

Agenda Item No:	10	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	6 November 2014	
Report Title:	Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) - New Partner Proposal	

1 Purpose / Summary

To agree Cabinet's recommendation that Council agrees, following agreement of the ARP Joint Committee at its meeting on 11 September 2014; that Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils become full members of ARP.

2 Key issues

- At Council on 19 December 2013, Members endorsed the Council's approach to Service Transformation including the way forward in respect of Shared Services. This meeting approved that the Council's Revenues and Benefits service join ARP as of 1 April 2014.
- At Council on 27 February 2014, Members approved governance arrangements allowing Fenland to be part of ARP. This allowed Officers to be shared between ARP member authorities.
- The Business Case for Fenland joining ARP, as previously advised to Council at its 19 December 2013 meeting generates savings to ARP of £272,000 per full year, of which Fenland receives £136,000 per full year over five years.
- At the same time as Fenland joined ARP as a full member (joining East Cambs, Breckland, Forest Heath and St. Edmundsbury Councils), Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Councils signed agreements to work with ARP to share resources but not governance arrangements. Fenland will continue to receive a minimum saving of £136,000 per annum, reflecting the robust terms that Fenland secured with regards financial return upon becoming part of ARP.
- 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 above the annual £136,000 per full year for Fenland.

3 Recommendations

That Council, as recommended by Cabinet:

- Note the attached report,
- Agree that following agreement of the ARP Joint Committee at its meeting on 11 September 2014; it agrees that Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils become full members of ARP.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	This matter is included in the Forward Plan
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor John Clark, Leader of the Council (and member of ARP Joint Committee) Councillor Chris Seaton, Portfolio Holder for Finance (and member of ARP Joint Committee)
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Background Paper(s)	Meeting the challenge - service transformation and efficiencies Report to Council 19 December 2013 Anglia Revenue Partnership Governance and Delegations Report to Council 27 February 2014

4 Background

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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. At its meeting on 27 February 2014, Council resolved to agree to the arrangement above.
- 4.3 The arrangements outlined in section 4.2 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. The Council is represented at this Committee by two Members: the Leader and Finance Portfolio Holder.

- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 Currently WDC and SCDC do not have Members sitting on the Joint Committee.
- 4.7 The seven authorities working together are already generating savings as section 4.4 above and further initiatives in progress and planned are:-
- Joint procurement of mailing services anticipating an 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.
- 4.8 As we develop the opportunities with WDC and SCDC 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.
- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 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.

5 Reasons for the proposed way forward

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 Full ARP membership for WDC and SCDC will offer the following:-
- Increased potential income from Bailiff fees (please see accompanying report to Cabinet today entitled " Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) - Internal Enforcement Agency Proposals"
 - Continued robust strategic and operational management,
 - Other benefits detailed in section 4.7 above,
 - Ensure that all members working in partnership work with the same governance model,

- Simplified arrangements for determining shares of cost and income.

- 5.3 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 5.1 above.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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.