

A G E N D A

ANGLIA REVENUES & BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE & TIME Thursday, 17th September, 2015 at 10.00 am

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

For the attention of:

Cllr S Allen, Waveney District Council
Mr D Ambrose Smith, East Cambridgeshire District Council (Chairman)
Cllr M Barnard, Waveney District Council
Mr J Clark, Fenland District Council
Mr S. Edwards, Forest Heath District Council
Ms L Every, East Cambridgeshire District Council
Mr G Holdcroft, Suffolk Coastal District Council
Mr I Houlder, St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Mrs E. M. Jolly, Breckland Council
Mr R Kerry, Suffolk Coastal District Council
Mrs S J Mildmay-White, St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Mr C Seaton, Fenland District Council (Vice-Chairman)
Mr M. A. Wassell, Breckland Council
Mr J Waters, Forest Heath District Council

PART A **ITEMS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

1. **MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2015.

2. **APOLOGIES**

To receive apologies for absence.

Page(s)
Herewith

1 - 10

Member Services
Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke,
Dereham Norfolk, NR19 1EE

Date: Thursday, 10 September 2015

Contact: Helen McAleer. Senior Democratic Services Officer (01362) 656381
Email: helen.mcaleer@breckland.gov.uk

	<u>Page(s)</u> <u>herewith</u>
3. <u>URGENT BUSINESS</u>	
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. <u>DECLARATIONS</u>	
5. <u>PERFORMANCE REPORT (STANDING ITEM)</u>	
Reports of the Operational Board:	
a) <u>Operational Performance</u>	11 - 14
b) <u>Balanced Scorecard</u>	15 - 52
c) <u>Financial Performance</u>	53
6. <u>MOVING TO A SINGLE MEMBER JOINT COMMITTEE</u>	54 - 61
Report of the Operational Improvement Board.	
7. <u>WELFARE REFORM UPDATE (STANDING ITEM)</u>	
Verbal update from the Strategic Manager (Benefits).	
8. <u>ENFORCEMENT AGENCY UPDATE</u>	
Verbal update from the Strategic Manager (Revenues).	
9. <u>FORTHCOMING ISSUES (STANDING ITEM)</u>	
To note any items.	
10. <u>NEXT MEETING</u>	
To note the arrangements for the next meeting to be held on 17 December 2015 in the Level 5 Meeting Room, Breckland House, St Nicholas Street, Thetford IP24 1BT.	

BRECKLAND COUNCIL
FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL
EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL
FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL
WAVENEY DISTRICT COUNCIL
SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday, 10 June 2015 at 2.00 pm in the
Level 5 Meeting Room, Breckland House, St Nicholas Street, Thetford IP24
1BT

PRESENT

Cllr M Barnard	Mr R Kerry
Mr J Clark	Mrs S J Mildmay-White
Mr S. Edwards	Mr C Seaton
Ms L Every	Mr J Waters
Mr G Holdcroft	Mr C G Carter (Substitute Member)
Mr I Houlder	Ms J Huffer (Substitute Member)
Mrs E. M. Jolly	

In Attendance

Jo Andrews	- Strategic Manager (Revenues)
Rob Bridge	- Corporate Director (Fenland)
Arthur Charvonia	- Strategic Director
Paul Corney	- Head of ARP
Linda Grinnell	- Head of Finance
Julie Kennealy	- Executive Director (Place) (S151 Officer)
Helen McAleer	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Adrian Mills	- Strategic Manager (Benefits)
Stuart Philpot	- Strategic Manager (Support Services) ARP
Richard Quayle	- Director (Support Services)
Liz Watts	- Director

15/15 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN (AGENDA ITEM 1)

For the benefit of the new Members the Head of ARP explained the proceedings. He also advised that according to the Joint Committee Agreement the Treasurer should be appointed annually.

After being duly proposed and seconded and with no other nominations being made it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Ambrose-Smith be appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

After being duly proposed and seconded and with no other nominations being made it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Seaton be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

Action By

In the absence of the Chairman the Vice-Chairman took the Chair.

Councillor Seaton in the Chair.

16/15 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

The Head of ARP updated Members on the actions arising from the Minutes.

He confirmed that due to statutory requirements no charge was passed on to the other preceptors for the collection of Council Tax but there was a charge for the collection of Business Rates. However, the other preceptors could be asked to contribute by providing funding for Single Person Discount checks for example.

With regard to the performance statistics he confirmed that the reduction in Business Rates collection was due to the change to payment over 12 months rather than ten months.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17/15 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 3)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen, Ambrose-Smith and Wassell.

Councillor Carter was present as Substitute for Councillor Wassell and Councillor Huffer was present as Substitute for Councillor Ambrose-Smith.

18/15 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

The Chairman agreed to take the appointment of Treasurer to the Joint Committee as an item of Urgent Business.

Since the Partnership had started the Chief Financial Officer of Breckland Council had assumed that role, but according to the ARP Agreement the Treasurer should be appointed for the year at each annual meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chief Financial Officer of Breckland Council be re-appointed as Treasurer for the ensuing year.

It was further **RESOLVED** that a vote of thanks to the Treasurer for all his work for the Joint Committee be recorded.

19/15 DECLARATIONS (AGENDA ITEM 5)

No declarations were made.

20/15 FRAUD (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The Strategic Manager (Benefits) explained the background of the new Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) for the benefit of new Members. The change would affect all Partners except Waveney and Suffolk Coastal Councils (as their staff transferred in May). On 1 September all existing fraud staff in scope would transfer to the DWP under TUPE like arrangements. The details were still under discussion.

At the previous Joint Committee meeting it had been proposed that the ARP would retain a fraud team to investigate non-Benefit fraud, ie Local Council Tax Support abuse, single person discount fraud, etc. Officers had been tasked with contacting the County Councils to see if they would be willing to contribute funding as main benefactors of that service and the results had been mixed:

- Cambridgeshire - reluctant to fund
- Suffolk - still in discussions
- Norfolk – meeting to be held the next day

In the meantime, approval had been given by three of the Partner Councils and was awaited from the other two.

The selection process was being discussed with staff and the HR department. In the interim fraud work was ongoing, mainly focussed on completing outstanding investigations, so the performance figures for completed investigations would be high.

There were no questions from Members.

21/15 2014-15 YEAR END OUT-TURN AND APPROVAL OF THE SMALL BODIES RETURN (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Executive Director Place (BDC) presented the report which sought approval of the accounts by the Joint Committee before the end of June.

It was the last year that the Joint Committee would be required to produce the accounts although they would still receive the information to ensure that the Partnership continued to comply with Governance arrangements.

It was noted at Appendix A that the Partnership had achieved all targets and savings. At the March meeting it had been agreed to retain the £110,000 year end surplus. Additional Grant income included money from the FERIS (the Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme).

The report included the Annual Governance Statement and the Internal Audit Report which had awarded the Partnership a Good Assurance opinion which was the highest possible standard.

Action By

The outgoing Chairman was required to sign off the accounts if approved by the Joint Committee.

Councillor Every offered congratulations on the report and asked how the control weaknesses (at point 2.5) would be addressed.

The Head of ARP advised that at the last meeting the Joint Committee had agreed to review the performance indicators in September and the Service Plan would also be reviewed.

It was clarified that apart from the FERIS grant money which was £454,000 there was £200,000 of new burden grants which had been retained and carried forward some of which would be used for the new website subject to Members' approval. Funding had also been received for Real Time Information from the Government.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the accounting statement for the year ended 31 March 2015 be approved;
- 2) the annual governance statement be approved;
- 3) the 2014-15 out-turn position be noted; and
- 4) the internal audit report and review of governance arrangements be noted.

The outgoing Chairman, Councillor Jolly signed the accounts.

22/15 PERFORMANCE REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The Head of ARP presented the report and noted that there was one Breckland indicator which was not green due to a large refund for Charitable Relief. Otherwise all targets had been met.

He drew attention to the customer survey results which showed that only 22.44% of the people using on-line services found it easy, but that 72% of people would prefer to use electronic methods for communication.

Councillor Every sought clarification re benchmarking as Members were keen to benchmark against other Authorities. She asked if the targets were challenging enough as the indicators were all green and whether performance was comparable across the different areas.

The Head of ARP said that CIPFA had been asked to provide benchmarking information but had wanted to charge the Partnership as seven separate authorities. Negotiations were continuing and it was hoped that more detailed information would be available for the next meeting.

The Executive Director Place (BDC) said that she had met with the IRRV Chief Executive who told her that the IRRV were looking to

Action By

provide a benchmarking service for shared services. She would get them to contact the Head of ARP to discuss the requirements.

The Head of ARP pointed out that some targets were linked to an individual Council's budget and were therefore set to reflect their ability to meet that target.

The report was noted.

23/15 ARP WEBSITE (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The Strategic Manager (Support Services) ARP presented the report which sought approval to redesign and update the ARP website.

West Suffolk had recently launched their icon-based website which provided direct access for users to the correct payment engine. It was recommended that the new ARP website should be based on that model. The new website would also be geared for use on mobile devices and tablets and have a consistent and easy to read style. The refurbishment of the website would mean that the current on-going costs for updates would cease.

Councillor Every noted that there were no operational costs in the report and asked what they were likely to be. She also asked if Officers were expecting the new website to replace the face to face approach as vulnerable people would still need that facility.

The Strategic Manager (Support Services) ARP acknowledged that there would also be a need for face to face contact but said that the aim was for the majority of people to use on-line services.

Councillor Jolly thought it was crucial to provide a fast-track access to the ARP website from each individual Council's website as that was where people would generally start their on-line experience.

The Head of ARP agreed and said that approach would be recommended. It would also be important to measure the economies that would be realised. He asked Members to approve an additional recommendation to approve the overall cost of the website refurbishment.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the engagement of an external design agency, at a cost in the order of £4,800 to design the style and layout of the new Anglia Revenues Partnership website with an ARP intranet and Bailiff website be approved;
- 2) the full re-write of all existing content should be conducted by an external, well-qualified resource at a cost of £8,000 in order to provide a consistent, modern and easy-to-read interface with the public and an intranet for staff information;
- 3) Commonsport, in use by West Suffolk, be adopted as the content

- management system for the new Anglia Revenues website; and
4) the £40,300 overall cost of the refurbishment be approved.

