reconstitution Agreement relate to the current draft 2019 as of 17.09.19.

**Accounts and Audit**

**6.15** *Independent and objective internal audits of the JC Services shall be undertaken by the Five Councils in accordance with the provisions and schedules contained with the Service Level Agreement appended to this Agreement.*

Extract from ARP Reconstitution Agreement 2019:

The ARP Reconstitution Agreement 2019 is not specific over roles involving Internal Audit.

### 4. ARP Management Team and Operational Improvement Board (OIB)

The ARP Management Team receive Internal Audit Reports to aid performance review of ARP. This is to support performance responsibilities in accordance with the ARP Reconstitution Agreement 2019. S151 Officers also receive these Internal Audit Reports. The ARP Management Team will provide updates upon the Internal Audit reports and findings to the OIB. In addition, a summary report upon ARP Internal Audit findings is provided annually to the OIB. The OIB provides a tier of review which represents good governance practice.

### 5. Joint Committee (JC)

The JC may receive Internal Audit Reports by exception, escalated by the OIB to aid performance review of ARP, in accordance with the ARP Reconstitution Agreement 2019. The JC provides a tier of review which represents good governance practice.

### 6. Audit Committees

Each Sovereign Council (five named Councils listed at section 2 above) has an 'Audit Committee' sometimes called 'Audit and Governance Committee', prescribed within their Constitutions. These Committees provide a high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards. The Heads of Internal Audit at each sovereign Council report Internal Audit findings to the 'Audit Committee' for the Committees to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities.

## **7. Service Level Agreement for the Provision of Internal Audit Services of the Revenue and Benefit Services Delivered by the Anglia Revenues Partnership (2019)**

The Agreement shall commence on 1 September 2019 for a term of three financial years expiring on 31 August 2022. This Agreement was a refresh of an earlier agreement which commenced on 1 April 2017.

The Heads of Internal Audit at East Suffolk, Fenland and West Suffolk jointly provide the Internal Audit Service to the five partner Councils in relation to the ARP. Internal Audit coverage is detailed in the Agreement Schedules.

## **8. Conclusion**

If additional information is required, the Internal Audit Leads would be pleased to assist.

## ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP

**Report of** Rachael Mann – Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) West Suffolk Council.

**To:** Anglia Revenues Partnership Joint Committee, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019

**Subject:** **Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution**

**Purpose:** To consider the outcome of the review of the Constitution of the partnership following the change in ARP membership following the abolishment of four member authorities and the creation of two new member authorities in their place on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, and to address other issues in the partnership agreement

### **Recommendation(s): The Joint Committee:**

- I. Approves the revised Partnership Agreement attached to have effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019
- II. Recommends to each partner Authority that they approve the revised agreement
- III. That subject to approval from each partner the revised agreement is signed and sealed by each Council

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.0.1 Further to the report that was considered by Joint Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018, this report proposes the revision of the Anglia Revenue Partnership (ARP) Agreement (Appendix 1). The revision to the terms of reference have been produced by the Operational Improvement Board as previously discussed by the Joint Committee as a result of the Councils merging in East and West Suffolk.

### **2. Statutory Arrangements**

- 2.0.1 The seven Councils formed a joint committee pursuant to Section 101 (5) and Section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 20 of the Local Government Act 2000 for the purpose of jointly managing the administration and performance of their respective statutory functions. These functions are the collection of council tax and non-domestic rates and the payment of housing and other relevant benefits. The joint operational unit known as the Anglia Revenues Partnership (“ARP”) operates under the control and management of the 2015 Joint Committee to provide the Councils with such services. ARP operates as a single officer core providing equal service provision for all partners across these functions.
- 2.0.2 On the 24 May 2018 the Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007(1) made **The East Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018** and **The West Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018**. These orders took effect on 01 April 2019 to create two new non-metropolitan districts and councils for East and West Suffolk respectively and abolished Suffolk Coastal District, Waveney District, Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils, four Councils who are members of the ARP.
- 2.0.3 In addition to the Orders referred to above, Regulations followed. The Local Government (Boundary Changes) (General) Regulations 2018 sets out the arrangements following the abolishment of the Four Councils and Regulation 7(3) provides that anything done by, or in relation to [any of the Four Councils] in the exercise of, or in connection with, a function that is to be exercised on and after the reorganisation date by the successor council shall have effect as if done by, or in

relation to, that council. Regulation 7(4) confirms that this applies in particular to any agreement or decision. This means that in terms of the ARP Reconstitution Agreement any obligations on or rights held by any one of the Four Councils is automatically held by the relevant successor council (i.e. East or West Suffolk Councils).

- 2.0.4 Whilst these provisions mean that the partnership could continue under the existing agreement, there are other issues that have been discussed during the lifetime of this agreement that mean a review is timely to ensure that the agreement is fit for purpose moving forward.

### **3. The Current Agreement**

- 3.0.1 The 2015 Anglia Revenues Partnership Reconstitution Agreement, as amended by the Joint Committee, sets out the role, membership, meetings and officers of the Joint Committee and provides at clause 3.1 that each of the Seven Councils shall appoint one of its members (and one substitute) for the time being to be members of the Joint Committee.
- 3.0.2 The role of the Joint Committee is set out in clause 3.26 of the Agreement and is mainly to discharge the Seven Council's statutory functions in respect of the JC Services as defined in Schedule 1 to the Agreement. The JC Services relate to the collection of council tax and business rates and administration of relevant benefits e.g. Council Tax (calculation, billing, recovery, enforcement) business rates (billing, recovery, enforcement), Benefits administration (incl. overpayments) and anti-fraud measures.
- 3.0.3 The Joint Committee may also approve the service delivery plan for each year to include staffing requirements, approve the annual budget, approve the annual report, monitor expenditure and income against the agreed budget, set progress and performance targets for the JC Services, recommend any amendment of the terms of reference of the Joint Committee or Reconstitution Agreement, review audits and policies and appoint sub-committees as may be required and to delegate specific functions to those committees.
- 3.0.4 Any decisions which fall outside the remit of the Joint Committee (as set out in clause 3.24 of the Agreement referred to above) would need to be referred back to each of the member Councils.

### **4. Review of Partnership**

- 4.0.1 Clause 11 of the Reconstitution Agreement provides that at any time any one or more of the Seven Councils may seek a review of the Agreement and the operation of the ARP and its performance of the JC Services by giving notice to that effect ("Review Notice") to the other or others of the Seven Councils.
- 4.0.2 In accordance with this process, Ian Gallin, Chief Executive of Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, served a review notice to the other partner authorities on 18 October, 2018. All Chief Executives agreed to the review, tasking their members of the Operational Improvement Board to make recommendations as to the terms of reference.
- 4.0.3 On 4<sup>th</sup> December the Joint Committee agreed to the following scope for the review of the agreement:

#### **Key issues**

- **Membership and representation:** ensure the agreement reflects the membership from 1 April 2019, with each authority having one member and one vote. Review notice required for withdrawal. Update quoracy and proxy

arrangements as agreed at Joint Committee in September 2017, reflecting too fact that there will now be 5 partners. (also see point 4.0.4 below)

- **Powers of JC and delegations to OIB** : ensure that the agreement reflects the delegations that have been agreed by Joint Committee
- **Decision making** – no change to be made to the decision making provisions that are by majority vote with Chair holding casting vote

### **Administrative issues**

- **Review process**: update the review process to remove need for all Chief Executives to agree to review;
- **Financial provisions and budget shares**: ensure that the agreement reflects current accounting practice and new partnership arrangements.
- **Audit**: be clear on provisions for audit and role of Joint Committee and OIB in the audit process
- **ARPT** –review all references and ensure up to date
- **Data Sharing** – update to incorporate any changes in line with recent legislation (GDPR)
- **Variation** – how the partnership approaches variation on minor changes and what constitutes a minor change
- **List of legislation forming JC services** – ensure up to date
- **ARP Enforcement Agency** – ensure agreement reflects provision of this service

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

The review will be overseen by the Operational Improvement Board and will be undertaken by West Suffolk Councils Legal Services team. The final agreement will be drafted by solicitors and will be agreed by all partner Councils

- 4.04 A further update to the agreement was requested at the 17 September 2019 Joint Committee meeting in relation to the quoracy of the Joint Committee to four members unless the Chair in consultation with the committee felt it would be appropriate for all five Joint Committee Members (or their substitute) to be present and in that case the item shall be deferred until the next meeting – 3.10 of the agreement attached refers.
- 4.05 The revised agreement has been considered by each partner's legal, financial and Audit teams in the light of the scope agreed above and all partners have confirmed that they are happy for the agreement to be recommended to you.

### **5.0 Recommendations**

- 5.0.1 It is recommended that Joint Committee review and approve the revised agreement (Appendix 1) should take effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.
- 5.0.2 Further it is proposed that the Joint Committee recommend to the partner councils that each council approve the revised agreement and that, subject to approval, the agreement should be sealed and signed

### **6.0 Reasons for recommendations**

- 6.1 The review will meet the requirements of all partner Councils creating a new equitable partnership and ensuring that the partnership agreement is up to date.

### **6.2 Risk**

If there is not agreement between all partners as to the proposed course of action, this could undermine the wider performance and decision making of the partnership. Ultimately, any partner could terminate its membership of the partnership

### **6.3 Financial**

The new agreement ensures that the share of cost remains equitable after the merger of the new Councils.

### **6.4 Legal**

A revised Partnership agreement clarifies the continuation of arrangements now that the new Councils mergers are complete.

### **6.5 Equality and Diversity**

Not applicable.

Background papers: - 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018 – Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution

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#### **Lead Contact Officers**

Name/Post: Rachael Mann, Assistant Director (Resources and Performance)

Email: [rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk)



## **Appendix 1**

DATED

2019

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

and

EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

and

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

and

WEST SUFFOLK COUNCIL

and

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL

---

**AGREEMENT FOR THE RECONSTITUTION  
OF THE ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP**

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**THIS AGREEMENT** is made the                      day of                      2019  
**BETWEEN**

- (1) **BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL** of Elizabeth House Walpole Loke Dereham Norfolk NR19 1EE ("**Breckland**") of the first part
- (2) **EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** of The Grange Nutholt Lane Ely Cambridgeshire CB7 4EE ("**East Cambridgeshire**") of the second part and
- (3) **FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL** of Fenland Hall County Road March PE15 8NQ ("**Fenland**") of the third part
- (4) **WEST SUFFOLK COUNCIL** of West Suffolk House Western Way Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP33 3YU ("**West Suffolk** of the fourth part
- (5) **EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL** of East Suffolk House, Station Road, Melton, Woodbridge Suffolk IP12 1RTU ("**East Suffolk**") of the fifth part

**Together referred to as the 'Five Councils'**

## **RECITALS**

- (i) The parties hereto have entered into this Agreement having recognised that significant efficiency and financial gains can be made by working together to deliver revenues and benefits services in partnership thereby enabling them to secure administrative advantages and economies of scale and to provide a robust and flexible service to their councils.
- (ii) On the 01 April 2015 Breckland District Council, Fenland District Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Forest Heath District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council (then referred to as the Seven Authorities) being duly empowered to do so under their constitutional arrangements and by law in force at the time agreed to form a joint committee ("**the 2015 Joint Committee**") pursuant to Section 101 (5) and Section 102 of the LGA 1972, Section 20 of the LGA 2000 and the 2000 Regulations and 2012 Regulations.

- (iii) On the 01 April 2019 Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council were abolished and a new non-metropolitan district council, West Suffolk Council, was created by virtue of the West Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018.
- (iv) On the 01 April 2019 Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council were abolished and a new non-metropolitan district council, East Suffolk Council, was created by virtue of the East Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018.
- (v) On the 01 April 2019 the functions of the abolished councils referred to in recitals (iii) and (iv) above became the functions of the new district councils by virtue of the Local Government (Boundary Changes) Regulations 2018 and the Seven Councils referred to in all arrangements for the creation of the 2015 Joint Committee will mean the Five Councils referred to in this Agreement.
- (vi) The 2015 Joint Committee was created for the purpose of:
  - (a) Jointly managing the administration and performance of the Five Councils' respective statutory functions relating to the collection of council tax and non-domestic rates and the payment of housing and other relevant benefits;
  - (b) To establish a joint operational unit known as the Anglia Revenues Partnership ("ARP") under the control and management of the 2015 Joint Committee to provide the Five Councils with such services ("the JC Services");
  - (c) To enter into a Reconstitution Agreement to regulate the constitution and proceedings of the 2015 Joint Committee and the relationships between the Five Councils and between each of the Five Councils and the 2015 Joint Committee and the future operation and funding of the ARP and making provision for:-
    - 1. the constitution, meetings, officers and funding of the 2015 Joint Committee;
    - 2. the transfer to the control and management of the 2015 Joint Committee the existing ARP.

- (vii) This Reconstitution Agreement will for all intents and purposes replace the Reconstitution Agreement made between the Seven Councils on the 10 September 2015 subject to the 2015 Joint Committee which will continue to remain in effect from 00.01 hours on the 01 April 2015.
- (viii) The Five Councils have pursuant to Section 95 of the LGA 2003 formed a wholly owned company limited by shares registered under the Companies Acts (“ARP Trading Limited”) for the purpose of them being in a position to jointly trade commercially in their functional activities in respect of the JC Services.
- (ix) The Five Councils have mutually exchanged information concerning their performance of their statutory functions within the definition of the JC Services (including financial reports and audit reports in respect of the previous two Financial Years together with other independent reports and assessments relevant to such performance).

## **NOW THIS AGREEMENT WITNESSES:**

### **1. INTERPRETATION**

#### **1.1 In this Agreement:**

##### **“Accountancy Protocol”**

means the Budget Policies and Procedures at Schedule 3 of this Agreement

##### **“Action Plan”**

means a written plan agreed by the Five Councils under Clause 10.3;

##### **“ADR Notice”**

means a notice given pursuant to Clause 22.2;

##### **“Alternative Business Structure”**

means for the purposes of this Agreement, further Joint Committee partnership; limited company; **Arms Length Management Organisations; or such business vehicles that may be available for the running and management of local authority services.**

**“ARP”**

means the operational unit entitled the Anglia Revenues Partnership controlled and managed by the 2015 Joint Committee pursuant to this Agreement;

**“ARP Management Team”**

means the working group of senior employees of the ARP established by the 2015 Joint Committee pursuant to Clause 5.1;

**“ARP Trading Limited”**

means the company limited by shares of which the Five Councils are equal shareholders pursuant to Section 95 of the LGA 2003;

**“The Chair”**

means the person who is the Chair of the 2015 Joint Committee from time to time elected under Clause 3.13;

**“Commencement Date”**

means the 1st April 2019 when West Suffolk and East Suffolk Councils were created;

**“DPA and GDPR”**

means the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation;

**“DWP”**

means the Department of Works and Pensions

**“Employment Costs”**

means all salaries, wages, sick pay, holiday pay, pension contributions, bonuses, commission, maternity, paternity and adoption pay, redundancy pay, expenses (including, but not limited to travel and subsistence allowances and disturbance pay), **tribunal awards or pre dispute resolution settlements** income and other taxes, national insurance contributions and levies of any kind for which an employer is accountable and all other normal employment costs;

**“Financial Year”**

means a period of one year commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> April in any year and ending on 31<sup>st</sup> March in the next following year;

**“FOIA”**

means the Freedom of Information Act 2000

**“Five Councils”**

means together the parties hereto;

**“JC Member”**

means a member of the 2015 Joint Committee appointed in accordance with Clause 3.1;

**“JC Services”**

means the functions and services listed respectively in Part I and Part II of Schedule 1 of this Agreement;

**“LGA 1972”**

means the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended);

**“LGA 2000”**

means the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended);

**“LGA 2003”**

means the Local Government Act 2003 (as amended);

**“2015 Joint Committee”**

means the joint committee formed by the Seven Councils and now the Five Councils pursuant to the resolutions of the Five Councils to that effect pursuant to the terms of this Agreement;

**“Operational Improvement Board”**

means the working group of senior employees from ARP and the Five Councils established by the 2015 Joint Committee pursuant to Clause 5.4;

**“Review Report”**

means a report referred to in Clause 11.1;

**“Secretary”**

means the Secretary of the 2015 Joint Committee for the time being appointed pursuant to Clause 3.21;

**“Service Delivery Plan”**

means the document agreed by the 2015 Joint Committee on an annual basis regarding service standards;

**“Statement of Intent”**

means the Statement produced under Clause 10.4.1 setting out the reasons of the Council producing it for intending to serve a notice of withdrawal under Clause 10.3;

**“Support Services”**



means any service required to support the operations of the ARP including but not limited to human resources finance ICT internal audit procurement and legal;

**“2000 Regulations”**

means the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000 (S.I. 2000 No. 2851) as amended by the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2001 (S.I. 2001 No.3961);

**“2012 Regulations”**

means the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions (England) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No. 1019);

**“Treasurer”**

means the officer appointed as the Chief Financial Officer of the 2015 Joint Committee pursuant to Clause 3.22;

**“TUPE”**

means the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 as amended;

**“Value for Money Objectives”**

means the responsibility incumbent upon all councils to ensure that taxpayers’ money is spent responsibly balancing the need for high quality service delivery with the need to reduce costs;

**“Vice-Chair”**

means the person who is the Vice-Chair of the 2015 Joint Committee elected from time to time under Clause 3.13;

**“Working Days”**

means Monday to Friday (9am – 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4.30pm Friday), with the exception of public holidays in England.

- 1.2 In this Agreement (unless the context requires otherwise):
  - 1.2.1 references to Clauses Schedules and Paragraphs are to the clauses Schedules and paragraphs of this Agreement. Any reference to a sub-clause or a sub-paragraph is to the relevant sub-clause or sub-paragraph of the Clause or Schedule in which it appears;
  - 1.2.2 the table of contents and headings are not part of this Agreement and are not to be taken into account in the interpretation of this Agreement;
  - 1.2.3 the use of the masculine gender alone includes the feminine and neuter genders and the singular includes the plural and vice versa;
  - 1.2.4 references to legislation (including subsidiary legislation) determinations and directions include all amendments replacements or re-enactments thereof and all regulations determinations directions and statutory guidance made or given under them save that the treatment under this Agreement of any such amendment or modification that imposes any new or extended obligation or liability adversely affecting the parties or any of them shall be determined by the 2015 Joint Committee after consultation with the Five Councils;
  - 1.2.5 any reference to a requirement for “consent” or “approval” shall be taken to be the prior written consent or approval of the relevant person or body;
  - 1.2.6 the terms “including” and “in particular” are illustrative only and are not intended and shall not limit the meaning of the relevant words that precede them;
  - 1.2.7 the term “persons” means individuals, companies, industrial and provident societies, limited liability partnerships, statutory bodies, or other bodies with a legal personality and includes H.M. Government, Government Departments, and the European Union and its constituent parts.
- 1.3 The Schedules to this Agreement are to have effect as if set out in full in the body of this Agreement and references to this Agreement include the Schedules.

## **2. THE 2015 JOINT COMMITTEE**

- 2.1 Each of the Five Councils agree that the 2015 Joint Committee shall have all the powers of Breckland, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, West Suffolk and East Suffolk (with effect from the Commencement Date) over the finances made available by Her Majesty's Government the European Union and other sources of finance to each of the Five Councils in relation to or in respect of the establishment, maintenance and development of the JC Services.
- 2.2 Each of the Five Councils hereby warrants that it shall not do nor omit to neither do nor permit to be done anything that prevents or inhibits or seeks to prevent or inhibit the 2015 Joint Committee from carrying out all or any of the JC Services.
- 2.3 Each of the Five Councils shall at all times co-operate with each other and shall work within the spirit of openness, honesty, trust, and with a co-operative approach in respect of each of the others of the Five Councils and with the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 2.4 Each of the Five Councils hereby agrees that it will make to the Treasurer of the 2015 Joint Committee such payments as are provided by this Agreement in full in accordance with the terms of this Agreement and shall meet such liabilities and carry out such obligations in respect of the establishment, maintenance and proceedings of the 2015 Joint Committee and of the operation of the ARP as may be provided by this Agreement or may be determined in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.
- 2.5 The 2015 Joint Committee and the Five Councils shall keep under review (having regard to each of the Five Councils' Value for Money Objectives) whether the performance of the JC Services should continue to be managed through the 2015 Joint Committee and may decide to consider and agree alternative mechanisms for the performance of the JC Services.
- 2.6 Where any of the Five Councils considers that its Value for Money Objectives require it to do so it shall have the right (after consultation with the others of the Five Councils and the 2015 Joint Committee) to make other arrangements for the performance of any of its statutory functions within the JC Services provided that to do so shall not be inconsistent with its obligations under this Agreement.

### **3. THE 2015 JOINT COMMITTEE, ITS ROLE, MEMBERSHIP, MEETINGS AND OFFICERS**

#### **Joint Committee Members**

- 3.1 Subject to Clause 3.2 each of the Five Councils shall appoint one of its members for the time being to be a member of the 2015 Joint Committee. In addition each of the Five Councils shall appoint two substitutes, who may attend meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee in the absence of their Council's JC Members.
- 3.2 All such appointments (whether made under Clause 3.1 or 3.4) shall be made in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions of Sections 101 and 102 of the LGA 1972 and of the 2000 Regulations or 2012 Regulations, as they may from time to time be applicable to each of the Five Councils.
- 3.3 Each JC Member shall remain in office until removed or replaced by his or her appointing Council or until ceasing to be a member of his or her appointing Council (or of the executive if Regulation 12 of the 2012 Regulations is applicable to his or her appointment).
- 3.4 Each of the Five Councils may remove and replace its JC Members at any time by giving notice of such removal or replacement to the 2015 Joint Committee by sending such notice to the Secretary within 5 days of effecting such removal or replacement.
- 3.5 The proceedings of the 2015 Joint Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy or by any defect or purported defect in the appointment of any JC Member.

#### **Meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee**

- 3.6 Part I of Schedule 12 of the LGA 1972 and the provisions of Clauses 3.7 to 3.17 shall apply to meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 3.7 Meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee shall normally be held once each quarter, subject to the need exceptionally to call additional meetings. The Chair shall

decide the venue, date and time of all meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee. Wherever practicable, at least ten Working Days notice of such meetings shall be given to each JC Member, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Monitoring Officer and to each of the Five Councils.

- 3.8 Any JC Member may requisition a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee by giving notice of such requisition to the Chair and to the Secretary. Immediately upon receipt of such requisition, the Chair shall call a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee in accordance with Clause 3.7.
- 3.9 The standing orders applicable to council meetings of Breckland shall apply to meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee except in so far as the 2015 Joint Committee may agree amendments thereto or may adopt its own standing orders. All recommendations taken to the 2015 Joint Committee shall be voted upon and the majority shall prevail. Please refer to Clause 3.17 should an equality of votes arise.
- 3.10 No business may be transacted at a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee unless a quorum is present. The quorum for a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee shall be four JC Members or their substitute present in person. In the unlikely event that a JC Member or one of their substitutes is unable to attend a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee a proxy arrangement may be agreed between the affected party and the remaining parties to this Agreement and a named member of the affected party may attend as such proxy. A substitute member or proxy member will count towards a quorum but will be unable to chair the meeting nor to vote on any issues. If the meeting is quorate but, upon considering an item brought to the Joint Committee the Chair determines (in consultation with the other Joint Committee members present) that it would be appropriate for all five JC Members (or their substitute) to be present, the item shall be deferred until the next meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee and a request shall be made for all five JC Members to be present or represented at that meeting.
- 3.11 If a quorum is not present within fifteen minutes of the time set for the commencement of a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee (or a quorum ceases to be present during a meeting) the meeting shall be adjourned to the same day time

and venue seven days later or to such other date time and venue as the Chair (or other person who is chairing the meeting) shall determine.

- 3.12 One of the meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee referred to in Clause 3.7 shall be held during May or June of each calendar year and shall be the annual meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee at which the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the 2015 Joint Committee shall take place together with such other business as may be appropriate in the opinion of the outgoing Chair.

### **Chair and Vice-Chair**

- 3.13 The 2015 Joint Committee shall at each annual meeting elect a new Chair and a new Vice-Chair to hold office for the next ensuing year. The persons eligible to be elected as Chair shall not be the appointees of a Council whose appointee held that position in any of the four previous years. The persons eligible to be elected as Vice-Chair shall not be the appointees of a Council whose appointee held that position in the previous year. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall not be appointees of the same Council.
- 3.14 The Chair or Vice-Chair may be removed by a majority vote of all JC Members present at a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee subject to the Chair or the Vice-Chair being given the opportunity to address the meeting before the vote is taken to put his or her case why he or she should not be removed.
- 3.15 If the Chair or the Vice-Chair is removed by a vote of the 2015 Joint Committee or resigns or is otherwise unable to continue as Chair or Vice-Chair he or she may be replaced by the election of a JC Member as Chair or Vice-Chair as the case may be who is the appointee of the same Council as the outgoing Chair or Vice-Chair.
- 3.16 The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee. If the Chair is not present within five minutes of the time for the commencement of a meeting, or being present does not wish to preside, or is unable to do so then the Vice-Chair shall preside at that meeting. If (in the event of the absence or non-availability of the Chair) the Vice-Chair is not present within five minutes of the time for the commencement of the meeting or does not wish to preside or is unable to do so, the meeting shall appoint a JC Member to chair the meeting.

- 3.17 In the event of an equality of votes the person chairing a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee shall have a second or casting vote.

### **Responsibilities of the Chair and Vice-Chair**

- 3.18 The responsibilities of the Chair are as follows: -
- 3.18.1 to act as an ambassador for the 2015 Joint Committee and to represent the views of the 2015 Joint Committee to the general public and other organisations;
  - 3.18.2 to seek to ensure that the meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee are conducted efficiently;
  - 3.18.3 to give all JC Members and/or their substitutes/proxy an opportunity to express their views;
  - 3.18.4 to establish a constructive working relationship with, and to provide support for, any sub-committees or officers of the 2015 Joint Committee or of the ARP to whom the 2015 Joint Committee have delegated any of its powers and functions;
  - 3.18.5 to encourage the 2015 Joint Committee to delegate sufficient authority to officers of the 2015 Joint Committee or of the ARP to enable the statutory functions within the provision of the JC Services to be carried out efficiently between meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee;
  - 3.18.6 to ensure that the 2015 Joint Committee monitors and controls the use of delegated powers.
- 3.19 The role of the Vice-Chair is to deputise for the Chair during any period of the Chair's absence and during that period his or her responsibilities shall be the same as those of the Chair.
- 3.20 Except as provided by this Agreement neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair has any authority or powers beyond those of any other JC Member.

### **Officers of the 2015 Joint Committee**

#### **(i) Secretary**

- 3.21 The Secretary of the 2015 Joint Committee shall be the officer for the time being designated by the 2015 Joint Committee. The Secretary shall be responsible for the recording of the minutes of all meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee and for

the circulation of draft minutes to each JC Member within five days of each meeting and responsible for the sending out of all notices and agendas of meetings. Minutes and records of the meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee shall be maintained by the Secretary in accordance with the requirements of the LGA 1972.

**(ii) Treasurer**

- 3.22 The Treasurer of the 2015 Joint Committee shall be appointed by the 2015 Joint Committee at each annual meeting for the next ensuing year from the Five Councils. The Treasurer as the Chief Financial Officer of the 2015 Joint Committee shall perform the functions of the relevant officer responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of the 2015 Joint Committee under Section 151 of the LGA 1972, Part VIII of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations 2003.

The Treasurer shall also perform the role of the accounting officer in respect of all funds held on account for or paid to the Five Councils or any of them by Her Majesty's Government the European Union or other sources of finance for any purposes of the JC Services and to make or provide all appropriate banking and accounting arrangements and services required for the due and proper receipt, holding and application of such funds in accordance with the requirements of Her Majesty's Government and in accordance with best practice.

**(iv) Legal Advice and Services in Respect of the Constitution and Governance of the 2015 Joint Committee**

- 3.23 Legal advice and services as detailed in Schedule 4 of this Agreement should be sought from the Head of Legal Services or equivalent for the time being of one of the Five Councils or, where the ARP Management Team considers it appropriate, and on the advice of a Head of Legal Services or equivalent of the Five Councils, from external legal sources on specialist matters, or in the event that a conflict of interest may arise or has arisen. Where the use of legal advice and services from an external source is required, the 2015 Joint Committee shall be required to approve the use of such external legal sources and their proposed fees for providing such legal advice and services. The precise manner in which such advice and services will be provided shall be the subject of a separate agreement between the Five Councils.



