

# **A G E N D A**

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

**DATE & TIME** Tuesday, 5th December, 2023 at 9.30 am

**VENUE:** Seminar and Training Room, Keystone Innovation Centre, Croxton Road,  
Thetford. IP24 1JD

**For the attention of:**

Cllr Paul Ashton, East Suffolk Council (Chairman)  
Cllr Diane Hind, West Suffolk Council (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr Phil Cowen, Breckland District Council  
Cllr Jan French, Fenland District Council  
Cllr James Lay, East Cambridgeshire District Council

Should members of the public wish to attend this meeting, please email  
[democraticservices@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@breckland.gov.uk)

	<u>Page(s) herewith</u>
1. <b><u>MINUTES</u></b> To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023.	1 - 7
2. <b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b> To receive apologies for absence.	
3. <b><u>URGENT BUSINESS</u></b> 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.	
4. <b><u>DECLARATIONS (IF ANY)</u></b>	
5. <b><u>PERFORMANCE REPORT (STANDING ITEM)</u></b> Report of Matthew Waite-Wright, Head of NNDR Recovery & Enforcement (ARP).	8 - 39
6. <b><u>WELFARE REFORM UPDATE (STANDING ITEM)</u></b> Report of Lorraine King, Head of Benefits & Council Tax Billing (ARP).	40 - 44

Democratic Services  
Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke,  
Dereham Norfolk, NR19 1EE  
Date: 24 November 2023

Contact: Julie Britton. Democratic Services Officer  
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	<u>Page(s) herewith</u>
7. <b><u>ARP FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE (STANDING ITEM)</u></b> Report of Alison Chubbock, Assistant Director of Finance & S151 Officer (BDC).	45 - 49
8. <b><u>ARP JOINT COMMITTEE PARTNERSHIP BUDGET 2024-25</u></b> Report of Alison Chubbock, Assistant Director of Finance & S151 Officer (BDC).	50 - 53
9. <b><u>ARP JOINT COMMITTEE SERVICE PLAN AND RISK REGISTER REPORT</u></b> Report of Adrian Mills, Head of ARP.	54 - 66
10. <b><u>FORTHCOMING ISSUES (STANDING ITEM)</u></b> To note any items.	
11. <b><u>NEXT MEETING</u></b> To note the arrangements for the next meeting to be held on Tuesday, 5 March 2024 at 10am. This meeting will be held via Teams.	

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

**At a Meeting of the**

**ANGLIA REVENUES & BENEFITS JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Held on Tuesday, 12 September 2023 at 10.00 am**  
**Virtual Meeting via Teams**

**PRESENT**

Cllr Paul Ashton (Chairman)            Cllr James Lay  
Cllr Diane Hind (Vice-Chairman)    Cllr Sarah Suggitt (Substitute Member)  
Cllr Jan French

**In Attendance**

Sam Anthony	- Head of HR & OD (Fenland)
Lorraine King	- Head of Benefits & Council Tax Billing (ARP)
Rachael Mann	- Director (Resources & Property) (West Suffolk)
Adrian Mills	- Head of ARP
Lorraine Rogers	- Acting Chief Finance Officer & S151 Officer (East Suffolk District Council)
Matthew Waite-Wright	- Head of NNDR Recovery & Enforcement (ARP)
Ian Smith	- Director, Finance (East Cambs)
Julie Britton	- Democratic Services Officer (BDC)

**Action By**

**23/23 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

**24/23 APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Cowen (BDC). Councillor Suggitt was in attendance as his substitute.

A further apology had been received from Alison Chubbock, the Assistant Director of Finance & S151 Officer (BDC).

Joao Santos a member of the public from Iliffe Media Publishing, was also in attendance to observe the meeting.

**25/23 URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**26/23 DECLARATIONS**

None declared.

**27/23 PERFORMANCE REPORT (STANDING ITEM)**

Matthew Waite-Wright, Head of NNDR Recovery & Enforcement (ARP)

**Action By**

provided Members with a detailed overview of the Joint Committee Performance Report for the end of June 2023 Quarter 1 position.

He was pleased to report that in terms of fraud & compliance, the £1.3m target had been exceeded by £52,470.

Overall, all partner Councils combined were on target in all areas except for East Suffolk who was slightly behind target in respect of council tax collection. All targets were closely monitored and the position at the end of Quarter 2 was awaited.

The Chairman, Councillor Ashton, asked if East Suffolk's recovery rates were recovering or getting worse and if there was any further information available to show how Quarter 2 was progressing. He also asked if this was having an effect on all partners.

Members were informed that there had been no improvement since June and at the end of August, East Suffolk was still slightly behind their council tax collection target. However, compared to the same quarter last year, East Suffolk's collection rates were above target, benefiting from the Energy Rebate Scheme.

The Chairman was not surprised that during a cost-of-living crisis such difficulties were appearing and asked if he could have further discussions with the Head of NNDR Recovery & Enforcement (ARP) and Lorraine King, the Head of Benefits & Council Tax Billing (ARP) at some point after this meeting.

**MW-W**

The number of days to process Housing Benefit for Fenland District Council and West Suffolk Council for Quarter 1 was just outside of the 10-day target, higher than the previous year. This had been mainly due to the additional workload from administering the Council Tax Support Fund plus two alternative Energy Schemes. All three had been implemented at extremely short notice and at the busiest time of the year. These Schemes had since ended.

In terms of fraud & compliance, Councillor French said that she had asked on a number of occasions whether information on prosecutions could be provided and if such matters were widely publicised as putting such information into the public arena could discourage future fraudulent claims.

The Head of NNDR Recovery & Enforcement (ARP) explained that there were a number of criminal prosecutions that were still on-going, but obviously cases could not be named, however, when a good result had been reached, ARP liaised with each partners Communications Team for possible publication. It was noted that Single Person Discount (SPD) was the main area of fraud.

It was agreed that such information would be reported in future taking into account data protection rules and regulations.

In response to a concern raised by Councillor Hind in terms of further explanation for West Suffolk Council's 'red' indicator for processing Housing Benefit claims, members were informed that as explained earlier, this was being actioned. West Suffolk was just outside of the 10-day target and focus days were being planned to concentrate on getting new Housing Benefit claims more up to date and improve the processing times going into Quarter

**Action By**

2 to hopefully get them back on target.

Councillor Lay had been very pleased with the sentencing of the Soham fraudster who had been found guilty of fraud against the Anglia Revenues Partnership and for the way it had been reported in the local newspaper by Illiffe Media Publishing Ltd. Councillor Lay, who also sat on the Citizens Advice Bureau for the West Suffolk area, advised that over the last 3 months he had noticed more and more people suffering hardship and somewhere along the line this would be highlighted in ARP's performance figures.

Adrian Mills, the Head of ARP advised that the operational impact to deliver the Government schemes in Quarter 1 could not be under-estimated, but the direction of travel was improving.

The Service updates as of June 2023 were then provided.

It was noted that the Enforcement fees that had been collected would be distributed in the usual way amongst the 5 partners.

In terms of Benefits, ARP was now automating 97% of changes in Universal Credit and had become a reference site for other supplier sites.

Work was continuing on the change of address automation project in terms of Council Tax and ARP Teams were working closely with the supplier to further develop the functionality.

The Chairman asked if this would include people moving to different districts. Members were informed that the technology was not there at the moment but hopefully it would be in the future.

Councillor French asked if new builds caused any issues and mentioned one of her constituents who was having problems registering their new home for Council Tax.

The Head of NNDR Recovery & Enforcement (ARP) explained the process that had to be followed. He was not aware of any specific problems but asked for the details of this individual customer to be forwarded to him so that this could be followed up.

Referring to Non-Domestic Rates (NDR), a new NDR Valuation List came into effect on 1 April 2023 where every property had been assigned a property value.

There had been a high volume of work undertaken in terms of ARP Systems and Digital and it was noted that historic database records that were no longer required were being deleted.

In terms of Fraud & Compliance, the Head of NNDR Recovery & Enforcement (ARP) was pleased to report that the Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub was now operational, and work continued to commence fraud work for Broadland and South Norfolk. Additionally, the implementation of agreements with Lincolnshire County Council were awaited regarding progressing SPD fraud with their seven district councils.

Referring to the Better Customer Experience Programme Members were informed that a new automated Council Tax moves (change of address form)

**Action By**

project was still on-going. Two move types were already live with further expansion due following a software update. These changes would hopefully improve collection rates and also cut down on paper applications.

The report was otherwise noted.

**28/23 WELFARE REFORM UPDATE (STANDING ITEM)**

Lorraine King, Head of Benefits, Council Tax Billing & Systems (ARP), presented the report.

The following updates were provided:

At paragraph 2.1.15, DWP had been running a 2-year grant offer competition for future help to claim support from 2024 on a non-profit basis. The deadline for applications was 28 July 2023 and it was anticipated that DWP would have some news on this competition soon therefore the results would be publicised at some point in December.

At paragraph 2.1.16, under the summary of the current position on the expansion of Universal Credit, and at one of the liaison meetings, the Head of Benefits was made aware that Breckland and Cambridgeshire Councils had been included in the July 2023 tranche for migration of tax credit only cases. This meant that all five councils within the Partnership were making a start on their migration cases. Further updates were awaited.

At the end of April 2023 East Suffolk, Fenland and West Suffolk CEOs received notification that DWP would start to issue migration notices to households claiming tax credits only in July 2023. An issue was raised that Breckland and East Cambridgeshire had not been notified and this had been identified by DWP and improvements to the process were being put in place moving forward.

It was noted that ARP had been providing local authority feedback via these liaison meetings by providing input in terms of the migration notices such as who should sent these notices out, how they should be sent and what information they should include – this was quite a key piece of work for ARP to be involved in and Members would be kept updated.

The report was otherwise noted.

**29/23 ARP FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE (STANDING ITEM)**

In the absence of Alison Chubbock, the Assistant Director of Finance & S151 Officer (BDC), Adrian Mills, the Head of ARP, presented the annual quarterly performance report as of 30 June 2023.

The forecast at this stage of the year showed a small underspend against the budget of £49k for the whole of ARP, further information could be found in Appendix A of the report.

Members were asked to note that at the date of this report, the national pay award had not been determined for local government. The forecast currently assumes the budgeted pay award for each council as shown in the table at section 1.2 of the report. Each 1% change in the actual award would increase/decrease the forecast and Members would be kept informed as new

**Action By**

information became available.

Members' attention was drawn to the Government's New Burdens' funding that had been received to offset the costs incurred for delivering the two energy alternative energy schemes that ARP administered.

A further £90,000 in funding from government departments was expected but this would be subject to a successful audit process of the scheme; therefore, this figure had not been included.

The budget for 2023-24 included an efficiency target of £100k, rising to £200k in future years. The efficiency savings for this year had already been achieved and steps were already underway to ensure that the increased target was achieved for the forthcoming financial year.

Referring to Appendix A of the report, in terms of the transformation funding, it was noted that a further investment of approximately £25k was anticipated to identify unrated properties; the exact value would be known following a procurement exercise. It was expected that the budget would be spent by the end of the year. If all the identified expenditure goes through in 2023/24 there would be £70k remaining for future projects.

Attention was drawn to the table at section 1.4 of the report. The table highlighted the share of the forecast outturn for each partner based on the ARP Joint Committee agreement. The agreement had different cost and income sharing splits for three areas of the budget, and as a result of the variances in the differing budget areas (such as Enforcement) the out-turn share for some partners was a surplus and for others was a cost.

These figures were anticipated to change not least because of the new additional New Burdens funding already mentioned but also other factors that would be forthcoming as the year progresses. Members would be kept informed.

The report and appendix were otherwise noted.

**30/23 FRAUD AND COMPLIANCE TEAM TARGET REVIEW**

The Head of NNDR Recovery & Enforcement (ARP) presented the report.

He was pleased to report that the current target of £1.3m for identified fraud had already been achieved in Quarter 1 by collecting just over £1.35m; therefore, required reviewing, hence the proposed recommendation to increase the performance target to £2.8m.

The largest element of the fraud identified was in Single Person Discount (SPD) awards. Across the partnership, the collection funds for the 2023/24 financial year included just over £48 million awarded in SPD. A 3% target of identifying fraud in this area was approximately £1.4 million. When considering past performance and the likely level of SPD, it had been considered that a 3% target, although quite stretching was achievable.

The Chairman asked if this target figure was realistic.

Members were informed that 3% was a reasonable figure and the reasoning behind this was explained.

**Action By**

The Head of ARP stated that National Fraud Authority Bodies had estimated for several years now that 3% was the likely level of SPD fraud.

Councillor French asked what checks and balances were in place to identify new claimants and existing claimants to make sure that they actually were entitled to SPD.

The Head of ARP explained the process used by the in-house Team.

Councillor Suggitt asked if there was anything in place to prevent such fraud happening in the first instance by checking the application process and, if there was a better way for data to be shared.

The Head of NNDR Recovery & Enforcement (ARP) explained that once an SPD application was made credit checks were undertaken to check the validity of that application by using credit agencies, and other data. This would then be followed by an annual review using external data to verify their liability.

The Head of ARP reassured Members that every application was checked but the Team had to rely on data as and when it became available so there was a slight delay but was processed immediately once the data had been received.

Councillor James asked how ARP was monitoring the change in properties from residential to commercial use.

Members were informed that in terms of domestic properties being used for Air B&B for example, and whether it should attract business rates, this did form part of the credit searches and therefore such properties could be identified. However, this was a growing issue mainly due to the cost-of-living crisis as more people were making their properties available for such a use, but the Team accessed available data with checks and balances to identify any discrepancies.

Councillor Lay suggested that Members could help in some way by being the eyes and ears in their towns and villages.

The Head of NNDR Recovery & Enforcement (ARP) was grateful for the offer and stated that any referral of suspicious activity regarding Council Tax or Business Rates would be well received and investigated accordingly.

The Chairman pointed out that if a domestic property was classed as a business, it would not be entitled to normal bin collections either.

Councillor Hind asked for the differences to be explained in terms of having to pay business rates and provided some examples.

Members were informed that if someone converted their garage and installed sinks, chairs and provided parking spaces to set up a hairdressing business for example, this would be subject to business rates. It all depended on the individual circumstances. To follow up on this matter, Members were also informed that through lockdown many businesses received grants for business rates with some people applying because they were running a business from home, leading to such premises becoming liable for business



**Action By**

rates.

Councillor French asked a question about charging Council Tax on empty homes.

The Head of NNDR Recovery & Enforcement (ARP) explained that if the property was owned by a charity which many social housing landlords and housings associations were, properties were entitled to be empty for six months before council tax charges were levied. This was government legislation.

The recommendation to increase the performance target for the Fraud & Compliance Team was proposed and seconded, and it was:

**RESOLVED** that the performance target for the Fraud & Compliance Team be increased from £1.3m to £2.8m per annum.

**31/23 FORTHCOMING ISSUES (STANDING ITEM)**

Nothing to report.

**32/23 NEXT MEETING**

The arrangements for the next meeting on Tuesday, 5 December 2023 at the Innovation Centre in Thetford at 9.30am were noted. Further details would follow.

The meeting closed at 10.56 am

CHAIRMAN



# Joint Committee Performance Report

## September 2023



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# All Partner Councils Combined



Business Rates Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>2023/24</b>	£ 67,768,223	£ 139,515,448	£ -	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 61,704,919	£ 128,580,723	£ 191,937,237	£ 239,550,804	
<b>2022/23</b>	£ 59,956,790	£ 126,388,945	£ 182,560,970	£ 222,341,168	●
			<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>£239,550,804</b>	●

Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>2023/24</b>	£152,371,801	£300,004,529	£0	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£152,496,922	£299,624,951	£448,909,622	£ 535,129,239	
<b>2022/23</b>	£149,681,569	£287,091,491	£427,218,713	£508,924,099	●
			<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>£535,129,239</b>	●

Number of Electronic Forms Received					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>2023/24</b>	18,463	40,278	0	0	●
<b>2021/22</b>	14,052	32,059	52,995	76,378	●
			<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>76378</b>	●

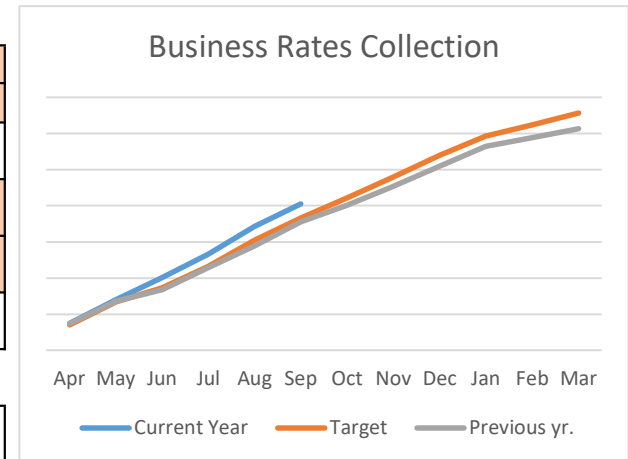
Fraud and Compliance	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Yr Target
Single Person Discount Fraud	£683,416	£1,357,666	£0	£ -	<b>£1,080,000</b>
Local Council Tax Support	£82,333	£160,769	£0	£ -	<b>£322,500</b>
Tenancy Fraud	£279,000	£372,000	£0	£ -	<b>£860,000</b>
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£307,721	£373,091	£0	£ -	<b>£537,500</b>
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£1,352,470</b>	<b>£2,263,526</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£2,800,000</b>

# Performance Information September 2023

## Business Rates

Business Rates Collection							
	Q1		Q2		Q3	Q4	
<b>2023/24</b>	£	10,067,781	£	20,239,464	£ -	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£	8,667,567	£	18,309,721	£ 26,970,487	£ 32,803,925	
<b>Refunds</b>	£	332,018	£	489,472	£ -	£ -	
<b>2022/23</b>	£	8,392,011	£	17,755,633	£ 25,449,325	£ 30,645,961	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	£	32,803,925	●
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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.