24/15 ARP RISK REGISTER (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The Head of ARP presented the report which would be considered by the Joint Committee every six months. Additional risks had been added in response to a request from Councillor Ambrose-Smith and from the Operational Improvement Board (OIB).

Councillor Every pointed out that on page 89 cells C2 and C3 should be amber not green.

Councillor Jolly was concerned that there was a risk that the implementation of Universal Credit would cause a large reduction in the amount of work done by the Partnership. She suggested that Members should look strategically at the way the Partnership operated and what other things it might be able to do in the future.

The Head of ARP acknowledged that the Partnership would no longer be responsible for Housing Benefit for working age claimants but did not think there would be such a large reduction in work as Universal Credit did not include Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) (previously Council Tax Benefit) and so for all authorities there would be a very small reduction in the number of claimants. He explained that in almost all cases where housing benefit was claimed there was also a LCTRS element to the claim. Furthermore Universal Credit would not include pensioners who represented more than 50% of most Councils caseloads.

He thought that it was the reduction in funding that needed to be prepared for. There was uncertainty about what the impact of Universal Credit would be and over what period and it was therefore difficult to determine defined strategies. However, the OIB were preparing scenarios to meet different potential outcomes.

The Director SEBC & FHDC said that the OIB were carrying out soft marketing of Councils within one and a half hours driving time; mapping out their workload. The possible impact on them was enormous. At the right time Members would be asked to have discussions with them about the ARP doing work for them such as Council Tax and Business Rates collection.

The Head of ARP pointed out that the ARP had new initiatives such as the bailiff service and the fraud work.

The Corporate Director (Fenland) said that it was expected that there would be about 20% less money initially.

The Executive Director Place (BDC) thought that different Partners would be affected differently by the financial impact and whereas some could weather it for a time others might find a 20% loss catastrophic

Action By

and might need to change their ways of operating. It would be important to consider all opportunities and the APR could be a shared vehicle for whatever Members wanted it to be.

Councillor Jolly suggested that there should be a Standing Item on the agenda to receive an update on the options being considered by the OIB. The Chairman agreed that would be a good idea.

The report was noted.

25/15 BAILIFF UPDATE (AGENDA ITEM 11)

The Head of ARP presented the report which updated Members on the new Enforcement Agency.

The Manager and four staff had commenced work and would be receiving training over the coming weeks. All aspects of the new system were working well. The first cases would be handled in mid-end July and all Members would be sent confirmation of that before any letters were sent out.

Councillor Jolly wanted assurance that the service would not be looked upon as a money-making tool and that customers that could not pay would be treated carefully.

The Head of ARP assured her that control would be exercised. The first priority was to ensure that the team were well trained. Vulnerabilities and causes of non-payment would be identified and handled carefully.

The Corporate Director (Fenland) pointed out that having the Enforcement Agency would allow the Partnership to offer the service to other Councils and create income.

The report was noted.

26/15 ARP TRADING COMPANY RESTRUCTURE (AGENDA ITEM 12)

The Executive Director Place (BDC) presented the report and explained the background to the Trading Company which had been set up by the two founding Partners, Breckland and Forest Heath and they were currently the only shareholders.

The proposal was for all Partners to own a share in the Company. There were a number of options to consider and Members were asked to delegate authority to the Operational Improvement Board (OIB) to agree the best mechanisms.

Councillor Every was not prepared to agree to the proposal without more information and the opportunity to discuss it further.

Councillor Barnard asked if it was the most tax efficient way forward.

Action By

The Executive Director Place (BDC) explained that Partners were not being asked to sign up to a specific business case. The aim was to be in a position to do that when the Partnership was ready to trade. At that point a proposal and business case would be presented from the OIB. Members were being asked to invest in a vehicle which would allow the Partnership to trade in the most tax efficient way.

Councillor Every did not feel that the proposal reflected that explanation and requested an amendment to the recommendation.

Councillor Mildmay-White did not have a problem with the existing recommendation. The proposals had been discussed before. Members would not be agreeing to do business they would just be setting up a trading vehicle. She was also happy for Officers to represent each Council at shareholder meetings.

Councillor Jolly echoed those sentiments, as long as the articles reflected that the Company was wholly owned by the Partnership she would be comfortable with that and with Officers doing the day to day work.

Councillor Kerry agreed.

Councillor Mildmay-White noted that the finance for the Company would be in the form of a loan from the retained profits and therefore approval was not required from each Council.

Councillor Edwards agreed that the Partnership needed to be in the position to do business when the opportunity arose. He would also be content for his Director to represent Forest Heath at the shareholder meetings.

The Chairman thought that the proposal would provide a framework for opportunities in the future.

Councillor Every wanted to take the information back to East Cambs Council for consideration. She suggested a deferral, but other Members did not support that.

Councillor Mildmay-White proposed an amendment to the recommendations to replace 'all Councils' with 'six Councils'. Councillor Waters seconded that proposal and it was agreed.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) **RECOMMEND** to Breckland and Forest Heath Councils that amendments be made to the company constitution and shareholder agreement to allow the expansion of the ARP Trading Company Limited to include all full partner councils of the ARP Joint Committee with the exception of East Cambridgeshire;

Action By

- (2) **RECOMMEND** to all partner Councils that East Cambridgeshire be admitted as a partner of the Company under the same conditions as the six Councils* if a request to do so is received before the next Joint Committee;
- (3) **RECOMMEND** to six Councils* that the investment in the ARP Trading Company Limited in accordance with paragraph 1.5 of the report be approved;
- (4) **RECOMMEND** to six Councils* that loans of £10,000 each to the trading company to cover initial working capital requirements (with approval to amend the Council's Treasury Management policies if required) be approved;
- (5) Delegate to the Operational Improvement Board authority to revise the company constitution and shareholder agreement; and
- (6) **RECOMMEND** to six Councils* that a person or persons be nominated to represent the authority's interests at shareholder meetings.

**The six Councils being Breckland District Council, Forest Heath District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Fenland District Council, Waveney District Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council.*

27/15 WELFARE REFORM (AGENDA ITEM 13)

The Strategic Manager (Benefits) ARP informed Members that the Partnership was live with single, working age claimants for Universal Credit, except for East Cambs and Fenland which would go live later in the year.

The numbers presenting were very low and there had been no significant impact on workflow.

The Government had made a manifesto pledge to reduce benefits and cap them at £23,000 per year. More would be known after the July budget. Work was being undertaken to assess how many customers would be affected.

In the 2014/15 year the benefit cap and spare room subsidy had affected between 19 and 45 customers. The amount of their reduction had varied from £50 to £215 per week.

Customers affected by the reduction in single room subsidy were being offered help if they had medical needs either to stay in their current accommodation or with finding alternative accommodation. The Partnership had a grant from the Government to help with that. A holistic approach was adopted, working with customers to review their finances, help them budget better or renegotiate their rent. That was all part of the 'transition to work' scheme to help make them ready for work.

Action By

About 45% of the Discretionary Housing Grants (DHG) had been spent for 2014/15. There was a substantial reduction in DHG and so care was being taken over how it was spent. There would be more challenges ahead. If the Partnership overspent its budget from the DWP it would impact on the General Fund. The OIB was looking at budgets.

The Head of ARP advised that with Universal Credit although the Housing element had moved to the DWP the Partnership still managed hardship payments.

No funding had been provided by the DWP for software but a reduction in charges had been negotiated with the provider.

The report was noted.

28/15 FORTHCOMING ISSUES (AGENDA ITEM 14)

Councillor Clark suggested that it was time to ask the Officers to do more work on the proposal to move to one Member one vote for each of the Partner authorities.

Councillor Mildmay-White agreed and suggested that there should be one Member and two Substitutes.

Councillor Jolly asked Officers to provide some historical perspective on how the current arrangements had come to be to provide a clear view for the future.

The Chairman asked the OIB to examine the history and explore the possibility of moving to one Member one vote with two Substitutes.

29/15 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 15)

It was noted that neither of the Fenland Members would be able to attend the next meeting. It was suggested that the meeting could be held in the morning instead.

Subject to confirmation of availability the next meeting would therefore be held at 10.00am on Thursday 17 September 2015 in the Level 5 Meeting Room, Breckland House, Thetford.

The meeting closed at 3.32 pm

CHAIRMAN

**Performance Report
as at 31st July 2015**

Benefit news

Regular liaison meetings have continued throughout this period with Housing Associations; this forum provides opportunities to understand impacts for shared customers to enable delivery of the best possible service. Welfare Reform continues to be a key topic.

On 14 May the ARP hosted a Universal Credit Social landlords meeting along with the DWP, for those areas currently live with UC.

On 20 May we attended a Suffolk Benefit Forum – a wide ranging group of Government agency and customer representatives.

On the 21 May ARP hosted a Stakeholders meeting with a wide range of partners to discuss and update each other on welfare issues affecting our customers, whilst learning from each other to help achieve better outcomes.

On the 12 June the ARP attended an Association meeting of the IRRV, where current issues and performance is shared with Council's throughout East Anglia.

On 18 June we attended a Waveney Welfare Rights Group meeting – Employment Support Allowance, particularly DWP contract for medical services and Personal Independence Payments continue to be key topics.

At the end of July ARP facilitated and hosted further Social landlord meetings in all three Counties partnership with the DWP UC teams.

The Initiative with Jobcentre Plus, now they are located in the Mildenhall office, continues to work well; CAB are also located in the Mildenhall office, providing increased opportunity for good customer service, including debt advice.

Ongoing contact has been held with the Financial Inclusion team within Suffolk County Council, where for example, supported accommodation and the claim process for DHPs, especially for vulnerable persons, is discussed and opportunities to support our customers are identified.

The ARP Fraud team successfully investigated and prosecuted a claimant resulting in a six month suspended sentence for failing to declare earnings, which resulted in his tenancy being deemed non-commercial and therefore not eligible for Housing Benefit. This related to a period over four years causing overpaid Benefit totalling £20,838.

Universal Credit is now live for new claims from single working age customers living in the Breckland, Forest Heath, St Edmundsbury, Suffolk Coastal & Waveney areas – the DWP have now announced East Cambridgeshire and Fenland Council will go live early next year; implementation meetings with DWP are planned. So far, the actual number of affected customers has been lower than projected by the DWP.

On-line claims continue to increase. In this financial year to 31st July there have been 1634 new benefit claim forms received on line and comments on the use of the on line forms is very positive.

The ARP had successfully made a bid to the DWP on behalf of 139 LA sites to develop software to help identify fraud and error cases; following a period of testing the software went live nationally in July and is starting to deliver results.

