

Cabinet



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 20 September 2016	
Report No:	CAB/FH/16/044	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	25 October 2016
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Purpose of report:	On 20 September 2016 the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) Joint Committee considered the following substantive items of business: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Performance Report; (2) Welfare Reform Update; (3) ARP Health and Safety Policy; (4) ARP Transformation Programme; (5) Forthcoming Issues; and (6) Exempt: Commercial and Partnership Update. <p>This report is for information only. No decisions are required by the Cabinet.</p>	
Recommendation:	The Cabinet is requested to <u>NOTE</u> the content of Report No: CAB/FH/16/044 being the report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee.	
Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)	Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition? Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers' 	

Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
Implications:	
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
Risk/opportunity assessment:	<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>
See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'	
Ward(s) affected:	All Ward/s
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	Breckland DC Website: http://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/ie/ListDocuments.aspx?CI=109&MI=3820&Ver=4
Documents attached:	None

1. Key Issues

1.1 Performance Report (Agenda Item 5)

(a) Operational Performance

1.1.1 The Joint Committee had received and noted the Operational Performance Report as at 31 August 2016. The report details ARP's key achievements in respect of Benefits and Fraud Performance, including performance against the national figures regarding Benefits performance and ARP Fraud Targets (more detail below); Revenues Performance and Support Performance, including Imaging System (EDMS) and ICT upgrade. This detailed report can be viewed on Breckland District Council's website at:

<http://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s40207/ARP%20Strategic%20Managers%20Highlight%20report%20September2016%20V2.pdf>

1.1.2 Output in respect of Benefits performance regarding the processing of new claims and change of circumstances is currently exceeding the national figures published by the DWP.

1.1.3 As previously reported, the Benefits and Fraud team exceeded the anticipated performance targets contained in the business case approved by the Joint Committee in 2015/2016, in respect of identifying and preventing fraud in four specific areas (as outlined in the report), which in turn leads to an increase in Council Tax income. Targets for 2016/2017 had been agreed by the Joint Committee in March 2016 and performance has continued to exceed expectations. Accordingly, revised targets were proposed for the remainder of 2016/2017, as contained in the report, which had been agreed.

1.1.4 Referring to Support performance, the first stage of aligning daily incoming documents to one single set of document types on the Imaging System for all seven partners has successfully been completed.

(b) Financial Performance

1.1.5 In respect of the financial performance report, the Joint Committee had noted the healthy position as at 31 August 2016, which showed a current underspend of £219,064 against budget. The reasons for the specific variances are contained in the report at:

<http://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s40167/ARP%20Management%20Accounts%20201617%20August%20-%20to%20Committee%20Services%2006.09.16.pdf>

1.1.6 The Enforcement Agency is presently exceeding expectations and progressing well.

1.1.7 An update had also been provided on committed expenditure for the Transformation Programme (see Section 1.4 below)

(c) Balanced Scorecard

Members had noted that with the exception of one, targets had been met by all partner authorities with the majority of indicators annotated green as at 30 June 2016, as shown on the Balanced Scorecard at:

<http://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s40196/ARP%20Balanced%20Scorecard%202016-17%20-%20June%202016%20002.pdf>

The above report provides further information on indicators relevant to each partner authority, which are grouped under the following headings:

- (a) **Financial:** Collection, Budget Management
- (b) **Customer:** Customer Satisfaction, Channel Shift
- (c) **Internal Process:** Collection, Fraud
- (d) **Learning and Growth:** Performance Management

1.2 **Welfare Reform Update (Agenda Item 6)**

1.2.1 The Joint Committee had received and noted an update on the topic of welfare reform, which included:

- (a) **Universal Credit:** The current position regarding the timeline to move to the live operation of the full service.
- (b) **Discretionary Housing Payment:** Spend continues to be within the recently increased grant provided by the DWP, which is designed to help customers remain in their homes or to move to affordable and sustainable accommodation.
- (c) **Benefit Cap:** The maximum family income before the Benefit Cap applies will reduce from November 2016 from £26,000 to £20,000 (£13,400 for single adults with no children). A rollout programme for each local authority, however, is yet to be announced.
- (d) **Social Rented Sector Rent Restrictions:** New social sector tenancies entered into after April 2016, will, after April 2018 have their Housing Benefit subject to and restricted to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), which is the level of rent set in the private sector. Rates that will apply to the partner authorities, and confirmation of any excluded groups, were yet to be received, however it is expected that supported accommodation will be exempt for a further year.

