

Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 17 September 2019 and 17 December 2019

Report No:	CAB/WS/20/002	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	14 January 2020
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 07929 305787 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
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Decisions Plan: This item is not required to be included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendation: **The Cabinet is requested to note the content of Report No: CAB/WS/20/002, being the report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee.**

1. Purpose of the report

Meeting: 17 September 2019

1.1 On 17 September 2019, the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) Joint Committee was inquorate therefore, during an informal meeting, it discussed and noted a few items of business only. All other items of substantive business were deferred until its next meeting on 17 December 2019, as indicated below:

1. Governance and Reporting Arrangements relating to Internal Audit (*Item deferred to 17 December 2019*);
2. Joint Committee ARP Brochure (*Item deferred to 17 December 2019*);
3. Performance Report and Service Updates – July 2019:
 - a. Joint Committee Performance Report July 2019;
 - b. Service Updates;
4. ARP Financial Performance;
5. Welfare Reform Update;
6. Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution (*Item deferred to 17 December 2019*);
and
7. Forthcoming Issues.

This report is for information only. No decisions are required by the Cabinet.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Joint Committee ARP Brochure (Agenda Item 6)

2.1.1 As a decision was required on this item, it was deferred to the next meeting held on 17 December 2019; however, a brief discussion was held.

2.1.2 The proposed brochure is designed to be an internal document, and not as a sales brochure. It is designed mainly to be viewed electronically and therefore few paper copies would be printed.

2.1.3 The main purpose of the document is to:

- provide new Members of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee with a copy as part of their induction;
- increase awareness to all Members of each partner authority in respect of how the Revenues and Benefits Service is delivered by ARP for their own authority;
- increase awareness to all staff who either worked as part of ARP or other services within each partner authority in respect of how the Revenues and Benefits Service is delivered by ARP;
- include it within material for ongoing recruitment to ARP; and
- increase external councils' awareness of the successful services available from ARP, such as the ARP Enforcement Agency.



2.2 **Performance Report and Service Updates: July 2019 (Agenda Item 7)**

2.2.1 a. Joint Committee Performance Report July 2019

The Joint Committee received and **noted** an update on performance. This report provides relevant information relating to the performance of ARP as a whole and that of the individual partners. This detailed report can be viewed on Breckland Council's website at the following link:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s53917/Performance%20Report%20July%202019%20V1.pdf>

The report indicated that when considering performance as a whole for all partner councils, all targets as at July 2019 were currently being met in respect of the following categories:

- Business rates collection
- Council tax collection
- Number of electronic forms received
- Fraud and compliance

2.2.2 In respect of West Suffolk Council's individual performance, all targets as at July 2019 were currently being met in respect of the following categories:

- Business rates collection
- Council tax collection
- Local council tax reduction
- Housing benefit
- Fraud and compliance

The Joint Committee had previously noted that, although the indicators for Local Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit being shown as having been met for April, due to the three week downtime in April associated with the merging of the former Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury systems, the target was thought not to be met for the first quarter of the year. However, in respect of both of these targets, they are now being achieved and are on track to achieve the annual target at the end of the year.

2.2.3 Attention was drawn to the service updates as at 31 July 2019:

- i. **Enforcement:** The Enforcement Team continue to perform well, having collected £18 million since the team started of which £1.838 million has been since the start of this financial year. With effect from July 2019, cases have been started to be taken from Norwich City Council. Caseload has currently been low but performance has been good. An increase in cases is expected in forthcoming months.
- ii. **Further recovery:** The Further Recovery Team had their best year for collection in 2018/19 collecting £1,111,595 exceeding the amount collected in 2017/18 by £203k. This financial year, the team has again exceeded the amount collected in the same period during the last financial year and has collected £416k since April 2019. In addition to

the monies collected by the Further Recovery Team, a further £1.776 million is in secured debt by way of Charging Orders on property owned by the debtor.

- iii. Non-Domestic Rates: The Government has introduced a Bill to Parliament to introduce 100% rate relief for public lavatories with effect from 1 April 2020. Local Authorities are expected to be compensated for any loss of income resulting from the relief.