Benefits performance continues to meet profiled targets and is on course to achieve year end targets.

It is noted performance differs for all Councils; Waveney in particular, Suffolk Coastal to a lesser extent, have not performed as well, having been affected by staff losses and issues with remote access to their dip & workflow system. This has prevented us utilising the resilience of wider teams within the partnership; the EDMS project will resolve this issue.

Council Tax News

The further recovery team have collected £131,303.63 against further recovery actions during the financial year to date, which includes 7.56% (£22,601.71) of the cases raised in 2015/16. An approach has been made to Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire County Councils for a contribution towards the cost of these officers.

The Council Tax team have been working on joining up processes across the whole partnership with regular staff liaison meetings and some processes have now been aligned.

A review of all empty homes is being carried out to help maximise the new homes bonus. The review started in June with review forms being sent to all long term empty homes, reminders followed in July. Single person discount reviews will now be carried out in-house using data matching software and reviews via The National Fraud Initiative will continue.

The impact of moving to 12 instalments has been reviewed to assess the impact on collection profiles across the partnership and is included in the profiling for the 2015-16 financial year. These profiles will be kept under review.

The new Enforcement team has been established and the first cases have been uploaded into the Enforcement system. The first Notice of Enforcement letters were issued in the week commencing 20 July 2015 and by the 31 July 2015 the team had collected £18,911.19

NDR News

The impact of moving to 12 instalments has been reviewed to assess the impact on collection profiles across the partnership and is included in the profiling for the 2015-16 financial year. These profiles will be kept under review.

The team have started to align processes across all partners.

We shall continue the review of criteria for discretionary rate relief to harmonise across the wider partnership.

HBOP News

Having made real progress on the collection of overpayments with two additional members of staff, the Operational Improvement Board have agreed to extend the 2 temporary contracts.

The new processes designed by the team have helped the team maintain collection levels however; the identification of cases suitable for each recovery option will pick up pace again and we will be able to maintain collection and be ready for the additional cases expected from the HMRC data matching exercise.

Performance Targets

The recommended performance targets for the 2015-16 year will remain the same over the course of the full year, but each quarter will be profiled to reflect the expected peaks of work. The quarterly profiling includes the anticipated peak of work following the Annual Billing process and the potential impact of a number of forthcoming changes and projects, including a conversion of the Document Imaging Systems.

Projects

Letter and Bill Designs.

Work on the redesign of letters and bills for Council Tax and Benefits has continued using the Pro-Print software and redesigning a shared look and feel of the letters and bills consistent across all seven partners in readiness for annual Billing 2016-17.

Learning and support

One of the Revenues and Benefits Training officers has been facilitating regular workshops with the six members of staff to help with their study toward the Level 3 IRRV professional qualification. Examinations for some of the group were undertaken in July 2015.

Website

There were 589 total responses received, of which 299, or 56.03%, state they have contacted us within the last 6 months at the time of completing the survey.

- 61.66% of contact has been in respect of Council Tax enquiries
- 53.01% of customers used email or online forms to contact us
- 69.04% of the people surveyed felt that the information given by a member of staff was clear or very clear.
- 22.81% of the people who contacted us online found the process straightforward or easy
- 70.38% of those completing the survey said that they would be most likely to contact us using email or online forms in the future

Work is now underway with the creation of a new ARP website, which will be easier to navigate for the customer and be primarily a transactional website. The new website will enable straight forward and efficient payments of Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit overpayments. Availability of a test Website is scheduled to be available during September and a staff focus group will be working with customers in developing the functionality and usability of the site.

The website design will incorporate the promotion of the Victoria Forms library for accessing electronic forms for both Revenues and Benefits, which clearly has scope for expansion of their use with nearly three quarters of survey respondents saying they would be most likely to contact us using email or online forms in the future.

Imaging System (EDMS)

The Waveney District Council procurement section has lead with the process for the selection of a single imaging system from the two current suppliers to the seven partners of the ARP, Northgate (Information@work) and CIVICA. The decision on which of the suppliers will be awarded the ongoing contract will be made by the end of September.

Operational staff have been involved in the evaluation of each of the systems and will be scoring from a user point of view.



Corporate Balanced Scorecard - Dashboard
As at end July 2015

Customer	Financial
Customer Satisfaction Channel Shift	Collection Budget Management
Internal Process	Learning and Growth
Collection Fraud	Performance Management

Customer	Financial
Customer Satisfaction Channel Shift	Collection Budget Management
Internal Process	Learning and Growth
Collection Fraud	Performance Management

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Collection Fraud	Performance Management

Customer	Financial
Customer Satisfaction Channel Shift	Collection Budget Management
Internal Process	Learning and Growth
Collection Fraud	Performance Management

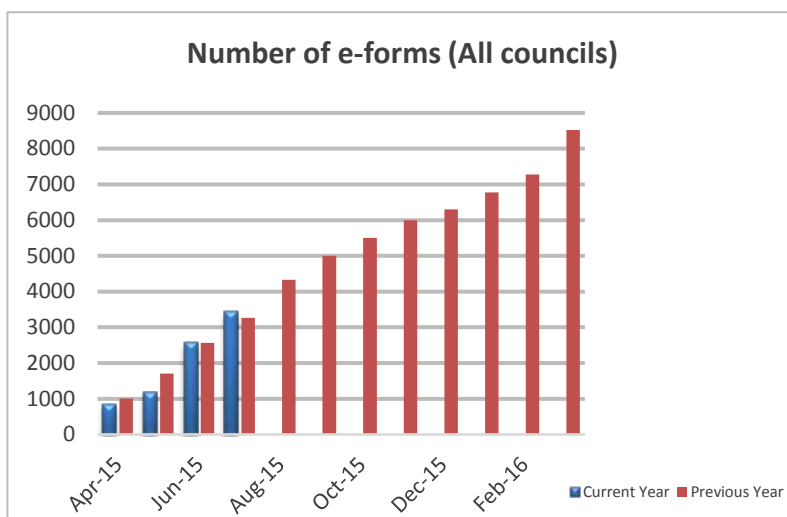
Customer	Financial
Customer Satisfaction Channel Shift	Collection Budget Management
Internal Process	Learning and Growth
Collection Fraud	Performance Management

Internal Process Dimension Fraud



This shows the % of successful investigations carried out by the Fraud Team. A successful benefit investigation is defined by a reduction in HB or CTRS. Due to the transfer of new HB investigations to the Single Fraud Investigation Service, performance reflects the Counter Fraud team concentrating on concluding existing cases

Customer Dimension Channel Shift



This shows the number of E-Forms (Victoria Forms) received by ARP for both Benefits and Council Tax. Although this area has not previously been targeted, our aim is to continuously increase this form of communication by making the process user friendly and achieve an upward trend.

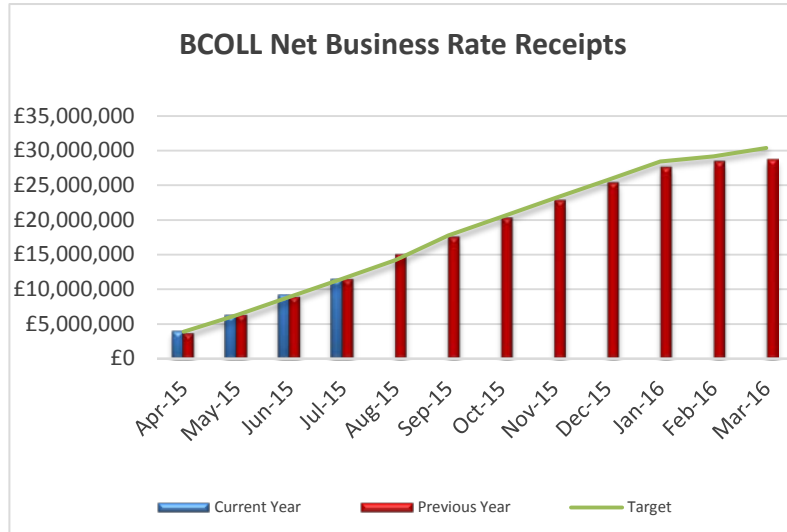
Summary Breckland Scorecard as at end July 2015



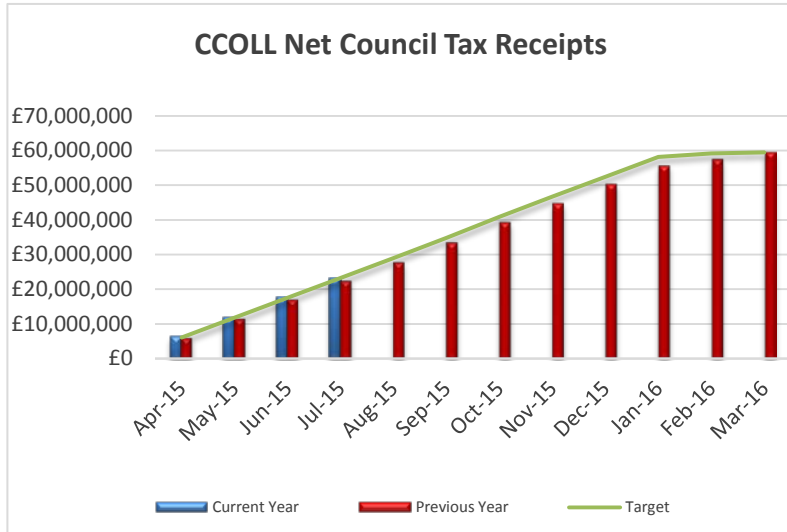
			2015			2014
Heading		Example Indicator	This month	Last month	YTD	Final
Financial	Collection	Collection amounts				
	Budget Management	Expenditure				
Customer	Customer Satisfaction	Survey results				
	Channel Shift	Number of e-citizens / e-claims / e-forms				
	Days to process	New claims				
		Changes				
Internal Processes	Collection	Collection amounts				
	Fraud	% Successful investigations				
Learning and Growth	Performance Management	One to Ones completed within timeframe				
		%Appraisals completed within timeframe				



Breckland Finance Dimension Collection Amounts



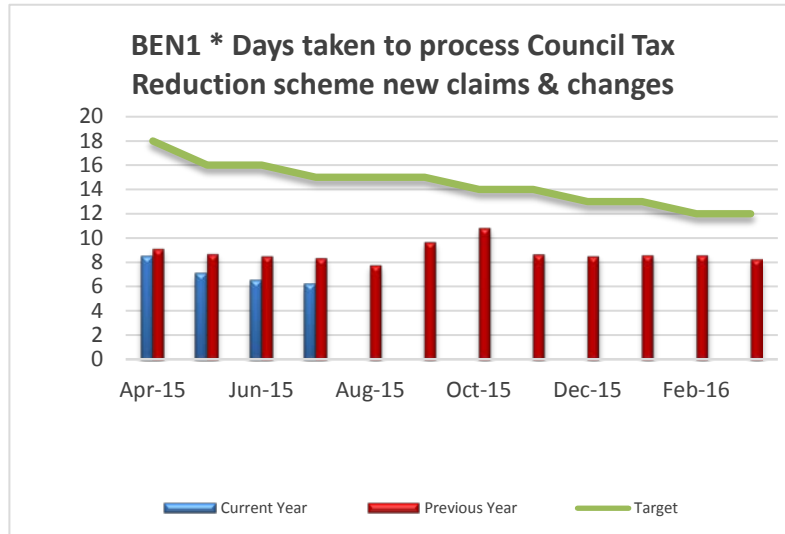
This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.