### **The Role of the 2015 Joint Committee**

- 3.24 The Role of the 2015 Joint Committee is to discharge the Five Council's statutory functions in respect of the JC Services including to: -
- 3.24.1 approve the Service Delivery Plan for each Financial Year including the approval of staffing requirements to be met by the Five Councils;
  - 3.24.2 approve the annual budget for the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP;
  - 3.24.3 approve the annual report of the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP;
  - 3.24.4 monitor expenditure and income of the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP against the agreed annual budget;
  - 3.24.5 set progress and performance targets for the JC Services, approve the Service Delivery Plan for the performance of such Services and monitor and review the performance of such Services against such targets and delivery plan;
  - 3.24.6 recommend to the Five Councils any amendment of the terms of reference of the 2015 Joint Committee or of this Agreement;
  - 3.24.7 regularly review and update the ARP Health and Safety Policy having particular regard to any amendments required by reason of a change of law which Policy the Five Councils shall have developed as soon as is practicable following the entering into of this Agreement;
  - 3.24.8 appoint one or more sub-committees of the 2015 Joint Committee (in accordance with Regulation 11(4) of the 2000 Regulations) as it may consider to be required and to delegate specific functions to such sub-committees. Any sub-committee shall comprise a majority of JC Members (one of whom shall chair the sub-committee) but may include non-JC Members (namely from the membership of the Five Councils) and the 2015 Joint Committee shall determine terms of reference of each sub-committee the term of office of each sub-committee member and the quorum for meetings of each sub-committee and the financial limits within which it shall operate;
  - 3.24.9 delegate specific functions to officers of the 2015 Joint Committee or of the ARP in accordance with the provisions of Section 101 of the LGA 1972 and Regulation 11(4) of the 2000 Regulations.

#### **4. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

- 4.1 The Five Councils shall through the 2015 Joint Committee regularly review and update an ARP Health and Safety Policy having particular regard to any amendments required by reason of a change of law.

#### **5. ARP MANAGEMENT TEAM AND OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD**

##### **ARP Management Team**

- 5.1 The 2015 Joint Committee has established a working group of ARP senior employees to be known as the ARP Management Team.

- 5.2 The members of the ARP Management Team shall continue to comprise the following officers of the ARP: -

The Head of ARP

The Strategic Manager (Billing and Benefits)

The Strategic Manager (Revenues)

The Strategic Manager (Support)

and such other officers of ARP as the 2015 Joint Committee may decide.

- 5.3 The responsibilities of the ARP Management Team shall be to: -

- 5.3.1 manage the performance of the JC Services so as to ensure, so far as is possible and practicable, the delivery of such Services in accordance with the Service Delivery Plan and the progress and performance targets for the JC Services set by the 2015 Joint Committee pursuant to Clause 3.25.5;
- 5.3.2 review the JC Services following a subsidy reclaim made by the DWP and in the event of such reclaim from the DWP or equivalent body to review the matter to which the reclaim relates and determine whether in the circumstances of the case the payment of the reclaimed amount shall be shared in accordance with the agreed percentages payable by the Five Councils for the period of subsidy reclaim;
- 5.3.3 report to the 2015 Joint Committee meetings on the progress and performance of the services provided by the ARP in connection with the provision of the JC

Services against the Service Delivery Plan and the progress and performance targets set by the 2015 Joint Committee pursuant to Clause 3.25.5;

- 5.3.4 strive to ensure that the services provided by the ARP are delivered equitably between the Five Councils, so far as may be practicable;
- 5.3.5 prepare and submit to the 2015 Joint Committee for its approval on or before 31<sup>st</sup> December in each year an annual budget, and annual Service Delivery Plan for the next Financial Year;
- 5.3.6 report to the 2015 Joint Committee on the income and expenditure of the ARP against the approved budget;
- 5.3.7 seek to ensure so far as is practicable that the JC Services are provided within the budget (to include the allocation of new burdens funding) approved by the 2015 Joint Committee and to notify the 2015 Joint Committee of any material divergence from the annual budget and the reasons therefore;
- 5.3.8 recommend to the 2015 Joint Committee the resources (including staffing resources) required to provide the JC Services to the requisite performance standards and any changes required in such resources to maintain such performance standards;
- 5.3.9 make appropriate recommendations to the 2015 Joint Committee on any matter of relevance to the business of the 2015 Joint Committee and of the ARP.

#### **Operational Improvement Board**

- 5.4 The 2015 Joint Committee has established an Operational Improvement Board.
- 5.5 The members of the Operational Improvement Board shall continue to be a working group of senior employees from ARP and the Five Councils as established by the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 5.6 The Operational Improvement Board shall meet monthly and report to the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 5.7 The responsibilities of the Operational Improvement Board shall be to:-
  - 5.7.1 clarify service standards/levels provided by the ARP on behalf of each of the Five Councils in particular:-
    - 5.7.1.1 interface with client services;

- 5.7.1.2 performance management requirements;  
and ensure a clear relationship between the ARP and client services in terms of areas of responsibility and fairness of cost/benefit arising;
- 5.7.2 shape future services both for each of the Five Councils and the ARP by identifying issues and prioritisation of them by the ARP management;
- 5.7.3 provide a basis to resolve problems and improve service incrementally over time;
- 5.7.4 where no Support Service arrangements have been agreed, or where it is deemed time to review the existing Support Service arrangements, decide how on going Support Service arrangement should be provided for ARP and
- 5.7.5 receive reports on specific employee Employments Costs.
- 5.7.6 consider and agree any future spending in respect of additional funding

## **6. FINANCE, BUDGETING AND AUDIT**

### **Finance – Budgets**

- 6.1 The budget for the provision of the JC Services on behalf of the Five Councils for the Financial Year 2019/20 set out in Schedule 2 has been approved by the Five Councils.
- 6.2 A draft budget for each Financial Year subsequent to 2019/20 shall be prepared by the ARP Management Team in collaboration with the Heads of Finance and Chief Finance Officers (or equivalent) of the Five Councils respectively and submitted to the Treasurer for consideration. The draft budget shall be based upon the budget for the previous Financial Year updated for any anticipated changes considered necessary and shall take account of the information in Schedule 3, paragraph 2.1
- 6.3 The draft budget shall also have appended to it a Schedule detailing the payments estimated to be required to be made by each of the Five Councils during the relevant Financial Year.
- 6.4 After being considered by the Treasurer, the draft budget shall be submitted to the 2015 Joint Committee for approval and thereafter submitted to each of the Five Councils so as to be received by them by no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December in each year.

- 6.5 Any comments of the Five Councils on the draft budget shall be submitted to the ARP Management Team who shall report to the 2015 Joint Committee the comments of each of the Five Councils and the effect thereof and the 2015 Joint Committee shall, having taken such comments and the report of the ARP Management Team into consideration, decide whether or not to approve the draft budget whether in the original or an amended form.
- 6.6 If the 2015 Joint Committee approves the draft budget (whether or not as amended) it shall become the approved budget for the relevant Financial Year and a copy of the approved budget shall be submitted to each of the Five Councils.
- 6.7 If the 2015 Joint Committee fails to approve a budget for the relevant Financial Year the process referred to in Clauses 6.2 to 6.6 shall be repeated in an attempt to secure an approved budget as soon as possible and in the meantime the JC Services shall be provided on the basis of the approved budget for the previous Financial Year with such amendment as the 2015 Joint Committee may determine.
- 6.8 In the event that the budget for the current Financial Year requires amendment to meet any overspend or increase in the costs of the provision of the JC Services by the ARP for that year, the ARP Management Team shall report thereon to the 2015 Joint Committee. If the 2015 Joint Committee agrees that the budget requires amendment it shall notify the Five Councils thereof and of the proposed amendments to the budget and of any increased payments it proposes that should be required from the Five Councils. The 2015 Joint Committee shall consider any comments on the proposals and determine whether or not and how the budget shall be amended and the amount of any additional payment required to be made by each of the Five Councils to meet the overspend or increase in the ARP's costs.
- 6.9 The ARP Management Team shall report as soon as practicable to the 2015 Joint Committee on any deficit or surplus arising during the current or immediately preceding Financial Year as compared with the approved budget. Any such deficit shall be met or any such surplus shall be dispersed by reference to the Accountancy Protocol.

#### **Payments to be made by the Five Councils**

- 6.10 The Five Councils shall in each Financial Year each pay to the funds of the 2015 Joint Committee sums in respect of the expenses of the 2015 Joint Committee and the costs of provision of the JC Services on behalf of each of them by the ARP.
- 6.11 The budget for the Financial Year 2015/16 set out in Schedule 2 and referred to in Schedule 3 formed the baseline position from which all further adjustments to the budget would be calculated. For each Financial Year subsequent to 2015/16 the cost of any increases or savings from any decreases in the ARP budget are allocated to each of the Five Councils in line with the agreed percentages set out in Paragraph 5.1 of the Accountancy Protocol. The agreed ARP percentage figures will be reviewed annually as set out in Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol.

#### **One-off Costs**

- 6.12 The One-off Costs shall be paid by each of the Five Councils in accordance with the percentages provided by Clause 6.11 upon receipt of an invoice from the Treasurer.
- 6.13 Each of the Five Councils shall pay the sums and percentages provided by Clauses 6.10 and 6.11 to the Treasurer for the credit of the funds of the 2015 Joint Committee in each Financial Year during which this Agreement remains in force.

#### **Accounts and Audit**

- 6.14 The Treasurer shall maintain the accounts of the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and the Local Authority Accountancy Act 2014 and with the requirements of the Department of Social Security, H.M. Treasury, H.M. Revenue and Customs, and all other applicable requirements.
- 6.15 Independent and objective internal audits of the JC Services shall be undertaken by the Five Councils either independently or in accordance with the provisions and schedules contained within Service Level Agreements outside this Agreement.

## **7. EMPLOYEES OF THE ARP**

- 7.1 The Five Councils shall ensure that sufficient and appropriate employees shall be made available to undertake and manage the activities necessary or expedient for the proper and adequate provision of the JC Services as approved in the annual staffing establishment by the 2105 Joint Committee on behalf of the Five Councils. A draft staffing establishment for each Financial Year subsequent to the establishment of the ARP shall be prepared by the ARP Management Team in collaboration with the Heads of Human Resources (or equivalent) of the Five Councils respectively and submitted to the Treasurer for consideration. The draft establishment budget shall be based upon the establishment for the previous Financial Year updated for any anticipated changes considered necessary.
- 7.2 Any employee allocated by any of the Five Councils, as the case may be, to carry out any activities necessary or expedient for the provision of the JC Services shall be required to report to the 2015 Joint Committee unless his or her terms of employment require otherwise and subject to the obligations of the council as his or her employer.
- 7.3 Each of the Five Councils warrant and represent that:
- 7.3.1 it shall (subject to Clause 7.5 and without prejudice to the indemnities in Clause 7.3.5) continue to pay all Employment Costs for each of its employees allocated to carry out work in respect of the 2015 Joint Committee and the provision of the JC Services (to be covered by the payment detailed in Clauses 6.10 and 6.11);
- 7.3.2 the allocation of such of its employees to carry out work in respect of the 2015 Joint Committee and the provision of the JC Services does not breach the terms of their contracts of employment;
- 7.3.3 it shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure that its employees so allocated shall perform their duties with the skill care and diligence to be expected of a competent employee engaged in the performance of those duties having regard to the grade and experience of such employees;
- 7.3.4 it shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure that nothing is done by it or by its employees or agents which results in a breach of the contract of employment of

- any member of the ARP employees or of any employee of another council so allocated;
- 7.3.5 it shall indemnify the others of the Five Councils against all claims by or in respect of its employees allocated to the 2015 Joint Committee or the ARP in respect of the delivery of Support Services in the provision of the JC Services caused by the fault negligence or omission of that Council or its employees or agents in respect of the provision of the JC Services and take disciplinary action against such employees, if the employing Council deems appropriate; and
  - 7.3.6 (in respect of issues arising under 7.3.5) it shall be responsible for all claims by or in respect of its employees allocated to the 2015 Joint Committee or the ARP in respect of the provision of the JC Services caused by the fault negligence or omission of that Council or its employees or agents towards those employees.
  - 7.4 The Five Councils agree to indemnify each other against all costs in relation to pensions and pensions' contributions in respect of any employees transferred/working within ARP in accordance with the percentages in Paragraph 5.1 as may be amended by Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol (Schedule 3).
  - 7.5 Each of the Five Councils shall where relevant cooperate and give assistance to and act in good faith towards each other in order to enable each of the others of these Councils to comply with their legal obligations in respect of their own employees.
  - 7.6 In the event that an employee of the 2015 Joint Committee is to be offered early retirement, redundancy or termination with associated payments, then such an offer to a specific employee will be reported to the next available Operational Improvement Board meeting.
  - 7.7 In the event that: -
    - 7.7.1 the 2015 Joint Committee is dissolved pursuant to Clause 10.2 because of a decision by any or all of the Five Councils to withdraw from the 2015 Joint Committee; or
    - 7.7.2 such Council no longer requires any part or element of the JC Services to be performed on its behalf by the ARP; and



- 7.7.3 TUPE does not apply to transfer the contracts of employment of all or any of the relevant employees of the others of the Five Councils carrying out work in connection with the performance of the JC Services on behalf of that Council or to any new contractor engaged by that Council

then that Council shall indemnify the others of the Five Councils against all contractual and statutory redundancy payments and notice payments made to employees dismissed by those others of the Five Councils for the reasons of redundancy arising from such withdrawal of that Council from the 2015 Joint Committee or the cessation of the performance of all or any of the JC Services by ARP on its behalf.

- 7.8 The Employment Costs incurred by any of the Five Councils in respect of any of its employees allocated to the 2015 Joint Committee or the ARP, other than the costs covered by the indemnities in Clauses 7.3.5, 7.5, and 7.6, shall be a charge against the accounts of the 2015 Joint Committee.

- 7.9 In the event that all Five Councils wish to consider dissolution and transfer to an Alternative Business Structure, all Five Councils agree:

- 7.9.1 that all Five Councils shall jointly instruct a pensions expert to undertake an actuarial and valuations assessment of the 2015 Joint Committee employee pensions contributions and liability, being both current and inherited liability ("Pensions Valuation Report") as at an agreed date, prior to dissolution; and

- 7.9.2 that full disclosure of the information submitted by or on behalf of the Five Councils in respect of Clause 7.9.1 shall be available to all Five Councils, together with any drafts and final copies of the most recent Pensions Valuation Report; and

- 7.9.3 that upon receipt of the most recent Pensions Valuation Report, each Council shall be liable for a proportion that directly relates to the caseload undertaken at the time of the dissolution, as calculated under Paragraph 5.1 or as may be amended by Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol and to the extent that it is necessary to indemnify the others of the Five Councils of any outstanding liability; and

- 7.9.4 that all Five Councils must then consider whether to transfer the 2015 Joint Committee employee pensions and liability detailed in the most recent Pensions Valuation Report to the Alternative Business Structure.

## **8. ARP PREMISES, ASSETS, CONTRACTS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

### **Premises**

8. The costs of the premises at Breckland House, Thetford occupied and used by the 2015 Joint Committee or by the ARP for the provision of the JC Services shall be charged to the accounts of the 2015 Joint Committee in accordance with Clause 2.1 of Schedule 3

### **Assets**

- 8.1 Any assets allocated for use by the ARP for the provision of the JC Services shall remain the property of the Council who owned it prior to the formation of the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 8.2 Any jointly used new assets procured by one of the Five Councils (as determined by the 2015 Joint Committee) on behalf of and at the cost of the 2015 Joint Committee (subject to the standing orders of the procuring Council and any applicable procurement legislation) shall be owned by the Five Councils in proportion to the percentages determined under Paragraph 5.1 or as may be amended by Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol.
- 8.3 The 2015 Joint Committee shall be responsible for the security, maintenance and repair of all assets used by it and the ARP for the provision of the JC Services.
- 8.4 A register of assets shall be maintained by the Treasurer showing the ownership, the date of its allocation to, or purchase for, the purposes of the 2015 Joint Committee for use by the ARP and the date of disposal of all assets allocated to or used by the 2015 Joint Committee formerly used by the ARP.

### **Contracts**

- 8.5 All contracts (whether for goods, equipment, supplies, services or use of intellectual property rights) entered into on behalf of the 2015 Joint Committee or its predecessor for use by the ARP shall (subject to the provision of any necessary licence or approval of the other contracting party) be continued in effect.
- 8.6 Any new contracts required for the purposes of the 2015 Joint Committee for the benefit of the ARP for the provision of the JC Services shall be procured by one of the Five Councils (as determined by the Operational Improvement Board) on behalf of the 2015 Joint Committee in accordance with the acquiring Council's standing orders and any applicable procurement legislation and the procuring Council shall remain contractually liable for any rights obligations and liabilities arising under the contracts and shall act in that regard in the best interests of the Five Councils and the 2015 Joint Committee and account for any monies received to the 2015 Joint Committee and be entitled to seek recompense from the funds of the 2015 Joint Committee for any expenditure properly and reasonably incurred in that respect.

### **Intellectual Property**

- 8.7 Each of the Five Councils shall grant to each of the others of the Five Councils a royalty free licence to copy and use through the 2015 Joint Committee all materials relevant to the JC Services in which it has intellectual property rights for use by or for the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP only. The Council owning such intellectual property rights shall indemnify the others of the Five Councils in respect of any claim for infringement of the intellectual property rights of a third party and shall notify the others of the Five Councils and the 2015 Joint Committee as soon as it receives notice of any such claim.

## **9. INDEMNITIES INSURANCE AND LIABILITIES AND CONDUCT OF CLAIMS**

### **Indemnities**

- 9.1 Save as provided under Clause 5.3.2 (*subsidy reclaims*) and Clauses 7.3.5 and 7.3.6 (*employee fault negligence or omission*) each of the Five Councils shall indemnify the others of them and their employees and agents against all claims

demands actions costs and expenses (including legal expenses on an indemnity basis) which such other of the Five Councils or its employees or agents may incur as a result of any act omission or default of the others of the Five Councils as the case may be or of their employees or agents in respect of this Agreement and:

- 9.1.1 breach of contract;
  - 9.1.2 damage to real and personal property; or
  - 9.1.3 injury to persons including injury resulting in death.
- 9.2 Save as provided by Clauses 7.3.5 and 7.3.6, (*employee fault negligence or omission*) each of the Five Councils shall indemnify the others of them from and against any damages or awards paid to any of its employees or his or her personal representatives or payment made in settlement of any claims made by an employee or his or her personal representative arising from a breach by that Council of this Agreement or from negligence of that Council or its employees or agents (including legal expenses on an indemnity basis).
- 9.3 Save as provided under Clause 5.3.2 (*subsidy reclaims*) and Clauses 7.3.5 and 7.3.6 (*employee fault negligence or omission*) each of the Five Councils shall release and indemnify the others of the Five Councils and their members and officers from and against all liability for any of the following which arise out of or in consequence of the obligations under this Agreement, including but not limited to:
- 9.3.1 breach by that Council of its supply contracts for goods or materials or equipment made or to be made available to the 2015 Joint Committee for the purposes of the JC Services; or
  - 9.3.2 breach by that Council of the terms of any other of the Five Councils' supply contracts for such goods or materials or equipment.
- 9.4 Where one of the Five Councils enters into such a supply contract as is referred to in Clause 9.3.1 then the others of the Five Councils shall release and indemnify the contracting Council in respect of any breach by those others of the Five Councils (or of their officers or agents) of the obligations under such a supply contract arising from or in consequence of any non-performance or part performance acts defaults omissions breaches and negligence of any obligation under that supply contract.

- 9.5 A Council shall not be responsible or obliged to indemnify any other or others of the Five Councils for:
- 9.5.1 any liability under Clause 9.3 which arises as a direct result of one of the Five Councils acting on the instructions of any other or others of the Five Councils (to the extent that the other Council is or other Councils are entitled to give such instructions); or
- 9.5.2 any injury loss damage cost and expense caused by the negligence wilful misconduct or a breach of this Agreement by any other or others of the Five Councils or an agent contractor or employee of any other or others of the Five Councils.
- 9.6 None of the Five Councils shall be liable in tort to any other or others of the Five Councils for any negligent act or omission of that other Council or those other Councils relating to this Agreement and the only remedy of such other Council or Councils is under this Agreement. Each of the Five Councils shall use reasonable endeavours to procure that no agent, contractor or employee of it brings a claim in tort or otherwise against any of the others of the Five Councils.
- 9.7 Any indemnity under any provision of this Agreement shall be without prejudice to any indemnity by the same Council under any other provision of this Agreement.
- 9.8 None of the indemnities under this Agreement shall apply and there shall be no right to claim damages for breach of this Agreement in tort or on any other basis whatsoever to the extent that any loss claimed is for loss of profits, loss of use, loss of production, loss of business or loss of business opportunity or is a claim for consequential or for indirect loss of any nature allegedly suffered by any Council.

### **Insurance and Liabilities**

- 9.9 Each of the Five Councils shall take out and maintain with a well established insurance provider or underwriter of repute for so long as may be necessary the following insurances in respect of their own employees premises and assets allocated to the 2015 Joint Committee for the use of the ARP: -
- 9.9.1 public liability insurance for a value of not less than £10 million for each and every claim;

- 9.9.2 employer's liability insurance for a value of not less than £10 million for each and every claim;
- 9.9.3 buildings and/or contents insurance;
- 9.9.4 any other insurances required by law or agreed by the 2015 Joint Committee to be appropriate.
- 9.10 In respect of any assets owned by any of the Five Councils and allocated to the 2015 Joint Committee for use by the ARP, the Council nominated by the Joint Committee shall take out and maintain the insurances referred to in Clause 9.9.
- 9.11 Any new assets or any accommodation or premises leased or acquired pursuant to Clauses 8.2 or 8.3 shall be insured by the Council nominated by the 2015 Joint Committee to acquire or lease such assets accommodation or premises on behalf of the 2015 Joint Committee for the purposes of the ARP.
- 9.12 In relation to the insurances referred to in Clauses 9.9, 9.10 and 9.11: -
  - 9.12.1 the interests of the others of the Five Councils shall be noted on the policies;
  - 9.12.2 none of the Five Councils shall take any action or fail to take any action nor allow anything to occur which would entitle an insurer to refuse a claim under any of the insurance policies or which may render such a claim wholly or partially repayable;
  - 9.12.3 each of the Five Councils shall provide to the others of the Five Councils copies of insurance policies referred to in Clauses 9.9, 9.10 and 9.11 and evidence of the payment of the premiums and that the insurances are in full force and effect.
- 9.13 In the event of a default by the responsible Council in taking out and maintaining any requisite insurance one of the others of the Five Councils may pay the premium or take out the requisite insurances and recover its costs from the responsible Council as a debt.
- 9.14 Other than in respect of the insurances referred to in Clauses 9.9.1 and 9.9.2 a Council responsible for taking out or maintaining insurances may (subject to the prior agreement of the 2015 Joint Committee) decide to self insure in respect of any risks or interest as defined and agreed by the 2015 Joint Committee and to accept and meet liability thereof as if it were an insurer of such risks or interest.

## **Conduct of Claims**

- 9.15 The conduct by one of the Five Councils of claims made by a third person against it in relation to a matter related to this Agreement in connection with a potential liability described in Clauses 9.1 to 9.8 shall be dealt with under the procedures set out in Schedule 4 of this Agreement.

## **10. COMMENCEMENT AND TERMINATION**

### **Commencement of the Agreement**

- 10.1 This Agreement shall come into at the date at the beginning of this Agreement and shall replace the Reconstitution Agreement dated 10 September 2015 subject to Clause 2 of that Agreement which shall continue to be in force.

### **Withdrawal of a Party from this Agreement**

- 10.2 Subject to the requirements of Clause 10.3 any of the Five Councils may withdraw from the 2015 Joint Committee on giving two years notice to the others of the Five Councils, in accordance with Clause 25. On the effective date of any such withdrawal, being two years after the date of service of the notice set out in Clause 25, this Agreement shall terminate and the 2015 Joint Committee shall be dissolved (save that any of the remaining Councils may enter into a new joint arrangement on such terms as the remaining Councils may agree).
- 10.3 Before serving a notice under Clause 10.2 the Council wishing to withdraw from the 2015 Joint Committee must have:-
- 10.3.1 served a Statement of Intent on the others of the Five Councils setting out the reasons underlying their intention to leave the 2015 Joint Committee and
- 10.3.2 discussed the Statement of Intent with the others of the Five Councils with a view to agreeing an Action Plan at a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee that shall be convened to take place within 28 days of the date of service deemed under Clause 25 but
- 10.4 failed to agree an Action Plan to address the concerns expressed or improved outcomes cited following discussion to deal with these.

- 10.5 Where an Action Plan is agreed the Five Councils will ensure that it is carried out.
- 10.6 Where an Action Plan is not agreed, then the Treasurer shall agree the appointment of an independent actuary to value assets, for the purposes of redistribution/sale or repayment to the Council leaving the 2015 Joint Committee, in accordance with the percentages set out in Paragraph 5.1 or as may be amended by Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol, and the Provisions on Termination set out under Clause 10.7 shall be applied.

#### **New Member**

- 10.7 If at any time it is agreed by the Five Councils that one or more other local authorities shall join in or benefit from the activities of the 2015 Joint Committee this Agreement shall be terminated and the 2015 Joint Committee shall be dissolved on such date as may be agreed by the Five Councils and a new joint committee arrangement entered into on such terms as the Five Councils and such one or more other local authorities may agree.

#### **Provisions on Termination**

- 10.8 From receipt of a notice of withdrawal given under the provisions of Clause 10.2 until the date of termination of this Agreement and without prejudice to any other rights or remedies that the Five Councils have against each other under the terms of this Agreement:
- 10.8.1 each of the Five Councils shall continue to make the payments provided for in this Agreement in respect of the maintenance of the ARP and the costs of the ARP's provision of the JC Services in respect of that Council until date of termination. This shall be subject to any redistribution/sale or repayment to the Council in relation to the ARP assets, in the agreed proportions set out under Paragraph 5.1 as may be amended by Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol, such assets to be valued in accordance with Clause 10.5;
- 10.8.2 each of the Five Councils shall co-operate with each other to ensure a smooth and timely handover of the JC Services to each of those Councils or to any contractor or contractors appointed by them or any of them or to any successor to the ARP and



- 10.8.3 each of the Five Councils shall act in good faith and use reasonable endeavours to minimise loss or harm to the others of the Five Councils arising from such a termination of this Agreement.

**Provisions when dissolving ARP and transferring to an Alternative Business Structure**

- 10.9 In the event that the Five Councils resolve that they wish to dissolve ARP and move to an Alternative Business Structure, the Treasurer shall agree the appointment of an independent actuary and pensions expert, for the purposes of valuing assets and liabilities, including, although not limited to those detailed under Clause 7.11 and that, subject to Clause 8.5 shall be apportioned in accordance with the percentages calculated under Paragraph 5.2 of the Accountancy Protocol.

**11. REVIEW OF AGREEMENT**

- 11.1 At any time any one or more of the Five Councils may seek a review of this Agreement and the operation of the ARP and its performance of the JC Services by submitting a report detailing the reason for the review (Review Report) to each of the other of the Five Councils and the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 11.2 Upon receiving the Review Report the 2015 Joint Committee shall advise the OIB and task it with conducting the review.
- 11.3 On production of the Review Report the Five Councils will have 8 weeks in which to submit their comments to the OIB in order to allow time for committee/member briefing cycles.
- 11.4 On receipt of comments from each of the Five Councils within the timescale referred to in Clause 11.3 (or any extension thereof agreed by the OIB) the OIB shall meet to consider the content and recommendations of the Review Report in the light of the comments received from the Five Councils and submit to the Five Councils and the 2015 Joint Committee the revisions and amendments (if any) it proposes be made to this Agreement and this Agreement shall be amended (or if not amended shall be deemed to have been amended) to accord with the proposals of the Review Report (as revised and amended by the OIB) with effect

from such date as determined by the OIB. The outcome of the review shall be reported to the next meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee.