The Government has also introduced measures to support progress towards linking local authority business rates systems to HMRC digital accounts. The legislation allows HMRC to undertake planning, consultation and testing toward developing a digital system, but it does not make any changes to the current billing and collection system. Further legislation would be required to bring in any subsequent reforms and there would be engagement with local authorities in developing further proposals.

Legislation is progressing to bring forward the date of the next revaluation to 1 April 2021 and every three years thereafter.

- iv. Council Tax: In order to maximise the New Homes Bonus, which is based on the number of new properties in the year plus a reduction in empty homes at October every year, an annual review of empty properties is being undertaken with follow-ups on non-responses.
- v. Benefits: Benefits performance was affected by the merging of systems for East Suffolk Council and West Suffolk Council in April 2019, as explained in 2.2.2 above; however, work has been undertaken to recover this position for both councils and end of year targets are aimed to be achieved.

The DWP have been satisfied with the handling of the two councils' mergers and other work that has been undertaken, particularly around the processing of Housing Benefit and Universal Credit claims. In August 2019, the DWP recognised ARP as a top performer for all partner councils actioning DWP data to identify, prevent and process benefit error notifications. ARP has been invited to share best practice as an exemplar for other local authorities.

- vi. Fraud and Compliance: Whilst Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils currently continue to support the review of Single Persons Discounts, Cambridgeshire CC (CCC) had ceased providing further funding from April 2019. ARP had provided a briefing note to East Cambs and Fenland District Councils to aid discussions with CCC regarding the implications of this.

DWP have published latest data for the number of fraud referrals made by a local authority to the DWP – all partner councils have again exceeded the national average by up to 200% or more, demonstrating the excellent success of the fraud and compliance team.



- vii. ARP Website and Online Self Service: The website has been enhanced to try and make it as straight forward as possible for customer use. This approach has been implemented for requests associated with council tax, business rates and housing benefit. Analysis has demonstrated that this has been particularly effective for customers utilising the self-serve facilities, which has seen a 10% increase in usage in the first four months of the 2019/20 financial year compared to the same period in 2018/19.
- viii. Better Customer Services Journey: A partnership wide programme of enhancements for the customer is being initiated, with the aim of improving the customer experience with improved access and quality of service. A separate element of the project includes using recognised project management tools and processes to implement a change delivery programme. A third element will look at opportunities for ARP to continue an ongoing transformation programme with aim of achieving better outcomes for residents and businesses.
- ix. External Mailing Contractor: A re-tendering exercise to award a further contract of up to five years has been completed. It is worth noting however, that the move towards electronic mailing is being increasingly encouraged.

2.2.4 Discussion was specifically held at the meeting on the Better Customer Services Journey, with particular emphasis placed on making improvements to the online forms required to be completed by customers, which appeared to presently be a relatively complicated process.

2.3 **ARP Financial Performance (Agenda Item 8)**

2.3.1 The Joint Committee **noted** the financial performance report as at 31 July 2019, which currently showed a small overspend against budget of £19k (0.2%) for the whole of ARP. Appendix A attached to that report provided further details, together with details and reasons for the specific variances. Risks were also highlighted to Members.

2.3.2 An update had also been provided on the remaining transformation funding which was set aside in previous years. £57k is earmarked for projects in progress this year and there is a further £93k available for future transformation projects.

2.3.3 Details of the funding held in the ARP ICT reserve, which had been approved as part of the budget setting process, was also contained in Appendix A. This reserve has been established to cover costs of ICT replacement in future years.

2.3.4 The reasons for other specific variances, together with other details, are contained in the report at:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s53911/ARP%20Financial%20Performance.pdf>



Appendix A:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s53912/Appendix%20A%20for%20ARP%20Financial%20Performance.pdf>

2.4 **Welfare Reform Update (Agenda Item 9)**

2.4.1 The Joint Committee received and **noted** an update on welfare reform, which included:

a. **Universal Credit (UC):**

From 1 April 2019, the DWP awarded a 12 month funding contract to Citizens' Advice to provide help to new Universal Credit customers to make a claim (Assisted Digital Support) and to help customers with budget monthly payments (Personal Budgeting Support). Having met with various Citizens' Advice branches across Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, ARP has established that the following arrangements are being implemented:

- Local advisors will dial into a national call centre.
- Web chat will be provided.
- Face to face arrangements will be in place – some on an appointment basis, others on a drop in basis or a mixture of the two. Rural provision may be patchy.
- Thetford and Diss Citizens' Advice are trialling the new service from January 2020.
- The help to claim service is funded to the point of first payment only.