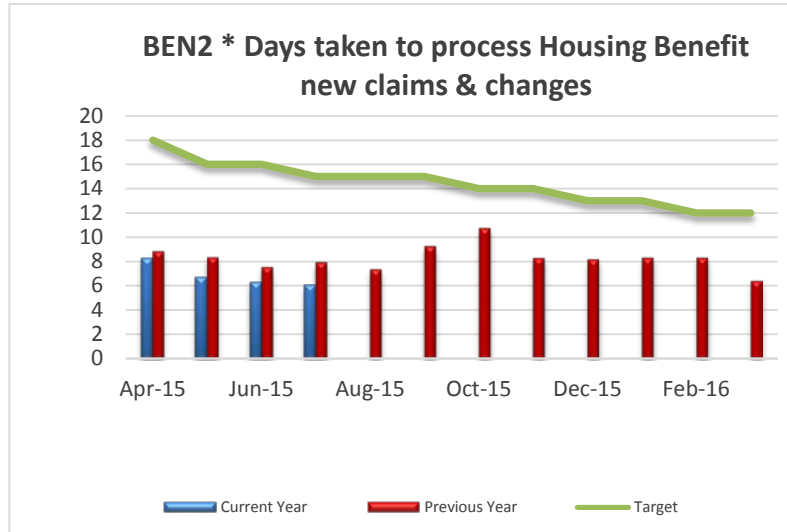
This shows the amount of Council Tax required to be collected within the financial year against actual collection.



Breckland Customer Dimension Benefits- Average Days to Process



This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Council Tax Reduction scheme claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year



This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Housing Benefit claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year.

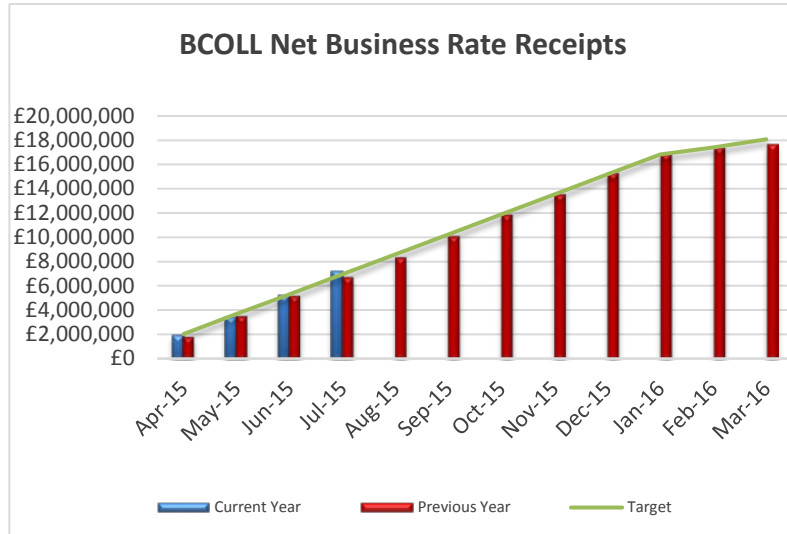
Summary ECDC Scorecard as at end July 2015



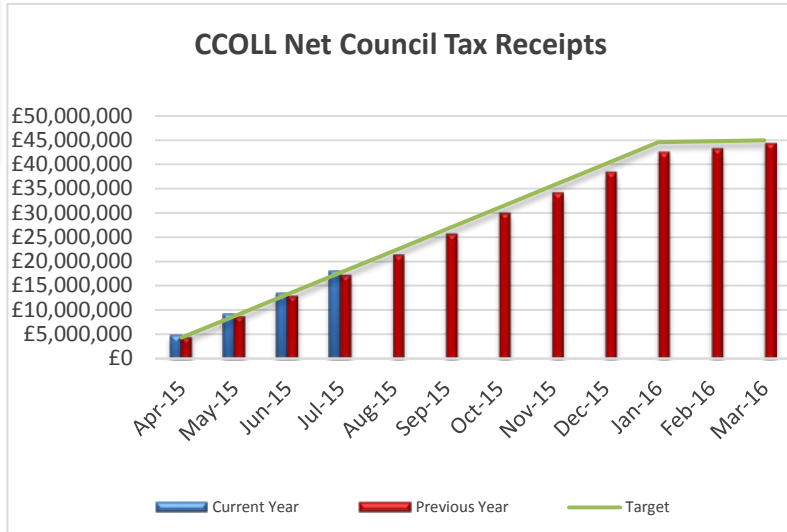
		2015			2014		
		Heading	Example Indicator	This month	Last month	YTD	Final
Financial	Collection	Collection amounts					
	Budget Management	Expenditure					
Customer	Customer Satisfaction	Survey results					
	Channel Shift	Number of e-citizens / e-claims / e-forms					
	Days to process	New claims					
		Changes					
Internal Process	Collection	Collection amounts					
	Fraud	% Successful investigations					
Learning and Growth	Performance Management	One to Ones completed within timeframe					
		%Appraisals completed within timeframe					



ECDC Finance Dimension Collection Amounts



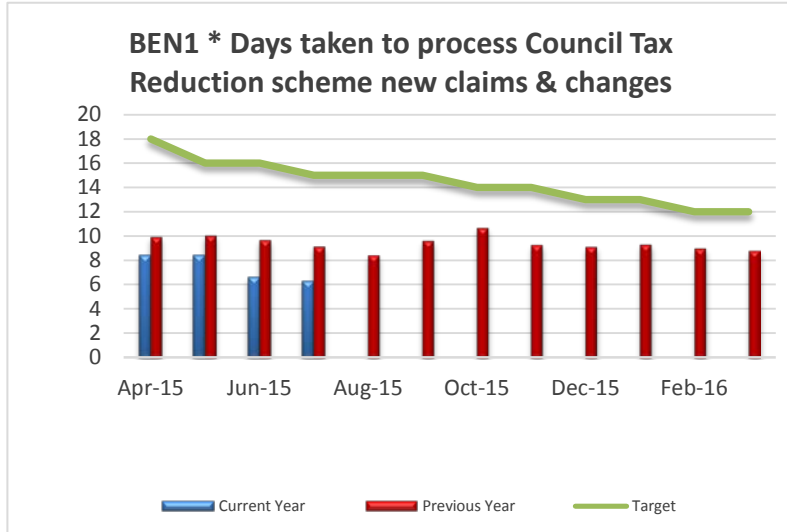
This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.



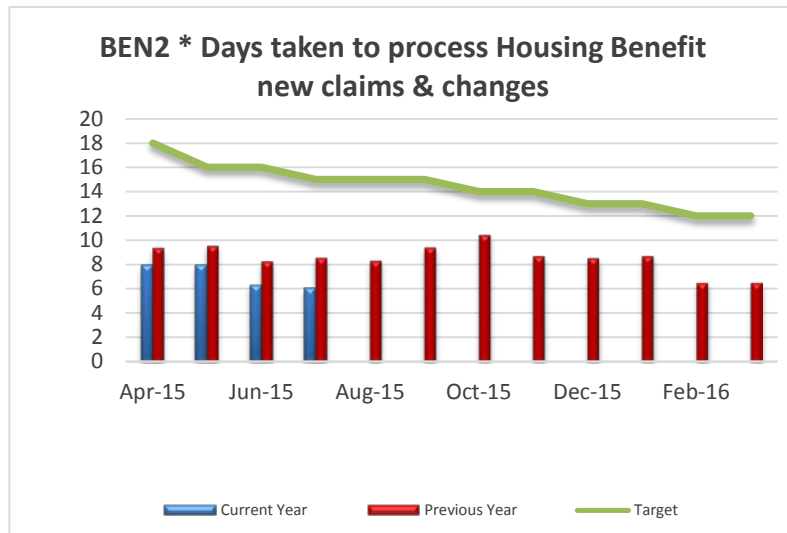
This shows the amount of Council Tax required to be collected within the financial year against actual collection.



ECDC Customer Dimension Benefits- Average Days to process



This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Council Tax Reduction scheme claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year.