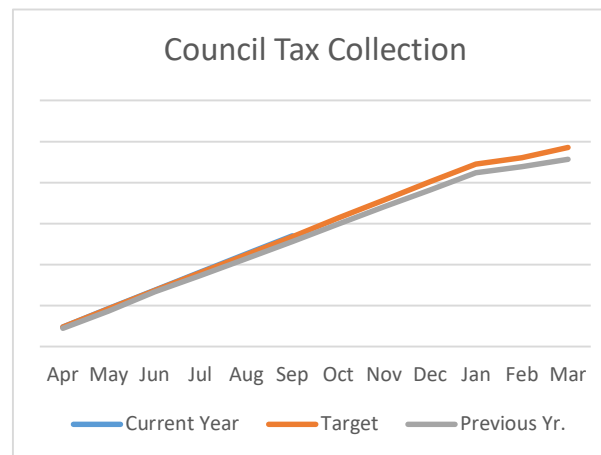
### Narrative

Collection has exceeded target in the second quarter, however is slightly behind 2022/23 percentage rate at this time of year. It will be closely monitored in the current economic climate.

## Council Tax

Council Tax Collection						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
<b>2023/24</b>	£ 27,531,029	£ 54,039,505	£ -	£ -	●	
<b>Target</b>	£ 27,270,949	£ 53,595,656	£ 80,395,006	£ 97,105,615		
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 233,307	£ 609,555	£ -	£ -		
<b>2022/23</b>	£ 26,680,055	£ 51,256,995	£ 76,440,286	£ 91,393,141	●	

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>£97,105,615</b>	●
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**Description**

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

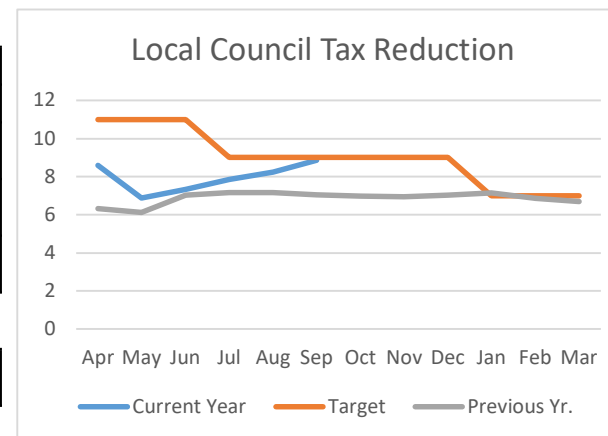
**Narrative**

Collection is above target at the end of Quarter 2 and slightly below the % collected at the end of Q2 last year. Collection is being closely monitored throughout the year in the current economic climate.

## Local Council Tax Reduction

Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
2023/24	7.34	8.87	-	-	●
Target	11	9	9	7	
2022/23	7.03	7.05	7.03	6.71	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>7</b>	●
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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.

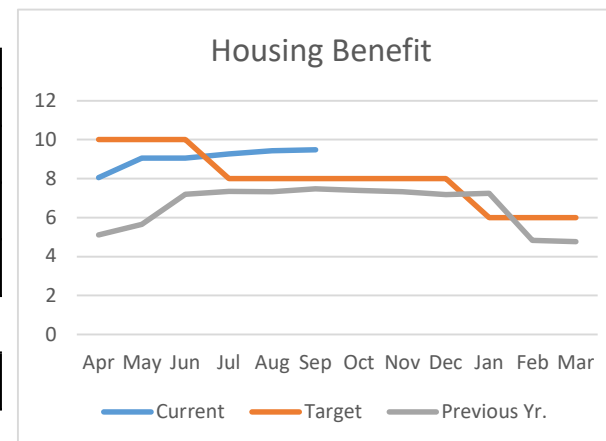
**Narrative**

The number of days to process Council Tax reduction at the end of Q2 is within the 9 day target.

## Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
2023/24	9.05	9.49	-	-	●
Target	10	8	9	6	
2022/23	7.19	7.47	7.03	4.77	●

Year End Target	6	●
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### Description

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

### Narrative

The number of days to process Housing Benefit in Q2 is above the target of 8 days. Performance has been impacted by the energy schemes which have now closed. A system issue affecting automation of UC records has also impacted resource requirements within Benefits. This has also now been resolved and we aim to meet the target by the end of the year.



### **Fraud and Compliance**

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be 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 continue to proactively 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.

A close working relationship with both Planning Enforcement has resulted in a number of positive outcomes.

More recent discussions with the extended Housing Team has resulted in positive moves and greater planned collaboration

The team continue to work closely with County in the management of the Fraud Hub in Norfolk. This is an attempt to match data sets across County to increase Council Tax and Business Rate income. Funding from Norfolk county continues to support Single Person Discount Reviews. This includes further funding for the roll out of the NFI Premium data matching service in 2023/2024. Funding has just been secured from Norfolk CC for a further 2 years until end of 2025/26.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Single Person Discount Fraud	£142,373	£243,933	£0	£0
Local Council Tax Support	£32,274	£47,239	£0	£0
Tenancy Fraud	£0	£0	£0	£0
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£14,537	£19,061	£0	£0
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£189,185</b>	<b>£310,232</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>

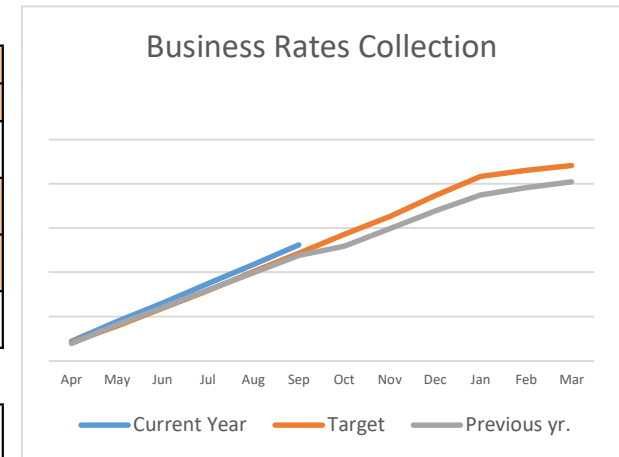


# Performance Information September 2023



## Business Rates

Business Rates Collection						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
<b>2023/24</b>	£ 6,536,259	£ 13,090,896	£ -	£ -	●	
<b>Target</b>	£ 5,951,099	£ 12,180,922	£ 18,669,037	£ 22,071,920		
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 271,670	£ 329,367	£ -	£ -		
<b>2022/23</b>	£ 6,032,224	£ 11,905,740	£ 16,939,915	£ 20,213,268	●	



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<b>Full Year Target</b>	<b>£22,071,920</b>	●
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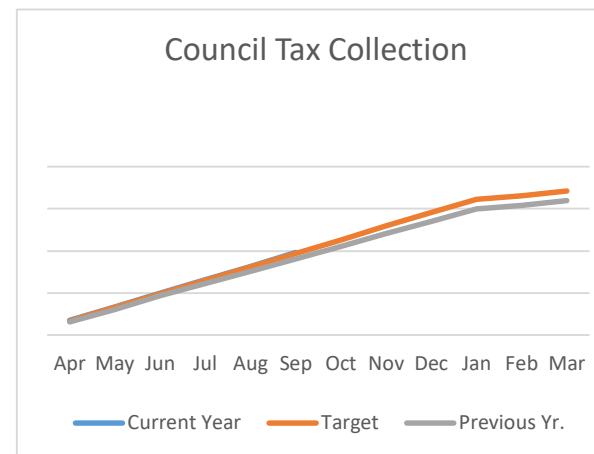
**Description**  
This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

**Narrative**  
Collection has exceeded target in the second quarter, however is slightly behind the 2022/23 percentage rate at this time of year. It will be closely monitored in the current economic climate.



## Council Tax

Council Tax Collection						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
<b>2023/24</b>	£ 19,921,293	£ 39,208,716	£ -	£ -	●	
<b>Target</b>	£ 19,633,224	£ 38,832,184	£ 58,202,677	£ 68,511,010		
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 221,763	£ 466,640	£ -	£ -		
<b>2022/23</b>	£ 18,778,113	£ 36,286,983	£ 54,114,832	£ 63,953,017	●	



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<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>£ 68,511,010</b>	●
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**Description**

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

**Narrative**

Collection is above target at the end of Q2 and above the % collected last year at Q2. Collection is being closely monitored throughout the year in the current economic climate.

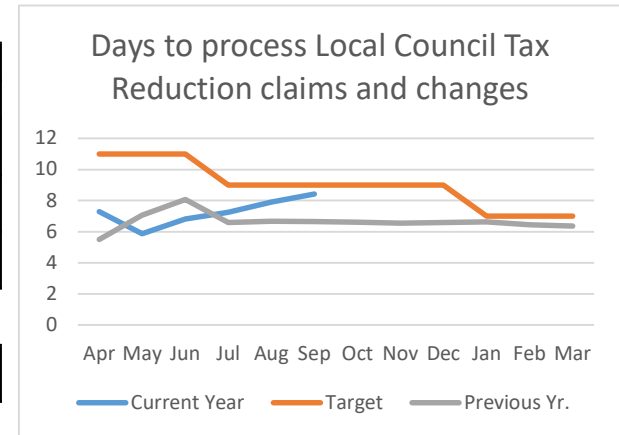


## Local Council Tax Reduction



Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>2023/24</b>	6.82	8.42	-	-	●
<b>Target</b>	11	9	8	7	
<b>2022/23</b>	8.08	6.66	6.61	6.38	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>7</b>	●
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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**  
 The number of days to process Council Tax reduction at the end of Q2 is within the 9 day target.

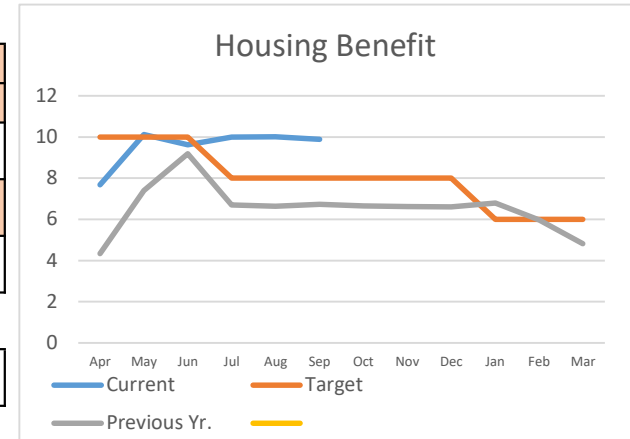


## Housing Benefit



Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
2023/24	9.61	9.89	-	-	●
Target	10	8	8	6	
2022/23	9.18	6.73	6.61	4.83	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>6</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**  
 The number of days to process Housing Benefit in Q2 is above the target of 8 days. Performance has been impacted by the energy schemes which have now closed. A system issue affecting automation of UC records has also impacted resource requirements within Benefits. This has also now been resolved and we aim to meet the target by the end of the year.



## 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 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 review of newly awarded Single Person Discounts continues to provide positive outcomes.

The team are working with the largest Social Housing provider in the authority to tackle Right to Buy and subletting abuse.

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.

Work on the Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub is in full progress following East Cambs and Fenland approving the business case to extend the Fraud and Compliance work for the two partners. This has aligned the Fraud and Compliance work currently being carried out for other partners of the Anglia Revenues Partnership as indicated in the fraud savings on the quarterly performance report. Funding for 2 additional posts from County has been secured for until the end of the financial year and those posts have been filled. Excellent on going results from the Hub have been realised as at the end of Q2.

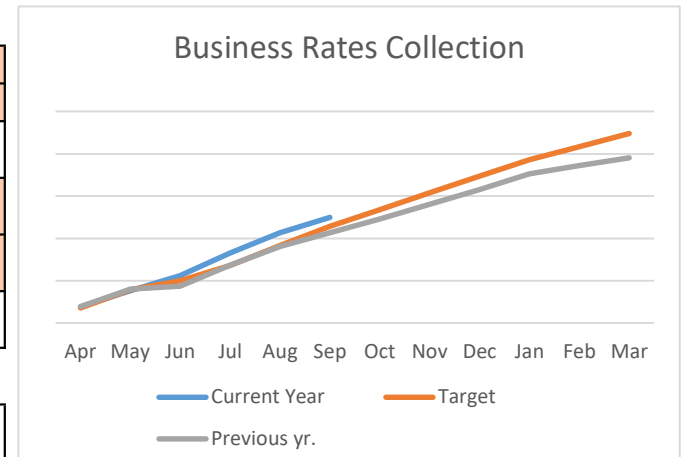
20

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Single Person Discount Fraud	£49,572	£204,868	£0	£0
Local Council Tax Support	£12,185	£21,465	£0	£0
Tenancy Fraud	£93,000	£93,000	£0	£0
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£126,108	£147,972	£0	£0
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£280,865</b>	<b>£467,305</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>

## Business Rates

Business Rates Collection						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
<b>2023/24</b>	£ 22,407,281	£ 49,989,647	£ -	£ -	●	
<b>Target</b>	£ 19,965,948	£ 45,762,883	£ 69,496,618	£ 89,602,932		
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 1,059,107	£ 1,571,498	£ -	£ -		
<b>2022/23</b>	£ 17,431,378	£ 42,658,428	£ 63,154,466	£ 78,033,010	●	

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>89,602,932</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.

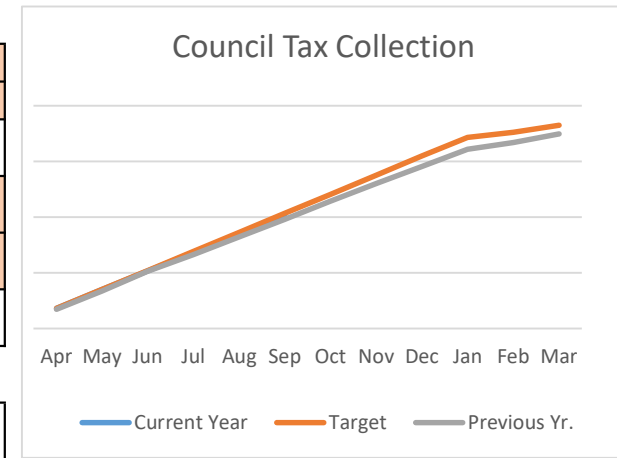
### Narrative

Collection has exceeded target in the second quarter but behind the 2022/23 collection percentage at this point in the year. It will be closely monitored in the current economic climate.

## Council Tax

Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>2023/24</b>	£ 51,605,854	£ 101,242,912	£ -	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 51,691,556	£ 101,797,118	£ 152,495,778	£ 182,376,077	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 521,384	£ 1,212,275	£ -	£ -	
<b>2022/23</b>	£ 51,262,165	£ 97,920,907	£ 145,561,042	£ 174,705,482	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>182,376,077</b>	●
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### Description

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

### Narrative

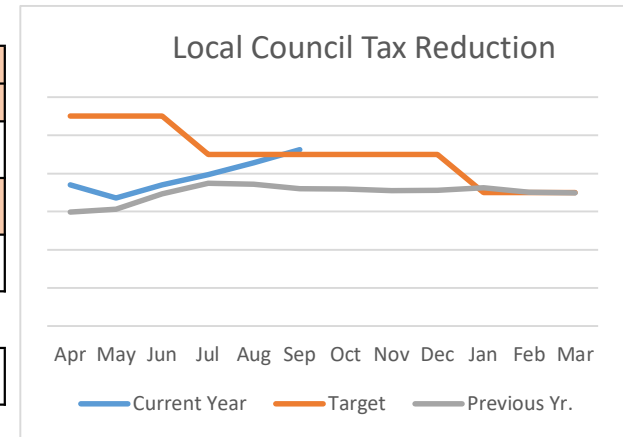
Collection is slightly below target at the end of Quarter 2 and slightly below the percentage collected at this time last year, but within the 1% tolerance so on target overall. Collection is being closely monitored throughout the year in the current economic climate.



## Local Council Tax Reduction

Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>2023/24</b>	7.41	9.24	-	-	●
<b>Target</b>	11	9	9	7	
<b>2022/23</b>	6.93	7.19	7.11	6.98	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>7</b>	●
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23

**Description**

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

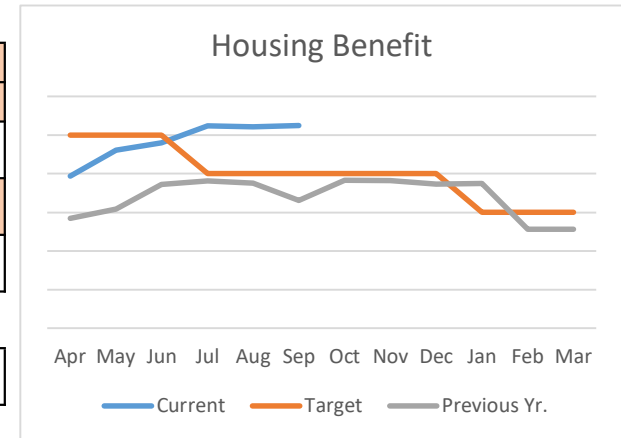
**Narrative**

The number of days to process Council Tax reduction at the end of Q2 is just above the target of 9 days. The administration of the 2 energy schemes and a system issue affecting automation of UC cases has affected performance throughout the first half of the year.

## Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>2023/24</b>	9.61	10.49	-	-	●
<b>Target</b>	10	8	8	6	
<b>2022/23</b>	7.44	6.62	7.45	5.13	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>6</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

The number of days to process Housing Benefit in Q2 is above the target of 8 days. Performance has been impacted by the energy schemes which have now closed. A system issue affecting automation of UC records has also impacted resource requirements within Benefits. This has also now been resolved and we aim to meet the target by the end of the year.

**Fraud and Compliance**

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be 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 reviews of NFI SPD matches and newly awarded Single Person Discounts continue to provide very positive outcomes.

The team work closely with the East Suffolk Corporate Fraud Team and ensure the transfer of fraud referrals across the teams.

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.

Work within the NFI SPD review process continues to provide a number of positive outcomes. Suffolk County have agreed to fund a further post in order that the NFI Premium matching service can be utilised for 2023/24. Excellent results have been achieved as at the end of Q2.

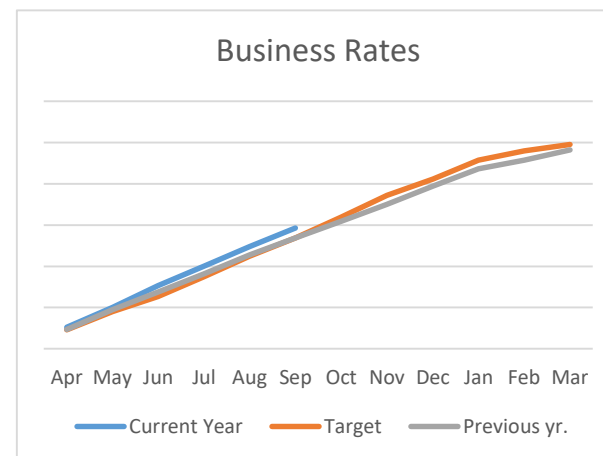
25

	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
Single Person Discount Fraud	£144,559	£283,689	£0	£0
Local Council Tax Support	£6,022	£28,256	£0	£0
Tenancy Fraud	£0	£0	£0	£0
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£1,698	£36,679	£0	£0
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£152,279</b>	<b>£348,624</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>

# Performance Information September 2023

## Business Rates

Business Rates Collection						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
<b>2023/24</b>	£ 7,636,425	£ 14,640,439	£ -	£ -		●
<b>Target</b>	£ 6,328,587	£ 13,437,456	£ 20,572,849	£ 24,779,458		
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 286,004	£ 610,782	£ -	£ -		
<b>2022/23</b>	£ 6,886,502	£ 13,413,855	£ 19,699,069	£ 24,120,990		●



26

<b>Year End Target</b>	£24,779,458	●
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### Description

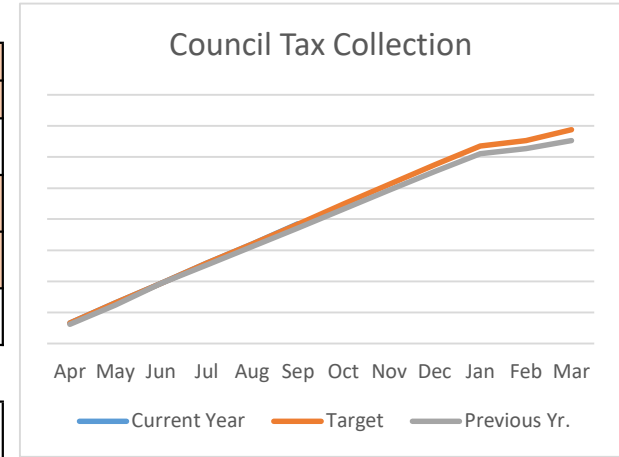
This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

### Narrative

Collection has exceeded target in the second quarter, however is slightly behind the 2022/23 collection percentage at this point in the year. It will be closely monitored in the current economic climate.

## Council Tax

Council Tax Collection						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
<b>2023/24</b>	£ 19,400,484	£ 38,563,439	£ -	£ -	●	
<b>Target</b>	£ 19,426,351	£ 38,421,156	£ 57,429,446	£ 68,755,817		
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 220,722	£ 447,331	£ -	£ -		
<b>2022/23</b>	£ 19,437,583	£ 37,186,868	£ 55,231,245	£ 65,262,181	●	



27

<b>Year End Target</b>	£68,755,817	●
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**Description**

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

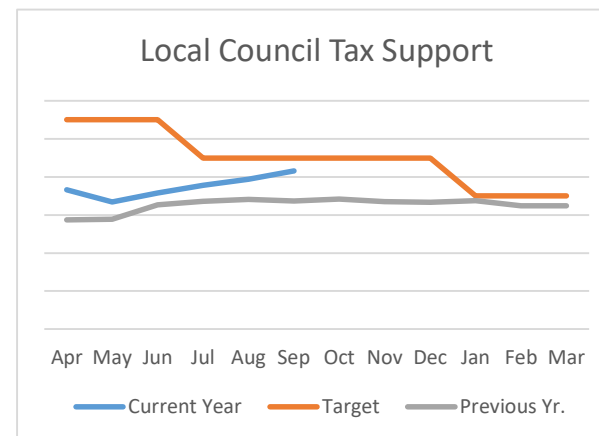
**Narrative**

Collection is on target at the end of Quarter 2 and slightly below the % collected at the same point last year. Collection is being closely monitored throughout the year in the current economic climate.

## Local Council Tax Reduction

Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>2023/24</b>	7.15	8.31	-	-	●
<b>Target</b>	11	9	9	7	
<b>2022/23</b>	6.54	6.73	6.67	6.48	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	7	●
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**Description**

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

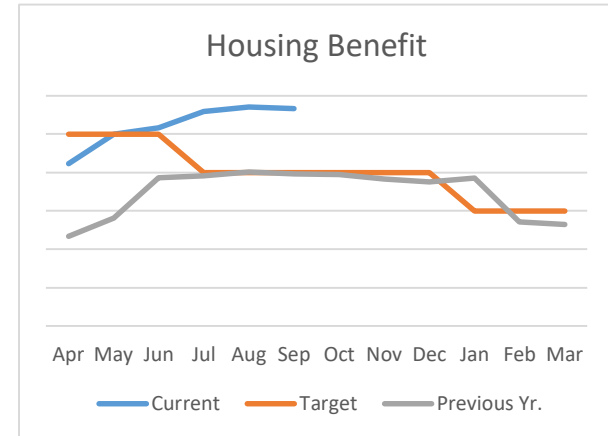
**Narrative**

The number of days to process Council Tax reduction at the end of Quarter 2 is within the 9 day target.

## Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
2023/24	10.33	11.33	-	-	●
Target	10	8	8	6	
2022/23	7.72	7.93	7.51	5.29	●

Year End Target	6	●
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20

**Description**

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

**Narrative**

The number of days to process Housing Benefit in Q2 is above the target of 8 days. Performance has been impacted by the energy schemes which have now closed. A system issue affecting automation of UC records has also impacted resource requirements within Benefits. This has also now been resolved and we aim to meet the target by the end of the year.

## 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 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:

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The review of newly awarded Single Person Discounts continues to provide positive outcomes.

The team are working with the largest Social Housing provider in the authority to tackle Right to Buy and subletting abuse.

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.

Work on the Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub is progressing well following East Camb's and Fenland approving the business case to extend the Fraud and Compliance work for the two partners. This has aligned the Fraud and Compliance work currently being carried out for other partners of the Anglia Revenues Partnership as indicated in the fraud savings on the quarterly performance report. Funding for 2 additional posts from County has been secured for until the end of the financial year and those posts have been filled. Excellent results from this initiative have been achieved at the end of Q2.

30

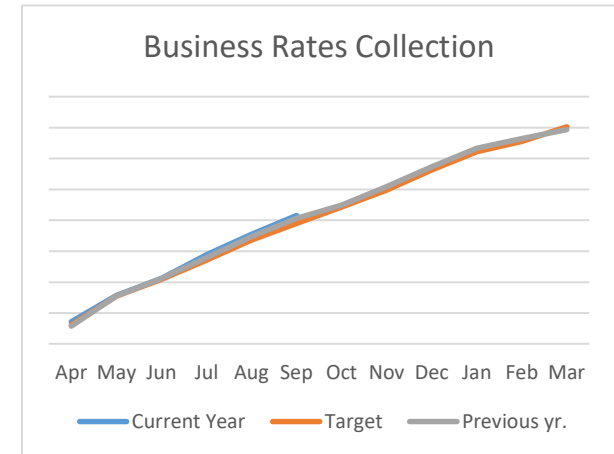
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Single Person Discount Fraud	£120,746	£237,996	£0	£0
Local Council Tax Support	£16,025	£22,449	£0	£0
Tenancy Fraud	£0	£93,000	£0	£0
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£165,378	£169,379	£0	£0
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£302,149</b>	<b>£522,823</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>



## Business Rates

Business Rates Collection						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
<b>2023/24</b>	£ 21,120,477	£ 41,555,002	£ -	£ -	●	
<b>Target</b>	£ 20,791,718	£ 38,889,741	£ 56,228,246	£ 70,292,569		
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 735,836	£ 1,558,348	£ -	£ -		
<b>2022/23</b>	£ 21,214,675	£ 40,655,289	£ 57,318,195	£ 69,327,939	●	

<b>Year End Target</b>	70,292,569	●
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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.

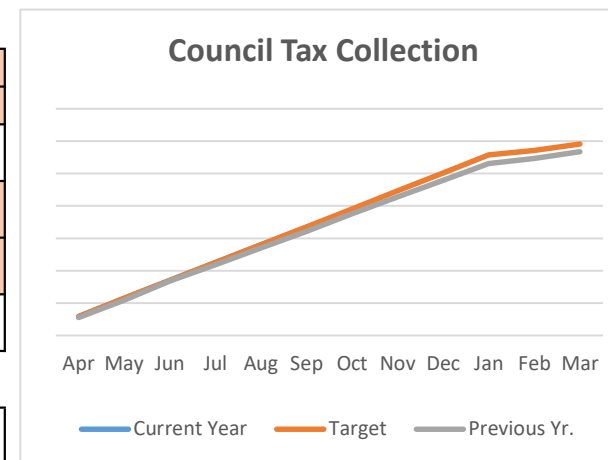
### Narrative

Collection has exceeded target in the second quarter and slightly ahead of the 2022/23 collection percentage at this point in the year. It will be closely monitored in the current economic climate.

**Council Tax**

Council Tax Collection					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>2023/24</b>	£ 33,913,141	£ 66,949,957	£ -	£ -	●
<b>Target</b>	£ 33,908,764	£ 66,978,837	£ 100,386,716	£ 118,380,720	
<b>Refunds</b>	£ 381,697	£ 805,676	£ -	£ -	
<b>2022/23</b>	£ 33,523,653	£ 64,439,738	£ 95,871,308	£ 113,610,278	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	118,380,720	●
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3

**Description**

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

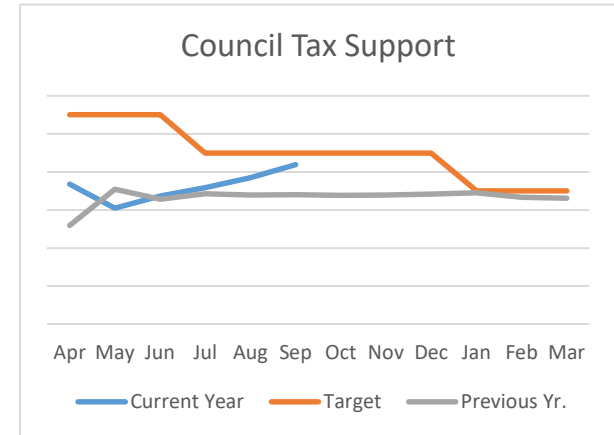
**Narrative**

Collection is on target at the end of Quarter 2 and slightly below the % collected at the same point last year. Collection is being closely monitored throughout the year in the current economic climate.

**Local Council Tax Reduction**

Days to process Local Council Tax Support					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>2023/24</b>	6.74	8.39	-	-	●
<b>Target</b>	11	9	9	7	
<b>2022/23</b>	6.56	6.79	6.82	6.61	●

<b>Year End Target</b>	<b>7</b>	●
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**Description**

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

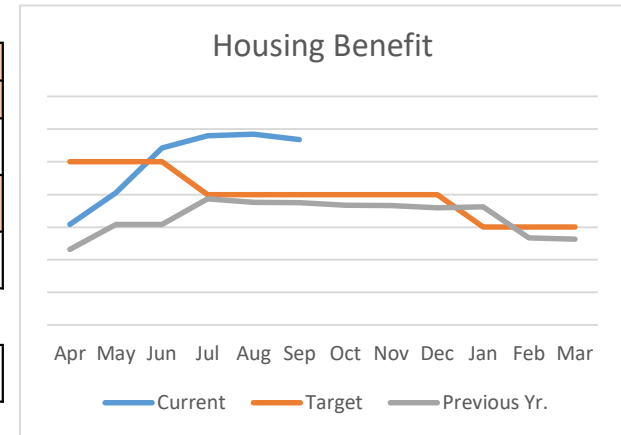
**Narrative**

The number of days to process Council Tax reduction at the end of Quarter 2 is within the 9 day target.

Housing Benefit

Days to process Housing Benefit					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
2023/24	10.85	11.36	-	-	●
Target	10	8	8	6	
2022/23	6.15	7.49	7.19	5.25	●

Year End Target	6	●
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**Description**

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

**Narrative**

The number of days to process Housing Benefit in Q2 is above the target of 8 days. Performance has been impacted by the energy schemes which have now closed. A system issue affecting automation of UC records has also impacted resource requirements within Benefits. This has also now been resolved and we aim to meet the target by the end of the year.

**Fraud and Compliance**

Following the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the DWP on the 1 September 2015, the team continue to be 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 reviews of NFI SPD matches and newly awarded Single Person Discounts continue to provide very positive outcomes.

The team work closely with the East Suffolk Corporate Fraud Team and ensure the transfer of fraud referrals across the teams.

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.

Work within the NFI SPD review process continues to provide a number of positive outcomes. Suffolk County have agreed to fund a further post in order that the NFI Premium matching service can be utilised for 2023/24. Excellent results have been received as at the end of Q2.

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	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Single Person Discount Fraud	£226,167	£387,181	£0	£0
Local Council Tax Support	£15,826	£41,361	£0	£0
Tenancy Fraud	£186,000	£186,000	£0	£0
Other (Council Tax and NDR)	£0	£0	£0	£0
<b>Fraud Identified</b>	<b>£427,992</b>	<b>£614,542</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>

# Service Updates as at September 2023



## **Enforcement**

The Enforcement Team is fully staffed with Enforcement Agents and Compliance Officers; unfortunately an Enforcement Agent is long term sick. Ongoing discussions continue with our external partners, Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk Councils and the East and West Suffolk parking teams regarding the flow of cases. This is in addition to the main function of collecting Council Tax and Business Rates for the 5 partners. The team are in their busiest period receiving cases from the first recovery cycles after annual billing with conversations regarding payment arrangements becoming more challenging due to cost of living pressures.

At the end of quarter 2 the team collected just over £2,120,388.15 in debt repayment and fees of £622,003.54.

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## **Further Recovery**

The Further Recovery Team continued their strong start to the year and are on course at the end of Quarter 2 to surpass the £1million collected in 2023/24.

CTAX	NDR	HBOP	TOTAL
£272,655.15	£295,046.43	£2,591.43	£570,293.01

## Council Tax

Overall collection for council tax in the second quarter is on target with one authority being marginally under but within the 1% tolerance; ongoing inflation and interest rate issues might be impacting. The collection rates are being closely monitored throughout the year.

Demand for council tax billing continues at very high levels, in particular the high number of people moving. The amount of outstanding work increased during the first quarter but is now more steady and starting to reduce. This is testament to our project to introduce the generic Council Tax Billing Officer (CTBO) role, which provides a resilient team who have been able to switch between billing and benefits to help cope with ever changing workloads and priorities, providing increased flexibility to the use of our resources, along with maximising automation functionality. We had 8 new CTBOS join in July and are now advertising for a new round of recruitment. Work has continued on the change of address automation project despite the focus on additional Government schemes this year and we continue to work closely with our supplier to further develop the functionality.

The Cabinet Office pilot for the Digital Economy Act has now closed.

At the end of last year Government announced a new £100m Council Tax Support Fund for 2023/24 to help economically vulnerable residents with their Council Tax Bills. The majority of allocations were applied directly to 2023-24 Council Tax bills during annual billing, with the remaining funds being used to provide additional support to new Council Tax Reduction claimants throughout the 2023-24 year and additional exceptional hardship funds for vulnerable council tax payers.

## Benefits

Whilst Council Tax Support targets have been met for all except one authority, Benefits target have been missed by all authorities. We plan to hold focus days to concentrate on getting new Housing Benefit claims more up to date to improve the processing times by the end of the year.

DWP are holding a face to face workshop at ARP to help them understand the difficulties and complexities of administering Housing Benefit for supported and specified accommodation as the time taken to process these claims is far greater than the general HB claims that are due to migrate to UC, thereby impacting processing times.