## **12. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- 12.1 The Five Councils shall work together through the 2015 Joint Committee to deliver the provision of the JC Services to a high standard of quality in a manner which is fair and equitable to all sectors of the communities of the Five Councils and their employees allocated to ARP and to this end each of the Five Councils shall agree:
- - 12.1.1 to adopt policies to comply with their statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and any modification or re-enactment thereof and will not treat any person less favourably than any others because of that person's gender, sex or sexual orientation, marital or other status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, disability or age and will comply with all relevant codes of practice;
  - 12.1.2 if found guilty of unlawful discrimination which relates to the ARP, to take steps to avoid a repetition of such unlawful discrimination and provide details of such steps to the others of the Five Councils; and
  - 12.1.3 as far as possible to observe all relevant codes of practice for equal opportunities in employment especially in relation to the employees allocated to the ARP.

## **13. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 13.1 Each of the Five Councils agrees that (except as required by law) it will:
- 13.1.1 keep confidential and not divulge to any person any agreed confidential, technical or commercial information concerning the business accounts finance technology expertise contractual arrangements or other dealings transactions or affairs of the others of the Five Councils; and
  - 13.1.2 not use any such information for its own purposes (except as contemplated in this Agreement).
- 13.2 Each of the Five Councils agrees to use its reasonable endeavours to prevent the publication or disclosure of any such confidential information.

- 13.3     Clauses 13.1 and 13.2 do not apply to any confidential information (as agreed by the Five Councils) used, divulged or communicated:
- 13.3.1   pursuant to a contract for the supply of goods or services;
  - 13.3.2   pursuant to the procurement of goods and services in accordance with Clauses 8.2 and 8.6;
  - 13.3.3   pursuant to this Agreement;
  - 13.3.4   on the instructions of any other or others of the Five Councils;
  - 13.3.5   to its employees and professional advisers on terms that this information is confidential to them; or
  - 13.3.6   under any Court order or where there is statutory obligation to disclose it.
- 13.4     Each of the Five Councils undertake that they will not without the consent of the others of the Five Councils make any press or other announcement concerning any aspect of this Agreement or make any use of the names of the others of the Five Councils in consequence of this Agreement.

#### **14. DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

- 14.1     Each of the Five Councils agrees that in relation to any personal data (as defined in the DPA and GDPR) it holds in relation to this Agreement it will comply as a data controller if necessary with the DPA and GDPR including:
- 14.1.1   the seven data protection principles listed in Article 7 to the GDPR;
  - 14.1.2   (subject to any exemptions) requests from data subjects for access to data held by it; and
  - 14.1.3   the requirements relating to notification to the Information Commissioner by data controllers under Article 33 of the GDPR.
- 14.2     Each of the Five Councils agrees that if it acquires personal data from any other party in connection with this Agreement it will:
- 14.2.1   maintain a valid and up to date registration or notification under the DPA which covers all processing of such data which it undertakes;

- 14.2.2 only undertake processing of such personal data where it is reasonably required in connection with the performance of its obligations under this Agreement;
- 14.2.3 not disclose such personal data to any third party other than:
  - 14.2.3.1 disclosure on terms substantially the same as and no less stringent than those required by this Clause, to its employees agents and contractors to whom such disclosure is reasonably necessary in connection with the performance of its obligations under this Agreement; or
  - 14.2.3.2 as required by court order; or
  - 14.2.3.3 as may be required under relevant exemption under the DPA & GDPR.
- 14.2.4 bring into effect and maintain all technical and organisational measures to prevent unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and accidental loss or destruction of or damage to personal data including taking reasonable steps to ensure the reliability of employees having access to the personal data; and
- 14.2.5 (save as under any relevant exemption, where exemptions under the DPA & GDPR apply to obtaining consent) obtain the consent of data subjects to the disclosure of any personal data disclosed under this Agreement.
- 14.3 Nothing in this Agreement requires any of the Five Councils to disclose any information to another party if that Council considers that to do so would be in breach of the DPA and GDPR.
- 14.4 In the event that any of the Five Councils receives a request for information under the FOIA (relating to the JC Services provided by the ARP to the Council) then the Five Councils agree that the ARP shall provide all the necessary assistance as reasonably requested by the Council to enable the Council to respond to the request for information within the time for compliance set out in Section 10 of the FOIA.
- 14.5 The Council in receipt of the request for information shall be responsible for determining at its absolute discretion whether the information requested is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of the FOIA or may be disclosed.

## **15. WAIVER AND SEVERABILITY**

- 15.1 A failure or delay by any of the Five Councils in exercising any rights, powers or privileges under this Agreement will not operate as a waiver of them. The single or partial exercise of any right power or privilege does not prevent any other exercise of it or the exercise of any other right power or privilege (whether arising out of the same factual situation or otherwise). Any waiver of a breach of this Agreement is not to be effective unless given in writing signed by the Council waiving its entitlement. No waiver is to be deemed a waiver of any subsequent breach or default nor is it to affect the other terms of this Agreement.
- 15.2 The receipt of money does not prevent the Council receiving it questioning the correctness of the amount or any other statement in respect of money.
- 15.3 If any term of this Agreement is illegal void or unenforceable the remainder of this Agreement will continue in force as though that term had not been included in it.

## **16. ENTIRE AGREEMENT**

- 16.1 This Agreement sets out the whole agreement between the Five Councils in relation to the transaction it provides for.
- 16.2 Each of the Five Councils warrants that it has not entered into this Agreement on the basis of any representation made by any one or more of the others of the Five Councils except to the extent that such representation is expressly included in it (but nothing in this Clause 16 excludes any liability for fraudulent misrepresentation).

## **17. EXTENT OF OBLIGATIONS AND FURTHER ASSURANCE**

- 17.1 Nothing in this Agreement is to require any of the Five Councils to act in any way that is inconsistent with its obligations or duties as a local authority.
- 17.2 Each of the Five Councils undertakes (subject to Clause 17.1) to do all things and execute all further documents that may reasonably be required by one or all of the others of the Five Councils to give effect to this Agreement.

## **18. NO PARTNERSHIP OR AGENCY**

- 18.1 Nothing in this Agreement is to constitute or be deemed a partnership within the meaning of the Partnership Act 1890 the Limited Partnerships Act 1907 the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2000 or any other legislation concerning partnerships or limited liability partnerships.
- 18.2 None of the Five Councils shall hold itself out as the agent of any one or more of the others of the Five Councils or to have any authority to bind any one or more of the others of the Five Councils except to the extent that this Agreement expressly provides otherwise.

## **19. CONTRACTS (RIGHTS OF THIRD PARTIES) ACT 1999**

No term of this Agreement is enforceable under the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 by any person who is not a party to this Agreement.

## **20. VARIATIONS**

- 20.1 Except as provided by Clause 11.4 no person has authority on behalf of any of the Five Councils to agree to any variation to this Agreement except where the amendment is agreed to in writing by each of the Five Councils.
- 20.2 No consents to any variation to this Agreement are required from any person other than the 2015 Joint Committee (acting pursuant to Clause 11.4) or all of the Five Councils as detailed under Clause 20.1.

## **21. PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION/BRIBERY**

- 21.1 Where any of the Five Councils or any person employed by or acting on behalf of any of the Five Councils (whether with or without that Council's knowledge) has offered or given or agreed to give to any person or received or agreed to receive from any person any gift or consideration of any kind as an inducement or reward for:

- 21.1.1 doing or not doing or having done or not having done any action in relation to the obtaining or execution of this Agreement or any other contract with that Council; or
- 21.1.2 showing or not showing favour or disfavour to any person in relation to this Agreement or any other contract with that Council; or
- 21.1.3 where in relation to any contract with such a Council the Council or any person employed by that Council or acting on that Council's behalf has:
  - 21.1.3.1 committed any offence under the Bribery Act 2010 or legislation revoking or amending the same; or
  - 21.1.3.2 given any fee or reward the receipt of which is an offence under the LGA 1972 or Bribery Act 2010;

then the others of the Five Councils, if they all agree in writing so to do, may withdraw from this Agreement pursuant to Clauses 10.3. to 10.6 and recover from the aforesaid Council the amount of any loss they may suffer as a result of such termination of this Agreement.

## 22. MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION

- 22.1 If any dispute arises out of this Agreement the Five Councils shall attempt to settle it by mediation in accordance with the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution ("**CEDR**") Model Mediation Procedure ("**the Model Procedure**").
- 22.2 To initiate mediation, the Chief Executive of any of the Five Councils seeking such mediation shall give notice in writing ("**ADR Notice**") to the others of the Five Councils requesting mediation in accordance with Clause 22.1 and shall notify CEDR of the dispute.
- 22.3 If the Five Councils cannot agree the identity of the mediator within 10 Working Days of the date of the ADR Notice the mediator is to be appointed by CEDR.
- 22.4 The mediation will start not later than 20 Working Days after the date of the ADR Notice.

- 22.5 None of the Five Councils may commence any court proceedings or arbitration in relation to any dispute arising out of this Agreement until they have attempted to settle it by mediation and that mediation has terminated.
- 22.6 If the dispute has not been settled by the mediation within 35 Working Days from the date of the ADR Notice the dispute shall be referred to arbitration under the Arbitration Acts 1950 to 1996 by a single arbitrator appointed by agreement between the Five Councils. If the Five Councils cannot agree the identity of the arbitrator within 10 Working Days of one or more of the Five Councils proposing at least two possible appropriate arbitrators to the others of the Five Councils the arbitrator is to be appointed by the President or next most senior officer available of the Law Society on the application of one or more of the Five Councils.

### **23. ASSIGNMENT AND SUBCONTRACTING**

- 23.1 None of the Five Councils may transfer assign mortgage or pledge its rights or obligations under this Agreement.
- 23.2 None of the Five Councils may subcontract any of its obligations under this Agreement except with the consent of the others of the Five Councils (such consent not unreasonably to be withheld or delayed) but any Council who so subcontracts is to be liable for the performance of its subcontractors.
- 23.3 No rights under this Agreement are to devolve by operation of the law or otherwise on any receiver administrative receiver liquidator or assignee.

### **24. GOVERNING LAW AND ENFORCEMENT**

- 24.1 The formation construction performance validity and all aspects of this Agreement are to be governed by English law and subject to Clause 22.6 each of the Five Councils agree to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.
- 24.2 The rights and remedies given by this Agreement are cumulative and do not exclude any other rights or remedies given by law under this Agreement.



## 25. NOTICES

- 25.1 Notices or other communications under this Agreement will be duly served if given in writing and sent to the nominated representative of the Five Councils or to JC Members or to officers of the 2015 Joint Committee and shall be deemed to have been served in accordance with the following table with the date of service and method of proof being as set out therein.

Method of service	Date of service	Proof of service
Personal delivery to the nominated representative.	Day of delivery.	Proof of handing to the nominated representative.
Personal delivery of a letter addressed to the nominated representative at the address for service.	Day of delivery if before 16.00 on a Working Day otherwise 10.00 on the next Working Day thereafter.	Proof of delivery.
First class letter addressed to the nominated representative at the address for service.	48 hours after posting if that is a Working Day otherwise 10.00 on the next Working Day thereafter.	Proof of posting unless returned through the Post Office undelivered service within 21 days of posting.
Facsimile addressed to the nominated representative at the address for service.	Day of transmission if before 16.00 on a Working Day otherwise 10.00 on the next Working Day thereafter.	Transmission report showing a successful transmission to the correct number plus proof of posting of a hard copy.
Electronic mail addressed to the	Date of transmission if before 16.00 on a	Delivery receipt

nominated representative's electronic mail address	Working Day otherwise 10.00 on the next Working day thereafter	
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- 25.2 Each of the Five Council's address for service is the address set out at the start of this Agreement or such other address as it may notify to the other of the Five Councils and the Secretary in writing.
- 25.3 The nominated representative for the receipt of notices under this Agreement is the Chief Executive of each of the Five Councils or such other person as the relevant Council may nominate by written notice to the others of the Five Councils and to the Secretary.

## 26. COSTS

Except in so far as the costs of the preparation negotiation and completion of this Agreement shall be within the One-off Costs each of the Five Councils shall bear their own costs in relation to the negotiation and completion of this Agreement.

**IN WITNESS** whereof each of the Five Councils have executed and delivered this Agreement as a Deed on the above date.

## **SCHEDULE 1**

### **PART I**

#### **JC Services**

The JC Services shall comprise the statutory functions of each of the Five Councils under each of the following enactments: -

- (a) **Local Government Finance Act 1988** Part III sections 43 to 51 and 62 to 67;
- (b) **Local Government Finance Act 1992** Part I Chapter I sections 43 to 51, sections 62 to 67, section 103 and Schedule IX;
- (c) **Social Services Contributions and Benefits Act 1992** Part VII section 123 and sections 130 to 137;
- (d) **Social Services Administration Act 1992** sections 5, 6, 7, 7A, 16, 75, 76, 110A, 110AA, 111, 112, 113, 139E, 139F, 139G, 139H, 140, 140A, 140B, 140C, 140D, 140E, 140EE, 140F and 140G and Regulations made under sections 7A and 76;
- (e) **Local Government Act 1972** section 111(1) (in so far as it relates to anything done thereunder that is calculated to facilitate or is incidental or conducive to the discharge of any statutory function or functions referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (d) above);
- (f) **Tribunals, Courts & Enforcement Act 2007** in so far as it relates to enforcement of debts for Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and other debts collected by the ARP
- (g) Any other statutory functions of the Five Councils which relate directly or indirectly to the collection of council tax and non-domestic rates and/or the administration of housing benefit council tax benefit and other relevant benefits.
- (h) The collection and/or enforcement of any other debt as agreed in writing by each of the Five Councils.

## **SCHEDULE 1**

### **PART II**

#### **JC Services**

The JC Services of the Five Councils in respect of the collection and administration of council tax and non-domestic rates (business rates) and the payment of housing and other benefits shall comprise the following services:

1. Council Tax including calculation of tax base
  - 1.1 Billing
  - 1.2 Recovery including enforcement
2. Business Rates including granting rate relief
  - 2.1 Billing
  - 2.2 Recovery including enforcement
3. Benefits Administration including recovery of overpayments
4. Anti-Fraud measures

## SCHEDULE 2

### Baseline Budget – 2015/16

	<b>7(5)Partners 2015-16 £</b>	<b>4 (3) Partners 2015-16 £</b>	<b>Total 2015-16 £</b>
Breckland Council	1,590,842	281,525	1,872,367
East Cambridgeshire Council	923,914	167,441	1,091,355
Fenland Council	1,151,977	0	1,151,977
Forest Heath Council	785,400	136,689	922,089
St Edmundsbury Council	1,121,313	224,491	1,345,804
Suffolk Coastal	1,185,218	0	1,185,218
Waveney Council	1,643,273	0	1,643,273
	<b>8,401,937</b>	<b>810,146</b>	<b>9,212,083</b>

### Agreed ARP Budget for the provision of the JC Services on behalf of the Five Councils for the 2019/2020 Financial Year

<b>2019-20 Budget</b>			
	<b>5 Partners</b>	<b>3 Partners</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>2019-20 Budget</b>	<b>2019-20 Budget</b>	<b>2019-20 Budget</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Breckland Council	1,624,756	218,377	1,843,134
East Cambridgeshire Council	926,615	130,174	1,056,789
East Suffolk Council	2,985,568	0	2,985,568
Fenland Council	1,235,369	0	1,235,369
West Suffolk Council	1,957,656	280,673	2,238,330
	<b>8,729,965</b>	<b>629,224</b>	<b>9,359,189</b>

## **SCHEDULE 3**

### **ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP**

#### **Accountancy Protocol**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The formulation of these budget policies and procedures has been written with reference to details contained within this Agreement.
- 1.2 Any issues resulting from any of the Five Councils not approving the budget approved by the 2015 Joint Committee should be pursued in accordance with the arrangements detailed within this Agreement.

#### **2.0 RECAP OF MAIN BUDGET ISSUES FROM THIS AGREEMENT**

- 2.1 The baseline budget was set in 2015/16 and was split between all seven (now Five) Councils for the majority of agreed costs and income, however a small part of the baseline budget was split between Breckland, East Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk Councils only (Three Councils). The agreed items which are charged only to these Three Councils are:
- Rent & Rates at the Thetford Offices
  - Magistrates Court Costs
  - Fax Machines
  - Support service recharges from Breckland & West Suffolk agreed in advance
- 2.2 A draft budget for each Financial Year subsequent to the 2015/16 baseline split is prepared by the ARP Management Team in collaboration with the Heads of Finance and Chief Finance Officers of the Five Councils respectively and submitted to the Treasurer for consideration and thereafter submitted to the Section 151 Officers of each of the Five Councils, by 30<sup>th</sup> October in each year. The draft budget for the next Financial Year shall be based upon the budget for the previous Financial Year with the agreed Three Councils and Five Councils baseline split, updated for any anticipated changes considered necessary and shall take account of:-
- The cost of employees required to perform the JC Services during the relevant Financial Year
  - The agreed goods, services, plant etc. required to be procured during the Financial Year
  - The share of cost of the accommodation occupied by the employees of the ARP for the Three Councils split only
  - The cost of implementing any change in the legal or other requirements affecting the performance of the JC Services
  - Any capital requirements
  - Any agreed changes to the JC services to be provided in connection with the performance of the JC Services
  - Indexation
  - Support services agreed in advance

- Any projected under spend or over spend for the current Financial Year that may be required to be taken into account in the budget for the next Financial Year.
  - Income receivable in respect of costs that are charged to the partnership
- 2.3 The draft budget shall also have appended to it a Schedule detailing the payments estimated to be required by each of the Five Councils during the relevant Financial Year.
- 2.4 After being considered by the Section 151 Officers the draft budget shall be submitted to the Treasurer for consideration and then to the 2015 Joint Committee for approval and thereafter submitted to each of the Five Councils so as to be received by them no later than 31st December in each year.
- 2.5 In the event that the budget for the current Financial Year requires amendment to meet any over spend or increase in the costs of the performance of the JC Services by the ARP for that year the ARP Management Team shall report thereon to the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 2.6 The ARP Management Team shall report as soon as practicable on any deficit or surplus arising during the current or immediately preceding Financial Year as compared with the approved budget, first to the Section 151 Officers and subsequently to the 2015 Joint Committee. Any such deficit shall be met, or any such surplus shall be dispersed, by reference to this Accountancy Protocol.

### **3.0 THE BUDGET**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The budget must be set in line with the arrangements and timetable detailed in this Agreement.

#### **3.2 The process**

- The Five Councils will hold a “Client” account and a “Partnership” account
- Costs chargeable to the “Partnership” account (taking into account the three & Five partner splits detailed in 2.1 above) are:
  - Employee related expenses
  - Transport related expenses
  - Premises related expenses
  - Supplies and services
  - Any Support Service costs agreed in advance by the Five Councils as chargeable to the “Partnership” account because of the obvious service/benefit provided
  - Any income that is received in respect of costs that are chargeable to the “Partnership” account.
- Costs chargeable to the “Client” account are:
  - Support Services not specifically agreed as chargeable to the “Partnership” account

- Income not received in respect of costs that are chargeable to the “Partnership” account
  - Corporate costs not directly attributable to the work of the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP.
- 3.3 Once all of the costs are identified the Council who will be making the various payments should be clearly identified. This will form the basis of future budget monitoring and control.
- 3.4 It will be necessary for the OIB to review each budget line each Financial Year to confirm the following:
- the basis of calculation is acceptable to each of the Five Councils and
  - the reasonableness of the cost and the benefits to the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP.

#### **4.0 TREATMENT OF COSTS**

- 4.1 “Partnership” account costs must adhere to the following principles:
- Costs must be based on actual usage/cost
  - Costs must be directly attributable to the work of the 2015 Joint Committee and the ARP
  - Costs are assessed on an annual basis in accordance with Value for Money Objectives
- 4.2 The annual budget of the 2015 Joint Committee must not include any corporate or client costs or previously un-agreed costs from any of the Five Councils.
- 4.3 The annual budget of the 2015 Joint Committee will include the costs chargeable to the “Partnership” account as set out under Paragraph 3.2 of this Accountancy Protocol.

#### **5.0 APPORTIONING THE PARTNERSHIP BUDGET**

- 5.1 The “Partnership” account will be apportioned to each of the Five Councils: by taking the agreed baseline (detailed in Schedule 2) & apportioning any increase or decrease in costs between the councils, in accordance with paragraph 2.1, in the following proportions:

<b>2019-20 Budget apportionment (based on 1 August 2019)</b>			
	<b><i>5 Partners (Excl Bailiff)</i></b>	<b><i>3 Partners</i></b>	<b><i>5 Partners Bailiff Only</i></b>
Breckland Council	17.89%	34.90%	20.60%
East Cambridgeshire Council	10.55%	20.60%	9.81%
East Suffolk Council	35.23%	0.00%	33.22%
Fenland Council	13.53%	0.00%	10.99%
West Suffolk Council	22.80%	44.50%	25.38%



Costs and income from Enforcement Agent activity (Tribunals, Court and Enforcement Act 2007) will be shared in relation to the percentage of liability orders passed, in respect of each of the Five Councils, to an Enforcement Agency Service

- 5.2 These percentages are based on a combination of caseload data, which include the number of hereditaments, the number of businesses chargeable to business rates and the number of benefits claimants (and in the case of the Enforcement Agency liability orders passed for enforcement). This data will be reviewed annually on 1 August, and the new percentage data used with respect to the budget for the following Financial Year.
- 5.3 The Treasurer shall prepare a Schedule setting out the payments due from each of the Five Councils, taking into account each Council's share of the ARP budget and the costs incurred by each Council. This Schedule shall be agreed by the OIB. Amounts due shall be payable in equal instalments on the first Working Day of each month.
- 5.4 Any new capital acquisitions shall be jointly funded by the Five Councils in accordance with the percentages set out in Paragraph 5.1 of this Accountancy Protocol, or amended in accordance with Paragraph 5.2 of this Accountancy Protocol.

## **6.0 BUDGET MONITORING AND CONTROL**

- 6.1 The Treasurer will act as the lead for monitoring and control of the budget which will be undertaken as follows:
- The budget will be set as detailed in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Accountancy Protocol.
  - Payments will be made by the relevant Council as identified when setting the budget (as provided in Paragraph 3.3 of this Accountancy Protocol).
  - Within 7 Working Days of the end of the quarter, each of the Five Councils will provide the Treasurer with a Schedule of payments made against the annual budget of the 2015 Joint Committee.
  - The Treasurer will compile an overall position against budget and raise any queries with the each of the other Councils.
  - The Treasurer will compile a quarterly monitoring report to the OIB and the 2015 Joint Committee, showing actual against budget and a forecast position for the year end.

## **7.0 BUDGET CHANGES AND AMENDMENTS**

- 7.1 Budget changes may result from:
- a) New initiatives
  - b) Additional expenditure not previously identified
  - c) Over spends
  - d) Additional Government funding received during the year
  - e) Under spends

- 7.2 Budget changes a)-d) above should be dealt with as detailed in Paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 of this Accountancy Protocol.
- 7.3 In these cases each of the Five Councils will share this cost in addition to the fixed fees in the ratio as detailed in Paragraph 5.1 of this Accountancy Protocol.
- 7.4 Budget changes resulting from Paragraph 8.1d) of this Accountancy Protocol should be reported to the 2015 Joint Committee once confirmation of the under spend is confirmed.
- 7.5 In all cases variations to the budget involving changes to or additions to a previously agreed budget will need reporting to the 2015 Joint Committee for approval and thereafter to each of the Five Councils for approval in line with each of the relevant Council's Standing Orders and Terms of Reference regarding budgets.

## **8.0 ASSETS**

- 8.1 Any new assets shall be procured by one of the Five Councils (as determined by the 2015 Joint Committee) on behalf of and at the cost of the 2015 Joint Committee (subject to the standing orders of the procuring Council and any applicable procurement legislation) and shall be owned by the Five Councils jointly in proportion to the percentages set out in Paragraph 5.1 of this Accountancy Protocol for the purposes of the 2015 Joint Committee.
- 8.2 A register of assets shall be maintained by the Treasurer showing the ownership, the date of their allocation to or purchase for the purposes of the 2015 Joint Committee for use by the ARP and the date of disposal of all assets allocated to or used by the 2015 Joint Committee formerly used by the previous Joint Committee.

## **SCHEDULE 4**

### **General Legal Advice and Services**

Subject to the 2015 Joint Committee deciding otherwise the Legal Advice and Services will include and be provided by the following of the Five Councils:-

#### **West Suffolk**

- 1.1 Securing outstanding liability orders for unpaid council tax and business rates by obtaining a charging order on the property and registering the same;
- 1.2 Where a charging order has been made by the court, applying for an order for sale when instructed to do so;
- 1.3 Investigating the possibility of collecting outstanding liability orders for both council tax and business rates by way of insolvency proceedings and commencing such proceedings when instructed to do so;
- 1.4 Advising generally on alternative methods of enforcement; and
- 1.5 Advising in connection with the recovery of overpaid housing benefit and other benefits and commencing proceedings when instructed to do so.

#### **Any of the Five Councils**

- 2.1 General Constitutional Advice to be the Council whose Monitoring Officer has been appointed
- 2.2 Commencing and conducting fraud prosecutions, although at the Commencement Date this is provided by external Solicitors, as previously arranged through ARP, or in respect of West Suffolk Council - by their Council, and may change at the request of one of the Five Councils to undertake their own prosecutions/or all of the prosecutions on behalf of the Five Councils.

## Conduct of Claims

- 3.1 If one of the Five Councils ("**the Notifying Council**") receives a notice demand letter or other document concerning such a claim for which the Notifying Council may be entitled to be indemnified under this Agreement the Notifying Council shall notify the others of the Five Councils in writing as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within twenty (20) Working Days of its receipt.
- 3.2 The Notifying Council shall be free at any time to give notice to the others of the Five Councils that it is retaining or taking over conduct of any defence dispute compromise or appeal of any claim made by a third party in connection with any matter described in Paragraph 3.1 or any incidental negotiations. On receipt of such notice the others of the Five Councils shall promptly take all reasonable steps necessary to transfer the conduct of such claim to the Notifying Council and shall provide to the Notifying Council all reasonable co-operation access and assistance for the purposes of considering and resisting such claim. If the Notifying Council gives any notice pursuant to this Clause then the others of the Five Councils shall be released from any future liability under its indemnity in respect of such claim.
- 3.3 If one or more of the others of the Five Councils pays to the Notifying Council an amount in respect of an indemnity and the Notifying Council subsequently recovers (whether by payment discount credit saving relief or other benefit or otherwise) a sum which is directly referable to the fact matter event or circumstances giving rise to the claim under the indemnity the Notifying Council shall immediately repay to the other or others of the Five Councils the lesser of:-
- 3.3.1 the sum recovered (or the value of the saving or benefit obtained) less any out of pocket expenses and costs properly incurred by the Notifying Council in recovering it; and
- 3.3.2 the amount paid to the Notifying Council by the others of the Five Councils in respect of the claim under the relevant indemnity.
- 3.4 There is no obligation on the Notifying Council to pursue a recovery under Paragraph 3.3. The other or others of the Five Councils is to be repaid only to the extent that the amount of recovery aggregated with the amount paid by the other or others of the Five Councils exceeds the Notifying Council's losses.

- 3.5 Each of the Five Councils shall comply with the requirements of any insurer who may have an obligation to consider any claim made in respect of any liability arising under this Agreement.