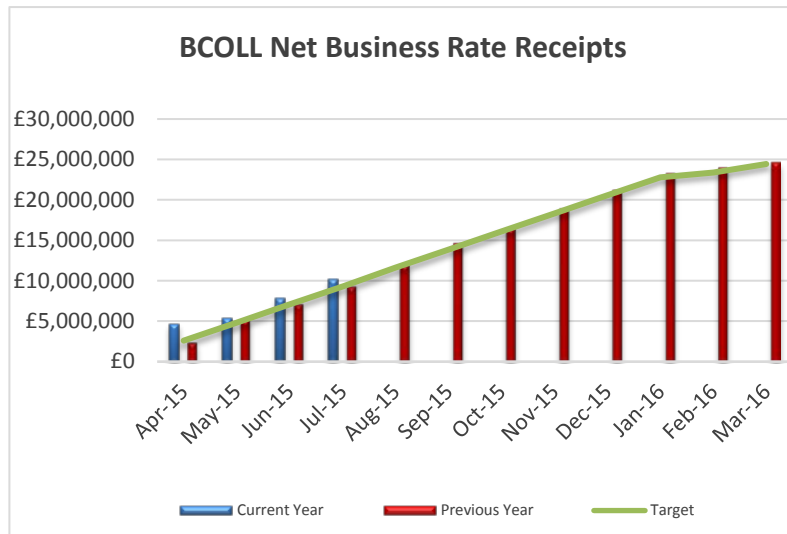
This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Housing Benefit claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year

Summary Fenland Scorecard as at end July 2015

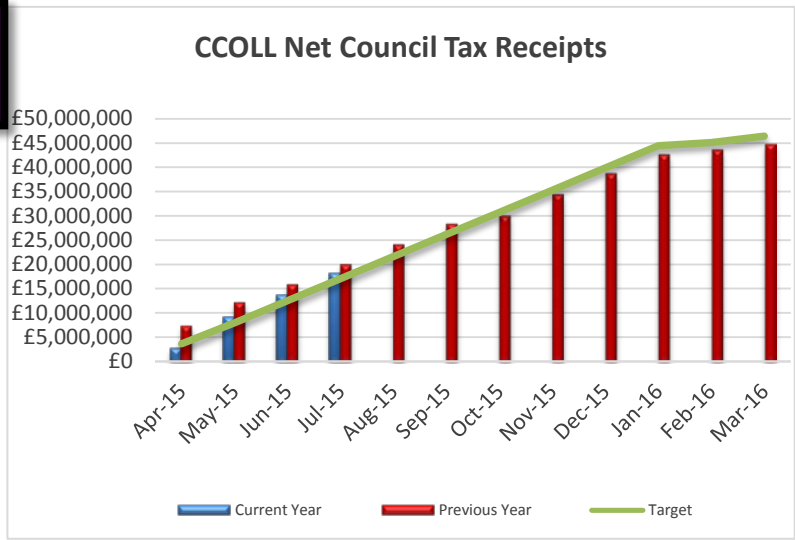


			2015			2014
Heading		Example Indicator	This month	Last month	YTD	Final
Financial	Collection	Collection amounts				
	Budget Management	Expenditure				
Customer	Customer Satisfaction	Survey results				
	Channel Shift	Number of e-citizens / e-claims / e-forms				
	Days to process	New claims				
		Changes				
Internal Process	Collection	Collection amounts				
	Fraud	% Successful investigations				
Learning and Growth	Performance Management	One to Ones completed within timeframe				
		%Appraisals completed within timeframe				

Fenland Finance Dimension Collection Amounts

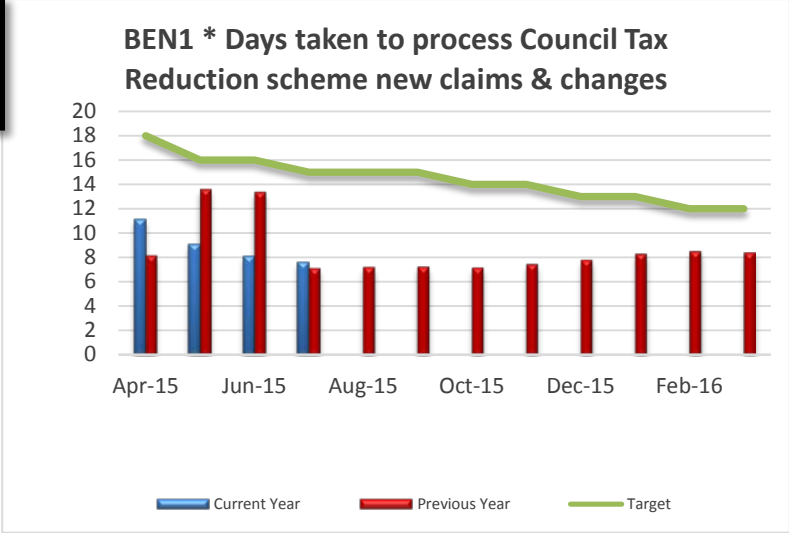


This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.

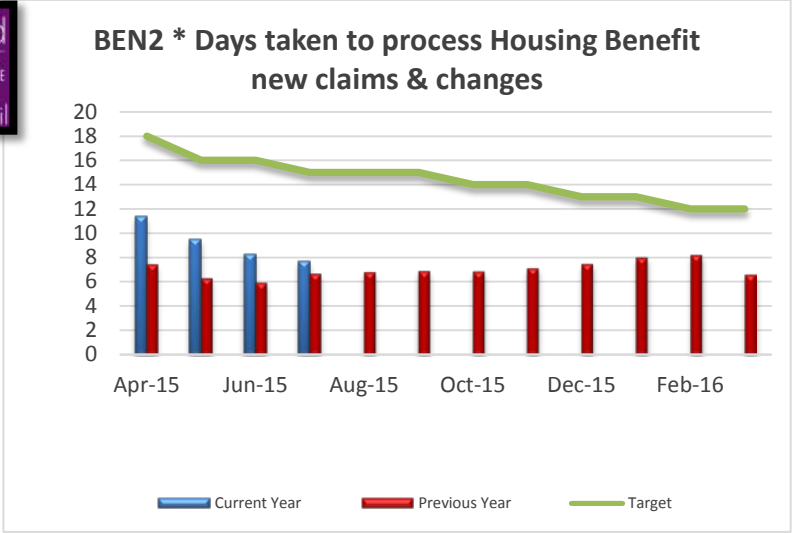


This shows the amount of Council Tax required to be collected within the financial year against actual collection.
 We are on target for the current year. Previous years receipts included direct debit payments for the 1st of the month.

Fenland Customer Dimension
Benefits- Average Days to process



This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Council Tax Reduction scheme claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year



This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Housing Benefit claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year

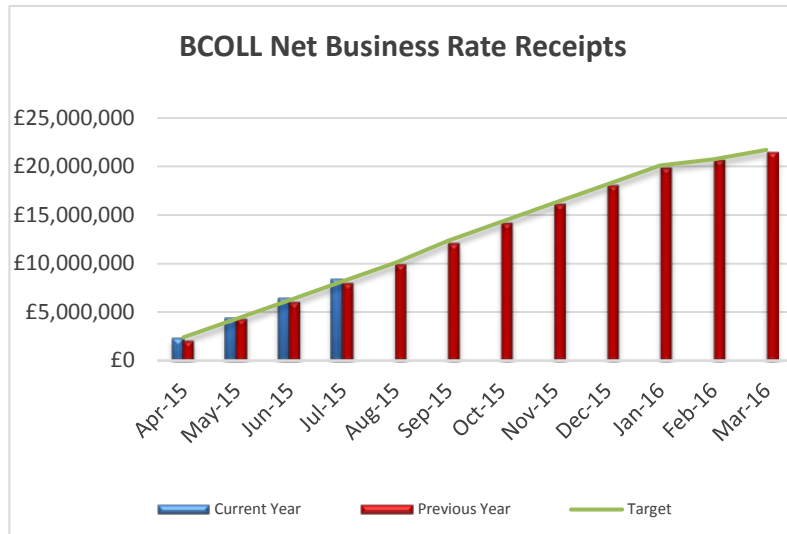
Summary Forest Heath Scorecard as at end July 2015



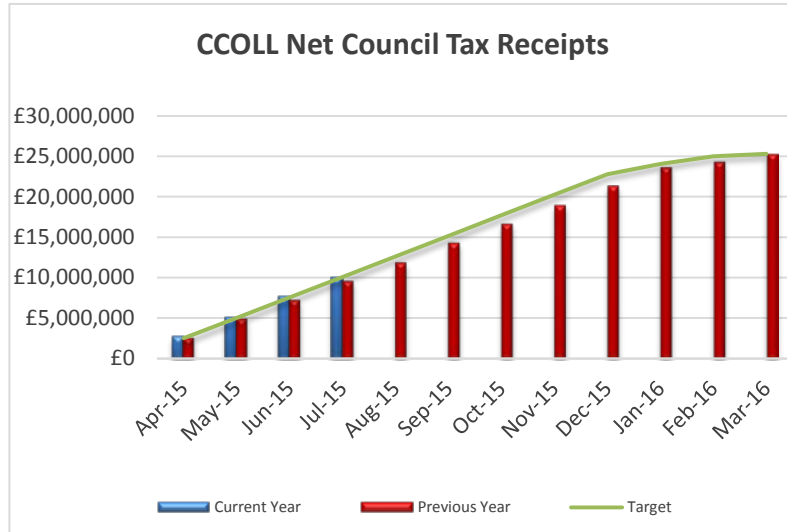
			2015			2014
Heading		Example Indicator	This month	Last month	YTD	Final
Financial	Collection	Collection amounts				
	Budget Management	Expenditure				
Customer	Customer Satisfaction	Survey results				
	Channel Shift	Number of e-citizens / e-claims / e-forms				
	Days to process	New claims				
		Changes				
Internal Process	Collection	Collection amounts				
	Fraud	% Successful investigations				
Learning and Growth	Performance Management	One to Ones completed within timeframe				
		%Appraisals completed within timeframe				



Forest Heath Finance Dimension Collection Amounts



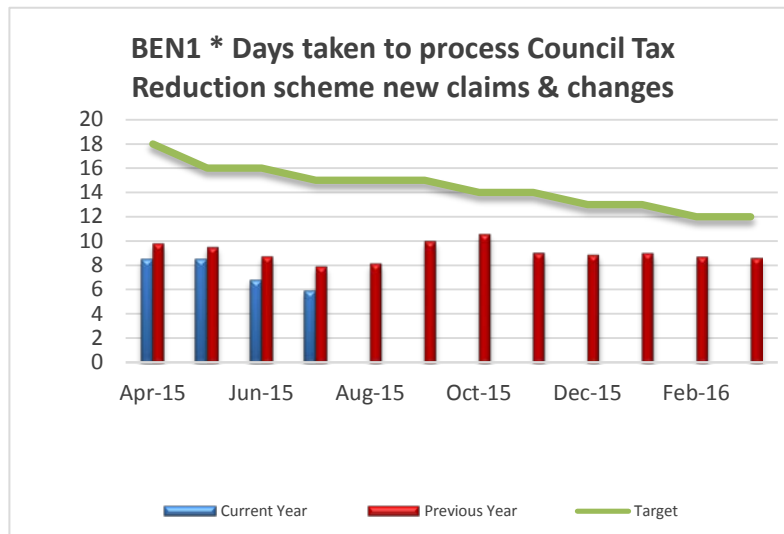
This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.