We have also been working on some new automation areas to improve performance and to further smooth the customer experience.

We continue to see increases in demand from the continuing high levels of changes of addresses and continue to utilise generically trained staff to focus resource where it is most needed. We have beta tested and implemented Capita's fraud prevention automation functionality and helped develop an online solution for accuracy reviews.

We are now automating 97% of changes in UC and have become a reference site for other supplier sites. The two government Energy Bills Support Scheme (Alternative Funding) have now closed and the second allocation of new burdens is due in January.

## **Non-Domestic Rates**

The overall collection and for each individual authority is above target at the end of the second quarter. This will be closely monitored in the current economic climate.

A new NDR Valuation List came into effect on the 1 April 2023, every property was assigned a property value. For the team it means that they are administering changes to the 2017 and 2023 VOA property lists. Apart from a handful of appeals the 2010 list is now closed.

Recovery Cycles successfully continue across all partners.

The review of Small Business Rate reviews continues with the task anticipated to be completed by the end of October.

The Team had 1 vacancy at the end of Q2 which has subsequently been filled.

Administration of the 4 BIDs and 3 Enterprise Zones continues.

## **ARP Systems and Digital**

Work is progressing with our supplier to review their Digital product working with other LA's to provide feedback from a wider group of users, working with a large Unitary Council where we are sharing our knowledge and experiences; this continues to be beneficial for ARP.

Work volumes with both System admin and EDMS have been quite high, but through working with the Programme Manager we are making a strong plan of priorities so we can ensure that resources can meet expectations and demands. All ongoing projects have been scored in line with strategic priorities and regular project updates are provided for each team.

We are now successfully automating web DDs and are starting to test refund automation, both of which will complement move automation which we hope to see progress during Q3 following some system enhancements and fixes. We are also in the early testing stages to implement a new interactive contact us form which will reduce customer contact and increase automation volumes through the option of uploading evidence. Work to amend the system start date has now been completed for all 3 Councils for Council Tax and NNDR as planned and we are working on PDF attachment of e-bills ahead of annual billing.



## **Fraud and Compliance**

The Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub became operational in Quarter 1, with excellent ongoing results in Q2. Norfolk County Council continue to fund one Council Tax compliance Officer to continue Single Person Discount reviews for Norwich City Council and any additional work identified through the Norfolk Fraud Hub. Funding from Norfolk County Council has now been secured for a further two years from April 2024, including funding of the Norwich post plus an additional post to utilise the premium matching service for Breckland and Norwich. Suffolk County Council have approved an increase in funding from April 2022 for a period of two years. This funding includes the premium matching service for both East and West Suffolk, providing funding for an additional post within the team.

Fraud work commenced for Broadland and South Norfolk in Quarter 2 although this has been impacted by their change in software supplier. We received notification that Lincolnshire County Council has withdrawn funding for ARP to undertake their Single Person Discounts reviews within their seven District Councils. To improve the registration of new properties, the Visiting team are trialling a new database containing details of new properties in Fenland; this trial has been expanded in East and West Suffolk with further results due in January.

## **Better Customer Experience Programme**

We are in the final stages of development and are almost ready to launch our new 'Contact Us' form. Providing a reliable and easy way as the main route to contact us. This will help enhance the customer experience by capturing all required information within the one form.

Automating Council Tax moves is an ongoing project which is starting to see improvements with automation and back-end processing. We are live with 2 move types with further expansion due after a software update; the next move types will be incoming tenants and tenant vacating. Further work will then be carried out to look at new properties to find a quicker way for these to be set up. Current automation is around 22% but we expect this to rise when we widen the scope of automation types.

Tel solutions is an innovative way of contacting our residents and sending reminders without producing paper. In September 7,171 soft reminders compared to 3,327 paper reminders were issued . This has reduced postage and printing for reminders by 53.60% whilst improving collection.

Work is ongoing to look at sending e-bills as a PDF attachment via email to help increase take up and avoid the rise in contact around annual billing time due to password resets and other online portal issues. This will tie into our wider strategic aim of moving people to a more automated service with direct debit and eBilling.

Our telephony project with West Suffolk ICT team has led to a thorough review of our call scripts and the options available for customers ahead of migration to a new system in October. We have made improvements to our call flow and scripts to help ensure the customer is routed to the right place more efficiently, whilst ensuring the right support is provided.

**ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP**

**Report of** Lorraine King – ARP Head of Benefits, Council Tax Billing & Systems

**To:** Joint Committee, 05 December 2023

**Subject:** Welfare Reform

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

**Recommendation(s):**

- Joint Committee note the report.

**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 – update at 2.1.15 (s-u)**

**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 customers 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** In April 2019 changed their strategy, awarding a 12-month contract, subsequently extended to the 2021-2022 year, 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 approximately 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 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 review of the CAB Help to Claim service but have confirmed the CAB arrangement will continue into the 2021-2022 year, with a review underway for provision from 2022.
- 2.1.9** DWP recently requested expressions of interest from public, private, and voluntary sectors to deliver a digital and telephony help to claim service from April 2022, stating DWP will take responsibility for face to face assistance. An expression of interest was made.
- 2.1.10** The Customer Services Team, comprising of partner Heads of Customer Service, support the ARP view that the best fit for our residents would be for DWP to take full responsibility for helping customers to claim UC, a benefit they administer. To provide a seamless service DWP could utilise their existing digital and telephony capability to provide assistance to supplement their face to face Job Centre capability.
- 2.1.11** At Joint Committee 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 Members requested a briefing note to assist with any discussions with their MPs, subsequently issued.
- 2.1.12** DWP have commenced a formal process to requests bids for a digital and telephony service, intending to award contract from April 2022 for one year.
- 2.1.13** It was announced at the end of January that the Help to Claim scheme has been renewed for a further year. Ministers confirmed that Citizens Advice will continue to deliver independent support and from April 2022 and that the support will be provided through telephony and digital channels. Individuals who are unable to access support via these channels will be supported by the local jobcentres.
- 2.1.14** The Minister of State for Employment announced on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023 that the Help to Claim scheme would be extended for another year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The department is currently considering the support required from April 2024.
- 2.1.15 Summary of the current position on the expansion of Universal Credit**
- a) Due to redeploying staff to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, DWP pulled the Harrogate pilot of managed migration of existing cases in Spring 2020. DWP now plan to recommence the pilot this year and report to Parliament with the aim of completing migration by 2024. DWP have not released any further detail or indicative timetable at this stage.
  - b) DWP are launching a UC awareness campaign to encourage voluntary migration as numbers are very low and not meeting UC business case volumes or costings. Difficulty presents that voluntary customer will not receive the transitional protection afforded to managed customers – DWP itself estimates 30-50% will be worse off at the point of transfer, with Ministers advocating caution when advising customers.
  - c) As a response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Universal Credit rates were temporarily increased by £20 per week for the 2020-2021 year and extended in the budget. This ended on 06<sup>th</sup> October, and we have received change files for all UC recipients. Due to the recent improvements to automation, we have been able to automate around 96% of these changes seamlessly, requiring no intervention from the team, whilst other Councils are struggling to cope with the increase in manual assessments. It should be noted all the partner Local Council Tax Support schemes provided for customers to receive the full benefit of that uplift.
  - d) The Chancellor announced at the 2021 Budget that by 1<sup>st</sup> December the taper for UC will be reduced from 63p to 55p per pound to help plug the gap left by the removal of the uplift which affected 4.4 million households nationally. This change is expected to benefit around 1.9m families.

- e) The UC work allowance will also increase by £500 per year from the same date and a new target of March 2025 was set for the rollout of UC to be complete, and for the introduction of a pension age housing costs scheme.
- f) Ministers announced in December 2021 that they would resume the managed migration process at some point during 2022, but it is felt that any movement this year will be very slow with rollout accelerating through 2023-24.
- g) DWP announced in April 2022 that they intend to move all working age customers to UC by the end of 2024. The scheme will now be called 'Move to UC' rather than managed migration.
- h) Lessons learned from the limited cases involved in Harrogate trial indicated that warm up conversations did not work and that aligning payment cycles is important.
- i) In May 2022 DWP announced that the first two trial sites are Bolton and Medway. During the trial there will be more focus on customers moving over independently and a test and learn approach will continue. At the time of writing this report we understand 500 claimants will be written to and given 3 months to make a claim for Universal Credit.
- j) Melton and Bolton trial 3-month deadline ran into second week of August with 1-month extensions given. A further 250 letters were issued in July trialling a different approach and expanded into Cornwall at the same time where 250 letters were issued to trial a new demographic. Harrow has now joined the pilot as well as Northumberland. CEOs should be contacted 4-6 weeks prior to any involvement in their area.
- k) In the Autumn budget in November 2022, it was announced that plans to continue to move across 2.5 m cases on to UC will continue but the move of a further 1 m ESA customers will be delayed until 2028. The plan to consider movement of Pensioners on to a Housing Element was also delayed from 2025 to 2028-29.
- l) It was also announced that mortgage support through UC will be reviewed.
- m) In January 2023 a report was issued providing analysis on the initial 499 move to UC cases. Of the 499, 423 transitioned, with 50% being awarded Transitional Protection, 63 applied by phone and 7 cases are yet to make a claim. The migration data will help inform the next stages of migration.
- n) In April 2023 5000 migration letters were sent to Tax Credit claimants asking them to claim UC as the move to UC expands.
- o) At the end of April 2023 East Suffolk, Fenland and West Suffolk CEOs received notification that DWP will start to issue migration notices to households claiming tax credits only in July 2023. This does not include households in receipt of HB and tax credits. Migration of HB cases will take place during 2024-25.
- p) The tax credit only cases could also be claiming CTRS and a partly automated process is already in place to re-assess these cases as they move across to UC.
- q) The estimated number of CTRS claimants in receipt of tax credits only in East Suffolk, Fenland and West Suffolk is less than 100 cases.
- r) At the end of July we were made aware that Breckland and East Cambridgeshire are also in the July 2023 tranche and tax credit only cases will now start migrating for all 5 partners.
- s) The expansion of Move to UC continues with Southeast Wales and Central Scotland in October and bringing Southwest Scotland on board in November.
- t) In September, a small-scale discovery phase started bringing more combinations of benefits into Manchester with Harrow and Northumberland starting in October.
- u) A stakeholder event has recently taken place to discuss Move to UC barriers and how they can be overcome.
- v) We continue to press for more information and timelines at our regular DWP & LGA liaison meetings and await further updates on the ongoing roll out programme.

## **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
- The lack of Managed Migration detailed plans and schedule
- Failure to take advantage of existing data to prepopulate UC systems with legacy systems data – all existing customers including Housing Benefit will be expected to make a new claim. DWP say they cannot 'lift and shift' existing known data held

on their systems to the UC system. I have challenged that as a missed opportunity to smooth the customer migration journey.

- Concerns the Managed Migration process will leave customers without benefit during the transfer - DWP adopting a 'who knows me approach'
- The five weeks 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

### **2.3 Discretionary Housing Payments – 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. For the 2020-2021 year DWP increased funding to offset the impact of private sector rents increasing above the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates used to calculate Housing Benefit.

**2.3.2** However, funding for 2021-2022 has returned to 2019-2020 levels, despite concerns the pandemic will increase demand throughout this year. We are in close conversations with individual Housing teams to plan, profile and monitor demand and expenditure to meet requirements to ensure full spend, but not to exceed funding levels, given a budget does not exist to top up.

**2.3.3** Funding for 2021-2022 was allocated in two parts with £100m at the start of the year and £40m at mid-year. We received the second allocation in September.

**2.3.4** Funding for 2022-2023 is being allocated in two allocations with national funding of £100m in April and £2m mid-year, a reduction of £38m overall (27%). We are working closely with Housing teams and other stakeholders to devise a process to help us manage the reduced budget to assist customers with shortfalls in their rent.

**2.3.5** Residual Discretionary Council Tax rebate funding has been used to provide additional targeted support to those who have successfully applied for DHP this financial year with payments of between £100-£200 being issued ahead of the scheme closure on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

**2.3.6** DWP are proposing to retain current methodology for DHP allocations, with a 2-year funding freeze with allocations to be paid in one upfront payment. This is to retain consistency and help Local Authorities plan. A short consultancy will take place prior to allocations being made in February.

### **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 will rise from £20,000 to £22,020 and for single adults with no children from £13,400 to £14,753 from April 2023.

**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** It was announced in the Autumn statement in November 2022 that the benefit cap would rise by 10.1% in line with CPI from April 2023. This will mean 60k households will no longer be capped, 130k will receive more support and 30k will be out of the scope of the cap.

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

**2.5.1** In August 2020 Government 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 Uprating April 2023 – no new matters arising**

**3.1** Government ended the four-year Benefit uprating freeze in 2020. However, the link between pensions and the triple lock was severed in September 2021 because of wage inflation. Instead, in 2022/23 the State Pension will rise in line with the highest of inflation or 2.5%, with CPI for September (3.1%) historically being the figure used.

**3.2** It was announced in the Autumn statement in November 2022 that the State Pension and other benefits would be increased by inflation (September CPI) from April 2023 – an increase of 10.1%. The triple lock also resumed.

### **4.0 Homes for Ukraine’s scheme – no new matters arising**

**4.1** DWP confirmed in circular A4/2022 that there will be no impact on Housing Benefit for anyone entering into the Homes for Ukraine scheme, as such the £350 thank you payment will be disregarded as income and there would be no non-dependant deductions applied.

**4.2** The same disregards are also covered in the prescribed CTRS scheme for pensioners, and we have provisions in all the partners Local Council Tax Support schemes for working age customers to disregard such payments.

## **5.0 Options**

**5.1** The report is for information purposes

## **6.0 Reasons for recommendations**

**6.1** The report is for information only

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 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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### **Lead Contact Officer**

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**BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Report of:** Alison Chubbock, Assistant Director Finance  
**To:** ARP Joint Committee, 5 December 2023  
**Author:** Alison Chubbock, Assistant Director Finance  
**Subject:** ARP Forecast Financial Performance 2023  
**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 2024 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 2023 and all costs are included and shared based on the Partnership agreement.

1.2 The forecast at this stage of the year shows an overspend against budget of £141k (1.3%) for the whole of the ARP and this is shown further in Appendix A along with details of the variances.

The main reason for the overspend is the recently agreed national pay award, which is higher than the original budget estimates. Alongside a significant increase in Royal Mail postage charges which took effect from October.

We have received Government *New Burdens* funding to help offset the costs incurred for delivering the two alternative energy funding schemes which has increased income in this year.

The budget for 2023-24 includes an efficiency target of £100k, rising to £200k in future years. The £100k for 2023-24 has been achieved and is included in the forecast in this report. Work will continue through the year to meet the higher target in future years and is currently on track.

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. £45k is earmarked for projects in progress and there is a further £70k available for future transformation projects.

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

- 1.4 The table below shows the share of the forecast outturn for each partner based on the ARP Joint Committee agreement, and this will change for the final values at the end of March 2024.

This report recommends that the end of year variance is distributed between the partner authorities in the approved shares from the Joint Committee agreement. The recommendation is included in this report to allow the end of year accounts to be produced in a timely fashion for the accounting deadlines.

	<b>Forecast Out-turn</b>
Breckland	£19,980
East Cambs	£6,469
East Suffolk	£65,975
Fenland	£25,837
West Suffolk	£22,685
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£140,946</b>

The Joint Committee agreement has different cost and income sharing splits for three areas of the budget. As a result of variances in the differing budget areas (such as Enforcement) the out-turn share for some partners is a surplus and for others is a cost.

## 2.0 **OPTIONS**

- 2.1 That the report and appendices are noted and that the final full year variance at 31 March 2024 is shared between the partner authorities in the approved shares

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

- 3.1 To provide Members information on the financial position against budget for the whole of the ARP.

## 4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

- 4.1 To provide Members information on the financial position against budget for the whole of the ARP.

## 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**

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**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 31/10/23

Description	Approved Budget 203/24 £	Forecast Actuals 2023/24 £	Forecast Variance Over/(Under) £	Variance %	Notes
Employee Related Costs	10,675,514	10,825,876	<b>150,362</b>	<b>1.41</b>	1
Premises Related Costs	185,902	134,472	<b>(51,430)</b>	<b>(27.67)</b>	2
Transport Related Costs	86,767	84,218	<b>(2,549)</b>	<b>(2.94)</b>	
Supplies & Services	1,951,227	2,026,646	<b>75,419</b>	<b>3.87</b>	3
Support Services	485,515	483,372	<b>(2,143)</b>	<b>(0.44)</b>	
Income	<b>(2,802,778)</b>	<b>(2,831,491)</b>	<b>(28,713)</b>	<b>1.02</b>	4
<b>TOTAL PARTNERSHIP COSTS</b>	<b>10,582,147</b>	<b>10,723,093</b>	<b>140,946</b>	<b>1.33</b>	

#### Variance Notes

1. The overspend is due to the impact of the recently agreed national pay
2. The underspend is mainly due to lower business rates for 2023/24 compared to budget
3. Supplies and services forecast outturn includes a cost pressure of an 18% increase in Royal Mail costs wef October 2023.
4. The outturn position includes one off funding for the administration of the two energy support grants.