The Common Seal of **BRECKLAND** )  
**DISTRICT COUNCIL** was affixed hereto in )  
in the presence of )

The Common Seal of **EAST** )  
**CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** )  
was hereto affixed in the presence of )

#### **Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

The Common Seal of **FENLAND DISTRICT** )  
**COUNCIL** was hereunto affixed in the )  
presence of )

#### **Authorised Signatory**

The Common Seal of **WEST SUFFOLK** )  
**COUNCIL** was affixed hereto in )  
the presence of )

#### **Authorised Signatory**

The Common Seal of **EAST SUFFOLK** )  
**COUNCIL** was hereunto affixed )  
in the presence of )

#### **Authorised Signatory**



## Joint Committee Performance report October 2019



CONTENT PAGE



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# All Partner Councils Combined



Business Rates Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	£ 68,526,436	£ 137,479,211	£ 158,709,340		●
Target	£ 67,766,801	£ 133,821,885	£ 154,692,337		●
2018/19	£ 69,705,667	£ 138,677,128	£ 160,699,845		●
Year End Target				£241,368,703	●

Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	£125,766,695	£247,998,105	£289,920,459		●
Target	£124,472,983	£244,559,662	£285,394,389		●
2018/19	£119,257,339	£234,326,636	£273,774,415		●
Year End Target				£432,596,541	●

Number of Electronic Forms Received					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	9,375	19,525	23,237		●
2018/19	9,079	19,042	22,591		●
Year End Target				37899	●

Fraud and Compliance	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	Yr Target
Single Person Discount Fraud	£689,154.21	£1,141,757	£1,271,310		£500,000
Local Council Tax Support	£50,083.49	£91,649	£109,368		£150,000
Tenancy Fraud	£36,000	£54,000	£54,000		£400,000
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£217,660	£336,860	£352,728		£250,000
Fraud Identified	£992,897.92	£1,624,265	£1,787,407		£1,300,000

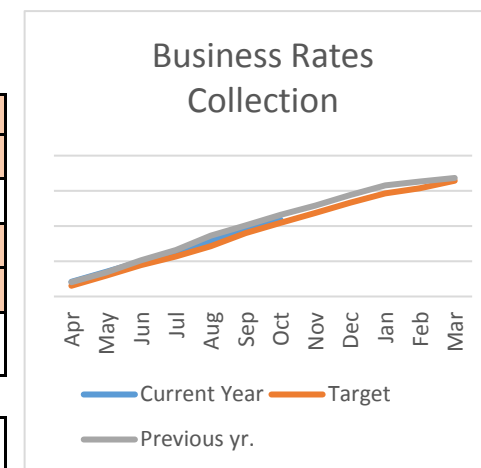
## Performance Information October 2019

### Business Rates

Business Rates Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	£ 9,936,479.00	£ 18,830,045.00	£ 21,827,359.00	£ -	●
Target	£ 8,891,311.00	£ 17,972,818.00	£ 20,898,151.00	£ 32,877,803.00	
Refunds	£ 182,408.00	£ 1,233,209.00	£ 1,333,192.00	£ -	
2018/19	£ 10,313,258.00	£ 20,189,166.00	£ 28,860,184.00	£ 33,655,722.00	●

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Year End Target	£ 32,877,803.00	●
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#### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

#### Narrative

Collection is on target for the current financial year.

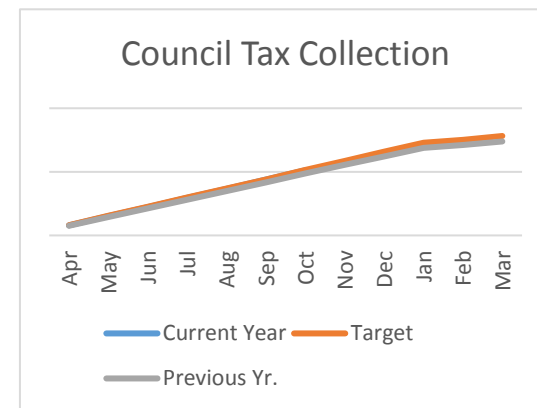
Further recovery action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £21K. Enforcement action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £42K.

## Council Tax

Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
<b>2019/20</b>	£ 22,364,957	£ 43,876,573	£ 51,268,089	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 22,495,661	£ 44,006,474	£ 51,498,262	£ 78,183,637	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 228,283	£ 50,882,648	£ 608,777	£ -	
<b>2018/19</b>	£ 21,259,174	£ 41,587,632	£ 48,667,629	£ 73,886,227	●

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<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>£78,183,637</b>	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is behind target by £230,173. There has been a high level of refunds this year, £609K compared to £475K at this point last year - an increase of £134K, which has reduced collection. Also, we have had an increase in the amount of pre-payments for the current financial year and the first Summonses for non-payment were delayed one month by The Court which will have had an effect. We are closely monitoring the situation.

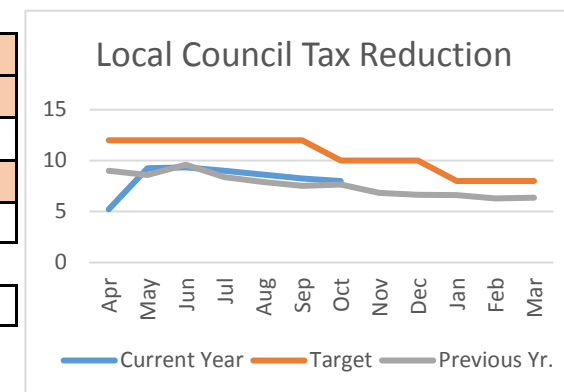
Further recovery action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £87K. Enforcement action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £342K.

Charging Orders have been obtained to secure £357,109 debt.

## Local Council Tax Reduction

Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	9.34	8.26	8.01		●
Target	12.00	12.00	10.00	8.00	
2018/19	9.60	7.54	7.65	6.37	●

Year End Target	8	●
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### Description

This indicator measures the average year to date number of days to process Council Tax reduction new claims and change of circumstances.

### Narrative

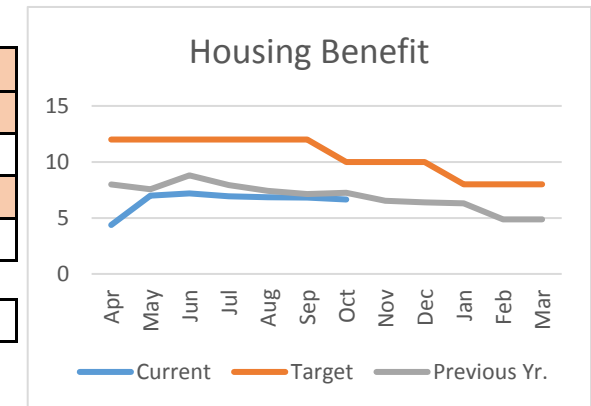
Whilst this indicator has been exceeded, it should be noted we have overachieved this indicator due to the downtime associated with the merger of East Suffolk and West Suffolk systems.

During the first three weeks of April all processing staff throughout the partnership were working on Breckland, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland cases, thereby resulting in exceptional outcomes.

Looking ahead, we expect performance to achieve the year end target, as we harmonise performance for all Councils by bringing performance back on track for East & West Suffolk.

## Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	7.19	6.81	6.64		●
Target	12	12	10	8	
2018/19	8.8	7.13	7.25	4.87	●
		<b>Year End Target</b>		<b>8</b>	●



### Description

**This indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances.**

### Narrative

Whilst this indicator has been exceeded, it should be noted we have overachieved this indicator due to the downtime associated with the merger of East Suffolk and West Suffolk systems.

During the first three weeks of April all processing staff throughout the partnership were working on Breckland, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland cases, thereby resulting in exceptional outcomes.

Looking ahead, we expect performance to achieve the year end target, as we harmonise performance for all Councils by bringing performance back on track for East & West Suffolk.

### Fraud and Compliance

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be been tasked, in accordance with the Business Case approved by Joint Committee, to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

Local Council Tax Support, Single Person Discount, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

The team are working with Housing Option Teams and also with Housing Associations to tackle Right to buy and subletting abuse where investigation agreements are in place. The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges – including possible retrospective charges.

The team are also forging closer working relationships with a number of service areas in an attempt prevent and detect fraud and error.

In an broader sense the team are also working with County in setting up Fraud Hub's in Norfolk and more recently Cambridgeshire. This is an attempt to match data sets across County to increase Council Tax and Business Rate income.

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	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4
Single Person Discount Fraud	£195,513.87	£330,066.74	£370,077.90	
Local Council Tax Support	£13,959.86	£39,881.46	£45,262.78	
Tenancy Fraud	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£28,174.21	£112,690.62	£92,931.87	
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£237,647.94</b>	<b>£482,638.82</b>	<b>£508,272.55</b>	



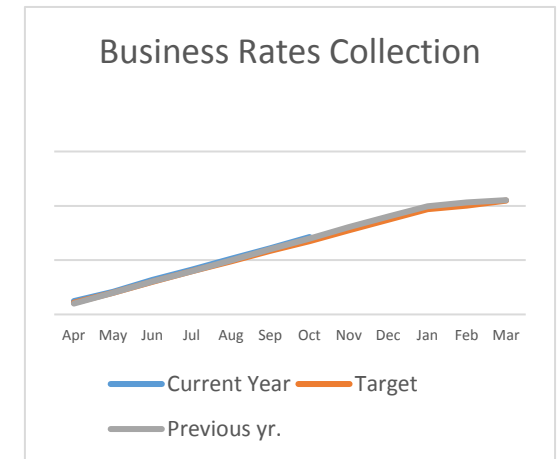
# Performance Information October 2019



## Business Rates

Business Rates Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	£ 6,372,977	£ 12,173,009	£ 14,254,670	£ -	●
Target	£ 5,987,332	£ 11,722,726	£ 13,498,095	£ 20,954,355	
Refunds	£ 651,447	£ 1,119,412	£ 1,201,100	£ -	
2018/19	£ 6,038,653	£ 11,999,640	£ 13,935,648	£ 21,044,862	●

Full Year Target	£20,954,355	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is on target for the current financial year.

There have been claims by NHS Trusts for charitable rate relief which are currently subject to a High Court appeal. If successful this could result in a backdated refund of £739K

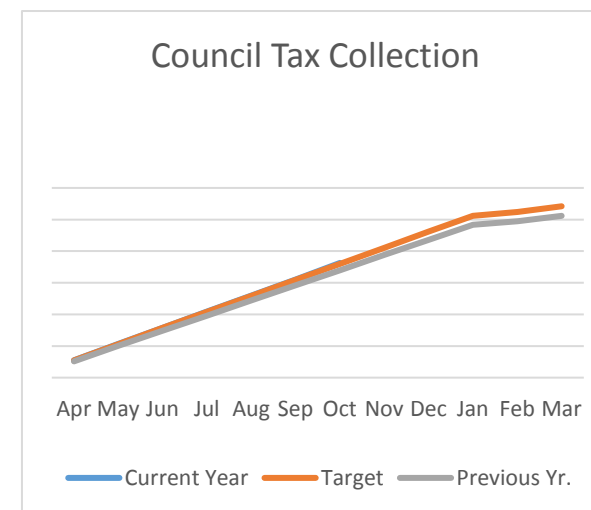
Further recovery action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £2K. Enforcement action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £54K.



## Council Tax



Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	£ 15,730,723	£ 31,067,215	£ 36,283,378	£ -	●
Target	£ 15,691,433	£ 30,894,391	£ 36,023,909	£ 54,194,333	
Refunds	£ 144,400	£ 379,898	£ 442,143	£ -	
2018/19	£ 14,815,307	£ 29,169,414	£ 34,012,528	£ 51,168,413	●
		<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>£ 54,194,333</b>		●



### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is on target for the current financial year

Further recovery action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £38K. Enforcement action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £191K.

Charging Orders have been obtained to secure £267,423 debt.



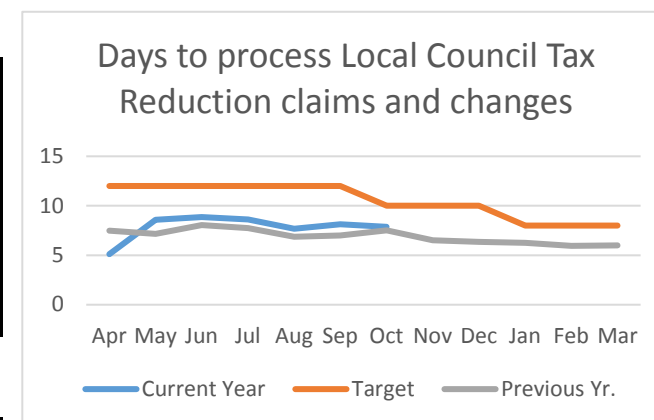


## Local Council Tax Reduction



Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	8.86	8.12	7.86		●
Target	12.00	12.00	10.00	8.00	
2018/19	8.05	7.00	7.52	5.99	●

Year End Target	8	●
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### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Council Tax reduction new claims and change of circumstances.

### Narrative

Whilst this indicator has been exceeded, it should be noted we have overachieved this indicator due to the downtime associated with the merger of East Suffolk and West Suffolk systems.

During the first three weeks of April all processing staff throughout the partnership were working on Breckland, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland cases, thereby resulting in exceptional outcomes.

Looking ahead, we expect performance to achieve the year end target, as we harmonise performance for all Councils by bringing performance back on track for East & West Suffolk.

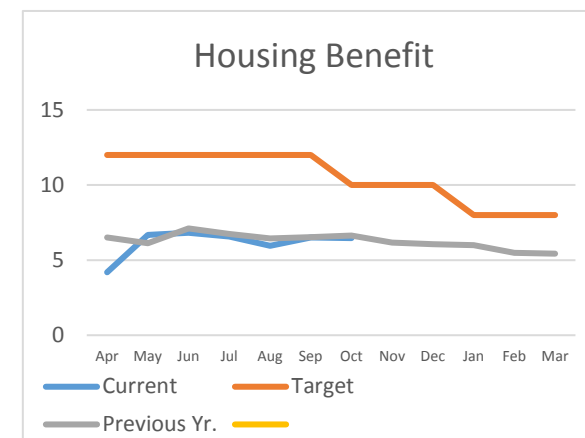


## Housing Benefit



Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	6.82	6.5	6.46		●
Target	12	12	10	8	
2018/19	7.11	6.53	6.64	5.43	●

Year End Target	8	●
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### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances.

### Narrative

Whilst this indicator has been met for April, it should be noted we have overachieved this indicator due to the downtime associated with the merger of East Suffolk and West Suffolk systems.

During the first three weeks of April all processing staff throughout the partnership were working on Breckland, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland cases, thereby resulting in exceptional outcomes.

Looking ahead, we expect performance to achieve the year end target, as we harmonise performance for all Councils by bringing performance back on track for East & West Suffolk.



## Fraud and Compliance



### **Fraud and Compliance**

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be been tasked, in accordance with the Business Case approved by Joint Committee, to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

Local Council Tax Support, Single Person Discount, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

The team are working with Housing Option Teams and also with Housing Associations to tackle Right to buy and subletting abuse where investigation agreements are in place. The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges – including possible retrospective charges.

The team are also forging closer working relationships with a number of service areas in an attempt prevent and detect fraud and error.

On a broader sense the team are also working with County in setting up Fraud Hub's in Norfolk and more recently Cambridgeshire. This is an attempt to match data sets across County to increase Council Tax and Business Rate income.

	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4
Single Person Discount Fraud	£34,795.41	£58,442.05	£61,676.67	
Local Council Tax Support	£3,362.16	£5,160.22	£5,478.78	
Tenancy Fraud	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£56,292.91	£65,647.69	£65,647.69	
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£94,450.48</b>	<b>£129,249.96</b>	<b>£ 132,803.14</b>	

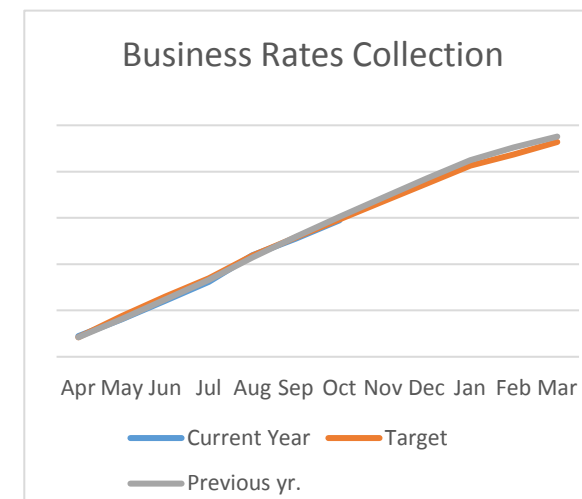
# Performance Information October 2019

## Business Rates

Business Rates Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
<b>2019/20</b>	£ 24,147,964	£ 51,103,221	£ 58,955,089	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 26,069,598	£ 51,535,547	£ 59,302,548	£ 92,792,211	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 2,760,260	£ 3,741,979	£ 4,237,393	£ -	
<b>2018/19</b>	£ 24,739,059	£ 51,903,997	£ 60,498,593	£ 95,129,303	●

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<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>92,792,211</b>	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is behind target for the current financial year by £347K. There have been £3.9M of backdated refunds as a result of reductions in Rateable Value most notably Felixstowe Dock for which a refund of £2.3M was made. These are accounted for in the Appeals Provision within the Financial Statements. As the appeals are accounted for within the provision it has been decided that the targets will not be amended.

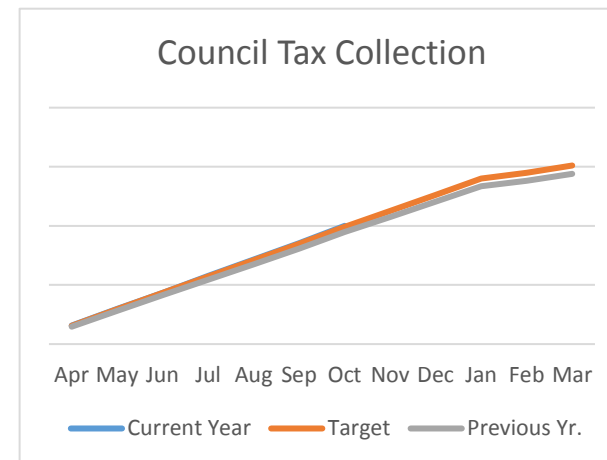
Further recovery action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £8K. Enforcement action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £124K.

## Council Tax

Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
<b>2019/20</b>	£ 43,402,134	£ 85,413,139	£ 100,026,752	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 43,341,163	£ 84,797,657	£ 99,036,200	£ 151,052,402	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 426,585	£ 1,028,594	£ 1,228,832	£ -	
<b>2018/19</b>	£ 41,318,611	£ 80,840,501	£ 94,735,137	£ 144,003,411	●

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<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>151,052,402</b>	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is on target for the current financial year

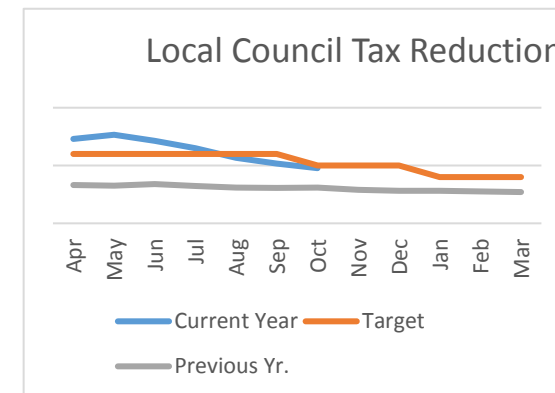
Further recovery action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £146K. Enforcement action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £592K.

Charging Orders have been obtained to secure £511,651 debt.

## Local Council Tax Reduction

Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Q1	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	14.29	10.36	9.54		●
Target	12.00	12.00	10.00	8.00	
2018/19	6.79	6.12	6.17	5.41	●

Year End Target	8	●
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### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Council Tax reduction new claims and change of circumstances.

### Narrative

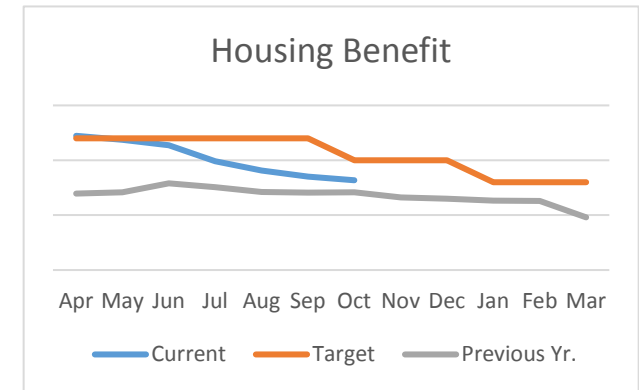
This indicator has now been met, despite the risk of not achieving the target following the downtime and recovery associated with the merger of East Suffolk and West Suffolk systems.

During the first three weeks of April we were not able to process East Suffolk cases, however, the direction of travel is an improving position with in month processing achieving target and expected to continue to do so.

## Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	11.36	8.52	8.18		●
Target	12.00	12.00	10.00	8.00	
2018/19	7.90	7.05	7.08	4.80	●

Year End Target	8	●
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### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances.

### Narrative

Despite the downtime associated with the merger of the East Suffolk systems we continue to meet the target and expect to achieve the year end target, given the direction of travel, which is within year end target.

### Fraud and Compliance

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be been tasked, in accordance with the Business Case approved by Joint Committee, to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

Local Council Tax Support, Single Person Discount, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

The team are working with Housing Option Teams and also with Housing Associations to tackle Right to buy and subletting abuse where investigation agreements are in place. The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges – including possible retrospective charges.

The team are also forging closer working relationships with a number of service areas in an attempt prevent and detect fraud and error.

In an broader sense the team are also working with County in setting up Fraud Hub's in Norfolk and more recently Cambridgeshire. This is an attempt to match data sets across County to increase Council Tax and Business Rate income.

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	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4
Single Person Discount Fraud	£115,116.79	£243,133.21	£280,078.60	
Local Council Tax Support	£15,070.27	£16,798.54	£22,824.93	
Tenancy Fraud	£18,000.00	£18,000.00	£18,000.00	
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£5,332.16	£12,144.35	£12,144.35	
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£153,519.22</b>	<b>£290,076.10</b>	<b>£ 333,047.88</b>	

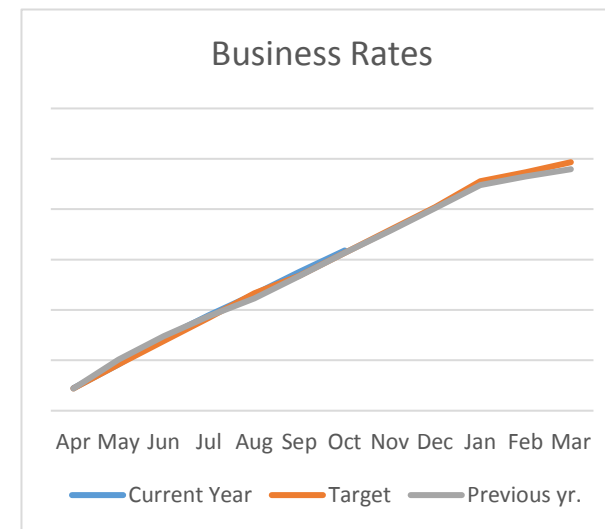


## Performance Information October 2019

### Business Rates

Business Rates Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	£ 7,228,152	£ 13,789,980	£ 15,902,523	£ -	●
Target	£ 6,913,281	£ 13,405,561	£ 15,666,727	£ 24,663,273	
Refunds	£ 302,488	£ 808,821	£ 1,025,858	£ -	
2018/19	£ 7,407,980	£ 13,363,473	£ 15,648,629	£ 23,969,262	●

Year End Target	£24,663,273	●
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#### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

#### Narrative

Collection is on target for the current financial year.

There have been claims by NHS Trusts for charitable rate relief which are currently subject to a High Court appeal. If successful this could result in a backdated refund of £1.464M

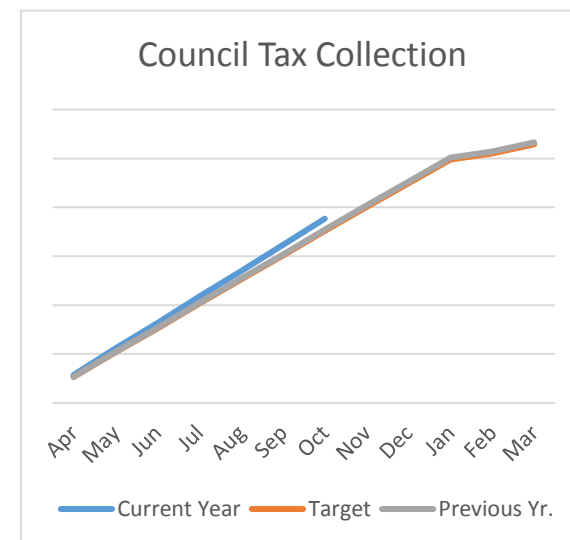
Further recovery action in 2019/20 has resulted in collection of £182K. Enforcement action in 2019/20 resulted in collection of £59K.

## Council Tax

Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	£ 16,330,949	£ 32,276,827	£ 37,676,667	£ -	●
Target	£ 15,205,594	£ 30,106,771	£ 35,187,787	£ 52,879,158	
Refunds	£ 164,336	£ 403,139	£ 492,612	£ -	
2018/19	£ 15,322,657	£ 30,338,553	£ 35,458,685	£ 53,286,256	●

96

Year End Target	£52,879,158	●
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### Description

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection is on target for the current financial year

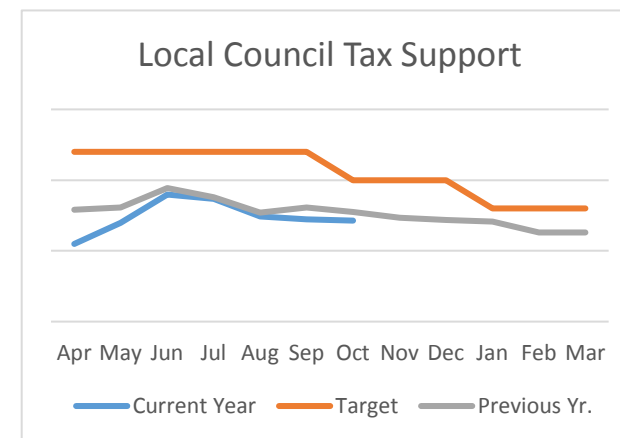
Further recovery action in 2019/20 resulted in collection of £34K. Enforcement action in 2019/20 resulted in collection of £270K. Charging Orders have been obtained to secure £201,048 debt.

## Local Council Tax Reduction

Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	8.98	7.24	7.13		●
Target	12.00	12.00	10.00	8.00	
2018/19	9.44	8.06	7.74	6.30	●

97

Year End Target	8	●
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### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Council Tax reduction new claims and change of circumstances.

### Narrative

Whilst this indicator has been met, it should be noted we have overachieved this indicator due to the downtime associated with the merger of East Suffolk and West Suffolk systems.

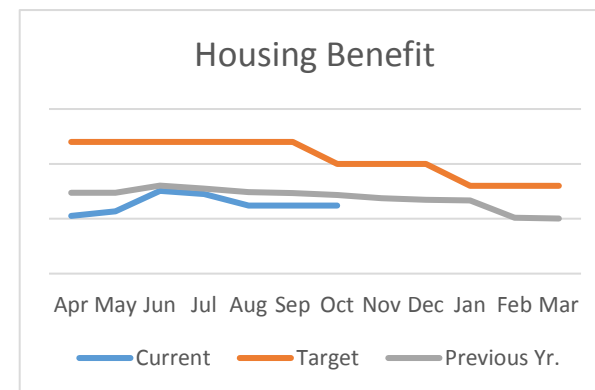
During the first three weeks of April all processing staff throughout the partnership were working on Breckland, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland cases, thereby resulting in exceptional outcomes.

Looking ahead, we expect performance to continue to achieve the year end target, as we harmonise performance for all Councils by bringing performance back on track for East & West Suffolk.

## Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	7.54	6.2	6.21		●
Target	12	12	10	8	
2018/19	8.02	7.33	7.17	5.02	●

Year End Target	8	●
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06

### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances.

### Narrative

Whilst this indicator has been met, it should be noted we have overachieved this indicator due to the downtime associated with the merger of East Suffolk and West Suffolk systems.

During the first three weeks of April all processing staff throughout the partnership were working on Breckland, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland cases, thereby resulting in exceptional outcomes.

Looking ahead, we expect performance to achieve the year end target, as we harmonise performance for all Councils by bringing performance back on track for East & West Suffolk.