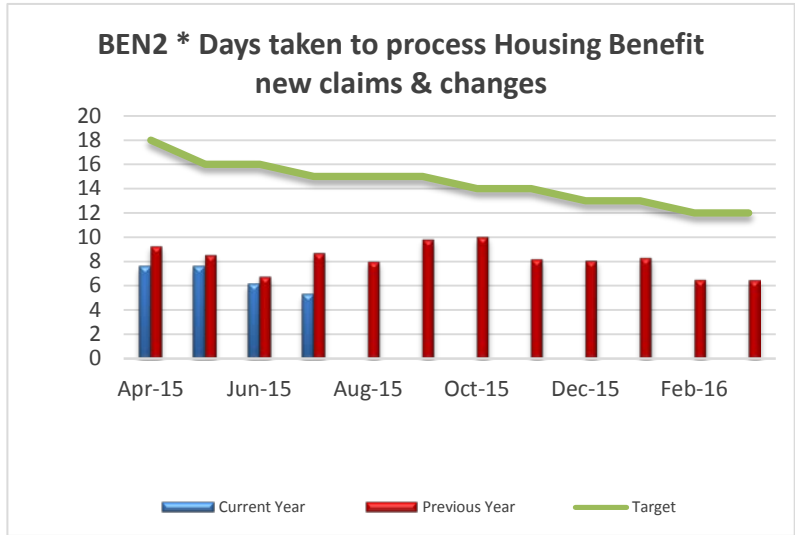
This shows the amount of Council Tax required to be collected within the financial year against actual collection.



Forest Heath Customer Dimension Benefits- Average Days to process



This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Council Tax Reduction scheme claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken.
Please note that we are on target for the current year



This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Housing Benefit claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year

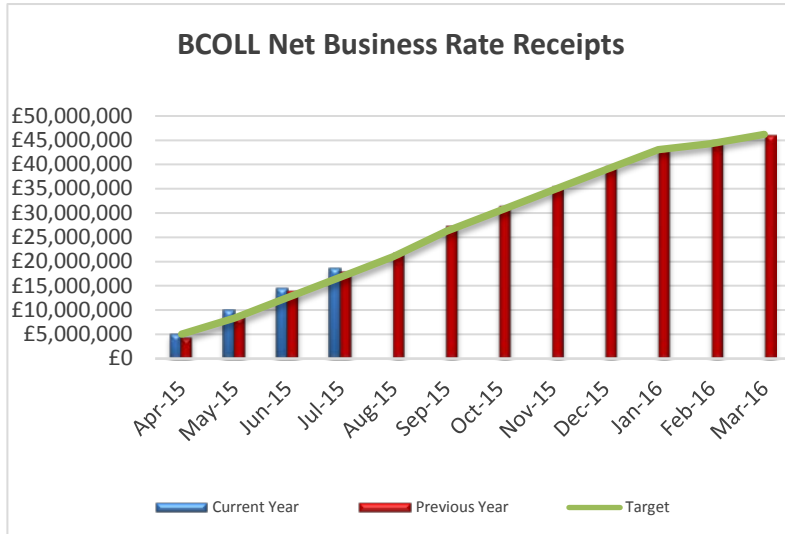
Summary St. Edmundsbury Scorecard as at end July 2015



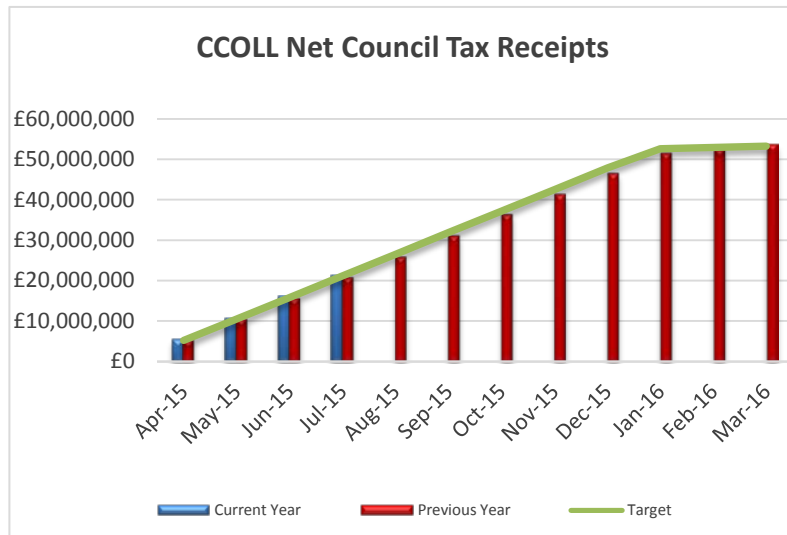
			2015			2014	
		Heading	Example Indicator	This month	Last month	YTD	Final
Financial	Collection	Collection amounts					
	Budget Management	Expenditure					
Customer	Customer Satisfaction	Survey results					
	Channel Shift	Number of e-citizens / e-claims / e-forms					
	Days to process	New claims					
		Changes					
Internal Process	Collection	Collection amounts					
	Fraud	% Successful investigations					
Learning and Growth	Performance Management	One to Ones completed within timeframe					
		%Appraisals completed within timeframe					



St Edmundsbury Finance Dimension Collection Amounts



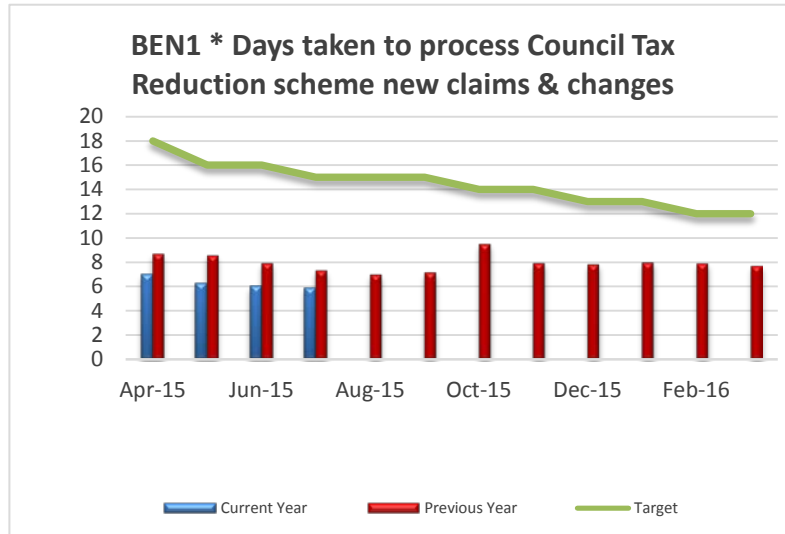
This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.



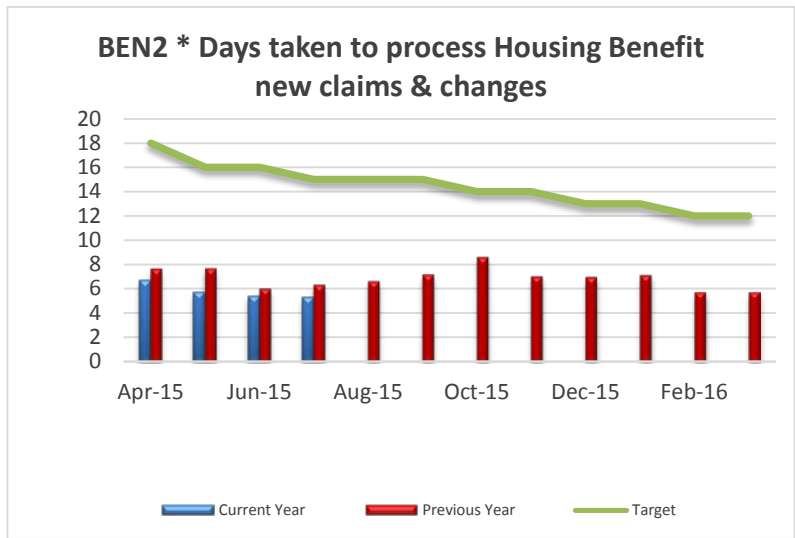
This shows the amount of Council Tax required to be collected within the financial year against actual collection.



St Edmundsbury Customer Dimension Benefits- Average Days to process



This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Council Tax Reduction scheme claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year



This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Housing Benefit claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year

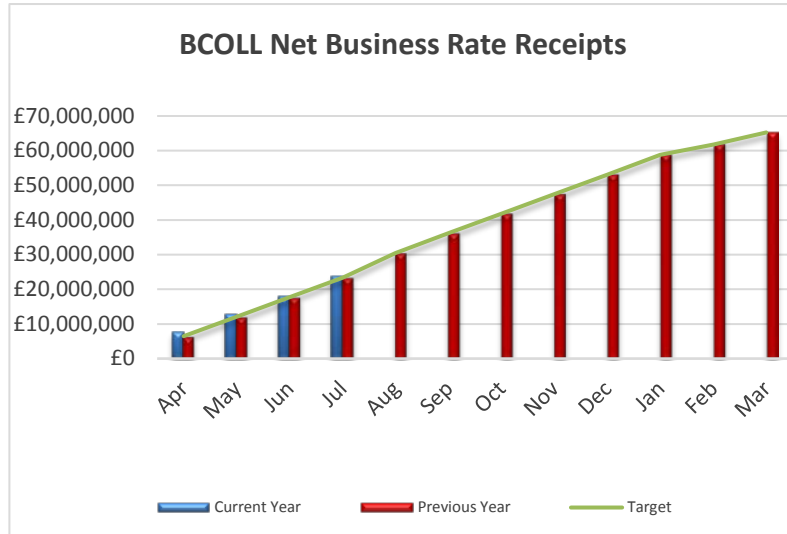
Summary Suffolk Coastal Scorecard as at end July 2015