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

Description	Approved Budget	Forecast Actuals	Forecast Actuals
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£	£	£
<b>Already committed from grant funding received in previous years</b>			
Call management replacement (Teams)	20,000	0	0
Work to identify unrated properties (estimated value)	25,000	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Unallocated</b>	<b>70,574</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>115,574</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The committed transformation funding is £20k, with a further investment of approximately £25k anticipated to identify unrated properties; exact value will be known after a procurement exercise. It is expected that the budget will be spent by the end of the year. If all of the identified expenditure goes through in 2023/24 there will be £70k remaining for future projects.

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ICT Reserve	Approved Budget	Approved Budget	Approved Budget
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£	£	£
Opening Balance	(35,000)	(22,500)	(20,000)
Partnership contribution	72,500	72,500	72,500
Earmarked - ICT refresh replacement servers software element	(60,000)	(70,000)	(90,000)
	<b>(22,500)</b>	<b>(20,000)</b>	<b>(37,500)</b>

**BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Report of:** Alison Chubbock, Assistant Director Finance  
**To:** ARP Joint Committee, 5 December 2023  
**Author:** Alison Chubbock, Assistant Director Finance  
**Subject:** ARP Budget  
**Purpose:** To set the annual budgets for the ARP Joint Committee

**Recommendation(s):**

- 1) That the ARP budget at Appendix A for 2024-25 be approved.

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

1.1 A joint budget is prepared for the ARP each year covering the costs and income for providing Council Tax, Housing Benefits, Non-Domestic Rates, Fraud and Enforcement services for the five partner authorities. Detailed working papers are prepared by the five partner councils finance teams in conjunction with the ARP management team, these are reviewed by OIB before being brought to Joint Committee. Approval is sought from Joint Committee in December each year to allow time for the ARP budgets to be incorporated into the five partners individual budgets for their own budget setting.

1.2 Certain items are not included in the Joint Committee budget as per the Joint Committee Agreement and these items are reflected in the direct budgets of the five partner authorities. These include Housing Benefit payments and subsidy income, court fee income and other specific grants.

**Budget**

1.3 The appendix to this report sets out the proposed budget for 2024-25 compared to the current year, with indicative budgets for the following two years. Based on the Joint Committee Agreement, further tables show the share of costs for each partner authority and the proportion that any additional costs or savings against the budget will be shared.

1.4 ARP, like the rest of the UK, continues to see pressures on services and residents as a result of current cost of living challenges being faced. This proposed budget protects the services we currently provide and despite continuing increasing demand for services, there is no growth in the level of staffing and the budget continues our ambition to achieve savings or additional income where possible.

1.5 When compared to the 2023-24 numbers, this proposed budget has increased significantly by £931k (8.8%). The major drivers behind this increase are:

Salary costs as a result of the national pay award increase	£913k
Rent & rates resulting from less office space occupancy	(£87k)
Royal Mail postage costs price increase 2023	£117k

Whilst salary costs have increased, there is no growth in staffing numbers despite the increased demand faced by ARP, this is due to the continued success in automation which helps to negate the requirement for employing additional staff.

The Royal Mail prices increased by circa 18% in October 2023 and these increases are reflected in this proposed budget. Costs are also due to rise again by a similar amount in 2024, however this proposed budget does not include costs resulting from the 2024 increase as the budget assumes through digitalisation and other improvements, we can mitigate the effects of the 2024 price increase.

As well as the efficiencies to mitigate the Royal Mail price increase, the budget includes the remainder of the previously set efficiency target of £91k to be achieved. Work is underway to achieve this target through automation and other improvements and natural turnover of staff.

- 1.6 To support partners Net Zero policies and to reduce costs, ARP is working with the Customer Strategy Group to reduce paper and postage usage, mainly through customer channel shift to transact online. For example, increasing e-Billing, use of Contact Us form, reductions in travel costs and reductions in paper reminders through smart messaging.

## 2.0 **OPTIONS**

- 2.1 That the ARP budget at Appendix A for 2024-25 be approved.

- 2.2 Make changes to the ARP budget before approving.

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

- 3.1 The budgets will enable ARP to continue to deliver services and will form the basis for monitoring financial performance in the 2024-25 year.

- 3.2 The partner contributions will form part of the five partners direct budgets, allowing time to include the ARP numbers.

## 4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

- 4.1 By setting these budgets the five partners are able to use the approved values to set their own budgets and we have an approved budget in order to monitor financial performance in the 2024-25 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 **Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues**

- 5.1.1 ARP is supporting partners net zero ambitions as detailed in paragraph 1.6.

### 5.2 **Constitution & Legal**

- 5.2.1 The ARP Joint Committee agreement requires a budget to be approved each year.

5.3 **Contracts**

5.3.1 Contractual costs are included in the budgets.

5.4 **Financial**

5.4.1 Financial information is included in the appendix.

5.5 **Staffing**

5.5.1 The budget is prepared based on the approved ARP establishment of each partner.

5.6 **Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales**

5.6.1 Each partner has provided the financial information for their own authorities which has then been collated to form this budget.

6.0 **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

6.1 N/A

7.0 **ACRONYMS**

7.1 ARP – Anglia Revenues Partnership

7.2 OIB – Operational Improvement Board

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**Background papers:-**

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**Lead Contact Officer**

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**Key Decision:** No

**Exempt Decision:** No

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

**Appendices attached to this report:**

Appendix A ARP Budgets

**Anglia Revenues Partnership Joint Committee  
2024-25 Budget Setting Summary**

<i>Description</i>	<i>2023-24 Budget £</i>	<i>2024-25 Budget £</i>	<i>2025-26 Indicative Budget £</i>	<i>2026-27 Indicative Budget £</i>
Employee Costs	10,675,514	11,488,963	11,776,238	12,058,602
Premises Costs	185,902	95,099	97,434	97,303
Transport Costs	86,767	95,506	96,124	96,734
Supplies & Services	1,951,227	2,135,242	2,187,573	2,239,818
Support Services	485,515	490,518	500,073	509,738
Income	(2,802,778)	(2,792,491)	(2,804,047)	(2,803,297)
<b>TOTAL PARTNERSHIP COSTS</b>	<b>10,582,147</b>	<b>11,512,837</b>	<b>11,853,395</b>	<b>12,198,898</b>

**Analysis of Total Partner Contributions**

<i>Description</i>	<i>2023-24 Budget £</i>	<i>2024-25 Budget £</i>	<i>2025-26 Indicative Budget £</i>	<i>2026-27 Indicative Budget £</i>
Breckland Council	2,066,134	2,221,909	2,284,522	2,347,639
East Cambridgeshire Council	1,174,235	1,275,178	1,312,629	1,349,965
Fenland District Council	1,389,977	1,499,979	1,544,960	1,591,514
West Suffolk	2,523,919	2,700,902	2,780,504	2,860,422
East Suffolk	3,427,881	3,814,868	3,930,779	4,049,358
	<b>10,582,147</b>	<b>11,512,837</b>	<b>11,853,395</b>	<b>12,198,898</b>

**Analysis of Partner Gain Share Percentages**

<i>Description</i>	<i>5 Partners %</i>	<i>3 Partners %</i>	<i>Enforcement %</i>
Breckland Council	17.99%	34.76%	18.05%
East Cambridgeshire Council	10.84%	20.93%	8.15%
Fenland District Council	13.41%	0.00%	17.26%
West Suffolk	22.93%	44.30%	20.89%
East Suffolk	34.82%	0.00%	35.64%
	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP**

**Report of** Adrian Mills – Head of ARP

**To:** **Joint Committee, 05 December 2023**

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

**Purpose:** To approve the Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register at Appendix B and to note progress in respect of the December 2022 Service Delivery Plan (Appendix A).

**Recommendation(s):**

- That the progress in respect of the December 2022 Service Delivery Plan is noted.
- That the ARP Joint Committee approve the 2023 Service Delivery Plan and risk register at Appendix B

**INTRODUCTION**

**1. Background**

- 1.0 In accordance with the ARP agreement a revised Service Delivery Plan for the new financial year should be agreed by the Joint Committee by the end of December of the previous year and the risk register is reviewed every 6 months.
- 1.1 A Service Delivery Plan for 2023/24 was agreed in December 2022 and this report provides an update below which details progress against the plan and an update to the risk register.
- 1.2 In December 2021 Members reviewed the strategic direction of the ARP, deciding to maintain objectives whilst implementing a four-year Business Plan, subsequently effective from April 2022. The annual Service Plan complements the Business Plan.

**2. April 2023/24 plan objectives performance and update**

- 2.0 The ARP has seen significant success thus far in 2023 and we have achieved the following:
  - In December 2022, a new Government scheme was announced to help support economically vulnerable families by providing additional reductions to their Council Tax bills. The Council Tax Support Fund (CTSF) was also administered at our busiest time of year where we facilitated automatic reductions for those in receipt of Council Tax Reduction at the time of annual billing and those making a claim successful claim during 2023-24. A residual fund was retained to provide additional support via the Exceptional hardship claim route throughout 2023-24.
  - In January 2023 two new Government schemes were announced to help support residents with rising energy costs if they did not receive payments automatically. The schemes (Energy Bill Support Scheme (Alternative funding) and Alternative Fuel Payments (Alternative funding) were administered by The Department of Energy, Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) with Local Authorities responsible for undertaking verification checks and making payments. The schemes ran from late February through to July during our busiest time of year alongside the CTSF and annual billing process. As a pilot site ARP played a key part in helping to shape and design the scheme guidance and processes and



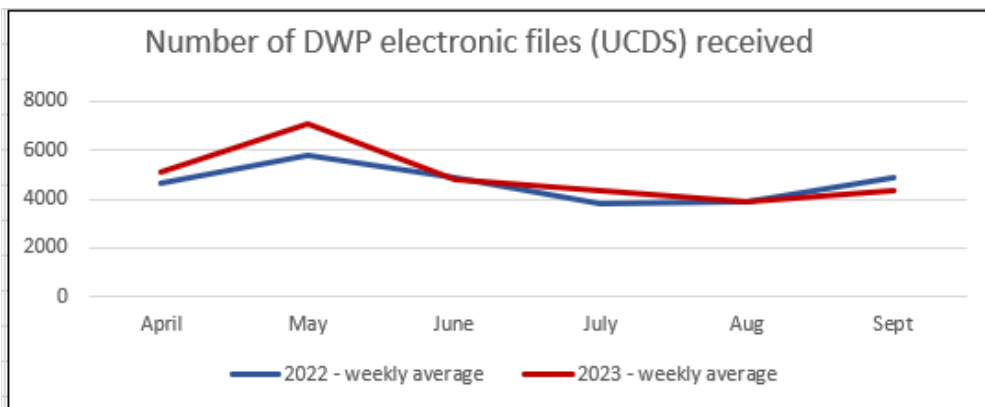
was the first Authority to make payment nationally. In total we paid out almost £1.6 m to help residents with rising fuel costs.

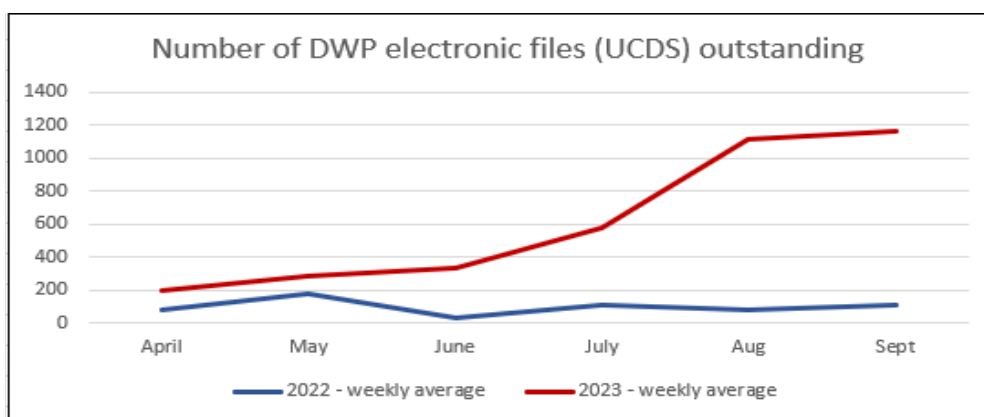
- We successfully implemented the revaluation of all business premises for April 2023.
- Council Tax collection is on target at the end of Q2 2023-24 for all five partners, with East Suffolk being slightly under target but within the 1% tolerance.
- Non-Domestic Rates achieved collection targets for the 2022-23 year for two partners, missing the target for three partners. A combination of factors contributed to this, including back dated refunds due to CARF relief awards, less prepayments for the following year and less in year collected. There was also a large one-off refund in East Suffolk for approximately £5 million.
- We continue to see more customers using e-services The suite of forms and other functionality is available to all customer teams using Capita customer contact software to sign customers up to e-services and the number of those using e-services continues to rise. We have recently launched a new improved 'Contact Us' online form which signposts customers to online forms and gathers all required information at the first contact. We are also testing an option to send e-bills as PDF attachments to email to remove the complex sign-up and log in process currently required to view an annual Council Tax bill.
- The further recovery work jointly funded by County Councils secured just over £1 million. This is a great result for a small team actioning complex further recovery cases for the collection of Business Rates and Council Tax.
- The Fraud teams work, also jointly funded by the County Councils, identified over £2.8 Million in fraud and error last year, an increase on the previous year. Following approval by Cambridgeshire County Council, the team are started work on the Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub in 2023/24 to achieve even higher values.
- As demand increases, we continue to see an overall increase across all work areas as detailed at para 2.10 below.
- In collaboration with each partner's Housing teams, we took a risk-based approach to target empty properties where data indicated occupation. During the 2023-24 empty property review, a number of properties that had not returned review forms were visited and 38% of these were found to be occupied.

Some other achievements relating to the Transformation Programme are detailed below, despite resources being redirected to deliver Government schemes:

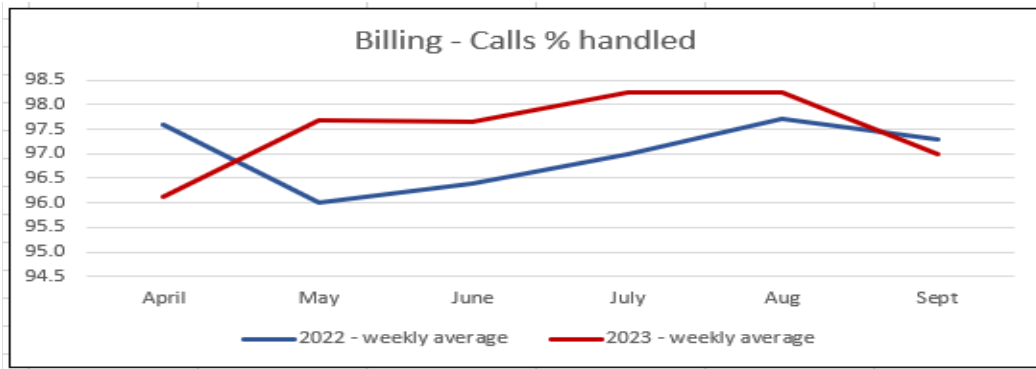
- 2.1 We continue to automate around 97% (in effect as close to 100% as possible) of changes reported by Universal Credit Data Share (UCDS) and following successful collaboration with our software supplier we successfully helped to develop and implement automation of new claims via UCDS. Currently 35-40% of these new claims are automated and we continue to work with our software supplier to expand and improve the functionality.

UCDS received and outstanding



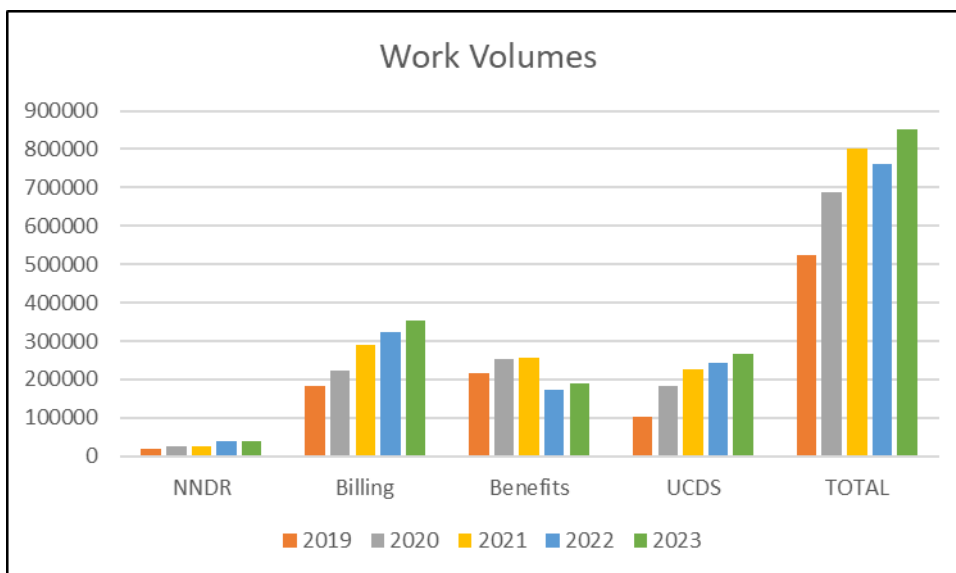


- 2.2 Automation of Universal Credit records included the introduction of the “Tolerance Rule” into our Council Tax Support Schemes two years ago. Approximately one third of the changes in income received did not result in a revised bill and payment profile for our customers, leading to a clearer picture of what they have to pay. Following consultation in 2021, we increased the tolerance level from £65 per month to £100 from April 2022, which has resulted in a further reduction in re-assessments and customer contact. At the same time, we introduced other scheme changes which have further streamlined the customer experience. There were no further scheme changes introduced in 2023-24 apart from one partner who increased the maximum CTR rate to 100% for one year only in response to the cost of living crisis. As part of the 2024-25 scheme review four partners have confirmed that they will not be making any changes this year. The remaining partner is consulting on retaining the 100% maximum CTR rate for a further year.
- 2.3 The number of outstanding UCDS files has gradually increased since June as a system issue was identified that prevented 13% of the more complex records from automating correctly. A fix has now been released which is currently being tested and we anticipate that the volume of outstanding files will reduce to levels seen in the first quarter of this year when it is fully implemented.
- 2.4 We introduced a new online change of address form which uploads data directly into our back-office system in 2022 and have started to introduce automation of straightforward tasks as we collaborate with our supplier to further develop the product. We now automate 22% of moves reported online and further enhancements to the product including a newer version of the form are currently being beta tested in collaboration with our software supplier.
- 2.5 In addition to automated moves, we have also successfully implemented new automation functionality within our processing system in the following areas this year:
- Direct Debit requests via our web form – over 55% are now automated.
  - Housing Benefit Award Accuracy (DWP pilot site)
  - HMRC earnings and Pensions data (pilot site)
  - New daily extracts of our usual monthly data share with DWP using API (pilot site)
- 2.6 We are also working on other automation projects which should enable us to automate refunds and set up payment arrangements automatically using a new online form.
- 2.7 It has continued to be the case that the phone technology (RAD message routing) continues to allow us to achieve strong call handling response times. We have achieved this through allowing 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, thereby releasing experienced staff for more complex calls and to assess more difficult cases. In October 2023, in collaboration with West Suffolk ICT, we moved from a handset phone system to a new supplier within MS Teams. The transition has been successful with no loss to service provision or customer access.