## Fraud and Compliance

### Fraud and Compliance

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be been tasked, in accordance with the Business Case approved by Joint Committee, to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

Local Council Tax Support, Single Person Discount, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

The team are working with Housing Option Teams and also with Housing Associations to tackle Right to buy and subletting abuse where investigation agreements are in place. The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges – including possible retrospective charges.

The team are also forging closer working relationships with a number of service areas in an attempt prevent and detect fraud and error.

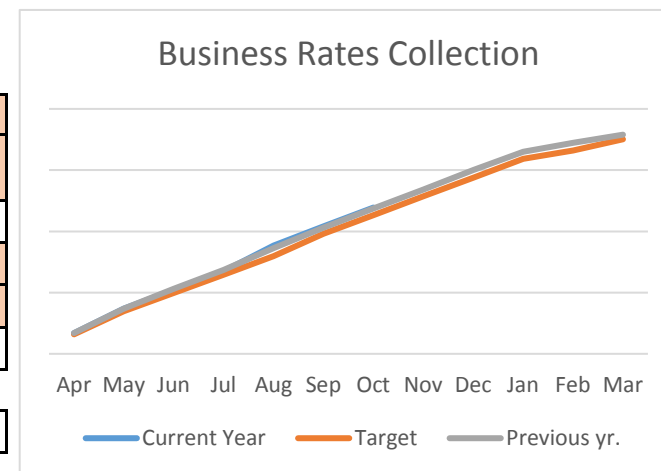
In an broader sense the team are also working with County in setting up Fraud Hub's in Norfolk and more recently Cambridgeshire. This is an attempt to match data sets across County to increase Council Tax and Business Rate income.

	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4
Single Person Discount Fraud	£89,137.00	£152,713.36	£160,062.76	
Local Council Tax Support	£4,545.30	£9,636.98	£13,525.57	
Tenancy Fraud	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£69,404.85	£85,826.07	£121,453.03	
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£163,087.15</b>	<b>£248,176.41</b>	<b>£295,041.36</b>	

**Business Rates**

Business Rates Collection						
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4		
2019/20	£ 20,840,864	£ 41,582,956	£ 47,769,699	£ -		●
Target	£ 19,905,279	£ 39,185,233	£ 45,326,816	£ 70,081,061		
Refunds	£ 440,654	£ 1,107,785	£ 1,341,321	£ -		
2018/19	£ 21,206,717	£ 41,220,852	£ 47,450,736	£ 71,576,538		●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>70,081,061</b>	●
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**Description**

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

**Narrative**

Collection is on target for the current financial year.

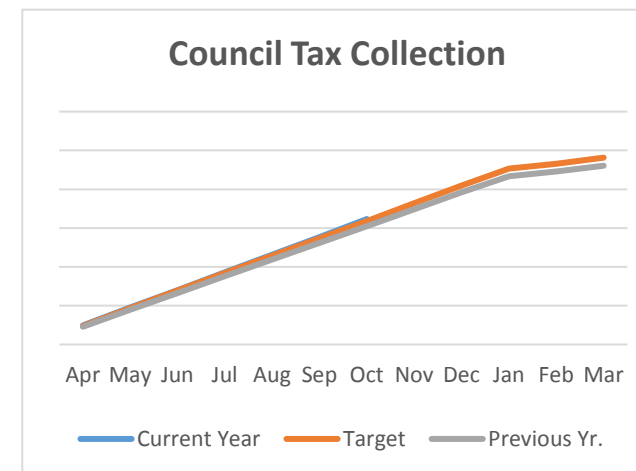
There have been claims by NHS Trusts for charitable rate relief which are currently subject to a High Court appeal. If successful this could result in a backdated refund of £4.605M

Further recovery action in 2019/20 resulted in collection of £174K. Enforcement action in 2019/20 resulted in collection of £61K.

Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
<b>2019/20</b>	£ 27,937,932	£ 55,364,351	£ 64,665,573	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 27,739,132	£ 54,754,369	£ 63,648,232	£ 96,287,011	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 269,396	£ 641,300	£ 787,290	£ -	
<b>2018/19</b>	£ 26,541,590	£ 52,390,536	£ 60,900,437	£ 92,130,148	●

101

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>96,287,011</b>	●
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**Description**

This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

**Narrative**

Collection is on target for the current financial year

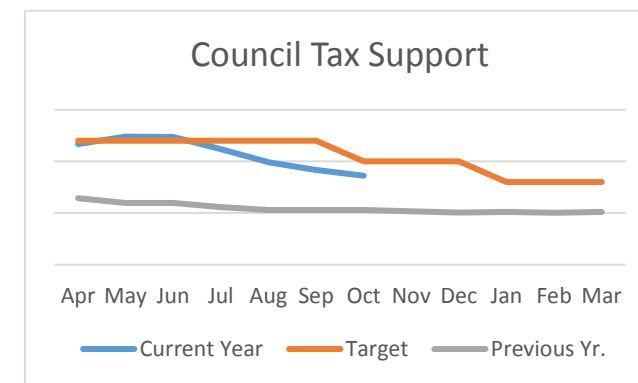
Further recovery action in 2019/20 resulted in collection of £83K. Enforcement action in 2019/20 resulted in collection of £429K.

Charging Orders have been obtained to secure £518,906 debt.

**Days to process Local Council Tax Support**

	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	12.36	9.18	8.61		●
Target	12.00	12.00	10.00	8.00	
2018/19	5.97	5.29	5.29	5.11	●

Year End Target	8	●
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102

**Description**

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Council Tax reduction new claims and change of circumstances.

**Narrative**

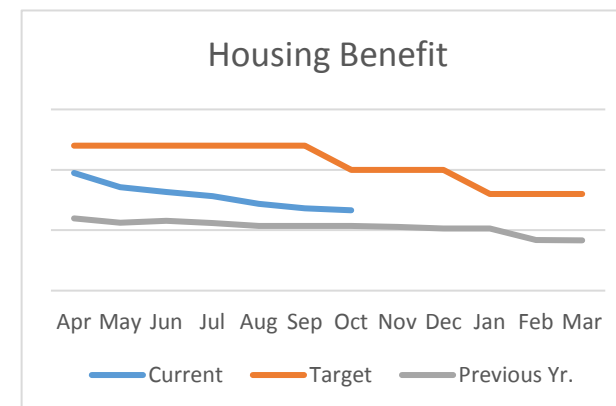
Despite the downtime associated with the merger of the West Suffolk systems we are now achieving the target and expect to achieve the year end target.



## Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4	
2019/20	8.16	6.80	6.65		●
Target	12.00	12.00	10.00	8.00	
2018/19	5.79	5.36	5.36	5.14	●

Year End Target	8	●
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### Description

This indicator measures the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances.

### Narrative

Despite the downtime associated with the merger of the West Suffolk systems we continue to exceed the target and expect to achieve the year end target.

### Fraud and Compliance

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be been tasked, in accordance with the Business Case approved by Joint Committee, to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

Local Council Tax Support, Single Person Discount, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

The team are working with Housing Option Teams and also with Housing Associations to tackle Right to buy and subletting abuse where investigation agreements are in place. The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges – including possible retrospective charges.

The team are also forging closer working relationships with a number of service areas in an attempt prevent and detect fraud and error.

In an broader sense the team are also working with County in setting up Fraud Hub's in Norfolk and more recently Cambridgeshire. This is an attempt to match data sets across County to increase Council Tax and Business Rate income.

	Q1	Q2	Oct-19	Q4
Single Person Discount Fraud	£254,591.14	£357,401.22	£399,414.30	
Local Council Tax Support	£13,145.90	£20,171.55	£22,276.35	
Tenancy Fraud	£18,000.00	£36,000.00	£36,000.00	
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£58,456.09	£60,551.07	£60,551.07	
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£344,193.13</b>	<b>£474,123.84</b>	<b>£518,241.72</b>	

# Service Updates as at October 2019



## **Enforcement**

The Enforcement Team continue to perform well, having collected £18.995 Million since the team started of which £3.576 Million has been since the start of this financial year. With effect from July we started taking cases from Norwich City Council. The number of cases sent to us was initially low but the number is now increasing and we have had some good results.

## **Further Recovery**

The Further Recovery team had their best year for collection in 2018/19 collecting £1,111,595 exceeding the amount collected the previous year by £203K. This financial year the team have again exceeded the amount collected in the same period last financial year and have collected £791K since April compared to £689K last year. In addition to the monies collected by the further recovery team we also have a further £1.856 Million in secured debt by way of Charging Orders on property owned by the debtor.

As reported previously the Further Recovery team is partly funded by Norfolk & Suffolk County Council, however Cambridgeshire County Council has ceased further funding from April 2018. Whilst monies continue to be paid in respect of the cases previously instigated within Cambridgeshire this will gradually decline if this work is not funded. As previously advised Norfolk County Council have committed to continue providing funding until March 2021 and Suffolk County Council until March 2020, at which point a further review will take place.

## Non-Domestic Rates

The Government have introduced a Bill to Parliament to introduce 100% rate relief for public lavatories with effect from 1 April 2020. The Government intend to compensate Local Authorities for any loss of income resulting from the relief.

Legislation is progressing to bring forward the date of the next re-valuation to 1 April 2021 and every three years thereafter.

## Council Tax

Local Authorities receive payment each year based on the number of domestic properties brought into use (new and previously empty). In addition to our routine checks on empty properties, each year during the summer we carry out a focussed exercise to review all empty properties in order to maximise new homes bonus. We also record the reason why the property remains empty if this can be established.

The findings from this exercise are shown below:

	Number	%
Demolished	9	0.52%
Empty	238	13.86%
For Sale / Let	364	21.20%
Occupied	270	15.73%
Other	19	1.11%
Second Home	98	5.71%
Sold / Let	233	13.57%
Under Probate	67	3.90%
Under Renovation	419	24.40%
Grand Total	1717	100.00%

The status of all the properties were updated in advance of the compilation of the CTB1 return from which the New Homes Bonus data is extracted.

The review also gives us the opportunity to work with the Housing Teams across the partnership, where requested, who can help owners with advice/grants in order to bring properties back into use and therefore increase the new homes bonus. It is worth noting that external suppliers offer this service for a fee which is payable whether or not any additional new homes bonus is achieved and also does not provide the Housing Teams with any valuable information.

## Benefits

Benefits performance has met profiled targets for all indicators with the direction of travel showing an improving position with in month processing achieving target and expected to continue to do so.

Following the merger work for East Suffolk and West Suffolk with associated loss of systems for three weeks, we have worked hard to recover the work position.

Inevitably, this has had an impact on performance for quarter 1 and the year to date figure as the year unfolds, although the end of year target should be met. We continue to prioritise work allocation to ensure benefit is awarded to minimise customer impact and are targeting resources to improve the position, whilst continuing to harmonise performance for all indicators.

Following a regular discussion with the DWP, we have been informed the DWP are very happy with how we managed the two mergers, especially how we have dealt with Housing Benefit performance during this period and the level of current performance, as well as our direction of travel for all five partners.

The Strategic Manager (Benefits) continues to attend national DWP/LA Welfare Steering Groups. These meetings enable input into shaping and influencing current and proposed operational and Government grant funding matters, Universal Credit plans, tackling fraud and error and data share.

This has led to the DWP inviting ARP to meetings with LAs to share our knowledge of establishing and operating shared services, along with good practice. In the most recent of these sessions we led a workshop on shared services. Furthermore, ARP has been one of a handful of LAs participating in a national review of DWP data notifications when a customer transfers from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit – we had flagged high volume of valueless records causing unnecessary work. DWP have worked with us throughout a trial and accept our results that 92% of records are worthless; DWP are redesigning their data share processes for all Councils. In November we are hosting a regional DWP led LA engagement event at Thetford, focusing on Universal Credit.

## Fraud and Compliance

Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils continue to fund the review of Single Person Discounts. Although Cambridgeshire ceased any further funding from April 2018. East Cambridge and Fenland together with all Cambridgeshire local authorities are in continued discussions with Cambridgeshire County Council regarding a Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub. The proposed model links to funding the review of Single Person Discounts at a local authority level. A meeting is planned for Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019 to discuss progress and software use within the Fraud Hub.

Norfolk County Council have committed to continue providing funding until March 2021 and Suffolk County Council until March 2020, at which point a further review will take place. Norfolk County Council have additionally funded a Premium review of Single Person Discounts in Breckland District Council with matches against a number of additional data sets held within the National Fraud Initiative (NFI). The results from the Breckland Council Premium matches exceed expectation and further opportunities across the partnership will be looked at within next year's NFI review programme.

Whilst there is limited work on Cambridgeshire cases newly awarded Single Person Discounts are currently reviewed by the Compliance Team with positive outcomes.

There is continued success for the ARP Fraud and Compliance team who continue to work closely with local DWP Fraud Teams in the joint working initiative. Ongoing relationship building continues with the teams across the partnership.

With the ARP Management arrangement with Norwich City Council it continues to allow us to employ an additional resource fully funded by Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council, to undertake Single Person Discount Reviews and Council Tax Support investigations for Norwich City Council.

Breckland Council and Norwich City Council are also part of the Norfolk Fraud Hub. As previously mentioned the Fraud Hub is fully funded by Norfolk County Council and is now matching additional data sets from all authorities to identify Fraud and Error across the county. The Fraud Team are working alongside Norfolk County on this project and are also in the process of reviewing results.

## ARP Website and Online Self Service

The Anglia Revenues website design has been enhanced to be more transactional and as straight forward as possible for customers and is showing a significant increase of website traffic for Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Reduction Schemes..

Analysis is demonstrating the effectiveness of the transactional design of the ARP website and has seen a 10% increase in usage in the first four months of financial year 2019/20 compared to the same period in 2018/19 and work will continue to improve the customer journey.

## Better Customer Journeys Programme

ARP are in the process of initiating a partnership wide program of enhancements and improvements for the customer. The starting point is the understanding of a clear baseline of current working which includes clear expectations between ARP and its Partner Services with agreed operational improvements being realised from March 2020. Building on this foundation will include the innovative development of the Capita E-forms Solution and an enhanced self-serve option, improving the customer experience with improved access and quality of service. Baselining will identify the improvements for both internal and external communications.

The second element of “Better Customer Journeys” is a change delivery programme using recognised project management tools and processes. One of the lessons learned from the recent merger project for East Suffolk and West Suffolk Councils was the benefit of a dedicated internal resource for programme management. This being preferable to the costly exercise of employing an external management consultancy.

The third element, the “Horizon”, will look at the opportunities for the Anglia Revenues Partnership to continue an ongoing transformation programme and engage with multiple services and agencies, leading to better outcomes for residents and businesses, ultimately a “Better Customer Journey”.

**BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Report of:** Christine Marshall, Executive Director Commercialisation (ARP Treasurer)

**To:** ARP Joint Committee, 17 December 2019

**Author:** Alison Chubbock, Chief Accountant

**Subject:** ARP Financial Performance

**Purpose:** To provide information on the forecast full year financial position against budget for the ARP

**Recommendation(s):**

- 1) That the report and appendix be noted.
- 2) That the final full year variance at 31 March 2020 is shared between the partner authorities in the approved shares.

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Each of the partner Councils provides forecast full year financial information against budget for the ARP. The information is collated to provide an overall financial performance report, to provide information to Joint Committee on the progress against budget. This report is based on information as at 31 October 2019 and all costs are included and shared based on the Partnership agreement.
- 1.2 The latest forecast at this stage of the year shows a small over spend against budget of £34k (0.4%) for the whole of the ARP and this is detailed further in Appendix A along with details of the variances.
- 1.3 Appendix A also provides details on the remaining transformation funding which was set aside in previous years from below budget spend and grant funding. £57k is earmarked for projects in progress this year and there is a further £93k available for future transformation projects.

The appendix also provides detail on the values held and earmarked in the ICT reserve, which was introduced last year to smooth the financial effects of major ICT spend.

- 1.4 This report recommends that the end of year variance is distributed between the partner authorities in the approved shares (distribution of year end balances is a JC decision). Determining this recommendation at this stage enables the accounts to be produced to faster closedown timeframes at each individual authority. Based on the current forecast the variance is not expected to be material and the shares for each partner would be:

Breckland	£7,107
East Cambs	£2,311
East Suffolk	£12,989
Fenland	£4,458
West Suffolk	£7,458
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£34,323</b>



## 2.0 OPTIONS

2.1 That the report and appendices are noted and the final full year variance at 31 March 2020 is shared between the partner authorities in the approved shares.

2.2 That the report and appendices are noted.

## 3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

3.1 To provide Members information on the financial position against budget for the whole of the ARP and to help meet year end accounting deadlines for the individual authorities.

## 4.0 EXPECTED BENEFITS

4.1 To provide Members information on the financial position against budget for the whole of the ARP and to help meet year end accounting deadlines for the individual authorities.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

In preparing this report, the report author has considered the likely implications of the decision - particularly in terms of Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues; Constitutional & Legal; Contracts; Corporate Priorities; Crime & Disorder; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; Transformation Programme; Other. Where the report author considers that there may be implications under one or more of these headings, these are identified below.

### 5.2 Financial

5.2.1 This report is financial in nature and financial information is included within the report and appendices.

### 5.2 Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales

5.12.1 Accountants at the partner Councils have been consulted on their financial forecasts.

## 6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

6.1 N/A

## 7.0 ACRONYMS

7.1 ARP – Anglia Revenues Partnership

7.2 JC – Joint Committee

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Background papers:- [See The Committee Report Guide for guidance on how to complete this section](#)

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### Lead Contact Officer

Name and Post: Alison Chubbock, Chief Accountant  
Telephone Number: 01362 656865  
Email: alison.chubbock@breckland.gov.uk

**Key Decision:** No

**Exempt Decision:** No

**This report refers to a Mandatory & Discretionary Services**

**Appendices attached to this report:**

Appendix A                      Financial performance report

## Anglia Revenues Partnership Joint Committee

### Forecast Full Year Financial Performance as at 31/10/19

Description	Approved Budget 2019/20 £	Forecast Actuals 2019/20 £	Forecast Variance Over/(Under) £	Variance %	Notes
Employee Related Costs	9,157,782	9,229,839	72,058	0.79	1
Premises Related Costs	273,822	273,822	0	0.00	
Transport Related Costs	154,129	154,443	314	0.20	
Supplies & Services	1,736,902	1,688,047	(48,855)	(2.81)	2
Support Services	531,162	525,037	(6,125)	(1.15)	
Income	(2,494,577)	(2,477,645)	16,932	(0.68)	3
<b>TOTAL PARTNERSHIP COSTS</b>	<b>9,359,220</b>	<b>9,393,543</b>	<b>34,323</b>	<b>0.37</b>	

#### Variance Notes

1. The over spend is due to one of the authorities not making an adjustment to the budget as a result of living wage increases which has resulted in a cost pressure of £38k. The remaining value relates to the early need for agency staff to bring council tax arrears up to date.
2. The underspend is mainly in respect of lower than budgeted costs for postages as a result of the Criticom procurement.
3. Expected Enforcement income may increase as more cases come on line, this shortfall is partly offset by Bids income for 2018/19 received in 2019/20.

**Transformation funding - committed expenditure as follows:**

Description	Approved Budget 2019/20 £	Forecast Actuals 2019/20 £	Forecast Actuals 2020/21 £
<b>Already committed from grant funding received last year</b>			
Mitel Join Up	35,000	35,000	0
Organisational - HR Business Support	15,409	15,409	0
Business case for Channel Shift	6,900	6,900	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,309</b>	<b>57,309</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Unallocated</b>	<b>93,100</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>150,409</b>	<b>57,309</b>	<b>0</b>

The committed transformation funding is £57,309 as at 31st October 2019. It is expected that the budget will be spent by the end of the year. If all of the identified expenditure goes through in 2019/20 there will be £93k remaining for future projects.

ICT Reserve	Approved Budget 2019/20 £	Approved Budget 2020/21 £	Approved Budget 2021/22 £
Opening Balance	89,428	80,488	80,488
Partnership contribution	72,500	72,500	72,500
Spend to date	0	0	0
Earmarked - ICT refresh replacement servers software element	(81,440)	(72,500)	(72,500)
	<b>80,488</b>	<b>80,488</b>	<b>80,488</b>

## ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP

**Report of** Adrian Mills – ARP Strategic Manager (Billing & Benefits)

**To:** ARP Joint Committee, 17 December 2019

**Subject:** Welfare Reform

**Purpose:** To provide an update on welfare reform

### Recommendation(s):

- That the report is noted, updates highlighted.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1** Welfare Reform was introduced by Government in 2012 as part of wider fiscal measures to reduce deficits, with the intention to encourage work whilst reducing welfare expenditure. This report contains the latest updates on welfare reform and builds on previous reports to Joint Committee.

## 2.0 Matters of interest

### 2.1 Universal Credit – situation to date

#### 2.1.1 Universal Support

- 2.1.2** The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) established Universal Support to help people to claim Universal Credit and budgeting support to help customer's to manage their payments.

- 2.1.3** Since the introduction of Universal Credit the DWP has funded Local Authorities to provide these services, who in turn have been free to do so either directly or through commissioning arrangements. The ARP partner Councils provided direct help to claim within their Customer Services teams, with all bar one of the Councils funding Citizen's Advice to provide budgeting support.

- 2.1.4** From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 the DWP awarded a 12 month contract to Citizens Advice (CAB) to provide these services. CAB nationally have, through their various CAB networks throughout Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, established the following arrangements locally:

- Advisors dial into a national call centre
- Web chat
- Face to face arrangements – some on an appointment basis, others on a drop in basis or a mixture of the two. Rural provision can be patchy

- 2.1.5** Concerns have been raised that CAB are only funded to help to the first payment. Given DWP's processing figures show 80% of claims are paid on time (at five weeks) and given that the Housing Element (for rent) is typically the cause of delay, concerns have been expressed that vulnerable people may be affected and at risk of falling into rent arrears and subsequent consequences. CAB have said they will continue to help such customers, drawing on their usual funding streams.

- 2.1.6** The partner Customer Services teams intend to continue to help customers to claim, which may include signposting to CAB.
- 2.1.7** ARP continues to monitor the position and through meetings with the LGA and DWP, will continue to raise issues and concerns.
- 2.1.8** DWP are yet to publish a six month refer of the Service and are yet to indicate plans for April 2020.

**2.1.9 Summary of the latest position on the expansion of Universal Credit**

- Funding to smooth the transition to Universal Credit, including an additional two week run on of existing DWP benefit, will apply from 2020 to help with the gap to customers first Universal Credit payment. NB – Housing Benefit has provided a two week run on since April 2018
- Funding to increase in work allowances - thereby boosting UC payments
- Managed migration of existing cases to commence from November 2020, but only after testing of up to 10,000 claimants from July 2019 at Harrogate and completion set by December 2023
- At time of writing only a handful of selected, volunteered customers have had intensive support to move them to Universal Credit
- Reductions in maximum deductions from Universal Credit – to offset criticisms advance payments were being deducted too quickly and at punitive rates
- For newly self-employed the introduction from September 2019 of a longer, 12 month, grace period before a minimum income floor calculation is applied
- Pensioner Housing Benefit to continue until at least 2023

**2.2 At a national level the following concerns have been raised:**

- How DWP will monitor and report Citizen's Advice performance delivering Universal Support
- Concerns the Harrogate trial is not a meaningful trial, given the claimant population demographics and the intensive support will not be sustainable
- The lack of Managed Migration detailed plans and schedule
- Failure to populate UC systems with legacy systems data – all existing customers for HB will be expected to make a new claim. This is being reviewed.
- Concerns the Managed Migration process will leave customers without benefit during the transfer - DWP adopting a 'who knows me approach'
- The five week wait for UC payments – rent element often lags behind
- Alternative Payment Arrangements and data share for Private Landlords
- Housing Benefit Debt
- LA funding
- Management Information including LA access to UC Information

**2.2.1 During July DWP commenced a small scale managed migration trial at Harrogate Jobcentre. This will test:**

- The 'who knows me' approach
- methods to 'warm up' customers selected to migrate to UC (no compulsion)
- options to explain the UC claiming process
- how to UC claim – on line and evidence requirements
- how to understand monthly UC payments and how to budget
- understanding award letters and customer journal requirements to ensure UC conditionality compliance
- testing pre population of existing customer data
- testing how transitional protection can work
- those participating in the trial will not have their legacy benefit stopped without UC entitlement established
- Parliament is required to consider the results of the trial prior to considering next steps – this is not expected before Summer 2020

**2.2.2** On 15<sup>TH</sup> May 2019 DWP introduced new legislation that means new claims from mixed age couples, where one partner is a pensioner and the other working age, must claim UC and be subject to UC conditionality rules, i.e. required to actively seek work to receive benefit, with certain exceptions. Given benefit rates are higher for existing pensioners, this will have the effect of reducing benefit entitlement. Protections are in place for existing customers until a relevant change in their circumstances.

### **2.2.3 Universal Credit – new matters arising**

- DWP has announced a £10 million Universal Credit Transition Fund for outreach programmes to help vulnerable people make Universal Credit claims.
- The fund will be available to partner organisations across the UK, including charities, from April 2020. It will aim to help vulnerable people, including disabled people, care leavers and those with mental health issues, claim Universal Credit as a route into work. It will support innovative ideas for engaging with vulnerable people early, helping them to make timely claims to the new benefit.
- Funding application details were not available at time of writing.
- The outcome of the General Election is expected to have an impact on Universal Credit

### **2.3 Discretionary Housing Payment - no new matters arising**

**2.3.1** Discretionary Housing Payment grant is funded by DWP, designed to help customers remain in their homes or to move to affordable and sustainable accommodation. DWP continue to reduce funding, with further reductions this year and likely in 2020/21.

**2.3.2** Spend continues to be within DWP grant and we aim to use all the grant to help customers where we can. The main area of expenditure continues to be to assist customers with rent shortfalls, in particular due to restrictions on Housing Benefit rent levels. The scheme is promoted through our stakeholder contacts.

### **2.4 Benefit Cap – no new matters arising**

**2.4.1** DWP introduced the reduced Benefit Cap on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016; the maximum family income before the Benefit Cap applies reduced from £26,000 to £20,000 (£13,400 for single adults with no children).

**2.4.2** The Benefit Service continues to work with colleagues in Customer Service and Housing Options teams to seek to avoid homelessness and the cost of temporary housing.

**2.4.3** DWP have provided New Burdens funding to assist Councils with extra administrative costs and have increased Discretionary Housing Payment grants to help customers with the reduction – it should be noted the increase does not cover all the reductions.

### **2.5 Social rented sector rent restrictions – no new matters arising**

**2.5.1** In August Government finally responded to consultation on funding for supported housing, dropping proposals to move away from a subsidised demand led model to a grant model. For the foreseeable future, supported accommodation, including hostel tenancies, will remain in Housing Benefit and will not move to Universal Credit.

### **3.0 Welfare Benefit Upating April 2020 – new announcement**

**3.1** Government have confirmed an end to the four year Benefit uprating freeze. From April 2020 all Benefits will increase by CPI as of September 2019, 1.7% with the State Pension rising by 3.9% due to the 'Triple Lock'.

### **4.0 Options**

**4.1** The report is for information purposes

**5.0 Reasons for recommendations**

**5.1** The report is for information only

**6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1 Risk**

The report is for information only

**6.2 Financial**

The report is for information only

**6.3 Legal**

The report is for information only

**6.4 Equality and Diversity**

Not applicable.

Background papers: - None

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## ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP

**Report by:** Tom Darling-Fernley  
**To:** Joint Committee 17 December 2019  
**Subject:** ARP Strategy Refresh  
**Purpose:** To recommend a new Strategic Priorities statement for the ARP  
**Report date:** 17 December 2019

### Recommendations:

That the Joint Committee approve the mission, strategic themes and vision set out in this report and in Appendix D.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of our work to develop coherent annual service plans, change delivery plans and a target operating model, the Anglia Revenues Partnership has reviewed its strategic priorities. From a series of discussions and reviews, ARP is proposing a new statement of its mission, revised priorities stated as strategic themes, and a new vision for its service offer...

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In September 2017, Joint Committee adopted a set of five strategic priorities to guide the work and development of Anglia Revenues Partnership. These are as follows, in order of importance:

Priority 1 – Core purpose  
 Priority 2 – Relationships  
 Priority 3 – Partner service standards and operating costs  
 Priority 4 – Customer service standards  
 Priority 5 – Commercialisation

Further detail on each of these can be found in Appendix A to this report, '2017 Strategic priorities'.