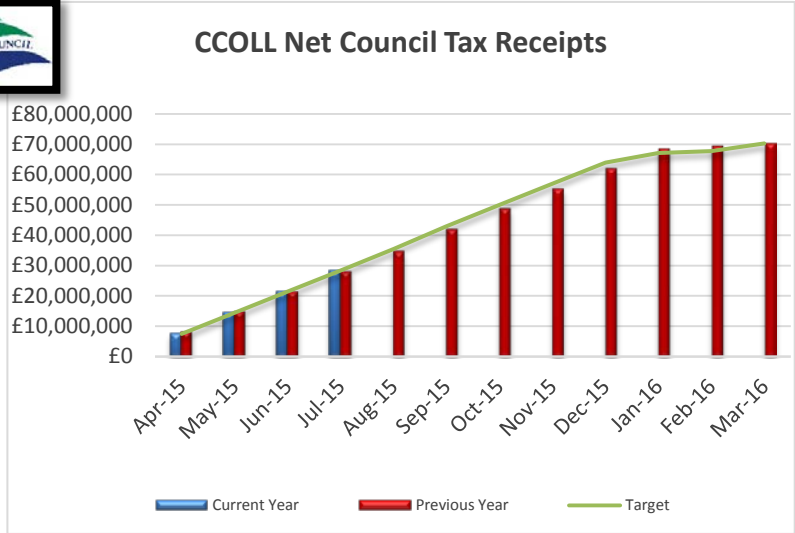
			2015			2014
			This month	Last month	YTD	Final
Heading		Example Indicator				
Financial	Collection	Collection amounts				
	Budget Management	Expenditure				
Customer	Customer Satisfaction	Survey results				
	Channel Shift	Number of e-citizens / e-claims / e-forms				
	Days to process	New claims				
		Changes				
Internal Processes	Collection	Collection amounts				
	Fraud	% Successful investigations				
Learning and Growth	Performance Management	One to Ones completed within timeframe				
		%Appraisals completed within timeframe				



Suffolk Coastal Finance Dimension Collection Amounts



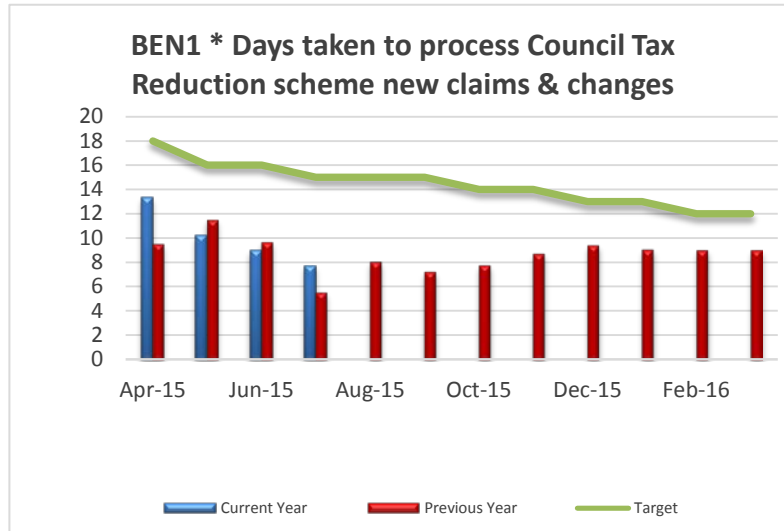
This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection.



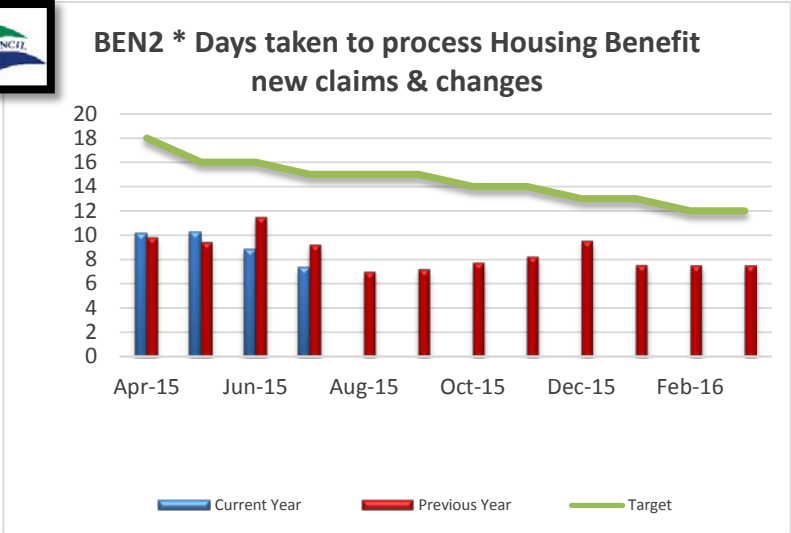
This shows the amount of Council Tax required to be collected within the financial year against actual collection.



Suffolk Coastal Customer Dimension Benefits- Average Days to Process



This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Council Tax Reduction scheme claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year



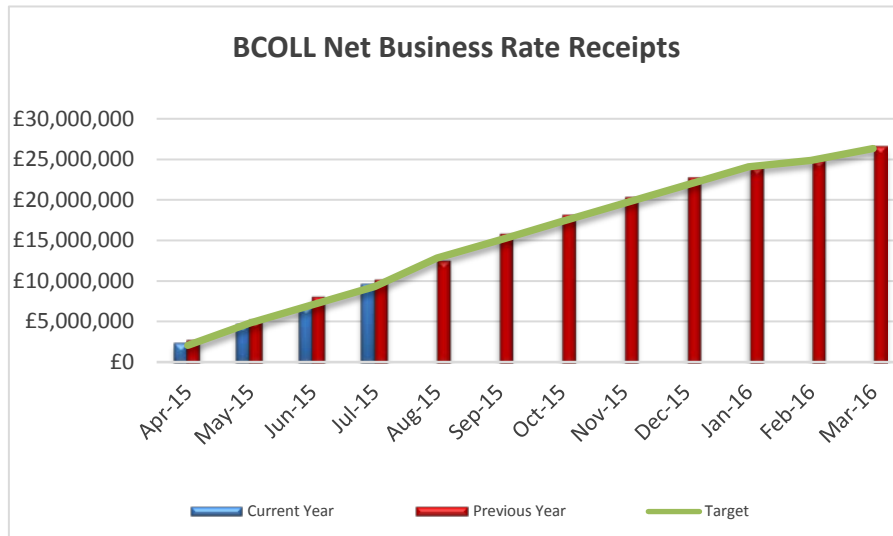
This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Housing Benefit claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year

Summary Waveney Scorecard as at end July 2015



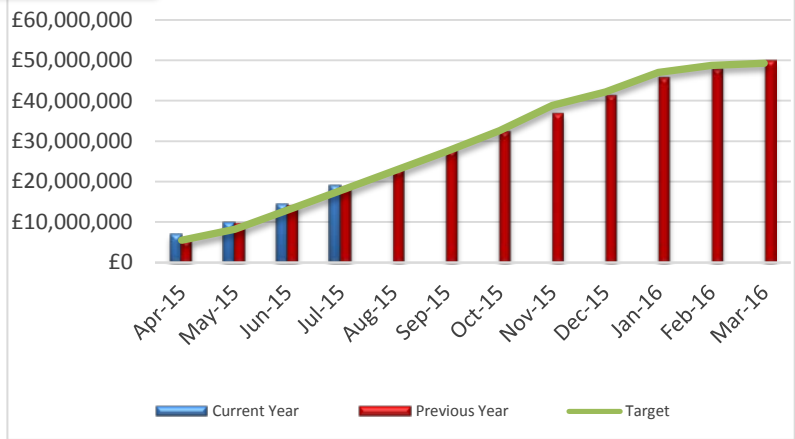
			2015			2014
Heading		Example Indicator	This month	Last month	YTD	Final
Financial	Collection	Collection amounts				
	Budget Management	Expenditure				
Customer	Customer Satisfaction	Survey results				
	Channel Shift	Number of e-citizens / e-claims / e-forms				
	Days to process	New claims				
		Changes				
Internal Processes	Collection	Collection amounts				
	Fraud	% Successful investigations				
Learning and Growth	Performance Management	One to Ones completed within timeframe				
		%Appraisals completed within timeframe				

Waveney Finance Dimension Collection Amounts



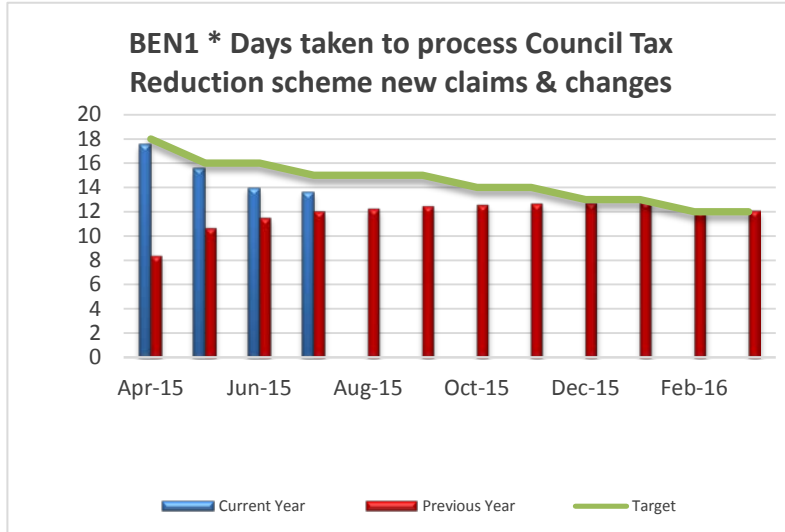
This shows the amount of money required to be collected within the financial year, payable to the NNDR Collection Fund against the actual collection. Currently year collection is on target, which has been amended to reflect the move to 12 month instalments.

CCOLL Net Council Tax Receipts



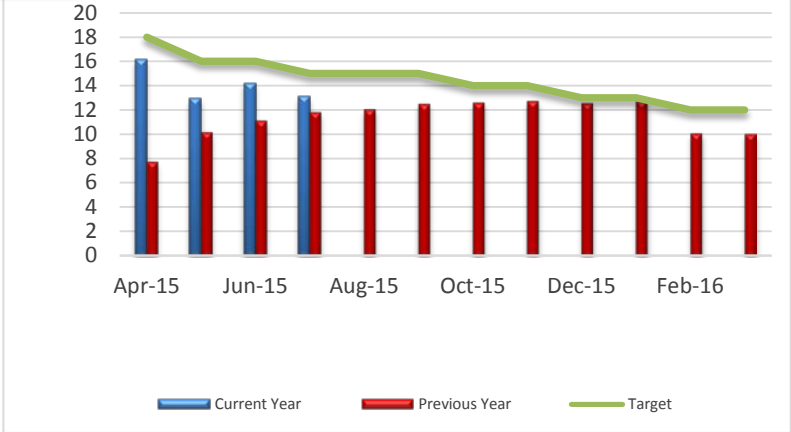
This shows the amount of Council Tax required to be collected within the financial year against actual collection.