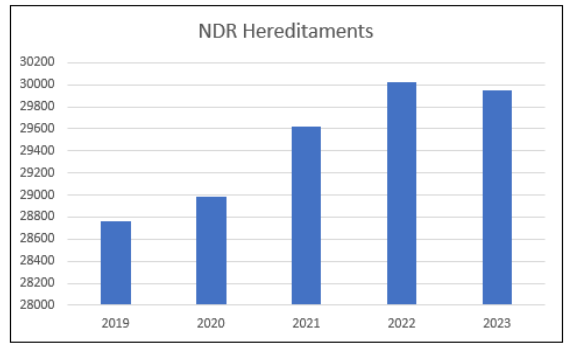
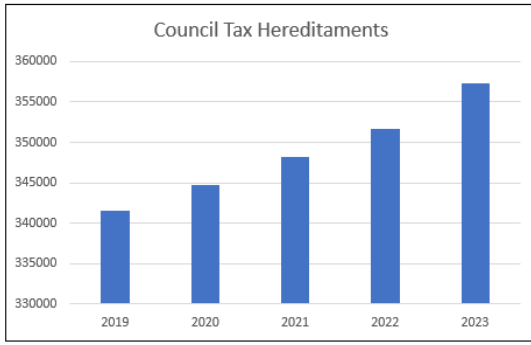
- 2.8 The introduction of a generic role, called a Council Tax Billing Officer, continues to be successful, providing flexibility and resilience whilst increasing the skills of staff. These posts process Council Tax changes and certain types of Council Tax Support (CTS) cases (where there is no Housing Benefit). This role means that resource is more flexible and can be moved from CTS to billing as the workload demands.
- 2.9 Through consultation a review of the ARP Support Team in August 2022 has resulted in the support team integrating back into the Operations teams. This review has made resource efficiencies, with one post being deleted with a suitable redeployment alternative provided. Through an ongoing review of support tasks throughout 2022-23 we have been able to create a more efficient, agile, proactive and resilient one team approach.
- 2.10 Overall workload across Council Tax, Benefits and NNDR has increased by 63% since 2019 with the largest increase seen during the Covid pandemic in 2020.
- 2.11 Despite this increase in demand, through our expanding automation we have been able to reduce our complement this year. Were it not for the level of our automation, we would have required additional resource to cope with increasing workloads, as the case at most other Councils at this time.

**OVERALL WORK VOLUMES**



**HEREDITAMENTS**

Hereditaments (properties) have also steadily increased over the past 5 years with NNDR seeing 4.11 % increase overall and Council Tax 4.6%.

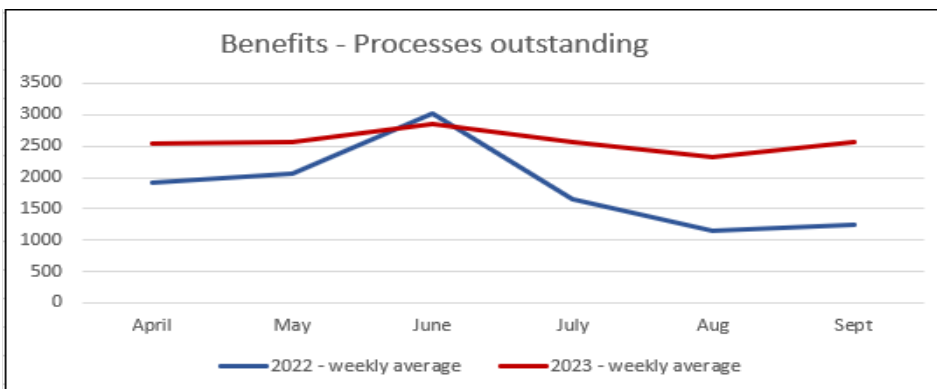
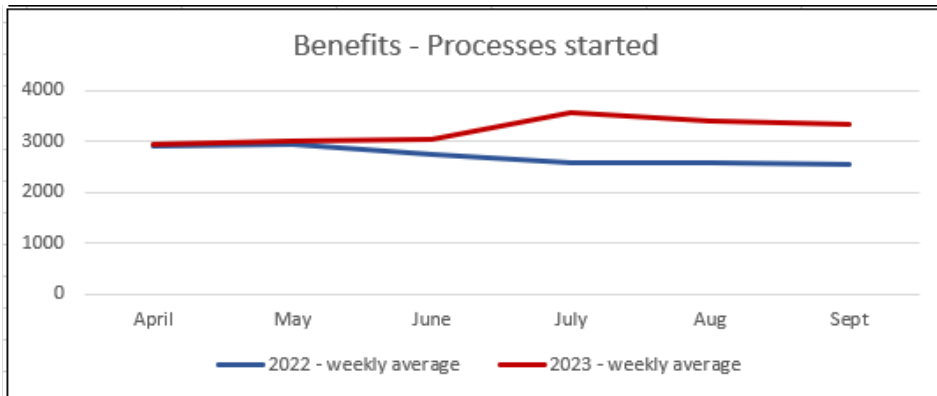


## BENEFITS

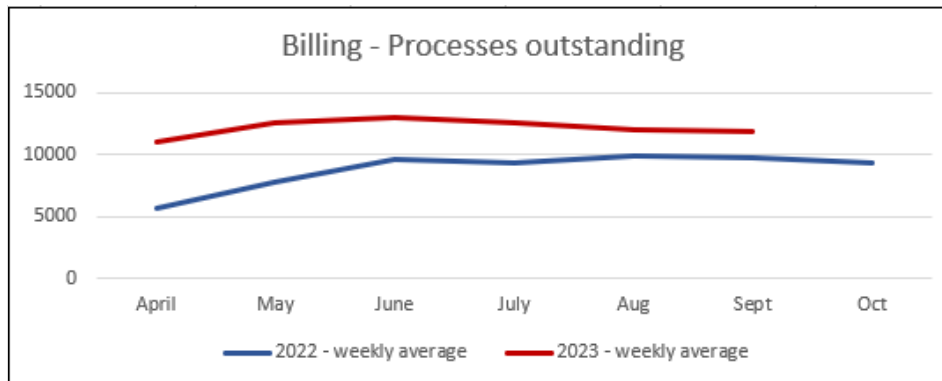
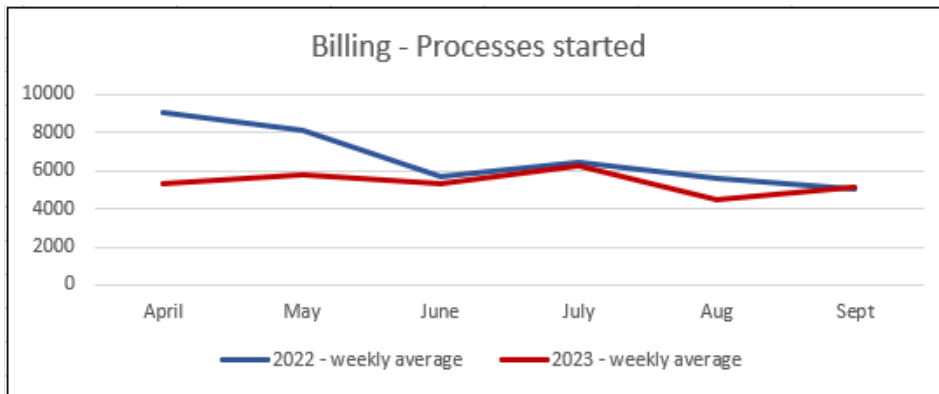
2.12 The number of outstanding benefits processes during the first two quarters of the year are higher than the previous year. This is due to several factors:

- The volume of incoming work has increased during quarter two.
- The system issue with UCDS records has meant resource has been re-directed to cover the additional manual processing in that area.
- The two energy schemes and the Council Tax Support Fund were both administered internally by the benefits team,
- As cases migrate to Universal Credit the remaining caseload contains a higher proportion of the more complex Housing Benefit Supported and Temporary Accommodation cases which take longer to verify, approve and process.

2.13 During October we have targeted new Housing Benefit claims and brought them up to date which has reduced the number of outstanding processes.



## BILLING



- 2.13 Norwich City Council delegated their enforcement services to Breckland Council from July 2019. Due to their approach to debt enforcement the volume of cases received has not been as expected.
- 2.14 Broadland Council agreed to delegate their enforcement services to Breckland Council from July 2022.
- 2.15 Norwich agreed to continue with ARP providing fraud services from April 2022, and a consultancy review was completed with Broadland & South Norfolk Councils. It was subsequently agreed at Joint Committee that ARP will undertake Fraud Services work for Broadland and South Norfolk Councils and Single Person Discount reviews for the seven Lincolnshire Councils, led by the County Council.
- 2.16 Whilst Lincolnshire have withdrawn due to lack of investment funding, work commenced for Broadland and South Norfolk Councils in April 2023.
- 2.17 The Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub finally went live April 2023, with the County Council and the District Councils agreeing to use the established and proven ARP methodology to detect and report fraud.
- 2.18 Partnership working between teams across all Councils and the ARP teams continues to work well, remaining a priority to ensure that we continue to work as closely in the future, especially with regard to the impact of rising living costs and economic pressures.
- 2.19 Appendix A attached to the report shows the status of the priorities agreed in December 2022.
- 2.20 Mainly due to the late receipt of DLUHC New Burdens Administration funding, the budget for the 2022-23 year ended in surplus; the funding was recompense for costs attributed to the delivery of the seven Business Rates reliefs, including the CARF scheme, and the Energy Rebate scheme.

- 2.21 There is cost pressure on the budget for 2023/24 attributable to higher than anticipated pay awards for 2022 and this year, along with inflationary increases in supplier costs. An efficiency target has been set and we are working with our software supplier to implement further automation opportunities that will lead to future efficiencies, although investment through vacancy filling is required to make that happen. Vacancies will be kept under review throughout the year as we seek to achieve the budget whilst managing rising demand due to inflationary pressures on the economy.

### 3 Revised Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register

- 3.1 The 2023 Service Delivery Plan (Appendix B) details the high-level actions that the service must implement to ensure that the varied demands on the service are met. The plan has two areas:

- Service plan – business as usual and innovative activities
- Risk matrix

- 3.2 The Service Delivery Plan seeks to detail actions to achieve the visioning detailed in the Strategic Direction.

- 3.3 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.

- 3.4 We continue to develop online facilities to enable customers to self-serve thereby releasing existing resource to help those unable to self-serve. The development of the online portal, forms and automation will continue to be a priority.

- 3.5 The Customer Strategic Team (the lead officer from each Councils customer services team and ARP officers) is focusing on understanding customer needs with a programme of customer engagement to help inform improvements to online forms and service design.

- 3.6 In 2024-25 we will continue to invest time and resource into developing automated processes to deliver savings and to streamline the customer experience as we seek to maximise the use of secure data share to design our services. Our top priority projects this year include a move to offer PDF attachment e-bills, a move away from emails in favour of a new interactive and intelligent contact us form. This will not only increase automation opportunities and ensure we gather the correct information at the earliest opportunity, but it will also reduce customer contact, increase processing times and free up officer time to concentrate on more complex cases where alternative contact methods are needed or preferred. In addition to this work continues on our moves automation in collaboration with our software supplier and we are introducing the automation of refunds and direct debits alongside moves.

- 3.7 During 2022-23 ARP participated in a pilot organised by the Cabinet Office surrounding the provisions within the Digital Economy Act. The pilot was for the DWP and HMRC to provide benefit and work details to Local Authorities to improve the collection of

Council Tax. The pilot proved to be unsuccessful as the data was delayed in being returned and HMRC did not provide work details without a National Insurance Number or Date of Birth, data which is not permitted to be held for Council Tax purposes. This feedback has been provided to the Cabinet Office. ARP look forward to participating in any future exercise should an agreed approach with HMRC be established.

- 3.8 The ARP strategic team will continue to influence national initiatives such as Universal Credit and Business Rates reform and to influence system design to improve performance. Enhancing data share is key to help inform service redesign.
- 3.9 We will also continue to maintain our flexible workforce. The Council Tax Billing role continues to work 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.
- 3.10 We need to ensure that we have resilience in key roles and so have developed a planning framework to ensure continued service delivery. We continue to work closely with HR who have led on a programme to identify future leaders as well as leadership development, career pathways and use of coaching/mentoring, and professional training/qualifications in leadership.
- 3.11 DWP relaunched their 'Move to UC' programme in 2022 to migrate customers to Universal Credit. Following a successful pilot with five authorities a report was published with the outcomes, leading to improvements for the remainder of the move programme. In the Autumn budget in November 2022, it was announced that plans to continue to move across 2.5 million cases on to UC will continue but the move of a further 1 million ESA customers will be delayed until 2028. The plan to consider movement of Pensioners on to a Housing Element was also delayed from 2025 to 2028-29.
- 3.12 The first tranche of UC migration commenced in July 2023 for all five partners. This involved tax credit only cases (with no Housing Benefit) so will have no impact on our caseloads. Less than 100 households per Authority who were claiming tax credits and in receipt of CTS have been affected and their CTS is automatically updated to reflect the change from tax credits to UC. We are continually reviewing resource requirement and forecast the overall impact of the delay in the full roll out and the next stage of moving more legacy benefits including Housing Benefit across from 2024/25.
- 3.13 The risk register also continues to highlight the need to monitor the impact of the cost of living and inflationary pressures upon customers, service delivery and the budget as well as Universal Credit migration on customers and DWP subsidy, amongst others. 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 recommend to Joint Committee to approve the 2023 Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register at Appendix B.