## 3.0 MATTERS OF INTEREST

### 3.1 Development process

For a full explanation of the process that has led to these recommendations, please refer to the Appendix C, 'Refresh process'.

The ARP team held a workshop on 9 September 2019 on its operating model evolution work. As introduction, we considered the 2017 strategic priorities and their continued fitness for our plans. This useful discussion pulled out a number of issues with the existing strategic priorities as a reflection of ARP's current work and its direction and aspirations.

The ARP management team analysed each partner's senior strategy documents, looking for themes and excerpts that inform ARP's work (see Appendix B, 'Partner frameworks'). The ARP strategic managers then developed these observations, and through some iterations have combined them into the strategy review recommended for adoption here.

The management team also drew on around a dozen workshops with the ARP team, including partner customer services teams, to incorporate their suggestions, ideas and

feedback. The aim of this exercise is to help the team take ownership of the refreshed strategy when it's published.

### 3.2 Recommended strategy in summary

The refreshed strategy is made up of four key components:

#### 3.2.1 Mission

Currently, 2017 strategic priority 1 sets out ARP's core purpose. This has been augmented and turned into a draft high-level Mission statement:

**“To share resources to provide fair and accessible revenues and benefits services to our communities. To maximise benefit entitlement and engage in ethical revenue collection, treating our colleagues and customers with courtesy, understanding and respect.”**

#### 3.2.2 Values

ARP developed and adopted its corporate values in 2018. These remain unchanged, and are presented here to elevate them alongside the Mission, Strategic Themes, and Vision.

#### 3.2.3 Strategic Themes

Informed by the 2017 strategic priorities, partner strategy analysis, management discussions and feedback from the ARP and customer services teams, five themes are recommended for adoption. These would update and revise the existing priorities; they are of equal status and not presented in order of priority.

- **“Colleagues”**: Our operations rely on the people who make up our team, both directly within the partnership and in partner service areas. We will develop our people professionally and pursue a comprehensive organisational development plan.
- **“Customers”**: We focus all of our work on supporting the families, communities, individuals and businesses located in our partnership area. We will continue to make our services as convenient and as accessible as possible.
- **“Digital”**: We will aim to increase our ‘digital by default’ service including full, partner-integrated self-service. We will use automation to speed processing and release our teams to provide face-time for the customers who need it.
- **“Relationships”**: We are a partnership of five district councils, pooling resources to share the provision of revenues and benefits services, offering greater returns on investment in change and innovation projects.
- **“Sustainability”**: We are organisationally designed to improve the financial and environmental sustainability of our partners, through efficient collection, revenue generation and fulfilment of our partners’ climate change imperatives”

#### 3.2.4 Vision

This describes our aspirational, future state in a number of respects, and should provide a framework for our target operating model and the forward development of the partnership. These are of equal status and not presented in order of priority.

- **“An engaged, highly skilled team**
- **“Satisfied customers**
- **“Integrated Self-Service across all functions**

- **“Excellent, harmonised services**
- **“Balanced budget and sustainable revenue”**

#### **4.0 OPTIONS**

- 1) To accept the proposed Mission, Strategic Themes and Vision, and confirm the strategic status of ARP’s corporate Values.
- 2) Substantially revise the recommended elements to reflect other priorities.
- 3) Retain the existing 2017 strategic priorities without change, with all subsequent work on operating models, service planning and project planning to follow their tramlines.

#### **5.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

ARP recommends adoption and subsequent committee ratification of this proposed strategy on the basis that it represents the team’s shared view of ARP’s direction, and that it brings together the strategic frameworks of all partners in a service-specific manner.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

##### **6.1 Risk**

No meaningful risk arises from the adoption of this strategic framework. The team has reviewed the existing strategic priorities to make sure their provisions are re-captured or re-articulated in this new strategy.

##### **6.2 Financial**

The recommended strategy in itself imposes no additional financial risk. The financial exposure brought about by any developments or projects pursued in realisation of the strategy should be subject to their own case-specific risk assessment.

##### **6.3 Legal**

The strategy has no impact on the existing partnership agreement and no other specific legal implications.

##### **6.4 Equality and Diversity**

By defining digital as a key strategic theme, the strategy seeks to increase accessibility, including through a strategic commitment to use technology to release our team from simpler processing. Individual projects and developments stand to enhance the partnership’s utility for as broad a range of people as possible.

#### **Background papers**

- 1) ARP Strategy Refresh 2019 – Appendix A – 2017 Strategic priorities
- 2) ARP Strategy Refresh 2019 – Appendix B – Partner frameworks
- 3) ARP Strategy Refresh 2019 – Appendix C – Refresh process
- 4) ARP Strategy Refresh 2019 – Appendix D – Refreshed ARP strategy

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## The Anglia Revenues Partnership: Strategic Priorities, 2017

### 1. ARP's core purpose

**At the heart of ARP's role is the maximising of council tax and business rates income streams on behalf of partner councils.**

**This means that ARP needs to**

- a) Understand and communicate the wider impact of revenues and benefits changes and proposals on businesses and families and communities;**
- b) Proactively use data and intelligence to:**
  - I. Further improve collection rates** (by collating behavioural information; modelling impact of develop and schemes);
  - II. Grow councils' tax bases** (by making best use of all data sources available to identify properties that are not yet paying business rates/change of uses);
  - III. Inform and support Council's investment decisions;**
- c) Explore the most effective way to provide analysis** – what is best delivered by ARP and what is best handed over to individual Councils;
- d) Keep abreast of innovation** across the country that could be beneficial to ARP Partners, our businesses and families and communities; and
- e) Provide best advice to businesses on business rates** to facilitate their growth, working with economic development teams.

### 2. ARP's relationships

**ARP acts as a trusted adviser on Council Tax, Business Rates and benefits issues for partner councils** (having regard to its core purpose).

**This means that ARP needs to be proactive in offering policy, analytical and forecasting advice, over and above standard reports.** This should include key local taxation and benefit related issues (e.g. Budgets, Autumn Statements, legislative changes, policy changes, scheme review dates, reliefs) and the production of a forward plan of such changes and reviews. It is important that such advice is provided in the context of revenues and benefits being a tool in the families and communities; economic growth; and council self-sufficiency piece. ARP should also be sensitive to local requirements, and specific democratic timetables. This insight could be used by councils to inform decision-making and policy development.

To support this, **ARP will continue to maximise its national influence,** making the most of lobbying opportunities with central government.

### 3. ARP's standard of service to partner Councils and operating costs

**ARP's prime focus is a level of service to its Councils that means partner Councils are high performing in regard to revenue. ARP ensures its operating costs are kept within budget and uses opportunities to earn income to balance ARP's budget and deliver a return to partner Councils.**

#### **This means that:**

- a) **ARP works with OIB to develop its performance dashboard** to show what it delivers for partners; and
- b) **ARP is clear as to the level of income it requires to balance its budget in the next 5 years** and takes opportunities to earn income, developing existing services where the core performance of ARP is not impacted

### 4. ARP's customer service standards of service

**ARP's business and resident customers should experience a good level of service in accordance with agreed service standards.**

#### **This means that:**

- c) **ARP works with OIB to develop its performance dashboard** in respect of customer metrics; and
- d) **ARP continues to develop its digital offer** to improve customer experience and service.

### 5. ARP's commercial positioning

**ARP continues to expand its commercial operations through a controlled risk assured and risk assessed approach. Options for delivery include extending the partnership, trading agreements or the provision of specialist services through delegated agreements as well as delivering services through ARP Trading Ltd.**

#### **This means that:**

- a) **ARP continues to promote its specialist services** (enforcement agency; revenues and benefits consultancy and management support) to other local authorities where this provides a positive benefit to partner authorities;
- b) **ARP develops its existing offer** and produces clear business cases for new opportunities; and
- c) **ARP should not lose focus on its core business** and commercial opportunities should serve to increase ARP's resilience.

## ARP Strategy Refresh 2019 – Appendix B – Summary of partner strategic frameworks

	Breckland	East Cambridgeshire	East Suffolk	Fenland	West Suffolk
<b>Vision or Mission</b>	A place where people and business can thrive	One of the most desirable places to live in the UK	Maintain and sustainably improve the quality of life for everyone growing up in, living in, working in and visiting East Suffolk	(Aim) To improve the quality of life for people living in Fenland	Supporting and investing in our West Suffolk communities and businesses to encourage and manage ambitious growth in prosperity and quality of life for all
<b>Governing strategy documents</b>	Corporate Plan 2019-2023 Customer Access Strategy 2019-2022	Corporate Plan 2019-2023	Business Plan 2015-2023 Digital Strategy 2015-2019	Business Plan 2019/20	Strategic Framework 2018-20 Customer Access Strategy 2019-2022
<b>Headlines</b>	Four priorities: Your Place Your Opportunity Your Health & Wellbeing Our Council	Six corporate priorities: Sound Financial Management Improving transport Housing Cleaner, Greener East Cambridgeshire Social & Community Infrastructure	Three prongs to existing business plan: Economic Growth Enabling Communities Financial Self-Sufficiency Two more are set to be added to a new strategy statement: Environment Digital Transformation	Four corporate priorities: Quality organisation Communities Environment Economy	Three strategic priorities: Growth in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc. Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active. Increased and improved provision of appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas.
<b>Partnership and shared working</b>	Priority: Your Health & Wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that through the Anglia Revenue Partnership our residents are given high quality advice to help maximise their income and manage their debts</li> </ul> Priority: Our Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work effectively with all our partners to deliver significant benefits to the communities of Breckland</li> </ul>	Area of focus in vulnerable communities strategy: Effective partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in multi-agency partnerships and events to address community needs using a joined-up approach.</li> </ul>	Remodel: Partnership working Reinvent: Shared services		Resourcing our priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>{Our Medium Term Financial Strategy is based in part on) Continuation of the shared service agenda and transformation of service delivery</li> </ul> Ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration and integration – Ambitious and comprehensive cross-system partnerships that join up resources around communities and individuals.</li> </ul>
<b>Customer access</b>	Priority: Your Health & Wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to engage with partners to lead early intervention activities such as the Early Help Hub to support, reduce and prevent complex needs</li> </ul> Vision from Customer Access Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide high quality and easy to use services that are designed with our customers in mind, that are delivered efficiently with improved value for money.</li> <li>To encourage customers to self-serve, wherever possible, so that we can focus our resources on the people who need our help the most</li> <li>To improve the digital skills and connectivity of our residents and the region.</li> </ul>	Corporate priority: Sound Financial Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue service reviews to minimise bureaucracy, increase efficiency and provide excellent 'can do' and 'open for business' services</li> </ul>	Prong: Financial Self Sufficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current projects which embrace our efficiency-driven approach include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A review of the Customer Strategy to improve customer service and access, using a clear business and evidence base.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> Remodel: Structure around customer needs Reinvent: Preventing demand Critical Success Factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits – Timely access to welfare benefits for those in need within our communities.</li> </ul>	Corporate priority: Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to support our residents to maximise their income by accessing the benefits they are entitled to. We will do this by processing all applications for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support effectively and accurately through our shared service (Anglia Revenues Partnership; ARP)</li> </ul>	"The West Suffolk Way" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empowering families and communities to create positive and healthy futures. Working in a way which helps to create safe places, recognises individuals and their needs and strengths, understands relationships and connects people.</li> </ul> From Customer Access Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One size definitely doesn't fit all but no matter how our customers get in touch with us, or which service they use, they should expect the same standards every time.</li> </ul>

## ARP Strategy Refresh 2019 – Appendix B – Summary of partner strategic frameworks

	Breckland	East Cambridgeshire	East Suffolk	Fenland	West Suffolk
<b>People</b>	<p>Priority: Our Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that our staff have the skills needed to drive the organisation forwards and meet the expectations of our changing communities and how they wish to interact with us</li> </ul>			<p>As an organisation, our unique ‘one-team’ culture supports the effective delivery of our priorities and enables officers, members and partners to effectively work together without the constraints of traditional department silos.</p> <p>We support and invest in our workforce to give them the skills they need to work effectively within their roles. This has been recognised through Investors in People (IiP) and Customer Service Excellence (CSE) re-accreditations. In our latest Staff Survey (2018), 84% of staff told us that they were proud to work for us.</p>	<p>Focus on West Suffolk Councils’ workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A committed and effective workforce is key to the successful delivery of our strategic priorities.</li> <li>Our people policies support the health and wellbeing of our staff in order that they are able to achieve the ambitions set out by West Suffolk councils.</li> <li>During 2018 – 2020 we will focus our workforce strategy on 5 key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills and behaviours</li> <li>Pay, reward and recognition</li> <li>Recruitment and retention</li> <li>Workforce planning and data</li> <li>Health and wellbeing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Technology</b>	<p>Priority: Our Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that our services are digital enabled, efficient and meet the expectations of our changing community whilst not exclude [sic] those that are unable to interact in that way</li> </ul> <p>From Customer Access Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving customer experience through better digital services, available 24/7</li> <li>Adopting Government Digital Service (GDS) as our benchmark</li> <li>Over 50% of resident contact via Self Service or Automated Phone channels by 2022</li> </ul>	<p>From vulnerable community strategy 2018-2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital exclusion: Digital support and assistance provided by the Customer Services team (face to face help on computers located in reception)</li> </ul>	<p>Prong: Financial Self Sufficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing demand for services through revised Customer Services and Digital Strategies.</li> <li>Increasing use of mobile devices to allow more flexible working to improve effectiveness and efficiency.</li> </ul> <p>Remodel: Digital by default, Channel shift</p>	<p>Corporate priority: Quality Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help residents to access our services digitally and self-serve (as outlined in our Channel Shift strategy) to allow us to provide more support for vulnerable customers and complex queries</li> </ul> <p>From Channel Shift case study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a clear opportunity to migrate customers and transactions onto the web and other methods of contact.</li> </ul>	<p>Resourcing our priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Our Medium Term Financial Strategy is based in part on) Encouraging the use of digital forms for customer access</li> </ul> <p>Ways of working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digitally enabled: Maximising the potential of data and technology to transform decisions and transactions.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic development</b>	<p>Priority: Your Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to deliver a clear “open for business” approach across all Council services that promotes and supports business growth</li> </ul>	<p>Corporate priority: Social &amp; Community Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a 33% business rates cut for local High Street retailers – funded by Central Government</li> </ul>	<p>Prong: Economic Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will seek to create the right environment for sustainable economic growth to flourish, supporting everyone from micro and small businesses to our resident multinationals, by collaborating with a wide range of public and private sector partners.</li> </ul> <p>Reinvent: Economic growth</p>	<p>Corporate priority: Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses in Fenland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with our partners, local businesses, and the Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities</li> <li>Provide responsive business support to encourage business growth, improve job diversity, skills and increased grant applications to support jobs and economic growth</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Resourcing our priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Our Medium Term Financial Strategy is based in part on) Taking advantage of new forms of local government finance (e.g. business rate retention).</li> </ul> <p>Growth in West Suffolk’s economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will use our influence, investment, partnerships and regulatory powers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>promote West Suffolk as a place to do business, so as to attract investment and innovation that increases salary levels and encourages the right mix of jobs to grow our economy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Commercial and financial</b>	<p>Priority: Your Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to strengthen our commercial approach which will secure our financial position by identifying income generation opportunities and efficiencies through trading and sharing</li> </ul> <p>Priority: Our Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the delivery of cost effective, high quality service provision through a robust approach to procurement and contracts management</li> </ul>	<p>Corporate priority: Sound Financial Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep Council Tax and fees low; keep delivering great services</li> <li>Be more commercial, but within reason: ‘commercial for community’</li> </ul> <p>Corporate priority: Cleaner, Greener East Cambridgeshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and adopt an Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, and accompanying Communications Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Prong: Financial Self Sufficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are committed to continuing to drive out further efficiencies. However, we must carefully consider whether to support further future Council Tax freezes.</li> <li>Simply continuing to improve efficiency and reducing costs will not be enough to enable the Councils to deliver all that we want for East Suffolk. We will adopt two further complementary approaches: reviewing how we deliver our services and becoming even more business-like and entrepreneurial in our approach.</li> </ul>	<p>Transformation and Efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue transformation and commercialisation opportunities, including co-location of services, to support effective ways of working and deliver additional income or cost savings</li> </ul>	<p>Resourcing our priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Our Medium Term Financial Strategy is based in part on) Behaving more commercially</li> </ul> <p>Ways of working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial self-sufficiency – A shift from reliance on grants to self-generated income, returns on investment, and business rates growth.</li> <li>Behaving more commercially – Taking a business approach to our operations, within our public service remit.</li> </ul>

# Strategy refresh process

## Summary

As part of its annual service plan review, the Anglia Revenues Partnership has reviewed its strategic priorities. From a series of discussions and reviews, ARP is proposing a new statement of its mission, revised priorities, and a new vision for its service offer.

As an integral component in each of its partners' strategies, extensive work has taken place into finding common threads in those strategies and building suitable priorities.

## Background

In September 2017, Joint Committee adopted a set of five strategic priorities to guide the work and development of Anglia Revenues Partnership. These are as follows:

<b>Priority 1   Core purpose</b>	At the heart of ARP's role is the maximising of council tax and business rates income streams on behalf of partner councils.
<b>Priority 2   Relationships</b>	ARP acts as a trusted adviser on Council Tax, Business Rates and benefits issues for partner councils (having regard to its core purpose).
<b>Priority 3   Partner service standards and operating costs</b>	ARP's prime focus is a level of service to its Councils that means partner Councils are high performing in regard to revenue. ARP ensures its operating costs are kept within budget and uses opportunities to earn income to balance ARP's budget and deliver a return to partner Councils.
<b>Priority 4   Customer service standards</b>	ARP's business and resident customers should experience a good level of service in accordance with agreed service standards.
<b>Priority 5   Commercialisation</b>	ARP continues to expand its commercial operations through a controlled risk assured and risk assessed approach. Options for delivery include extending the partnership, trading agreements or the provision of specialist services through delegated agreements as well as delivering services through ARP Trading Ltd.

## Operating Model workshop

ARP is redesigning its operating model, and as part of this process the management team held a workshop to discuss the partnership's value propositions and the operating elements surrounding these. All this work needs to be informed by the partnership's strategy, so we took the opportunity to review the 2017 priorities.

The team came up with a number of ideas to improve, and plug gaps in, the strategic framework.

### Approach

In a brief session at the start of the workshop, four teams reviewed the existing strategic priorities, and then fed back into a group discussion. The notes of these discussions are below, put into themes by the pictogram bullet points.



## Blue table

- ☐ Priority 1 needs to speak about timely award of benefits, not just revenues.
- ☐ The part about best advice to businesses (1e) should move to 'Stakeholders' (see below).
- ☐ 'People and organisational development' should be a new Priority 2.
- ☐ 'Customer service standards' should merge with 'Relationships' to form a new Priority 3 'Stakeholders'.
- ☐ 'Partner service standard and operating costs' should be Priority 4.
- ☐ Needs more about relationships with other service areas.
- ☐ Fraud needs to be in Priority 5.

## Green table

- ☐ Benefits not in core purpose?
- ☐ No mention of staff?
- ☐ Priority 4 should be about digital innovation instead of CS standards.
- ☐ Good quality digital offering
- ☐ Commercialisation shouldn't detract from core service offering.
- ☐ Agility, resilience, efficiency
- ☐ Low cost
- ☐ Quality automation
- ☐ Challenge [status quo]

## Yellow table

- ☐ Benefits needs to be part of core purpose
- ☐ Second priority should be Relationships and Customer Services.
- ☐ Expand core purpose – support vulnerable residents
- ☐ Support people who can't as distinct from people who won't pay.
- ☐ Standard, modern services, efficient and excellent.

## Pink table

- ☐ Core purpose should include Benefits.
- ☐ No mention of staff including taking pride. People should be Priority 2.
- ☐ Signposting to discounts, exemptions and benefits as part of core purpose.
- ☐ Develop punchy mission statement.
- ☐ Fair debt collection, recovery and enforcement. Be mindful how we collect.
- ☐ Internal teams' relationships. Relationships with others e.g. VOA. Stakeholder relationships.
- ☐ Self Service and automation technology – Work with suppliers on further digitisation.
- ☐ Differences – 'EoS' – Encourage equalisation of service provision across the partnership.
- ☐ Include protection of public purse

## Summary findings from discussion

### All tables

- Benefits is missing from ARP's strategic priorities and needs to be included.

### Most tables

- People and organisational development should be a high priority. Two tables said independently that these topics should become priority 2.
- Relationships (currently priority 2) should be broader than 'policy' and 'advice' links. This should encompass internal operational links, including customer service teams, as well as external links with other agencies and organisations (e.g. DWP, VOA, CAB etc).
- We need to continue developing a high-quality digital offer, with Self Service and automation by default.
- One table made explicit mention of the need for a mission statement in their feedback, this was a discussion point for every group.

### Other notable mentions

- Supporting vulnerable people, along with mindfulness and fairness in the way we follow up and collect debts, is mentioned by two tables.
- We need to standardise across sites and partners towards a single way of working (two tables).
- Efficiency is mentioned by two tables.
- We need to continue being cost conscious in protecting public funds (two tables).
- Commercialisation strategy needs to complement and not detract from the core service, and needs to include the Fraud Team.

## Further work by the strategic management team

Following the operating model workshop, our strategic management team suggested a set of four, prioritised strategic themes. These are, with an indication of which pictogram topics they speak to:

- **Customer access**
- **Staff (organisation, structure, location)**
- **ICT infrastructure and suppliers**
- **Commercial and ► financial**

Beyond these headings, we need to make sure our strategy speaks about (a) our benefits work ♦, (b) relationships ◐ and (c) consistent, efficient, agile, resilient working practices across the partnership □.

## Partner strategies

ARP is integral to each partner's overall service offer. Each partner prepares and publishes its own strategy documents, so any partnership-wide strategy needs to align with and complement these multiple frameworks.

We reviewed partner strategies for excerpts directly relevant to ARP, then organised these into some themes emerging from discussions so far, to make sure any revised strategy speaks to each partner's corporate priorities.

Appendix B to the Strategy Refresh report to December 2019 joint committee gives a detailed, tabulated summary of these findings.

## Summary observations

Clear threads can be drawn between the corporate priorities of all or most partners, for example on the topics of economy, environment, communities, and financial management. Some priorities are particular to single partners at this level, such as housing, transport and digital transformation.

We found the following shared themes:

**Shared working:** All partners are committed to shared working, with budgetary projections relying in large part on operations that pool resources and unify mutual processes and requirements.

**Customer access:** We all share similar commitments to convenient, customer-centric ways of working, with the same standards applied across the partnership.

**People:** Three of our four employing partners state their people priorities in their leading strategic policy documents. The leading common thread relates to equipping people with the correct skills. Breaking down silos, responsiveness to change and health and wellbeing.

**Technology:** We are all working towards more technologically enabled ways of working, with customer convenience at their core. We also touch on use of data to direct plans and use of technology to release our teams to focus on people with more detailed needs.

**Economic development:** Our rates section can help each partner's economic development priorities and improve efficiencies and collection rates to yield more from rates retention schemes.

**Commercial and financial:** We all want to improve our commercial approach and leverage more from our operations. We also seek increased financial efficiencies through streamlining processes and from return on investment. We want to deliver maximum value to people who need our support, for example by expending our discretionary housing payment budgets fully.

## Strategy Sessions

In late October 2019, we ran around a dozen workshop strategy sessions with the ARP and wider customer services team across all four APR sites, in order gather feedback and ideas to incorporate into the strategy and its subsequent plans. These were vibrant, useful events where much valuable evidence and contributions were gathered.

Broadly speaking, the discussions fell into five broad categories:

1. Emphasise customers are our top priority - especially help for vulnerable people not digitally capable
2. Recognise the importance of the team across ARP, and how critical the team is to delivering against any strategy.
3. Poor digital systems, internal business systems, online forms, slow responses from suppliers
4. Need to improve team communications across the four sites to foster single team ethos
5. Still have work to do to harmonise all procedures in all disciplines
6. Striking right speed/accuracy balance & avoiding double handling



## Anglia Revenues Partnership

# Strategy

### Our Mission

To share resources to provide fair and accessible revenues and benefits services to our communities. To maximise benefit entitlement and engage in ethical revenue collection, treating our colleagues and customers with courtesy, understanding and respect.

### Our Values

**Positive  
Engagement**

**Thinking  
Dynamically**

**Efficient and  
Excellent**

**Taking  
Pride**

**Respect and  
Integrity**

### Our Strategic Themes



**Colleagues**



**Customers**



**Digital**



**Relationships**



**Sustainability**

### Our Vision

**An engaged,  
highly skilled  
team**

**Satisfied  
customers**

**Integrated Self-  
Service across  
all functions**

**Excellent,  
harmonised  
services**

**Balanced  
budget and  
sustainable  
revenue**

## Commentary on our strategic themes



### Colleagues

**Our operations rely on the people who make up our team, both directly within the partnership and in fellow service areas. We will develop our people professionally and pursue a comprehensive organisational development plan.**

- Our human resources function is an integral part of the organisation, and helps managers and teams create a more productive, efficient, collaborative and responsive operation.
- We will design an agile organisation that can respond to increasing change in the delivery of core services for our partners.
- ARP serves as a rallying point for recruitment to its specialised roles, with our human resources management coordinating provision across multiple employing partners.
- We develop and pursue strategies for recruitment, succession planning, career pathways, training, workforce culture and engagement and health and wellbeing.
- We actively support and equip remote working where it improves productivity and engagement.
- We aspire to create supportive, inviting, well-equipped and well-maintained workplaces that support everybody's day-to-day work, and provide all colleagues with the tools they need to do their jobs.



### Customers

**We focus all of our work on supporting the families, communities, individuals and businesses located in our partnership area. We will continue to make our services as convenient and as accessible as possible.**

- We guide people proactively towards, and provide access to and administer housing benefits, council tax reduction, discounts, exemptions, and discretionary support.
- We strive to make all customer interactions as convenient and expeditious as is feasible, and will work to bring as many interactions as possible within agreed timescales.
- We ensure all residents and businesses are informed of their council tax, business rates, or recovery status, fully and accurately, and on a timely basis.
- We support businesses and other non-domestic occupants with high-quality business rates services and administer business improvement districts.
- We will maximise the value of our expertise and advice to economic development work.



## Digital

We will aim to increase our 'digital by default' service including full, partner-integrated self-service. We will use automation to speed processing and release our teams to provide face-time for the customers who need it.

- We will develop digital products that integrate with partner systems and enhance convenience for customers.
- Our main objective with digital is to release colleagues to provide face-time for the customers who need it.
- We will evaluate services on the presumption that they should be automated and/or accessible through self-service.
- It will be necessary to justify any process remaining manual and/or assisted, and to review these justifications on a regular basis.
- Digital change projects will be led through an approved lifecycle framework, with project managers identified.
- Every digital project should respond to a clear business need, in ways that limit over-reliance on single suppliers.
- We will use our partnership to pool digital capability such as web development or design resources.
- We collaborate to improve the scope and quality of our digital offer, in terms of integration, automation, self-service convenience and other fields.



## Relationships

We are a partnership of five district councils, pooling resources and sharing best practice to share the provision of revenues and benefits services, offering greater returns on investment in change and innovation projects.

- Partnership oversight rests with a joint committee of elected members, and an operational improvement board, consisting of partners' senior officers and the partnership's strategic management team.
- We balance the opportunities of joint working with local requirements.
- We provide our partners with expert policy advice, analysis and forecasting for revenues and benefits.
- We collaborate with other functions (e.g. customer service, housing, economic development), other local authorities, the third sector and central government to improve our core service offer.
- We work through other local authorities, central government, product user groups and professional bodies to influence policy at all levels.
- We bring together a set of function support teams covering customer service, communications, finance and so on to ensure best practice, check our work with partners' priorities, and pool resources.
- We seek to be integral to all partners, regardless of location or employer.