1.3 **ARP Health and Safety Policy (Agenda Item 7)**

1.3.1 The Joint Committee had considered a single Health and Safety Policy, which would be applicable to all authorities within the Partnership.

1.3.2 The draft policy had been produced with guidance from Martin Hosker, Health and Safety Manager for the West Suffolk councils and Health and Safety Officer for ARP, in conjunction with ARP management and partners.

1.3.3 The policy is required by the ARP Partnership Agreement to cover the statutory responsibilities of employers and employees for Health and Safety at Work. It details the responsibilities of the authorities managing each of the four base sites of ARP employees at Breckland House in Thetford, Fenland Hall in March, Melton Hill in Woodbridge and The Marina in Lowestoft.

1.3.4 Further details are provided in the report at:

<http://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s40199/Joint%20Committee%20Report%20ARP%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Policy%20-%20draftv3.pdf>

1.3.5 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED: That**

(1) delegated authority be given to the Health and Safety Officer to make minor amendments, including legislative updates that do not change the Policy materially; subject to the agreement of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Management; and

(2) the revised Health and Safety Policy be approved; subject to it being reviewed by the Joint Committee at two year intervals.

1.4 **The Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) Transformation Programme (Agenda Item 8)**

1.4.1 The Joint Committee had considered a report, which provided an update on progress in respect of the Transformation Programme and had sought its approval, as contained in [Appendix A](#) attached to the report.

1.4.2 Following approval of the Service Delivery Plan by the Joint Committee in December 2015, work had commenced by the Operational Improvement Board on developing a proposed Transformation Programme.

1.4.3 The overarching purpose of the programme will be to secure continued and improved delivery of excellent services to customers whilst creating efficiencies that make savings equivalent to the estimated loss of grant funding previously allocated by Central Government.

1.4.4 A part of the overall strategy also relates to achieving efficiencies in respect of whether ARP work can be identified as potential trading opportunities which can be brought forward (subject to approval) on a commercial basis through the ARP trading company.

1.4.5 The Transformation Programme has taken the actions in the Service Delivery Plan and built them and additional actions into the following three strands:

- Reduction in Avoidable Contact and Automation of Processes (Digital)
- Commercial, Partnership and Trading Opportunities
- Organisational Vision and Development

1.4.6 Further details regarding the elements of the above three strands are contained in the report at:

<http://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s40200/Joint%20Committee%20Transformation%20Programme%20Report%20draft.pdf>

1.4.7 The Joint Committee had also noted the means of resourcing the proposed Transformation Programme, as outlined in the report, which will be funded from the Partnership's previously approved investment fund.

1.4.8 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED: That**

(1) the progress in respect of the Transformation Programme be noted; and

(2) the Transformation Programme at Appendix A be approved.

1.5 **Forthcoming Issues (Agenda Item 9)**

1.5.1 No issues had been reported on this occasion.

1.6 **Exempt Item: Commercial and Partnership Update (Agenda Item 12)**

1.6.1 The Joint Committee had been informed that another authority has delegated its enforcement service to the ARP Enforcement Agency, starting from mid-October 2016.

1.6.2 Another authority has approached ARP regarding the delegation of the management of its service to the ARP under a partnership agreement. Formal consideration and approval will be sought from the Joint Committee at its next meeting on 6 December 2016.

1.7 **Minutes**

1.7.1 For further information on the discussions held at the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee meeting on 20 September 2016, the draft minutes of the meeting may be viewed on Breckland District Council's website at the following link:

<http://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/g3820/Printed%20minutes%2020th-Sep-2016%2010.00%20Anglia%20Revenues%20and%20Benefits%20Partnership%20Joint%20Committee.pdf?T=1>