## **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. A mid year review is considered good practice.

## **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 2022 progress**

**Appendix B – Service Delivery Plan December 2023**



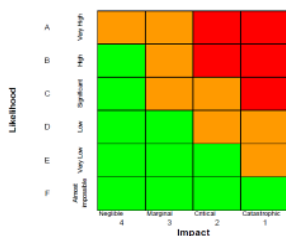
Topic	Link to Strategic aims	Core Purpose	Summary Action Required	Links with other actions and projects	Timeframe	Suppliers/Relationships	Interdependencies	Progress & completion date	Flag
Annual Council Tax and NDR Billing and Benefits letter production	Customer Sustainability	Annual exercise to get bills for new Council tax & NDR year and benefit letters to customers with in-provided time to collect instalments	The production and dispatch of year end bills and benefit letters	Collection and customer service	Commence January 2023 for issue of bills and letters mid-march	External printing contract	Preceptors setting their Council Tax early enough for bills to be produced	Annual billing completed on time for 2023/24	
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 maximised.	Monitor income, expenditure and Subsidy in the light of NDR revenues values, LCES, IC and conversion team	Maximising Taxbase	Annually - April-March initial review against budget on monthly basis and report to C11 officers very early	OB, SMT & Operational Mgmt team, partner Finance teams across APP & WBP's	Finance officer function group will continue to agree information to be provided and frequency	Reported quarterly to IC - Finance team advised of issue identified monthly 2022-2023 actions required to OIB and Members. Inflationary pressures continue to impact the budget.	
Business plan	Colleagues Customers Digital Relationships Sustainability	Review and update the four year business plan to complement the annual service plan.	Joint Committee to agree Annual Review	APP Strategy	Next four year review scheduled for 2025.	OB,IC/Members	OB & IC	Next four year review scheduled for 2025 - have 2 considering existing as a disclaimer workshop - intention is to align the Business Plan to the 4 year electoral cycle from 2024.	
Communication and Digital Strategy	Colleagues Customers Digital Relationships Sustainability	Promote a digital culture throughout the organization through digital champions/ Subject Matter Experts.	Online series of digital platforms to develop frameworks for measuring impact of APP services for the partnership. Work closely with programme, project and Content Officer. APP SMC administrator team to measure accessibility and use of APP Hub.	Engagement digital learning - corporate APP Commissioners Strategy	Sept 23	SMT and APP Corporate Comms	WS IT team	APP Hub is to be continued to be developed within service areas, in particular with the Staff Hours.	
Cost of Living	All	To monitor and manage the impact of Cost of Living demands on the service and staff.	Cost of Living indicators to plan. Monitor impact on collection, performance and resources.	Staff Retention, maximising tax base, performance	Throughout 2023.	Relationships with partners, colleagues and customers	Impact of inflationary pressures on the economy	The impact continues to be monitored throughout the year, with additional data gathered and reporting to capture increased demand. Two additional Government fuel schemes and the Council Tax Support additional funding scheme were delivered this year.	
Customer Journey - Automation of Services	Customer Digital Sustainability	To maximise the number of automated transactions, that are received electronically, to speed up processing times for customers and to provide efficiencies.	Self service forms to be auto-invoiced (a significant percentage of forms are now auto-invoiced) - and auto assessment increased. More automation to be increased from 20% further enhancements to existing automation functions. Feasibility of NDR and Revenue to be developed with Capita.	This project is part of the Customer journey programme and, in particular, links to the online services action on this service plan	Billing and Benefits automation to be expanded by December 2023 and Revenue to be developed by December 2023.	Dependent upon supplier engagement and delivery	A reliance on Capita and the Government Agencies regarding data sharing protocols and providing data and software enabling automation	Achieved 97% automation with LCES change files. More automation increased slightly but have been reliant on software enhancements to increase higher volume and we continue to work closely with our software provider to help develop this further. We are currently using a new menu form which will need into these enhancements. During the year we have also successfully implemented automation for Housing Benefit Assesment process being a pilot and helping to shape the product, and are now automating 95% of direct debit requests substantial work is underway to automate related and credits for Council Tax and a new arrangement manager online form. A new improved contact form was introduced in September and has already proven to be successful in streamlining the customer journey and increasing automation.	
Customer journey - online services	Customer Digital Sustainability	To offer as simple a journey as possible for the customer to access online services and information, where possible to offer 24/7 & 365 services to customers to be able to interact with the Councils which will increase self-service transactions using online forms that lead to automation	To work with Customer Service teams to make links between activities as far as possible. To further enhance the Capita Change of Address (COA) form and collaborate with further develop online forms and integrate into the back office. To further improve the take up of online services and consider alternative options including PDF attachments. Developing program with Capita for Revenue automation.	This project is part of the Customer Experience programme and, in particular, links to the automation action on this service plan	To implement new contract on form during 2023, to reduce customer contact and to move away from email.	Capita provide APP with the portal and online form functionality	A reliance on Capita providing data and software enabling automation	The Customer Strategy Team (made from all LAs and APP) have developed strategy and programme concerning development of the website, online services and the new 'contact us' form. A new Council Tax form has been introduced with links to online forms that we can automate.	
Leadership & Succession Planning	Colleagues Customers Sustainability	Continue to build upon the established strategic approach to succession planning at Management level so that we identify and develop our leaders of the future wherever possible in areas of vital leadership traits.	Continue Leadership and Management development programmes to support succession planning. Continue with mentor working job shadowing, sharing knowledge and skills to build workforce resilience. Continue to include mandatory mental health awareness into leadership and management development programmes. Consider future structure in light of crucial Managers leaving.	Resource Management	January 2023 to December 2023	OB, SMT and Ops mgmt, Assessment Centre providers and L&D teams	Reliance on TNA of operational leadership and identifying future leaders as part of new APP structure. Funding to other qualifications.	We continue to assess critical posts and job profiles, considering business need when vacancies arise.	
Learning & Development Strategy	Colleagues Customers Sustainability	To oversee and ensure corporate L&D meets the strategic, OB, Corporate Induction and service level workforce plans whilst maximising the long 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 strategy. Online series of L&D. Communicate career pathways/career clusters for each job profile. Improve internal and external recruitment offering, job shadowing. Review operational skills needed to upskill or cross-train. BNY Qualifications / Apprenticeships	Succession Planning, L&D Strategy & Operational projects	July 2023 to review strategy.	SMT and Ops mgmt, APP Trainers & Recruiters Offices and L&D teams	Reliance on Ops teams providing TNA data and any changes to Apprentices Levy schemes, with use of funding and providers available.	Strategy reviewed, information from Appraisals and Corporate teams for each partner received to develop schedule of activities.	
Maximising taxbase - NDR	Relationships Sustainability	Perform periodic review of Beliefs and exemptions and exercises to identify hereditaments that are missing or altered	To identify hereditaments not in the lists or, with reduced charge that should be charged more Business Rates.	Budget monitoring and Quality, Audit	BBB review underway. Timetable for review of rebills and exemptions	Planning and APP	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 before the NDR tax base is calculated by OLINC. The outstanding Internal Audit actions were closed or suitable.	
Maximising taxbase Council Tax	Relationships Sustainability	Ensure all relevant properties are included on a Valuation list and to use that list to use that list to understand why they remain empty - campaign to encourage owners to get properties occupied - to maximize income	To identify properties not in the lists or, with reduced charge that should be charged more Council Tax. To maximize use of Total Mobile to improve efficiencies in visits	Budget monitoring and Quality, Audit	Consider continuation of new risk based approach for Empty Home Review. Monthly timetable for review of discounts and exemptions.	Planning, Housing Teams and APP	Data to be shared so that taxbase is maximised and reasons for properties being empty are recorded and reviewed periodically	Throughout the year cases have been reviewed and in addition an annual review was started in the Summer, in collaboration with partner housing teams, to review long term empty properties before the Council Tax base is calculated for OLINC.	
NDR Revolutioin 2023	Relationships Sustainability	To implement the 2023 NDR Revolutioin for the new List.	Maintain two NDR list from Jan to Mar ensuring they are in balance. Make necessary arrangements for conversions to B&B's. Implement any required software enhancements	Maximising Taxbase	January to completion	Valuation Office and Capita	VOA and software supplier	Staff Revolutioin list received December 2022 was reconciled to enable Annual Billing April 2023 to be completed on time.	
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 APP	Continually review the performance management framework available 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	Strategic to all activities	Dec-23	OB, SMT, Function Support Teams	ICT (VO)	Dashboard are in place and shared; there have been expanded throughout the year to include out of being indicators.	
Quality/DOP/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	Strategic to all activities	Annual audit plan agreed with audit partnership/OA	SMT and Ops mgmt, APP Trainers & Recruiters Offices and L&D teams	Link to Partnership audit requirements and advice	Quarterly updates are provided to OIB.	
Resourcing Strategy	Colleagues Customers Sustainability	Continue to review our approaches to recruitment and retention, to make sure that we attract and retain valued employees.	Develop a brand message to include social media presence and approach in engaging prospective employees	Workforce Planning	January 2023 to December 2023	ICT (APP) & APP Corporate Comms	Links with partnerships website remain unchanged and HR SA arrangements	Internal audits to test candidates shared with partner HR teams. Most recent recruitment exercise in collaboration with all partner HR teams with ES leading.	
Team Cohesion	Colleagues Customers Sustainability	Continue to develop an improved understanding of each service area within APP - build team work through projects, cross cutting events and well-being initiatives.	Service area awareness events and cross-selling opportunities through job shadowing	APP Communications Strategy, HR Strategy & Operational Service Plan	Throughout 2023	All Ops mgmt.	Operational teams	A programme is in place for teams to share learn knowledge within their service area to increase cross team understanding. Job shadowing is promoted and encouraged.	
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 Revenue & 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 plan for UC to 2025, although DWP telling customers actually migrate without defined timetable. A pilot 'revolve to UC' project has commenced with gradual roll out to different demographics before a full a roll out program is devised.	DWP	DWP are managing this process, we must understand the implications to us in the information concerning migration timetable become available	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems attends national DWP group and have APP informed as well as Director DWP to address LA issues. All APP Councils have been in Working Age full service (for new claims) since 2022. Whilst Tax Credit cases are migrating to 2024/25 DWP intend to start migrating non-ESA legacy cases during 2024/25 but have not released a plan. Completion date is still intended to be by the end of 2023 when ESA cases scheduled to migrate. No further clarity on plans for Pansourer HR.	
Well-Being Strategy	Colleagues Customers Sustainability	To continue to pulse survey and support staff through well-being initiatives, with good physical, mental and financial health info on the APP Hub, CAP's, OIB and benefits available.	Promote critical events and good practice to support W&B at work. Promote CAP and benefits packages (i.e. Finance & Non-finance benefits). Staff Forum Annual survey and / or other pulse surveys to include APP culture and eating an area which prohibit a healthy and positive workplace culture	Health & Well-being Strategy	Throughout the year	External Well-being providers, HRSP, OB, SMT and Ops mgmt. All Staff ACC/Relocations/Conversion/Division Well-Being Champions & MHP's	Working to support well-being initiatives and suitable facilities to delivery them	A significant amount of material and workbooks continue to be available to staff and kept under review. The Staff Forum play an active part in initiatives.	
Work Force Strategy	Colleagues Customers Sustainability	To provide operational HR metrics to manage and monitor people performance, budgeted headcount and to be proactive in identifying operational needs in line with agile working	Review APP and operational workforce organisational structure & service review to support enhancement of APP key projects, agile/flexible working and customer service level agreements	Operational resource strategy Operational project timetable - Customer service level agreements Staffing Budget	Dec-23	OB, SMT & Operational Mgmt team Financial team across APP HRSP's	Organisational structure and establishment kept under review along with workforce planning. LA's policies across partnership with regard to workforce planning strategies	Functions are reviewed on an operational basis and to meet budget requirements. Being determined due to the cost of living to taken into account in vacancy filling.	

Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Description	Consequences	Opportunities	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Current Controls	Mitigating Actions	Date added	Date Updated	Curr. Score	Tgt Score	Trend
	A partner or partners leave the partnership	A reduction in partners could occur for a number of reasons in the future such as Local Govt reorganisation	Possible loss of key staff and TUPE implications - loss of resilience - also leading to increased cost of service and reduction in VFM	Develop trading opportunities to carry out some functions for other Councils	Head of ARP	Head of ARP	Partnership agreement includes notice period for cessation of partnership.	Opportunities for trading to be considered and business cases developed	01/04/2014	02/11/2023	E3	E3	Reached target score
	Annual Council Tax and NDR Billing and Benefits letter production	External printer does not issue daily or annual bills and letters with legal timescale	Bills may have first instalment date later than 01/04/2023 which could result in loss or delay in collection of Council Tax and Business Rates	The contract will continue to offer significant savings to the Councils	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	2015/16 to 2022/23 annual billing process successful and daily bills and letters designed and active with current printers	The process was carried out successfully for the 2023/24 year, lessons learnt have been gathered.	01/04/2014	02/11/2023	E2	E2	Reached target score
	Business continuity	Loss of key staff due to welfare reform and potential reduction in required resource	Inability to meet statutory requirements and to deliver services according to performance targets	With the expanded partnership we can ensure that skills are more widely held	Head of ARP and Heads of Service	Head of ARP	Staff are encouraged to take IRRV exams and NVQs and management qualifications and internal structures allow for career progression - reasons for staff leaving are being monitored to identify whether this becomes a reason for staff leaving	Transformation programme continues to identify opportunities for training and staff development, we continue to monitor reasons for staff leaving	01/04/2014	02/11/2023	C4	C4	Reached target score
	Business continuity	Loss of premises, loss of power/telecoms and/or loss of systems - emphasis must be placed on loss of systems in relation to cyber attack	Difficulty in finding some members of staff access to systems or loss of systems	Shared services mean that we operate from 4 centres and work can be carried out from 6 sites as well as home working	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Head of ARP	Systems mirrored at 2 sites enabling work to continue. All staff can work securely from home. West Suffolk IT update systems with new patches and protection regularly and systems are PSN compliant	Access to mirrored servers in Midhall regularly tested. Business Continuity plan agreed with partners - full testing carried out and lessons learned applied. West Suffolk IT have worked on specific mitigation of cyber attack which reduces risk.	01/04/2014	02/11/2023	E2	E2	Reached target score
	Cost of Living	Increased demand due to economic impact of inflationary pressures, could impact enforcement income	Increased demand upon the service and reduction in collection income.	To continue to engage with DWP & DLUHC at a national level as an early warning system and to shape implications.	SMT	SMT	Dependant upon Government management of rising cost of living pressures	To use overtime and agency where demand means that there is a risk to customer service standards, income and subsidy.	07/11/2022	02/11/2023	D3	D3	Reached target score
	Fraud and Error	Risk of Fraud entering the system if retained fraud team are not kept. LCRIS fraud and Council Tax fraud will not be investigated by the DWP - related services have to be self funding	If no service is retained by the partnership then Fraud will not be investigated by the DWP - related services have to be self funding	Funding to resource interventions in cases currently receiving benefits and to retain joint funding from County and Police	Head of NNDR, Recovery & Enforcement	Head of NNDR, Recovery & Enforcement	Team retained to investigate LCRIS, Tenancy, Char. disclosure investigations and NNDR since 01/09/15	Both Norfolk & Suffolk County Councils agreed funding for Fraud team till 31/03/24. Cambridgeshire County Council have agreed to fund a fraud hub from April 2023. Quarterly reporting continues to County Councils to demonstrate the impact of the Fraud team.	11/12/2014	02/11/2023	C2	C2	Reached target score
	Housing benefits subsidy shortfall	Overpayments that are a local authority's fault can be claimed back as income if the value is less than 0.48% of the overall HB expenditure. Extrapolation to External Audit teams can also take Councils over the threshold	If LA error is not kept below this level of the overall HB expenditure. Extrapolation to External Audit teams can also take Councils over the threshold	To ensure that processes and procedures are correct and are followed and to ensure that backlogs do not effect LA error and that error is kept to a minimum so that Audit teams do not extrapolate subsidy overpayments	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Rigorous procedures and high level of professional training. We have a quality assurance programme designed to test accuracy levels and look for and at areas of weakness. All councils were kept below LA error levels for audited claims from 2013/14 to 2020/21. 2021/22 audits have not been completed due to nationwide external audit resource issue.	To continue to use overtime and agency where vacancies mean that there is a risk to subsidy. To continue to apply OIA to areas identified in audits and random testing to identify other areas of risk error	11/12/2014	02/11/2023	D3	D3	Reached target score
	Income from retained Business rates and Council Tax	Income from NDR and Council Tax do not meet budgeted amount. In particular, due to impact of pandemic on businesses and individuals and potential appeals against rateable value	The income available to the Councils is insufficient to meet needs	Income may exceed projected budget	Head of NNDR, Recovery & Enforcement	Head of NNDR, Recovery & Enforcement	Monitoring will continue for 2022/23, Revaluation 2023, appeals adds risk for life of 2017 list.	The NNDR and Taxbase calculations include provision for bad debt and appeals returned for 2022/23 reported to partners, CIB & JC.	01/04/2014	02/11/2023	D2	D2	Reached target score
	Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Unemployment levels rise to a level that make the scheme unaffordable - this risk has risen due to cost of living factors	Customers are asked to pay more than they can afford and arrears accrue	Increased income from Council Tax could be achieved	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Current scheme has set payment levels at or below Attachment of Benefit levels for all but one Council which gives realistic opportunity to recover	Annual review for 2023/24 schemes completed, one partner introduced 100% support scheme for 2023/24 year. Review of 2024/25 schemes underway.	01/04/2014	02/11/2023	D3	D3	Reached target score
	NDR Revaluation	Risk the Valuer Office Agency might delay releasing property data in time for annual billing	Inability to meet annual billing deadlines to collect NDR from April 2023.	To continue to engage with VOA & DLUHC at a national level as an early warning system and to shape implications.	Head of NNDR, Recovery & Enforcement	Head of ARP	Liaison with VOA, DLUHC & IRRV for updates.	The Team reconciled new revaluation lists in time for 2023/24 annual billing.	07.11.2022	02/11/2023	D3	D3	Reached target score
	Universal Credit implementation	Uncertainty over future funding from DWP and DLUHC. Affect upon customers currently receiving HB and resultant impact on customer teams	UC has been rolled out to new claimants with 'Move to UC' pilot underway - the impact on customers and social Landlords will be significant if the migration takes	To continue to work with the DWP and Stakeholders to jointly offer customers assistance in making the transition	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	DWP recovered migration in 2023/24 with Tax Credits cases migrating but yet to publish a timetable for further migration during 2024/25. We will continue to monitor the position. Latest completion date end of 2024 for ESA cases, plans for migration of Pensioner HB deferred.	Continue to assess the impact of claims moving to the DWP - modelling can take place to understand how ARP will be impacted when the timetable for all Councils is issued.	11/12/2014	02/11/2023	D3	D3	Reached target score

### Risk management process and toolkit

#### Step 3 - Prioritisation using the matrix below

- How likely is this risk?
- How big an impact will this risk have?