Waveney Customer Dimension Benefits- Average Days to Process



This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Council Tax Reduction scheme claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year

BEN2 * Days taken to process Housing Benefit new claims & changes



This shows the average number of days taken to assess all Housing Benefit claims and changes against agreed targets. ARP strives to improve customer service by reducing the number of days taken. Please note that we are on target for the current year

Anglia Revenues Partnership Joint Committee

Forecast Full Year Financial Performance as at 31st August 2015

Description	Approved Budget	Forecast Actuals	Forecast	Variance	Notes
	2015/16	2015/16	Variance		
	£	£	Over/(Under)	£	%
Employee Related Costs	7,245,974	7,207,176	(38,798)	(0.54)	1
Premises Related Costs	267,130	266,496	(634)	(0.24)	
Transport Related Costs	82,426	84,887	2,461	2.99	
Supplies & Services	1,182,540	1,184,175	1,635	0.14	
Support Services	669,116	662,954	(6,162)	(0.92)	
Income	(50,355)	(50,780)	(425)	0.84	
TOTAL PARTNERSHIP COSTS	9,396,831	9,354,908	(41,923)	(0.45)	

The forecast at this stage is showing a minor variance overall with the reason for the larger variance area detailed below

Variance Notes

1. The predicted employee under spend is due to the high turn over of staff in the 1st quarter of this year

**Report to ARP Joint Committee
Moving to a single member Joint Committee**

1. At its meeting on 10th June 2015, Councillor Clark (Fenland DC) suggested that it was time to ask the Officers to do more work on the idea of moving to one Member one vote for each of the Partner authorities. Councillor Mildmay-White (St Edmundsbury BC) agreed and suggested that one option would be to have one Member and two Substitutes. Councillor Jolly (Breckland DC) suggested that some historical perspective on how the current arrangements had come to be might provide a clear view for the future.
2. The OIB were therefore tasked to examine the history behind the current arrangements and explore the possibility of moving to one Member one vote, with two Substitutes.

3. History

4. ARP started its operation as a Joint Committee of two authorities, Breckland and Forest Heath district councils. This was in 2003. The Joint Committee was established with two members from each council, making a total committee of four. Each council had two substitutes.
5. In 2007 East Cambridgeshire District council joined ARP, initially through a contracting arrangement, but subsequently as full members of the Joint Committee. This took the committee to three authorities with six members.
6. In 2011 St Edmundsbury Borough council joined ARP as a full member, followed by Fenland, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney district councils in 2014. This took the total membership to seven authorities, represented by 14 members.
7. At the ARP Joint Committee on 13 March 2014, members tasked the Operational Improvement Board to look at the implications of the partnership expanding in terms of the size of the Joint Committee. A report was taken to 30 June 2014 Joint Committee (agenda item 11) setting out the options, which were:
 - i. Move to a single member per authority immediately
 - ii. Move to a single member per authority if and when Waveney and Suffolk Coastal become full members
 - iii. Do nothing and continue with two members per authority.
8. At the meeting, discussion centred around whether it was the right time to change the number of members on the Joint Committee, in light of the imminent joining the partnership by Suffolk Coastal and Waveney, and also the unresolved issue of the future structure of

ARP (which was part of the wider strategic review work). It was agreed to continue with two members per authority until the decision on the review of ARP had been made. For completeness, the minute from this meeting is attached at Appendix 1.

9. At its meeting on 19 March 2015 (agenda item 14) the committee agreed that it would continue operating under the existing Joint Committee model and that the partnership would be closed to any new full partners for the time being, but would look to trading possibilities, and using the partnership's strong reputation to secure future business opportunities to the benefit of the existing seven partners, using a 'reinvigorated' Anglia Revenues Partnership trading company.
10. This decision drew to a conclusion the decision on the operating model of ARP, which had been the subject of considerable work over 18 months.
11. **Joint Committee – current and possible arrangements**
12. The current terms for the Joint Committee are set out in Appendix 1.
13. Legally all members of the Joint Committee must be executive members of their own council (if they operate a cabinet system).
14. Appointments to ARP Joint Committee or changes to the legal agreement are made through the following committee processes:
 - i. Breckland – Cabinet decision
 - ii. East Cambridgeshire – Council decision
 - iii. Fenland – Cabinet and Council decision
 - iv. Forest Heath – Cabinet decision
 - v. St Edmundsbury – Cabinet decision
 - vi. Suffolk Coastal – Cabinet and Council
 - vii. Waveney – Cabinet and Council
15. Naturally each council will have a different approach to appointing members to the Joint Committee and reporting back to their councils, depending on whether they operate a committee or cabinet system, and if the latter, depending on the levels of authority delegated to the cabinet.
16. Any changes to representation at the Joint Committee, may require some flexibility depending on the different arrangements which each council has. For example, a council operating a committee system, may wish to have their substitute attend the JC meetings and partake in the debate (but not have a vote). Councils operating a close partnership (such as East and West Suffolk) may wish only to send one member who is able to cast two votes.
17. Changes to the Joint Committee arrangement would require:

- i. An amendment to the legal agreement, confirmed through each council's procedure (as above)
 - ii. Amendment to nominate only one member (and two substitutes) to the Joint Committee by each council (as above).
18. If Joint Committee were to agree to reduce the number of members from two to one (with two substitutes), it would be likely to take between three and four months to complete all seven councils' democratic process.
19. The Joint Committee has worked very effectively since the inception of ARP. However, as the partnership has expanded, both in terms of membership and activities, and in light of the potentially significant changes relating to the implementation of Universal Credit, it is likely that the committee will need to become more nimble, be able to meet at shorter notice, and be able to respond more quickly to events. Latterly if a joint committee meeting has had to be rearranged it has proved extremely difficult to get a date which is suitable for everyone.
20. There is significant evidence that a board of ten or more creates coordination and communication issues which have a negative effect on performance¹. The Joint Committee itself has realised that we may have past the optimum number of members, by virtue of having asked officers to review the position for a second time.
21. **Recommendation**
22. It is therefore recommended that the Joint Committee moves to a single member and two substitutes per authority, with the option for one of the substitutes to attend and take part in debate (but not vote) and for paired councils to choose to send only one member who can cast a vote for each council. In effect the solution would create 'one council one vote' but retain some flexibility around attendance at Joint Committee meetings

¹ The European Journal of Finance, Volume 15, Issue 4, June 2009, Pages 385-404; The Impact of Board Size on Firm Performance: Evidence from the UK

Appendix 1 – Extract from the minutes of the June 2014 Joint Committee meeting.

21/14 Moving to a Single Member Joint Committee (Agenda Item 11)

The Operational Improvement Board had been tasked with looking at options for the future of the Joint Committee in light of its expansion. There was concern that as more Members joined it would become unwieldy.

The position of Waveney and Suffolk Coastal was questioned and it was explained that they were already effectively fully embedded in the Partnership through the single management team and a number of other shared areas of work, and were keen to become full members.

Councillor Ambrose-Smith felt that there should be no change to the representation until the future of the ARP had been determined. He also pointed out that point 7 of the report was not correct as East Cambs did not have Executive Members.

That point was acknowledged and would be changed.

Other Members suggested that the right time to change to one Member representation would be when Waveney and Suffolk Coastal joined.

The Chairman was concerned at the amount of time it was taking to determine the future course of the ARP.

It was explained that the business cases were ready apart from agreement about the pension scheme. That had caused the delay and had been the subject of much discussion. A brief had been drafted and would be presented to the three Actuaries (Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk) and it was hoped that the issue could be resolved allowing the review to proceed. It was expected that the work would be done by the end of July and a report would then be presented to the next meeting.

Councillor Smith was loathe to change to one Member representation before that decision was taken, although it was pointed out that any decision on the business cases would require approval by the Partner Authorities anyway.

It was suggested that Waveney and Suffolk Coastal might be concerned at the change to one Member just as they were joining. The Corporate Director (Fenland) said that the same could be said for Fenland, and he suggested that the proposal could be mentioned to Waveney and Suffolk Coastal during discussions.

An amendment to Option 2 was proposed and seconded, that the move to one Member should be reviewed when the Waveney and Suffolk Coastal decision was made. That amendment was not supported.

RESOLVED that option 3 be approved.

The Joint Committee would continue with two members per authority until the decision on the review had been made.

APPENDIX 2 – EXTRACT FROM 2015 ARP LEGAL AGREEMENT

1. THE 2015 JOINT COMMITTEE, ITS ROLE, MEMBERSHIP, MEETINGS AND OFFICERS

Joint Committee Members

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

Meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee

- 1.6 Part I of Schedule 12 of the LGA 1972 and the provisions of Clauses 3.7 to 3.17 shall apply to meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee.

- 1.7 Meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee shall normally be held once each quarter, subject to the need exceptionally to call additional meetings. The Chairman shall decide the venue, date and time of all meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee. Wherever practicable, at least ten Working Days notice of such meetings shall be given to each JC Member, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Monitoring Officer and to each of the Seven Councils.
- 1.8 Any JC Member may requisition a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee by giving notice of such requisition to the Chairman and to the Secretary. Immediately upon receipt of such requisition, the Chairman shall call a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee in accordance with Clause 3.7.
- 1.9 The standing orders applicable to council meetings of Breckland shall apply to meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee except in so far as the 2015 Joint Committee may agree amendments thereto or may adopt its own standing orders.
- 1.10 No business may be transacted at a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee unless a quorum is present. The quorum for a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee shall be Seven JC Members present in person provided that one JC Member appointed by each of the Seven Councils shall be present.
- 1.11 If a quorum is not present within fifteen minutes of the time set for the commencement of a meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee (or a quorum ceases to be present during a meeting) the meeting shall be adjourned to the same day time and venue seven days later or to such other date time and venue as the Chairman (or other person who is chairing the meeting) shall determine.
- 1.12 One of the meetings of the 2015 Joint Committee referred to in Clause 3.7 shall be held during May or June of each calendar year and shall be the annual meeting of the 2015 Joint Committee at which the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the 2015 Joint

Committee shall take place together with such other business as may be appropriate in the opinion of the outgoing Chairman.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman

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

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