We are organisationally designed to improve the financial and environmental sustainability of our partners, through efficient collection, revenue generation

**Sustainability**

**and fulfilment of our partners' climate change imperatives.**

- Local authorities are declaring climate emergencies. We will help our partners find ways to reduce our footprint, and begin to build into our operations a presumption against generating waste and emissions.
- We mitigate financial exposure for partners through pooled resources and economies of scale and will continue to seek efficiencies for the partners.
- We maximise revenues through expert billing services, and diligent recovery of council tax and business rates debts and overpaid housing benefits.
- We will develop and implement a defined process for change projects and programmes and ensure clear identification of business need and evaluation of options, ahead of implementing any specific solutions.
- We use intelligence and data to identify properties where council tax or business rates should be paid and seek to maximise each partner's tax base.
- We evaluate all opportunities to do more with less and will pursue efficiencies as deemed appropriate.
- We expand the partnership for specific professional services (e.g. enforcement, fraud management, consultancy, leadership services) to local authorities beyond the partnership, and will grow these efficiency and resilience streams.
- Commercial activities will always operate under a risk-assured, risk-assessed approach, and must have a neutral or complementary effect on core services to partners.

## ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP

**Report of** Paul Corney - Head of ARP

**To:** ARP Joint Committee, 17 December 2019

**Subject:** The Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) Service Delivery Plan.

**Purpose:** To recommend the Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register at Appendix A are approved and to report on the progress in respect of the December 2018 Service Delivery Plan.

### Recommendation(s):

- That the progress in respect of the December 2018 Service Delivery Plan is noted.
- That the ARP Joint Committee approve the revised Service Delivery Plan and risk register at Appendix A

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 In accordance with the ARP agreement a revised Service Delivery Plan should be agreed by the Joint Committee by the end of December each year and the risk register is reviewed every 6 months.
- 1.1.2 A Service Delivery Plan was agreed in December 2018 and there is an update below which details progress against this plan.
- 1.1.3 In addition to service aims and objectives the plan includes a risk assessment that ARP will implement in the next year.

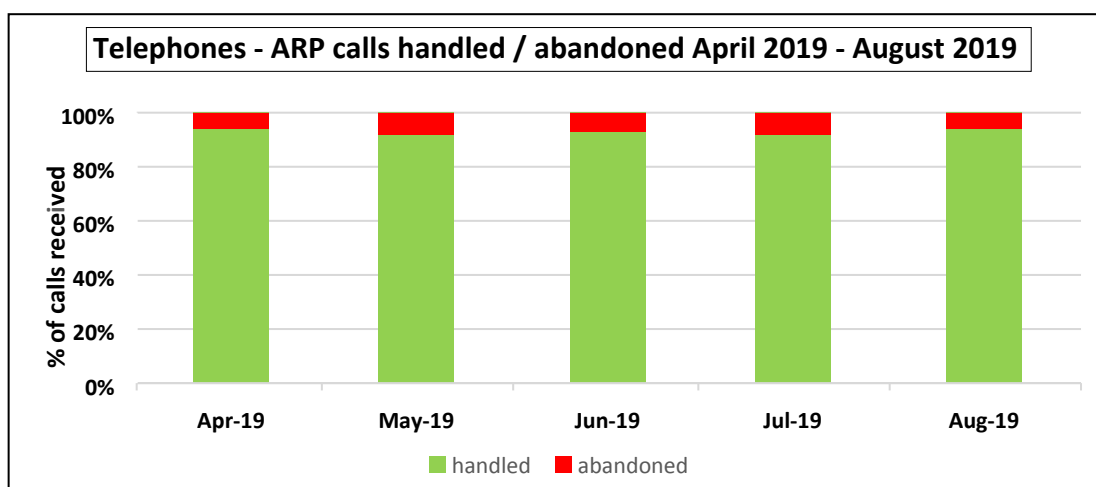
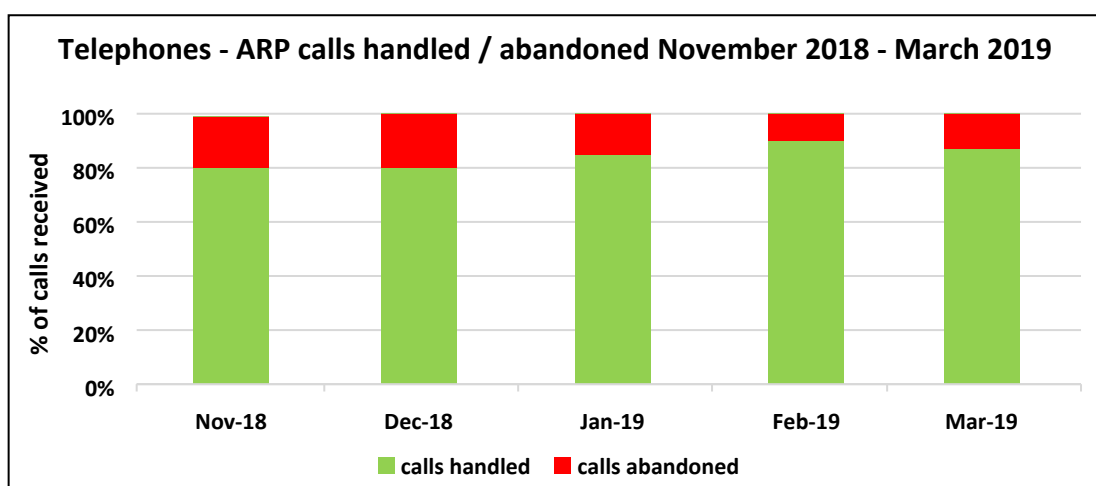
## 2. December 2018 plan update

- 2.1 The ARP has seen significant success in 2019/20 and we have achieved the following;
- Housing Benefit new claims and changes are meeting targets even though the merger effected early performance
  - The ongoing design of processes on our document management system continues to automate the harmonisation of work distribution for all partners. The EDMS drip feed has been rolled out to Business Rates too now.
  - All customer teams are able to use customer contact software to sign customers up to e-services upon contact and the number of those using e-services continues to rise.
  - The further recovery work jointly funded by County Councils secured recovery of over £1.1 Million last year and is already on target to secure similar/higher recovery in 2019/20
  - The Fraud teams work also jointly funded by the County Councils identified £3.2 Million in fraud and error (£600k more than last year).
  - The East and West Suffolk merged databases were in place from April 2019 and the project to merge them has been a great success

Some other achievements relating to the Transformation Programme are detailed below:



- 2.2 The Digital work stream has progressed with the procurement of a forms designer and some bespoke forms that integrate with the Capita system. Robotics/automation software has also been purchased to provide full automation of the assessment process in selected cases.
- 2.3 Automation of Universal Credit records has been progressing well and Capita's most recent upgrades to software should significantly increase the amount of data shared by DWP that can be automated.
- 2.4 By December 2018 it had become clear that too many calls to the ARP were unanswered and that the time customers were waiting to get through was too long. Processing times for some Council Tax changes was also taking 8 weeks or more to deal with.
- 2.5 High staff turnover (partly due to the number of temporary appointments funded by DWP and others) meant that the number of new staff with less experience and knowledge were being trained and so the experienced staff were taking calls and we were unable to clear some Council tax work within acceptable timescales.
- 2.6 In March 2019, before new year bills were issued, new phone technology was introduced (RAD messages) that allows the ARP to manage calls so that the simpler calls go to our less experienced staff and customers are offered online services as an alternative to needing to speak to an officer. This year improvement in performance has been excellent as shown by the graphs below



- 2.7 A number of temporary posts were made permanent and appointments made. These staff have since been trained and we have seen the outstanding work reduce so that now all Council Tax Billing enquiries are being responded to in less than 2 weeks (the situation continues to improve) and the work in progress is less than half of the amount we had at the same time last year.

- 2.8 We have introduced a generic role called a Council Tax Billing Officer. These posts process Council Tax changes and will also be able to process some Council Tax Support (CTS) cases (where there is no Housing Benefit). This role will mean that resource is more flexible and can be moved from CTS to billing as the workload demands.
- 2.9 The Service Delivery Plan sought to deliver efficiencies to the partner councils of more than £1 Million by the end of 2018/19 which was achieved. The target was set on the basis of assessed loss of grants from the DWP. As you can see from the table below, the cost of the Revenues and Benefits service is still less than it was when each partner joined the partnership.

<b>ARP Partner Budgeted Contributions from 2010 to 2018</b>									
<b>By Partner</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
Breckland	1,954,095	1,816,017	1,900,178	1,940,644	1,960,573	1,909,805	1,930,732	1,864,022	1,822,280
Fenland	-	-	-	-	1,306,332	1,172,954	1,203,425	1,171,988	1,120,962
Forest Heath	1,006,656	906,446	943,778	966,096	976,114	940,232	946,413	922,356	880,015
St Edmundsbury	-	1,334,141	1,388,177	1,421,240	1,436,939	1,375,651	1,393,371	1,360,342	1,329,877
East Cambs	1,175,903	1,057,434	1,100,715	1,131,980	1,143,817	1,113,589	1,129,429	1,062,654	1,043,406
Suffolk Coastal	-	-	-	-	1,258,713	1,213,337	1,284,836	1,220,306	1,189,228
Waveney	-	-	-	-	1,716,820	1,671,263	1,686,058	1,608,994	1,501,729
	<b>4,136,654</b>	<b>5,114,038</b>	<b>5,332,848</b>	<b>5,459,960</b>	<b>9,799,308</b>	<b>9,396,831</b>	<b>9,574,263</b>	<b>9,210,662</b>	<b>8,887,497</b>

- 2.10 On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 the shared management arrangement with Norwich City commenced and has been very successful to date. Partnership arrangements have been extended to include the provision of fraud services for Norwich (jointly funded by Norfolk County Council)
- 2.11 Norwich have delegated their enforcement services (previously known as Bailiff) to Breckland Council from July 2019 who pass this work to the ARP team. This increases the teams resilience and ability to collect debt in a fair manner taking account of people's ability to pay and vulnerability.
- 2.12 Waveney and Suffolk Coastal have merged to become East Suffolk Council and St. Edmundsbury and Forest Heath have merged to become West Suffolk. This meant that data in the Capita Revenues and Benefits System and the data in the Civica EDMS System had to be merged too.
- 2.13 The teams effecting the merger managed the project superbly with the Councils involved and Capita and Civica. The annual bills and letters were unaffected by the project and customers received a seamless service with the exception of the 3 week period of the actual final conversion.
- 2.14 The systems had to be taken down for conversion to the merged databases but we were still able to work on the other 3 Councils databases and so when the databases became available again we were then able to concentrate resource on the West and East Suffolk backlog that had arisen due to the downtime a clear benefit of partnership working.
- 2.15 The merger work for East and West Suffolk was resourced and funded by the 4 Councils and was managed so that it had little or no impact on the 3 other partner Councils not merging.

### **3. Revised Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register**

- 3.1.1 The service Delivery Plan (Appendix A) details the high level actions that the service must implement to ensure that the varied demands on the service are met. The plan has 2 areas:
- Service plan – business as usual and innovative activities
  - Risk matrix

- 3.1.2 The Joint Committee has reconsidered the strategic direction of the ARP going forward and the Service Delivery Plan seeks to detail actions to achieve the visioning detailed in the report to members.
- 3.1.3 The priorities of the Revenues and Benefits service are:
- “Colleagues”**: Our operations rely on the people who make up our team, both directly within the partnership and in partner service areas. We will develop our people professionally and pursue a comprehensive organisational development plan.
- “Customers”**: We focus all of our work on supporting the families, communities, individuals and businesses located in our partnership area. We will continue to make our services as convenient and as accessible as possible.
- “Digital”**: We will aim to increase our ‘digital by default’ service including full self-service. We will use automation to speed processing and release our teams to focus on vulnerable and complex cases.
- “Relationships”**: We are a partnership of five district councils, pooling resources to share the provision of revenues and benefits services, offering greater returns on investment in change and innovation projects.
- “Sustainability”**: We are organisationally designed to improve the financial sustainability and self-sufficiency of our partners, through the collection of council tax and business rates and the ethical recovery and enforcement of related debts.
- 3.1.4 All partner Councils strategies include the development of digital online solutions. Self-service offers customers accessible services inside and outside of opening hours, it also means that the customer service teams are available to provide more help to those who cannot self-serve or need to speak to a specialist.
- 3.1.5 Customers completing online forms and submitting them to us also means that we will be able to automate a number of transactions in Council Tax and Benefits which will lead to quicker response times and future efficiencies. The data received from the DWP Universal Credit Data Services will also lead to increased ability to automate assessment of cases.
- 3.1.6 The infrastructure to be able to increase on-line transactions has been put in place and software to enable automation of assessment processes has been installed. In 2019/20 and 2020/21 the digital transformation team (the customer service lead officers from each Council and the ARP strategic team) will continue to drive cultural change to enable officers to assist customers to learn to use the on-line services to reduce future footfall and telephone calls.
- 3.1.7 In 2020/21 we will continue to invest time and resource into developing automated processes so that by the end of the year we will be able to better estimate future savings and efficiencies in subsequent years. In the meantime a conservative efficiency target is included in the budget from 2021/22 onwards.
- 3.1.8 The ARP strategic team will continue to influence national initiatives such as Universal Credit and to influence system design to improve performance and generate efficiencies where possible.
- 3.1.9 We will also continue to maintain our flexible workforce. We have seen great success in the new Council Tax Billing role which works generically across Council Tax and Council Tax Support cases and we will continue to recruit vacancies to this new role as we see Universal Credit and Automation changing the way in which we receive and process our work.
- 3.1.10 We need to ensure that we have resilience in key roles and so we will develop a planning framework to ensure continued service delivery. We will have a programme of; identifying future leaders, leadership development, career pathways and use of coaching/mentoring, professional training/qualifications and external experiences in leadership.

- 3.1.11 Welfare reform is still high on the Governments agenda which may lead to fundamental changes in our service provision and so the plan includes actions to understand the impact on the partner councils of the changes, as information becomes available, there are also actions concerning the monitoring of the financial impact of the changes we have already seen.
- 3.1.12 The risk surrounding income from Business Rates remains red at this time because there is a risk in relation to subsequent appeals that may be received and reduce rates payable and in particular an appeal outstanding from Hospitals asking for Charitable relief which would have a significant impact on the partners affected (Finance teams and Section 151 officers are aware)
- 3.1.13 The register also continues to highlight the need to monitor the impact of Universal Credit on customers and grant income. We continue to influence changes in delivery through representation on DWP steering groups.

## **4 Options**

1. To suggest changes and additions to the Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register.
2. To approve the Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register.

## **5 Reasons for recommendations**

A Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register are requirements of the ARP agreement and are needed to agree the short to medium term priorities of the ARP in delivering services as effectively, efficiently and economically as possible and to identify the risks associated with the services.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Risk**

If a Service Delivery Plan is not agreed then the direction and priorities of service delivery can lose focus. The Plan allows members to monitor and direct service provision. The identification and mitigation of risk is necessary to ensure that Councils minimise the impact of risk on customers and the partner councils.

### **6.2 Financial**

The Service Delivery plan requires the ARP officers to monitor and report on financial matters of relevance to the Section 151 officers of the ARP.

### **6.3 Legal**

The ARP agreement requires a Service Delivery Plan to be agreed before the end of December each year.

### **6.4 Equality and Diversity**

Not applicable.

Background papers:- None

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#### **Lead Contact Officer**

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#### **Appendices attached to this report:**

**Appendix A – Service Delivery Plan December 2018**

Topic	Link to Strategic aims	Core Purpose	Summary Action Required	Links with other actions and projects	timeframe	Suppliers/Relationships	Interdependencies	Progress & completion date	Flag
Universal Credit implementation and other Welfare Reform	Customer Relationships Sustainability	Ensuring that customers receive, as far as possible, a seamless change to Universal Credit and other future welfare reforms by managing skills and knowledge of officers	Continue review of Revenues & Benefits service provision in the light of the introduction of Universal Credit and other future welfare reforms once migration timetable communicated by DWP	Workforce Strategy and Learning and Development Strategy	ongoing - current managed migration target for UC 2023	DWP	DWP are managing this process, we must understand the implications to us as the information concerning migration timetables become available	Strategic Manager Benefits attends national DWP group and keeps ARP informed as well as directing DWP to address LA issues. All ARP Councils have been in full service (for new claims) since the end of December - still awaiting info on Managed migration of existing cases.	
Automation of Services	Customer Digital Sustainability	Offering 24.7 & 365 services to customers to be able to transact with the Councils	Review of website and self service portal to ensure ease of access for customers using UX principles. For all eclaims/forms and system generated post to be auto indexed - and auto assessed where possible. There needs to be a review of existing supplier to decide whether a	Customer Journey project	Work already commenced - next milestones by end June 2020 - improved UCDS and review of COA automation	Dependent upon supplier engagement and delivery	A reliance on Capita and the Government Agencies agreeing data sharing protocols and providing data and software enabling automation	SPD automation & UCDS automation commenced - ongoing development	
Billing and Benefits letter production	Customer Sustainability	Annual exercise to get bills for new Council tax year and benefit letters to customers with in prescribed time to collect instalments	The production and dispatch of year end bills and benefit letters		Commence January for issue of bills and letters mid-march	External mailing Contract	Preceptors setting their Council Tax early enough for bills to be produced	Project plan to be developed by end January - Capita release scheduled for late Dec/early Jan	
Learning & Development Strategy	Colleagues Customers Sustainability	To oversee and ensure corporate L&D meets the strategic OD, Corporate Induction and service level workforce plans whilst maximising the Levy contributions from the partnership councils, in order to upskill the workforce and promote from within	Bi-annual review of operational TNA & skills gap priorities and provide direction to achieve key OD objectives inline with L&D calendar. Utilise Levy at each LA. Communicate career pathways/career clusters for each job profile. Improve internal and external secondment offering, job shadowing. Review operational skills needed to upskill or cross-train	Succession Planning strategy projects L&D Operational	Jul-20	SMT and Ops mgmt. ARP Trainers & Resilience Officers L&D teams	Reliance of Ops teams providing TNA data and any changes to Apprentice Levy schemes, with use of funding and providers available.	Information from Appraisals and Corporate teams for each partners to develop schedule of activities	
Leadership & Succession Planning	Colleagues Customers Sustainability	To identify key roles likely to vacate in next 1-5 years and build a succession planning framework to ensure continued service delivery.	A programme of ; identifying future leaders, leadership development, career pathways and use of coaching/mentoring, professional training/qualifications and external experiences in leadership	Succession Planning strategy L&D	Dec-20	OIB, SMT and Ops mgmt. Assessment Centre providers L&D teams	Reliance on TNA of leadership and identifying future leaders. Funding to deliver qualifications that can not be attained through Apprenticeship Levy	Project team to be set up	
Work force Strategy	Colleagues Customers Sustainability	To provide operational HR metrics to manage and monitor people performance, budgeted headcount and be pro-active in identifying operational needs in line with agile working	Review ARP and operational workforce organisational structures & service reviews to support achievement of ARP key projects, agile/flexible working and customer service level agreements	Operational resource strategies Operational project timelines service level agreements Customer Staffing Budget	Dec-20	OIB, SMT & Operational Mgmt. team Financial team across ARP HRBP's	Current organisational structure and establishment to remain constant. LA's policies across partnership with regard to workforce planning strategies	All HR teams have approved the new Council Tax Billing (generic) role and we will continue to recruit to this new post as Council Tax and Benefits officers leave (where the transfer of HB cases to Universal credit and automation warrant this action)	
Well-Being Strategy	Colleagues Customers Sustainability	To support staff through well-being initiatives including good physical, mental and financial health, EAP's, OH and benefits available	Develop a ARP Well-Being Charter to target areas as a result of ARP survey, meet legislative requirements, effective communication tools (banners) and good practice to support H&WB at work. Promote EAP and Benefits packages i.e. financial & non-financial benefits (Neybour, WSWs, Norfolk Rewards). Annual survey. and work with external providers	Health & Well-Being Strategy Metrics data HR	01 July 2020	External Well-being providers HRBP's OIB, SMT and Ops mgmt. ALL Staff ACAS/legislation/casework/Unions Well-Being Champions & MHFA's	Funding to support well-being initiatives and suitable facilities to delivery them	A number of events have already been provided and a schedule of future events will be offered	
Resourcing Strategy	Colleagues Customers Sustainability	To resource staff with relevant skills inline with up to date JD's and PS to achieve strategic priorities in a timely manner	Develop recruitment website, potential applicant database, social media presence, develop e-assessment tools, job profiles, review JD/PS's, adverts and raise ARP branding & profile. Update Staff Success profiles for website	Recruitment website Comms strategy re online platforms Workforce Planning Succession Planning	Jan-21	ICT (ARP) ARP Corporate Comms	ICT systems to support recruitment website, links with partnership website remain unchanged and introduction of new roles to suit service delivery requirements	Recruitment site ready for data to populate	

Sharing of Good Practice	Colleagues Customers Relationships Sustainability	Challenge and support to encourage new ways of working, sharing of good practice and innovation through "function" support teams	To review terms of reference of existing Function Support Teams and for OIB to agree other groups that add value to sharing of intelligence and good practice across the partnership	Links to most other actions - Communications and delivery will be partner responsibility	Scoping by March 2020	Members of groups	All terms of reference documents are subject to review, and new editions should make specific reference to the ways they support ARP's strategic themes. Format will be consistent, following the layout of the most recent set (at the time of writing) for the new Communications Support Team	Over time a number of specialist teams have been set up to discuss future approach to various issues - the next step should be for OIB to formalise the groups needed and each groups terms of reference should be agreed	
Harmonisation	Colleagues Customers relationships Sustainability	Organise processes / transactions so that they are designed around the needs and accessibility of the customer	There are a number of areas where partners receive different services or, where ARPs access to partner systems and other functions/information is different - there is a need to review why these differences exist and to assess the benefits of harmonisation of service delivery across the partnership	Automation and Self Service	By September 2020 - identify areas and agree resolution	partners	Local requirements and other department needs	A number of areas have been identified and other areas will be reviewed	
Performance management	Colleagues Customers Digital Relationships Sustainability	To ensure that customers receive prompt accurate service by ensuring that the correct individual, team and organisational performance measures (and reporting) are in place to manage service delivery across the ARP	Design a performance management framework to enable a clear line of sight between planning, measuring, monitoring and reporting on performance and support SMT in performing their role through ensuring effective performance reporting arrangements are in place	Integral to all activities	new Approach for approval JC for 2021/22 year	OIB, SMT, Function Support Teams	All officers on each group must engage with group and complete tasks agreed by the groups	Target Operating Model and Team plans designed	
Quality/GDPR/Audit	Customer Relationships Sustainability	Ensuring that the correct checks and balances are in place to provide security of data and efficient processes	Ensuring that Internal Audit Plan recommendations are followed up and completed within agreed timeframe and applying risk based quality assurance work to ensure processes are followed and error is minimised	Integral to all activities	Annual audit plan agreed with audit partnership/SLA	SMT and Ops mgmt. ARP Trainers & Resilience Officers L&D teams	Link to Partnership audit requirements and advice	Quarterly updates are provided	
Maximising taxbases	Relationships Sustainability	Ensure all relevant properties are included on a Valuation List and to bring properties back in to use and / or understand why they remain empty - campaign to encourage owners to get properties occupied - to maximise income	To identify properties not in the lists or, with reduced charge that should be charged more Council Tax or Business Rates	Budget monitoring and Quality, Audit	Initial letters by early June	Planning, Housing Teams and ARP	Data to be shared so that taxbase is maximised and reasons for properties being empty are recorded and reviewed periodically	During the year cases are reviewed and in addition an annual exercise is started at the end of may, working with partner housing teams, to review all long term empty properties before the Council Tax Base is calculated for MHDCLG	
Budget monitoring	Relationships Sustainability	To keep officers and members informed of performance against projections to ensure that financial planning can be accurate and to ensure Subsidy is not qualified and is maximised	Monitor income, expenditure and Subsidy in the light of NNDR retention scheme, LCTRS, UC and conversion issues	Maximising Taxbases	Annually - April-March initial review against budget on monthly basis and report to 151 officers any variance	OIB, SMT & Operational Mgmt. team Financial team across ARP HRBP's	Finance officer function group will continue to agree information to be provided and frequency	Reported quarterly to JC - Finance teams advised if issue identified monthly	
NNDR retention and revaluation	Relationships Sustainability	Prepare for business rates retention changes announced - Councils to retain increased percentage of Business Rates and full business rates review	Information to be provided to officers and members concerning the impact of changes to the NNDR system.	Budget monitoring	April 2021 implementation date	Finance officers	Valuation Office data required and Capita testing	Awaiting data from Valuation Office later in the year	
Expansion of Enforcement Agency	Relationships Sustainability	To increase resilience through the expansion of the Enforcement Agency to enable the ARP to sustain performance levels during peaks of work and to cover sickness and turnover more efficiently	To increase the number of Councils joining the Enforcement Agency using an agreed model The model will create circumstances that will allow other councils to share risks and benefits in their areas.		Ongoing	business case for JC, OIB approvals	The service will be delegated to an ARP partner council and the terms of the partnership will be agreed by OIB. The introduction of new councils to the service will involve work for the West Suffolk IT team and external systems providers.	South Norfolk and Norwich have delegated function to Breckland and they pass work to ARP - Norwich work has been received from November 2019 and should continue on regular basis now	
Team Cohesion	Colleagues Customers Relationships Sustainability	To develop an improved understanding of each service area within ARP, build team work through projects, corporate events and well-being initiatives	Service area awareness events, improve induction programmes and cross-skilling opportunities through job shadowing	ARP Communications Strategy HR Strategy Operational Service Plans	Sept - Dec 2020	All Ops mgmt.		Initial stage will be to scope suggested activities and assess cost of events.	

**BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Report of:** Christine Marshall, Executive Director Commercialisation (ARP Treasurer)

**To:** ARP Joint Committee, 17 December 2019

**Author:** Alison Chubbock, Chief Accountant

**Subject:** ARP Joint Committee Partnership Budget

**Purpose:** To set the annual budgets relevant to the Joint Committee for 2020-21 and to provide indicative budget values for future years.

**Recommendation(s):**

- 1) That the partnership budget at Appendix A for 2020-21 be approved.

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

1.1 Each year a budget is prepared for the ARP Joint Committee. Working papers are prepared by the service accountants at each authority in conjunction with the ARP Management team and these are reviewed by OIB before being brought to the Joint Committee for formal approval. Approval is sought from the ARP JC in December to allow time for the ARP budgets to be incorporated into the 5 partners' individual budgets for their own budget setting. The budgets cover the costs and income for providing Council Tax, Housing Benefit payments, Non-Domestic Rates collection and the Enforcement service for the five partners.

1.2 Benefits payments and subsidies, court fee income and other grants specific to the individual authorities are not included within the partnership budgets, as these are the direct responsibility of the individual authority and will be reflected in their direct budgets.

**Budget**

1.3 Appendix A sets out the proposed budget for 2020-21 compared to the current year, with indicative budgets for the following two years. Further tables show the share of costs for each authority and the proportion that any additional costs or savings against the budget will be shared. The proportionate share of costs has remained fairly constant since last year, the only changes have been in the Enforcement area where Fenland & East Suffolk have seen increases in their liability orders and therefore receive a higher share of the Enforcement income, whilst the other partners have seen a reduction in liability orders.

1.4 The budgets have been set using the same principles as previous years and the current approved establishment staffing levels. It also includes an efficiency target of £120k to be achieved from 2021-22 onwards. This is in relation to the customer experience work which is in progress currently. In setting the budget the following key assumptions have been made:

- A pay award of 2% each year.
- A vacancy factor of 2.5% in all years
- No inflation on general non-contracted supplies and services

Significant work is underway around automation and the *better customer journey*, to drive forward the improvements which will deliver the £120k efficiency in future years. By the end of 20-21 we will have a good idea of any future additional efficiencies we can achieve.

1.5 The overall budget shows an increase of £450k when compared to 2019-20. The majority of this increase relates to salary costs (£334k) as a result of the 2% pay increase, salary increments and Living Wage pressures. Alongside these increases are contractual inflationary increases on items such as software maintenance (£65k) and Business Rates (£10k), a small reduction in Government grants (£10k) plus other small value changes. Costs of Enforcement within Supplies and Services have increased due to additional work but these are fully offset by additional income.

1.6 There is a risk that the final agreed pay award could be higher than the budgeted 2%, if this risk materialises it will be reported in the quarterly financial update to Joint committee, along with any suggested mitigations required at the time.