#### Steps 4 and 5 - Mitigation and monitoring

Mitigation	Monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess current actions and controls adequate or more needed?</li> <li>Within your Service Plans - develop specific SMART actions that will either reduce the likelihood of the risks or mitigate the impact?</li> <li>What should the score be after you have taken action?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the Risk Register with colleagues (for example, as part of your Service Plan) at least quarterly?</li> <li>RISRS changed?</li> <li>How risks?</li> <li>Need to report to executive RISK?</li> <li>Risks ranking changed?</li> </ul>

Definitions	Impact	Example Descriptions
Very High > 95%	Negligible	Financial impact below £10k, no effect on partnership / service provision or reputation, minor delays to a project, limited physical consequences
High 55% - 95%	Marginal	£10k - £200k, service slightly reduced, broken timetables, objectives of one team not met, minor adverse local media, impact on an external inspection (3)
Significant 15% - 55%	Critical	£200k - £500k, service suspended short term / reduced, loss of delivery times, service objectives not met, industrial action, adverse national publicity, service taken over temporarily
Low 5% - 15%	Catastrophic	£500k +, partnership / service suspended long term, statutory duties not delivered, major loss of budget, major impact on service objectives not met, major staff loss, reputational to affect staff, determined for survival. Service taken over permanently
Very Low 1% - 5%		
Almost impossible 0% - 1%		

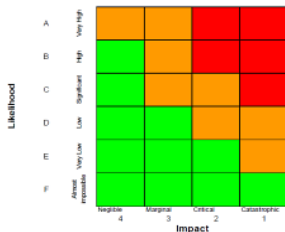
Topic	Link to Strategic aims	Core Purpose	Summary Action Required	Links with other actions and projects	Timeframe	Suppliers/Relationships	Interdependencies	Progress & completion date	Flag
Annual Council Tax and NDR Billing and Benefits letter production	Customer Sustainability	Annual exercise to get bills for new Council tax & NDR year and benefit letters to customers with no arrears/delinquency	The production and dispatch of year end bills and benefit letters	Collection and customer service	Commence January 2024 for issue of bills and letters mid-month	External mailing Contract	Exception writing their Council Tax only enough for bills to be produced		
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 liability is managed.	Monitor income, expenditure and liability in the light of NDRS retention scheme, LCR, UC and concession issues	Monitoring Tables	Annually - April/March initial review against budget on monthly basis and report to CIL officers any variance	CIL, SMT & Operational Mgmt. teams, former Finance teams across AMP & H&B's	Finance officer function group will continue to agree information to be provided and frequency		
Business plan	Collagen Customers Digital Relationships Sustainability	Review and update the four year business plan to complement the annual service plan.	Joint Committee to agree Annual Review	AMP Strategy	Outcomes of new IC Strategy workshop in December will inform ongoing Business Plan to the year review cycle.	CM/IC/Member	CIL & IC		
Communication and Digital Strategy	Collagen Customers Digital Relationships Sustainability	Promote a digital culture throughout the organisation through digital channels/subject Matter Experts.	Utilise variety of digital platforms to develop framework for meeting impact of AMP services for the partnership. Work closely with programme, project and Centre Officer AMP+UK to ensure customer needs to accessibility and use of AMP.	Implement digital learning - corporate. AMP Communications Strategy	Throughout 2024	SMT and AMP Corporate Centre	MS IT Teams		
Cost of Living	All	To monitor and manage the impact of Cost of Living demands on the service and staff.	Cost of Living indicators in place. Monitor impact on collection, performance and resources.	Staff Retention, maximising low base performance	Throughout 2024	Relationship with partners, colleagues and customers.	Impact of inflationary pressures on the economy		
Customer Journey - Automation of Services	Customer Digital Sustainability	To maximise the number of automated transactions, that are revenue discretionary, to speed up processing times for customers and to provide efficiencies	SAP service forms to be auto indexed (80% of forms are now auto indexed) and auto assessment created. These submissions to be increased from 20% further enhancements to existing automation services. This opportunities to automate referrals and credits, arrangements and to extend the use of the central forms to include email traffic and revenue automation. Functionality in NDR and Recovery to be developed with Capita.	This project is part of the Customer Journey programme and, in particular, links to the automation action on the service plan	Billing and Benefits automation to be expanded throughout 2024	Dependence upon supplier engagement and delivery	A reliance on Capita and the Government Agencies agreeing data sharing protocols and providing data and software enabling automation		
Customer Journey - online services	Customer Digital Sustainability	To offer as simple a journey as possible for the customer by online services and information. Where possible to offer 24 x 7 x 365 services to customers to be able to interact with the Councils which will increase self-service transactions using online forms that lead to automation	To work with Customer Service teams to make links between websites as far as possible. To further enhance the Capita Change of Address (COA) form and collaborate with further development forms and integration into the back office. To further improve the take up of online services and consider alternative options including PDF attachments, streaming program with Capita for Revenue automation.	Further introduce online forms that we can automate - throughout 2024	Capita provide AMP with the partial and online form functionality	A reliance on Capita - providing data and software enabling automation			
Leadership & Succession Planning	Collagen Customers Sustainability	Continue to build upon the established strategic approach to succession planning at Management level so that we identify and develop our leaders of the future wherever possible in areas of virtual leadership traits.	Continual Leadership and Management development programme to support succession planning. Continue with focus on working, coaching, mentoring and skills to build awareness resilience. Continue to include mandatory leadership assessment for leadership and management development programmes. Consider future structure in light of current Managers leaving.	Succession Management	January 2024 to December 2025	CIL, SMT and Ops mgmt. Assessment Centre providers L&D teams	Reliance on TM of operational leadership and identifying future leaders as part of new AMP structure. Funding to deliver activities		
Learning & Development Strategy	Collagen Customers Sustainability	To oversee and ensure corporate L&D meets the strategic L&D. Corporate induction and service level excellence plans which maximising the Levy contributions from the partnership assets, in order to upskill the workforce and promote them within	Annual review of operational TNA & skills gap priorities and provide direction to address key CO objectives with L&D partner. Utilise Levy as much as possible. Communicate career opportunities to staff for each job profile. Regular internal and external recruitment offering job shadowing. Review opportunities needed to assist or overcome their Qualifications/Apprenticeships	Succession Planning, L&D strategy and Operational projects	July 2024 to review strategy.	SMT and Ops mgmt. AMP Trainers, Resilience Officers and L&D teams	Reliance of Ops teams providing TNA data and any changes to Apprentices Levy schemes, with use of funding and providers available.		
Maintaining taxbase - NDR	Relationships Sustainability	Perform periodic review of Rates and exemptions and continue to identify developments that are arising or altered	To identify developments not in the bill or with reduced charge that should be changed more business like	Budget monitoring and Quality, Audit	Ongoing review of rates and exemptions	Funding and AMP	Data to be shared so that taxbase is maximised and reasons for properties being empty are recorded and reviewed periodically		
Maintaining taxbase Council Tax	Relationships Sustainability	Ensure all relevant properties are included on a Valuation list and to bring properties back to its use and to understand why they remain empty - campaign to encourage owners to get properties occupied - to maximise income	To identify properties not in the bill or with reduced charge that should be changed more business like. To monitor use of Total billable to improve efficiencies in use	Budget monitoring and Quality, Audit	Monthly approach with partners to review Empty Homes. Monthly invoices for review of account and exemptions	Funding, Housing Teams and AMP	Data to be shared so that taxbase is maximised and reasons for properties being empty are recorded and reviewed periodically		
Performance management	Collagen 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 AMP	Continually review the performance management framework available to ensure a clear line of sight between planning, measuring, monitoring and reporting performance and support SMT in performing their role through ensuring effective performance reporting arrangements are in place	Integral to all activities	Throughout 2024 to adjust to operational requirements.	CIL, SMT, Function Support Teams	ICT SWQ		
Quality/CCP's/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 Plus 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. AMP Trainers & Resilience Officers and L&D teams	Link to Partnership audit requirements and action		
Recruiting Strategy	Collagen Customers Sustainability	Continual to review our approaches to recruitment and retention, to make sure that we attract and retain valued employees.	Develop a brand strategy to include social media presence and approach to engaging prospective employees.	Workforce Planning	January 2024 to December 2024	ICT (AMP) Centre	AMP Corporate	Links with partnership website remain unchanged and HR SLA management	
Team Culture	Collagen Customers Relationships Sustainability	Continual to develop an improved understanding of each service area within AMP, build team work through projects like cutting waste and well-being initiatives.	Service area business events and cross-siding opportunities through job shadowing	AMP Communications Strategy Operational Service Plans	HR Strategy	HR Ops mgmt.	Operational teams		
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 Revenue & Benefits central provision in the light of the introduction of Universal Credit and other future welfare reform initiatives (regularly communicated by Capita)	Workforce Strategy and Learning and Development Strategy	Initial - current through migration plan for Oct. 2025, review SLA outcomes in 2026, with Personnel HR defined. ODP being customer centricity through. Full roll out programme not available.	ODP	ODP are managing the process, we must understand the implications to us in the information concerning migration readiness become available		
Well-Being Strategy	Collagen Customers Sustainability	To continue to pulse survey and support staff through well-being initiatives, with good physical, mental and social health info on the AMP PULS, CAPS, OI and benefits available.	Provide virtual events and good practice to support HR&D at being initiatives, with good physical, mental and social health info on the AMP PULS, CAPS, OI and benefits available.	Health & Well-Being Strategy	Throughout the year	External Well-being providers HR&P, CIL SMT and Ops mgmt. All AMP A&S (public/private)/Councils/Unions Well-being Champions & Ambassadors	Working to support well-being initiatives and suitable facilities for delivery from		
Work force Strategy	Collagen Customers Sustainability	To provide operational HR needs to manage and motivate people performance, budgeted headcount and be pro-active in identifying operational needs to line with agile working.	Review AMP operational workforce organisational structure & service reviews to support achievement of AMP key projects, with/without working and customer service level agreements.	Operational resource strategies (resilience - Customer service level agreements Staffing Budget)	Ongoing/Throughout 2024.	CIL, SMT & Operational Mgmt. team Financial team across AMP HR&P's	Operational structure and establishment level under review along with workforce planning. LA's policies across partnership with regard to workforce planning strategies		

Ref.	Risk Title	Risk Description	Consequences	Opportunities	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Current Controls	Mitigating Actions	Date added	Date Updated	Curr. Score	Tgt Score	Trend
	A partner or partners leave the partnership	A reduction in partners could occur for a number of reasons in the future such as Local Govt reorganisation	Possible loss of key staff and TUPE implications - loss of resilience - also leading to increased cost of service and reduction in VFM	Develop trading opportunities to carry out some functions for other Councils	Head of ARP	Head of ARP	Partnering agreement includes notice period for cessation of partnership.	Opportunities for trading to be considered and business cases developed	01/04/2014		E3	E3	Reached target score
	Annual Council Tax and NDR Billing and Benefits letter production	External printer does not issue daily or annual bills and letters within legal timescale	Bills may have first instalment date later than 01/04/2023 which could result in loss or delay in collection of Council Tax and Business Rates	The contract will continue to offer significant savings to the Councils	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	2015/16 to 2023/24 annual billing process successful and daily bills and letters designed and active with current printers	The process was carried out successfully last year and testing will ensure that all documents are sent with correct information and on time	01/04/2014		E2	E2	Reached target score
	Business continuity	Loss of key staff due to welfare reform and potential reduction in required resource	Inability to meet statutory requirements and to deliver services according to performance targets	With the expanded partnership we can ensure that skills are more widely held	Head of ARP and Heads of Service	Head of ARP	Staff are encouraged to take BRVR exams and NVQs and management qualifications and internal structures allow for career progression - reasons for staff leaving are being monitored to identify whether this becomes a reason for staff leaving	Transformation programme has identified opportunities for training and staff development - monitoring of reasons for staff leaving shows.	01/04/2014		C4	C4	Reached target score
	Business continuity	Loss of premises, loss of power/telecoms and/or loss of systems - emphasis must be placed on loss of systems in relation to cyber attack	Difficulty in finding some members of staff access to systems or, loss of systems	Shared services mean that we operate from 4 centres and work can be carried out from 6 sites as well as home working.	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Head of ARP	Systems mirrored at 2 sites enabling work to continue. All staff can work securely from home. West Suffolk IT update systems with new patches and protection regularly and systems are PSN compliant	Access to mirrored servers in Midland regularly tested. Business Continuity plan agreed with partners - full testing carried out and lessons learned applied. West Suffolk IT have worked on specific mitigation of cyber attack which reduces risk	01/04/2014		E2	E2	Reached target score
	Cost of Living	Increased demand due to economic impact of inflationary pressures, could impact enforcement income.	Increased demand upon the service and reduction in collection/income.	To continue to engage with DWP & DLUHC at a national level as well as an early warning system and to shape implications.	SMT	SMT	Dependant upon Government management of rising cost of living pressures	To use overtime and agency where demand means that there is a risk to customer service standards, income and subsidy.	07.11.2022		D3	D3	Inflation and economic factors could impact throughout the year.
	Fraud and Error	Risk of Fraud entering the system if reduced trust from partners, due to impact of fraud and Council Tax Fraud will not be investigated by the DWP - retained service has to be self funding	If no service is retained by the partnership then Fraud will not be identified in cases.	Funding to resource interventions in cases currently receiving benefit and to obtain joint funding from County and Police	Head of NNDR, Recovery & Enforcement	Head of NNDR, Recovery & Enforcement	Team retained to investigate LCTRS, Tenancy, Claim, discount/exemptions and NNDR since 01/09/15	Both Norfolk & Cambridgeshire County Councils have agreed funding for Fraud team to 31/03/25. Suffolk County Council funding to be confirmed. Quarterly reporting to County Councils to demonstrate the impact of the Fraud team.	11/12/2014		C2	C2	Reached target score
	Housing benefit subsidy shortfall	Overpayments that are a local authority's fault can be claimed back as income if the value is less than 0.48% of the overall HB expenditure. Extrapolation of External Audit teams can also take Councils over the threshold	If LA error is not kept below this level it can have a significant impact on councils	To ensure that processes and procedures are correct and are followed and to ensure that backlogs do not affect LA error and that error is kept to a minimum so that Audit do not have cause to extrapolate subsidy overpayments	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Rigorous procedures and high level of professional training. We have a quality assurance programme designed to test accuracy levels and look for and at areas of weakness. All councils were kept below LA error since 2013/14 to 2020/21 due to robust challenge of Audit findings and extensive work to identify drill down to avoid extrapolation having an adverse effect.	To continue to use overtime and agency where vacancies mean that there is a risk to subsidy. To continue to apply CA to areas identified in audits and random testing to identify other areas of risk / error	11/12/2014		D3	D3	Reached target score
	Income from retained Business rates and Council Tax	Income from NDR and Council Tax do not meet budgeted amount. In particular, due to impact of pandemic on businesses and individuals and potential appeals against rateable value	The income available to the Councils is insufficient to meet needs	Income may exceed projected budget	Head of NNDR, Recovery & Enforcement	Head of NNDR, Recovery & Enforcement	Monitoring will continue. Following the 2023 revaluation, appeals adds risk for the 2017/18.	The NNDR1 and Taxbase calculations include provision for bad debt and appeals on target to meet spending requirements	01/04/2014		D2	D2	Reached target score
	Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Unemployment levels rise to a level that make the scheme unaffordable - this risk has risen due to cost of living factors	Customers are asked to pay more than they can afford and arrears accrue	Increased income from Council Tax could be achieved	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Current scheme has set payment levels at or below Attachment of Benefit levels for all but one Council which gives realistic opportunity to recover	Annual review proposals submitted, one partner consulting the audit for that 2024/25 year scheme proposing to maintain the maximum 100% scheme implemented in 2023/24. The four remaining partners intend to retain the current scheme for 2024/25	01/04/2014		D1	D3	Reached target score
	Universal Credit implementation	Uncertainty over future funding from DWP and DLUHC. Impact upon customers currently receiving HB and resultant impact on customer teams	UC has been rolled out to new districts with Move to UC pilot underway. The impact on customers and social landlords will be enormous if the migration fails	To continue to work with the DWP and Stakeholders to justify offer customers assistance in making the transition.	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	Head of Billing, Benefits & Systems	DWP recovered migration in 2022 with tax credit cases migrating in 2023/25. HB expected in 2024/25, awaiting DWP enablement. We will continue to monitor the position. Latest completion date end of 2028 with Pensioner HB to then be considered.	Assess the impact of claims moving to the DWP - modelling can take place to understand how ARP will be impacted when the timetable for all councils is issued.	11/12/2014		D3	D3	Reached target score, subject to DWP plans.

### Risk management process and toolkit

#### Step 3 - Prioritisation using the matrix below

- How likely is this risk?
- How big an impact will this risk have?



#### Steps 4 and 5 - Mitigation and monitoring

Mitigation	Monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess current actions and controls</li> <li>Adequate or more needed</li> <li>Outline your Service Plans - develop specific SMART actions that will either reduce the likelihood of the risks or minimise the impact.</li> <li>What should the score be after you have taken action?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the Risk Register with colleagues (for example, as part of your Service Plan) at least quarterly</li> <li>Risks changed?</li> <li>New risks?</li> <li>Need to report of escalable risks?</li> <li>Risks ranking changed?</li> </ul>

Definitions	Example Descriptions
<b>Likelihood</b> Very High: > 90% High: 50% - 90% Significant: 15% - 55% Low: 5% - 15% Very Low: 1% - 5% Almost impossible: 0% - 1%	<b>Impact</b> Negligible: Financial impact below £10k, no effect on partnership / service provision or reputation, need delay to a project, limited physical consequences Marginal: £10k - £500k, service slightly reduced, broken down/fixed, objectives of one team not met, minor adverse local media impact on an external project (s) Critical: £500k - £500k, service suspended short term / reduced, loss of licence/brands, service objectives not met, industrial action, adverse national publicity, service taken over temporarily Catastrophic: £500k +, partnership service suspended long term, statutory duties not delivered, major loss of revenue, major reputational damage, significant staff loss, mass staff leaving/unable to attract staff, consequences for award service taken over permanently