

**ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP (ARP) – NEW MEMBER PROPOSAL**

Committee: Regulatory & Support Services Committee

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Author: Jo Brooks, Director of Regulatory Services

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1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To enable Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Councils to become full members of ARP.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 Members are requested to:-

- a) Approve that Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Councils become full members of the Anglia Revenues Partnership; and
- b) Authorise the Director of Regulatory Services to negotiate a new Anglia Revenues Partnership agreement (via the ARP Operational Improvement Board) to include Waveney District and Suffolk Coastal District Councils as full members of the Anglia Revenues Partnership.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 ARP is a shared Revenues and Benefits service that from April 2014 comprises five partner authorities (Breckland, East Cambs, Fenland, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury). It also has a partnership working arrangement with Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Councils, which effectively enables all seven authorities to pool their Revenues and Benefits resources to generate shared savings.
- 3.2 ARP operates a Joint Committee and the delivery of the Revenues and Benefits service at each of the five full member authorities of ARP, which is delegated through Section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 (Section 113 applies to East Suffolk and Waveney as they are not full members of ARP for governance purposes) and regulations made under Section 20 of the Local Government Act 2000.
- 3.3 The arrangements outlined in Section 3.2 above mean that the Joint Committee is enabled by legislation to make decisions on behalf of all the Councils that are part of ARP from April 2014. Councillor David Ambrose-Smith and Councillor Lis Every represent East Cambridgeshire District Council at the Joint Committee.
- 3.4 Waveney District Council (WDC) and Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) Academy databases were moved into the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) infrastructure as part of the first phase of partnership working.

- 3.5 ARP, WDC and SCDC have recently completed the second phase of partnership working in creating a single officer core for the seven councils in the partnership.
- 3.6 Currently WDC and SCDC do not have Members sitting on the Joint Committee.
- 3.7 The seven authorities working together are already generating savings as Section 3.4 above and further initiatives in progress and planned are:-
- Joint procurement of mailing services anticipating and average reduction of 30% in cost of post items mailed;
  - Merging document management systems may generate further savings;
  - Procurement of training services;
  - Discounts for the future development of the Academy Revenues and Benefits system;
  - Channel Shift through website development and expansion of e-forms.
- 3.8 As opportunities with WDC and SCDC are developed we need to ensure that the management of all elements relating to share of cost and savings is equitable, transparent and consistent for all parties.
- 3.9 The process of budgeting, procuring and determining the equitable share of cost and savings can be extremely complicated and will work better with one agreement for all parties, rather than having two forms of arrangements and governance.
- 3.10 The seven authority partnership puts the ARP in a very strong strategic position if opportunities arise when changes such as Universal Credit and the Single Fraud Investigation Service are implemented.
- 3.11 ARP Joint Committee now seeks to admit Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils to full partner status, helping simplify management arrangements and allowing potential further savings.
- 4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS
- 4.1 The Joint Committee provides the governance vehicle for the 5 ARP partners to agree and vote upon matters relating to future strategy, budgets and resourcing. At the moment WDC and SCDC do not have voting rights to influence decisions and equally are not constrained in making decisions independently that would affect all partners.
- 4.2 Full ARP membership for WDC and SCDC will offer the following:
- Continued robust strategic and operational management;
  - Other benefits detailed in Section 3.7 above;
  - Ensure that all members working in partnership work with the same governance model;
  - A management model to offer future potential partners;
  - Simplified arrangements for determining shares of cost and income.
- 4.3 Full membership of the ARP for all seven partners will mean that all partners have a say in all decisions affecting them which removes the current risk referred to in section 4.1 above.

4.4 The partnership is delivering annual savings and will continue to deliver additional efficiencies and income that benefit all seven partners if these recommendations are accepted. The savings for each Authority for 2015/16 are:

**2015-2016 Shared Management Saving**

	<b>Budget Before Savings</b>	<b>Shared Mgt Saving</b>	<b>Baseline Budget</b>
Breckland	1,968,761	(49,134)	1,919,627
East Cambs	1,148,687	(29,223)	1,119,464
Fenland	1,306,332	0	1,306,332
Forest Heath	980,090	(23,856)	956,234
St Eds	1,443,469	(39,180)	1,404,289
Suffolk Coastal	1,258,713	(49,282)	1,209,431
Waveney	1,716,820	(49,327)	1,667,493
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,822,872</b>	<b>(240,002)</b>	<b>9,582,870</b>

4.5 The revised partnership agreement will be negotiated by the Operational Improvement Board (in consultation with Members of the Joint Committee) and will be drafted and agreed by the Councils' legal teams.

**5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 The ECDC share of the partnership savings achieved through creating a single officer with Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils in 2015/16 is £29,223.

5.2 Equality Impact Assessment not required.

<b><u>Background Documents</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Contact Officer</u></b>
	Room 101 The Grange Ely	Jo Brooks Director (Regulatory Services) (01353) 616498 E-mail: jo.brooks@eastcambs.gov.uk