## 2.0 **OPTIONS**

2.1 That the partnership budget at Appendix A for 2020-21 be approved.

2.2 Make changes to the partnership budget before approving.

## 3.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

3.1 These budgets will enable ARP to continue its strategic focus moving forwards and will form the basis for monitoring financial performance in next financial year. The contributions form part of the individual partner's base budgets.

## 4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

4.1 By setting these budgets the partner authorities are able to use the approved values to set their own budgets and we have a basis for monitoring financial performance next year.

## 5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

In preparing this report, the report author has considered the likely implications of the decision - particularly in terms of Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues; Constitutional & Legal; Contracts; Corporate Priorities; Crime & Disorder; Data Protection; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; Other. Where the report author considers that there may be implications under one or more of these headings, these are identified below.

### 5.1 **Constitution & Legal**

5.1.1 The ARP Joint Committee is required to approve the budget each year.

### 5.2 **Financial**

5.2.1 Financial information is included within the appendix.

### 5.3 **Staffing**

5.3.1 The budget has been prepared based on the current approved establishment.

### 5.4 **Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales**

5.4.1 The budget approved at this meeting runs from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, with future years given as indicative values only.

5.4.2 Partner authorities accountants have provided the financial information for their own authorities which has been collated to form this budget.



6.0 **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

6.1 N/A.

7.0 **ACRONYMS**

7.1 ARP – Anglia Revenues Partnership.

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Background papers:-

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**Lead Contact Officer**

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Telephone Number:	01362 656865 / 01842 756437
Email:	<a href="mailto:alison.chubbock@breckland.gov.uk">alison.chubbock@breckland.gov.uk</a> / <a href="mailto:paul.corney@angliarevenues.gov.uk">paul.corney@angliarevenues.gov.uk</a>

**Key Decision:** No

**Exempt Decision:** No

**This report refers to Mandatory and Discretionary Services**

**Appendices attached to this report:**

Appendix A	ARP Budgets
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**Anglia Revenues Partnership Joint Committee**  
**2020-21 Budget Setting Summary**

<i>Description</i>	<i>2019-20 Budget £</i>	<i>2020-21 Budget £</i>	<i>2021-22 Indicative Budget £</i>	<i>2022-23 Indicative Budget £</i>
Employee Costs	9,150,882	9,485,073	9,674,920	9,996,070
Premises Costs	273,822	285,440	293,976	303,072
Transport Costs	154,129	149,856	151,306	152,781
Supplies & Services	1,586,221	1,742,120	1,740,706	1,770,966
Support Services	531,162	555,000	560,960	567,099
Income	(2,337,027)	(2,408,696)	(2,402,416)	(2,396,591)
<b>TOTAL PARTNERSHIP COSTS</b>	<b>9,359,189</b>	<b>9,808,793</b>	<b>10,019,452</b>	<b>10,393,397</b>

**Analysis of Total Partner Contributions**

	<i>2019-20 £</i>	<i>2020-21 £</i>	<i>2021-22 Indicative £</i>	<i>2022-23 Indicative £</i>
Breckland Council	1,843,134	1,960,625	2,000,134	2,068,987
East Cambridgeshire Council	1,056,789	1,121,411	1,144,215	1,184,408
Fenland District Council	1,235,369	1,255,239	1,282,515	1,331,716
West Suffolk	2,238,330	2,378,288	2,428,672	2,516,420
East Suffolk	2,985,567	3,093,231	3,163,916	3,291,866
	<b>9,359,189</b>	<b>9,808,793</b>	<b>10,019,452</b>	<b>10,393,397</b>

**Analysis of Partner Gain Share Percentages 2020-21**

	<i>5 Partners %</i>	<i>3 Partners %</i>	<i>Enforcement %</i>
Breckland Council	17.89%	34.90%	16.20%
East Cambridgeshire Council	10.58%	20.65%	7.63%
Fenland District Council	13.50%	0.00%	15.81%
West Suffolk	22.78%	44.45%	20.88%
East Suffolk	35.25%	0.00%	39.48%
	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## **ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP**

**Report of**     Stuart Philpot – ARP Strategic Manager (Support)

**To:**             ARP Joint Committee – 17 December 2019

**Subject:**     ARP Brochure 2019

**Purpose:**     The Production of an Anglia Revenues Partnership Brochure

### **Recommendation(s):**

- A new ARP Brochure be adopted for use by the Anglia Revenues Partnership to provide information to Members, New Joint Committee Members and new staff working as part of the ARP
- ARP Members are asked to approve the December version for the purposes above

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

- 1.2.** The Operational Improvement Board of the Anglia Revenues Partnership requested Senior Management to produce a brochure to outline the work carried out by the partnership and how the partnership has developed, in a brochure format. This brochure is designed to be understandable to an audience including those with limited technical revenues and benefits knowledge.

## **2.0 The Audience**

- Members - New ARP Joint Committee members can receive a copy of the brochure as part of their induction.
- Members at each partner Council for awareness of how the Revenues and Benefits service is delivered by the ARP for their own authority.
- Partner Authority staff who either work as part of the ARP or other services within the partner authorities for staff awareness of how the Revenues and Benefits service is delivered by the ARP.
- Included within material for ongoing recruitment.
- External Councils' awareness of the successful services available from the ARP, for example The Anglia Revenues Partnership Enforcement Team.

## **3.0 The Current Content**

- Front Cover including the Anglia Revenues Partnership logo
- A foreword narrative from The ARP Joint Committee Chair.
- "A Time of Change" – a summary of what the Anglia Revenues Partnership is and the services provided, with a timeline from the creation of the Anglia Revenues Partnership through the present day.
- The "Core Purpose" of the ARP
- Our Customers – the area covered and the population
- The Objectives

- The Anglia Revenues Enforcement Agency
- Fraud and Further recovery.
- Other initiatives, for example acting as Head of Service for Revenues and Benefits at Norwich City Council.
- The Economies of Scale enjoyed by the Anglia Revenues Partnership
- A summary of the Governance of the Anglia Revenues Partnership
- The Values of the Anglia Revenues Partnership
- Our people
- The Keys to the success of the Anglia Revenues Partnership.
- Endorsements of the ARP from external partners and contractors.
- A summary of the future for the Anglia Revenues Partnership

#### **4.0 The Design. Format and Cost**

**4.1** On recommendation from East Suffolk, graphic designer Stuart Fitzpatrick from Cresign Ltd. has been employed to produce this brochure.

#### **5.0 Costs**

The cost of producing this document in an editable format (PDF) has been £1,255 + VAT for the professional graphic design costs. It is envisaged this document will be updated at least once a year and when approved, there will be a small number of paper copies printed. The print will be for 250 ARP Brochures with a Gloss Laminated cover and inner pages printed on high quality paper of 250 gsm.

#### **7.0 Options**

**7.1** The report is for information purposes

#### **8.0 Reasons for recommendations**

**8.1** The report is for information only

### **9 IMPLICATIONS**

#### **9.1 Risk**

The report is for information only

#### **9.2 Financial**

The report is for information only

#### **9.2 Legal**

The report is for information only

#### **9.3 Equality and Diversity**

Not applicable.

#### **Background Papers**

**Appendix A** - Online link to the [ARP Brochure](#)

**Appendix B** – PDF Version of the ARP Brochure

#### **Lead Contact Officer**

Name/Post: Stuart Philpot – Strategic Manager (Support)

Email: [Stuart.Philpot@angliarevenues.gov.uk](mailto:Stuart.Philpot@angliarevenues.gov.uk)



a truly unique partnership





# INTRODUCTION

The Anglia Revenues Partnership is a truly unique partnership delivering the Revenues and Benefits Services for five partner local authorities as equals rather than a separate entity charging for services.

The partnership allows us to take the best practice and experience from each of the five council districts.

Taking the very best from each partner to deliver the best services, the ARP is able to focus staff in becoming experts in their field and further their career development.

Having achieved the alignment of systems across the four back office locations, the ARP are now focussing development by working with suppliers to enhance the "Customer Journey" with straight forward digital service available 24 hours a day and automation of some back office processes, reducing the amount of manual data input required.

At the heart of the organisation is of course our staff, of which many have worked at the ARP since its inception. Together they are pioneering innovative ways of working at a time of great change in how Local Government Services are delivered.

## **Councillor Sarah Broughton**

Chair, ARP Joint Committee  
Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance  
West Suffolk Council



## Councillors



### **Councillor David Ambrose-Smith**

ARP Joint Committee Member  
Chairman Operational Services  
Committee  
East Cambridgeshire  
District Council



### **Councillor Jan French**

ARP Joint Committee Member  
Deputy Leader  
Fenland District Council



### **Councillor Maurice Cook**

ARP Joint Committee Member  
Elected Member  
East Suffolk Council



### **Councillor Phillip Cowen**

ARP Joint Committee Member  
Cabinet Member  
Breckland Council

# A TIME OF CHANGE

The Anglia Revenues Partnership is currently the largest revenues partnership in England continuing to look for innovative ways of reducing costs, while improving services, with a focus remaining on excellent customer service.

As an organisation the ARP has the third largest Revenues & Benefits caseload in the country, only exceeded by the large urban authorities of Birmingham and Leeds.

	*Ctax Properties	**Business Rates	***Housing Benefit	Total
Birmingham	440,950	47,270	103,155	591,375
Leeds	352,370	29,380	60,410	442,160
Anglia Revenues Partnership	338,560	28,440	50,364	417,364
Cornwall UA	270,090	31,550	37,601	339,241
Sheffield	247,440	18,880	45,763	312,083
Manchester	228,300	26,610	52,427	307,337
County Durham UA	244,120	15,490	42,719	302,329
Liverpool	227,240	18,790	53,156	299,186

\* Source: Valuation Office Agency (20th Sept 2018)

\*\* Source: MCHLG Local Rating List (31 March 2018)

\*\*\* Source: DWP Housing Benefit Caseload Statistics (14th August 2018)

## Among the services it offers partner councils include:

- Collection of Council Tax
- Collection of Business Rates
- Administration of Housing Benefit
- Administration of Local Council Tax Support (introduced on 1 April 2013)
- Fraud and Compliance
- ARP Enforcement (previously known as Bailiff Services) across the partner council areas
- Consultancy Services



The Partnership continues to take on new innovations beneficial to ARP Partners, our businesses, families and communities.

However, it needs to be stressed that ARP is not simply a money collecting agency. Through administering Council Tax Support (CTS) and Housing Benefit on behalf of the Partners, it provides low income working age families and pensioners with a means tested Housing Benefit to assist with rent and a reduction on the amount of council tax they have to pay.

By working together through this partnership, the councils are reducing costs and providing a more efficient, effective service.

The aim of the partnership is to run an efficient Council Tax and Housing Benefits service, while reducing administration costs to each partner council.

## How the Partnership has developed

**2003** Breckland District Council and Forest Heath District Council first combined their Revenues and Benefits services to form the ARP.

**2007** East Cambridgeshire District Council joined the partnership

**2011** St. Edmundsbury Borough Council joined the Partnership

**2014** Fenland District Council joined the partnership

**2015** Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils joined the Partnership



## From April 1st 2019 - Four Partners become two Councils

- St. Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils merged to become West Suffolk Council.
- Suffolk Coastal District and Waveney District Councils merged to become East Suffolk Council.

**ARP promises to continue to provide the same high quality of service and ongoing savings for the partner councils.**

# ARP'S CORE PURPOSE

At the heart of the ARP's role is the maximising of council tax and business rates income streams in excess of £650 million per annum on behalf of partner councils, and the delivery of Housing Benefit.

The Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) delivers over £2 Million in efficiencies to the partners through innovative working, including the introduction of the ARP Enforcement Agency (ARPE). Those efficiencies are demonstrated as an individual council's cost as a partner of the ARP is the same, or less, for the delivery of their service than it was 10 years ago.

The members of the Joint Committee have agreed the ARP look to work with other Councils and public bodies to deliver specific services in partnership.

The initial areas offering future opportunities for partnership working include:

- Resilience services to assist other councils with backlogs
- Fraud and Compliance services for public sector bodies
- Enforcement and debt collection services
- Consultancy services

## OUR CUSTOMERS

### Area and population

	Area Km <sup>2</sup>	Population
Breckland	1,305	138,602
East Suffolk	1,261	243,497
East Cambs	651	89,362
Fenland	547	99,170
West Suffolk	1,035	179,248
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,799</b>	<b>749,879</b>

With an area of nearly 2,000 square miles, most of the population of 750,000 have regular contact with the Anglia Revenues Partnership for Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support.

# OBJECTIVES

- A strategic plan for the wider impact of revenues and benefits changes and proposals for businesses, families and communities.
- Use of data and intelligence to:

<b>A</b>	Improve collection rates by collating behavioural information and predicting modelling impact of schemes	<b>B</b>	Maximise income to identify properties that are not paying business rates or change of use
<b>C</b>	Provide analysis to individual Councils	<b>D</b>	Be at the forefront of innovation across the country
<b>E</b>	Digital Transformation and automation of services	<b>F</b>	Provide best advice to businesses on business rates to facilitate their growth and working with economic development teams

## Enforcement Agency

In 2015 the ARP Enforcement Agency (ARPE) was set up. The ARPE team works much more closely with the Council Tax and business rates teams than external providers are able to. We are better able to respond in cases where vulnerable people are involved, to help those who are genuinely having difficulty in paying, and where appropriate, the team can withdraw statutory fees.

Debtors are asked to enter into arrangements that are affordable and take account of new debt from new year Council Tax bills. The enforcement actions seek to help debtors to find ways to break their current cycle of debt through referral to agencies and through ongoing dialogue.

In addition to providing a more responsive and compassionate service, the statutory fees collected provide a net income of over £800k per annum. This income can now be used to reduce the cost of the partnership to each Council.

## Fraud and further recovery actions

When the DWP introduced the Single Fraud Investigation Service most Councils passed the whole of the Fraud team over to the DWP. The ARP retained part of the team to investigate Council Tax Support cases and other Council Tax discounts and exemptions.

The fraud and compliance activities carried out by the ARP Fraud team, along with other further recovery initiatives, identifies over £2 million each year of Council Tax, and the cost of staff providing these services is shared by the County Council.

# OTHER PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

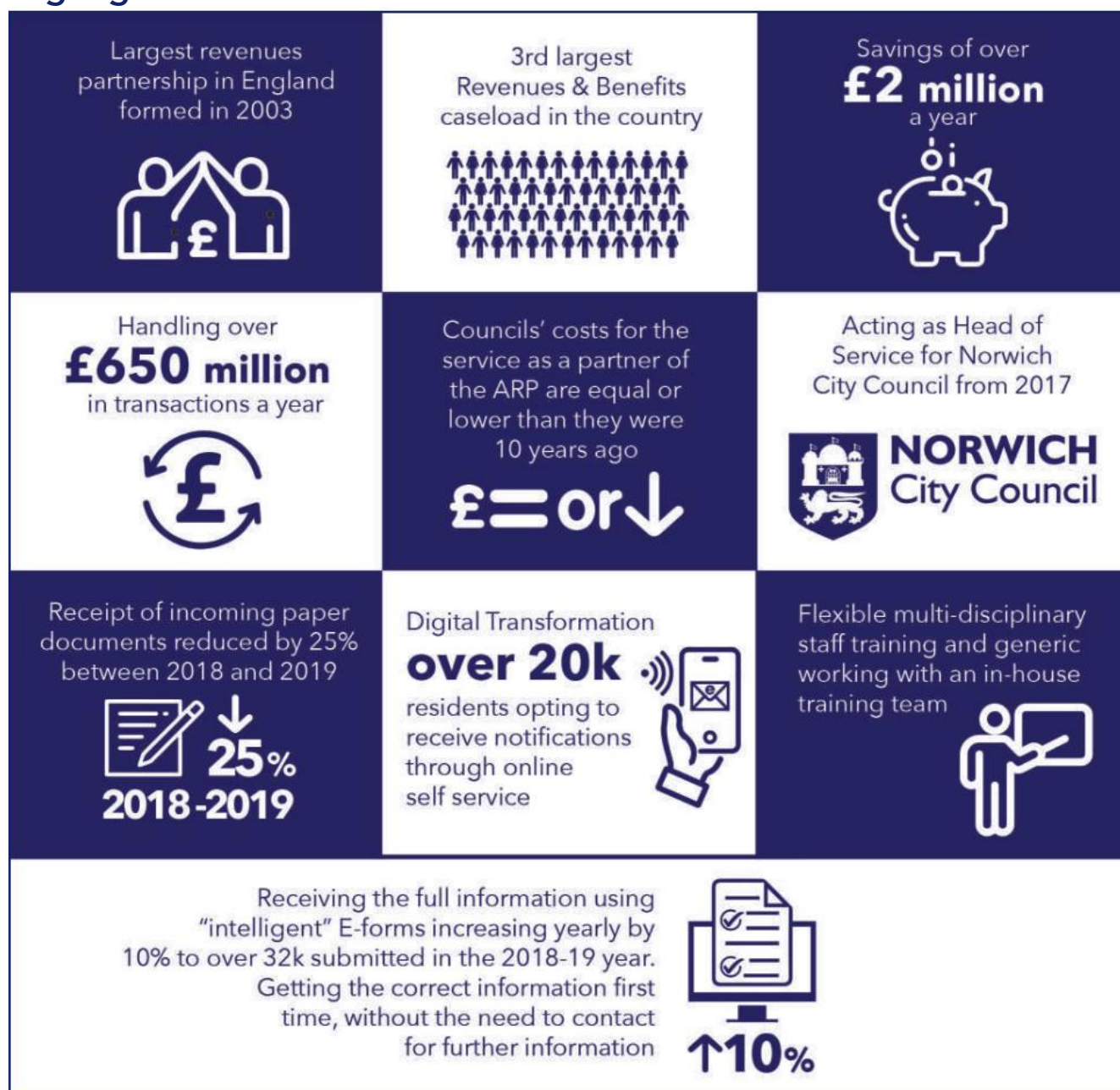
In November 2016 South Norfolk District Council delegated their Council tax and business rates debt enforcement work to Breckland Council for the ARPE to collect.

From April 2017 the ARP entered into a partnership agreement with Norwich City Council for shared management

services. This has led to further sharing of resource; fraud services funded by Norfolk County Council. Norwich

has passed their Council Tax and business rates debt to Breckland Council for the ARPE to collect from July 2019.

## Highlights of the ARP



# GAINING FROM ECONOMIES OF SCALE

The Anglia Revenues Partnership Enforcement (ARPE) focuses on those who "will not pay" and provides advice and assistance for those who "cannot pay"

ARP Enforcement acts on behalf of authorities who are not partners of the ARP

Joint partnership procurement, for example mailing with over 1 million letters per year generated by the partnership

Investment in automation software improving completion times for repetitive data entry operations

Centralising of the in-house post room to one location, at Thetford, for all partners

Retention of in-house Fraud and Compliance team, identifying over £2m in the 2018-19 year

Single Person Discount  
Business Rates  
Tenancy Fraud  
Council Tax  
Local Council Tax Support

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Resilience with alignment on all partners work at all locations

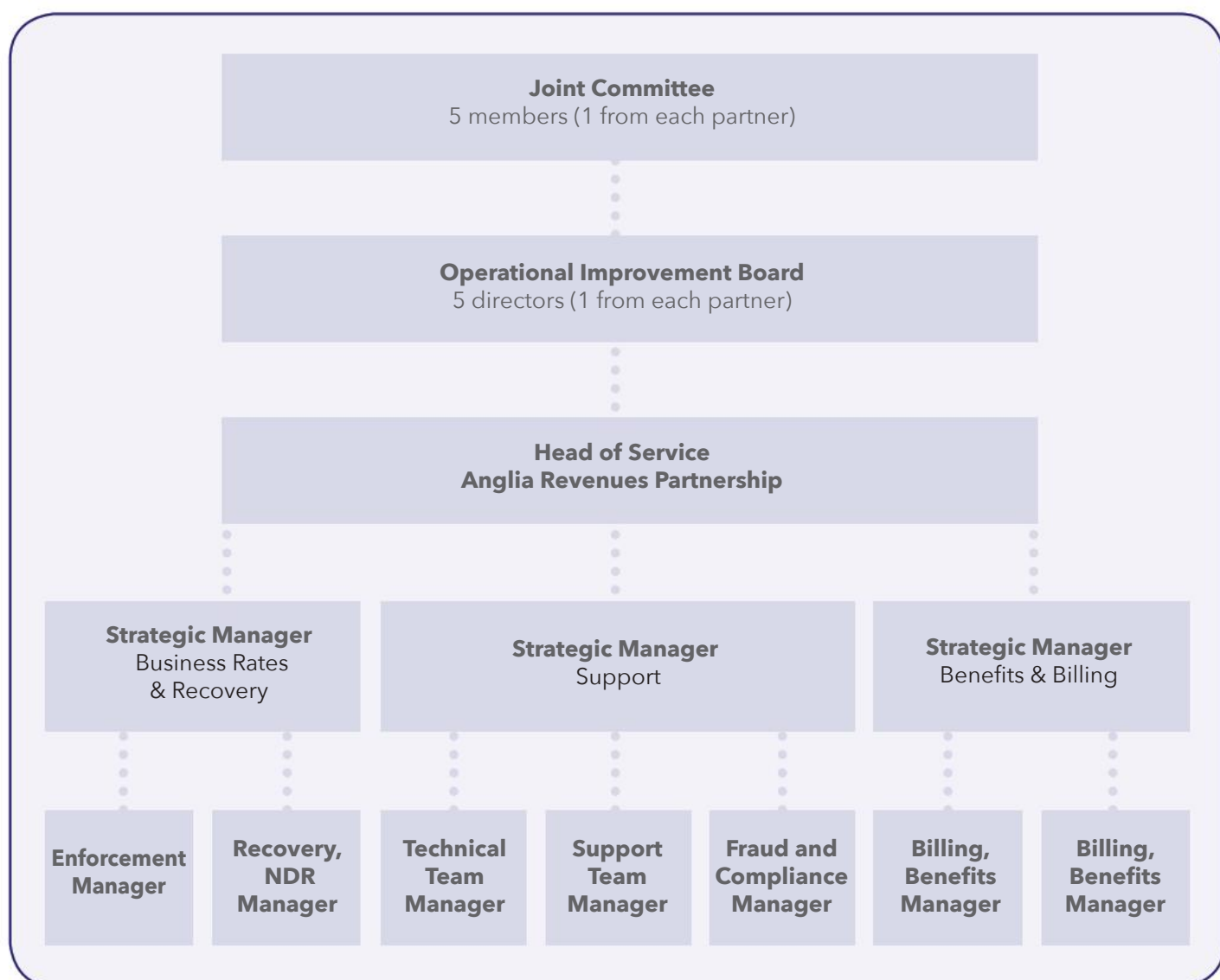
**arp**  
Anglia  
Revenues Partnership

# GOVERNANCE

As its name suggests, the Anglia Revenues Partnership is a pure partnership, not a legal entity in its own right, sharing resources for the administration of Revenues and Benefits.

Governance of the ARP is provided through a formal reporting structure of one elected member representing each partner council, called the Joint Committee.

The Operational Improvement Board (OIB) consists of one director from each partner council, reporting to the Joint Committee.





# VALUES OF THE ARP

Like any organisation committed to providing a high quality, efficient service, our workforce is the lifeblood of the Anglia Revenues Partnership.

A total of over 230 people work for the ARP across four ARP sites at Thetford, March, Melton and Lowestoft, using a single integrated network whichever office they are based at. With processes and procedures aligned across the four locations, staff are allocated to any area of the partners' outstanding work.



## Positive Engagement

One team, sharing information to create positive change

## Thinking Dynamically

Championing ideas to deliver improved services for our community

## Efficient and Excellent

Delivering outstanding cost efficient services through improved technology

## Respect and integrity

Across the partnership demonstrate respect, dignity, integrity, empathy and politeness to all

## Taking Pride

Being proud in who I am, what I do and how I do this for all of us

# OUR PEOPLE

Unlike most organisations, the ARP is a Partnership made up of five councils and staff are all employed by these partner councils although managed by the ARP providing our services.

## Professional Qualifications and Modern ways of Working:

All staff are able to work from any of the four office locations, including agile working from other offices or remote bases.

This effective use of technology not only allows more flexible working on behalf of

the staff – allowing them to get a better work/life balance – it also obviously saves on travel time/costs, helping reduce our carbon footprint.

Working for the Anglia Revenues Partnership gives opportunities for training and development including career pathways to qualifications from professional bodies, such as the IRRV (Institute of Rates Revenues and Valuation).

## Interested in a career with the Anglia Revenues Partnership?

[angliarevenues.gov.uk/services/Job\\_vacancies](http://angliarevenues.gov.uk/services/Job_vacancies)



### Cambridgeshire

Fenland  
Hall, March,  
Cambridgeshire  
PE15 8NQ



### Suffolk

The Marina,  
Lowestoft, Suffolk,  
NR32 1HH



### Norfolk

Breckland House,  
Thetford, Norfolk,  
IP24 1BT



### Suffolk

East Suffolk House,  
Melton, Suffolk,  
IP12 1RT



# KEYS TO THE SUCCESS OF THE ARP

There are many reasons behind the success being enjoyed by the Anglia Revenues Partnership.

- ▶ Introduction of generic working with multi- skilled staff who are Council Tax, Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Reduction trained.
- ▶ Aligning processes and procedures across the partnership.
- ▶ Working with Software Providers to improve and develop working methods including automation.
- ▶ Involvement with national initiatives and steering groups working closely with Members of Parliament, for example moving across to Universal Credit full service.
- ▶ Over 20,000 people across the ARP areas are reaping the benefits of dealing with their council tax and benefits on-line, actively embracing the use of new technology and encouraging 'channel shift'. Successfully moving customers away from time-consuming and expensive face-to-face interactions or telephone calls to using more efficient 24 hour web-based services.
- ▶ Innovative high-profile campaigns to make paper bills a thing of the past and encouraging people to sign up for on-line 'self service'.
- ▶ External experts have been used to carry out UX (User Experience) Testing when the ARP developed its new website reducing the number of 'clicks' the customer carries out for the website to be transactional, and get to do what they need to as quickly and easily as possible, using understandable language.
- ▶ ARP sends out over 1million letters a year including some 350,000 just at year end. The Partnership was able to negotiate a competitively priced external mailing service to reduce the cost of traditional letters to the best competitive rates on the market.
- ▶ The Partnership has built close working relationships with Citizens Advice Bureau, Housing Associations, Private Landlords and welfare groups.

For more information about the Anglia Revenues Partnership go to:  
[www.angliarevenues.gov.uk](http://www.angliarevenues.gov.uk)

# WORKING WITH US

The ARP has always been a great partner to work with and their input into our product development has been very valuable.

ARP now have a very flexible service delivery model offering staff a choice of four office locations and home working.

**Dave Young, CAPITA**

Critiqom has found working with the ARP invaluable when reviewing and developing our own product offering as ARP have always valued best practice in the industry and have been instrumental in giving feedback to new products or service improvements. ARP bring a true collaboration approach on behalf of the councils they represent to ensure optimum service levels and value for money are achieved.

**Agnes Williamson, Senior Account Development Manager, Critiqom Ltd.**

Universal Credit was introduced in Lowestoft in May 2016 and Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) was an integral support during its implementation, ensuring success from the start. They helped us build a network of local organisations that enabled us to quickly forge strong relationships to better support our customers in their Universal Credit Journey.

As Universal Credit rolled out and expanded across the district, ARP responded positively to continue to effectively support customers. They have also been involved both locally and nationally, providing feedback to help Universal Credit develop and evolve.

**Julia Nix, East Anglia District Manager, Department for Work and Pensions**

# THE FUTURE

- ▶ Manage the changing workload of Universal Credit migration
- ▶ Expanding ARP enforcement to more Authorities
- ▶ Expanding the ARP Fraud and Compliance team to more Authorities
- ▶ Automation of work processes and procedures
- ▶ Digital Transformation and channel shift
- ▶ Develop easy to use intelligent forms getting the information right first time
- ▶ Customer Services continuous improvement
- ▶ Consultancy services
- ▶ Resilience Services - e.g. Norwich City Council



For more information, contact us by email at [enquiries@angliarevenues.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@angliarevenues.gov.uk)