ARP has raised concerns that Citizens' Advice are only funded to help to the first UC payment received; however, Citizens' Advice have said they will continue to help vulnerable customers, drawing on their usual funding streams. Through regular liaison meetings ARP will monitor this.

A detailed discussion was held at the meeting regarding the implications of Citizens Advice being responsible for the above service and the impact on council services. The Joint Committee looked forward to the findings of the six-month review.

The summary of the latest position on the expansion of UC and concerns raised by officers regarding specific issues in respect of the expansion on a national level were contained in sections 2.1.8 and 2.1.9 of the report, and which were duly noted by the Joint Committee. New matters arising via the DWP in respect of UC were provided in Section 2.2.

- b. **Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP):** Spend continues to be within the grant provided by the DWP, and is forecast to be closer to the limit, but within the grant. This grant is designed to help customers remain in their homes or to move to affordable and sustainable accommodation. The main area of expenditure continues



to be to assist customers with rent shortfalls, in particular due to restrictions on Housing Benefit rent levels.

- c. **Benefit Cap:** In November 2016, the maximum family income before the Benefit Cap applies reduced from £26,000 to £20,000 (£13,400 for single adults with no children). 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.

DWP has provided New Burdens funding to assist councils with extra administrative costs and have increased Discretionary Housing Payment grants to help customers with the reduction; however, it should be noted that the increase does not cover all reductions.

- d. **Social Rented Sector Rent Restrictions:** The Government has responded to consultation on funding for supported housing and it has indicated it will not implement Local Housing Allowance rates in social housing. Supported accommodation, including hostel tenancies will remain in Housing Benefit and will not therefore move to Universal Credit.

2.5 **Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution (Agenda Item 10)**

- 2.5.1 As the meeting was inquorate, this item was deferred to 17 December 2019. See paragraph 6.2.1 below for further details.

2.6 **Forthcoming Issues (Agenda Item 11)**

- 2.6.1 No forthcoming issues were discussed on this occasion

3. **Notes**

- 3.1 For further information on the informal discussions held at the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee meeting on 17 September 2019, the notes of the meeting may be viewed on Breckland District Council's website at the following link:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s55053/Minutes%20Public%20Pack%2017092019%20Anglia%20Revenues%20and%20Benefits%20Partnership%20Joint%20Committee.pdf>

4. **Background papers**

Breckland DC Website:

[17 September 2019](#)



5. Purpose of the report

Meeting: 17 December 2019

5.1 On 17 December 2019, the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) Joint Committee considered the following items of substantive business:

1. Governance and Reporting Arrangements relating to Internal Audit;
2. Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution;
3. Performance Report and Service Updates:
 - a. Joint Committee Performance Report – October 2019;
 - b. Service Updates;
4. ARP Financial Performance;
5. Welfare Reform Update;
6. ARP Strategy Refresh;
7. The Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) Service Delivery Plan;
8. ARP Joint Committee Partnership Budget;
9. Joint Committee ARP Brochure;
and
10. Forthcoming Issues.

The majority of this report is for information only; however, a decision is required on the item listed in (2) above and a separate report relating to this is contained elsewhere on this Cabinet agenda.

6. Key Issues

6.1 Governance and Reporting Arrangements relating to Internal Audit (Agenda Item 5)

- 6.1.1 The Joint Committee noted that a new Service Level Agreement for the provision of internal audit services of the revenue and benefits service delivered by the Anglia Revenues Partnership has been agreed.
- 6.1.2 The agreement commenced on 1 September 2019 for a term of three financial years expiring on 31 August 2022.
- 6.1.3 The Heads of Internal Audit at East Suffolk, Fenland and West Suffolk jointly provide the internal audit service to the five partner councils in relation to the ARP.
- 6.1.4 A brief discussion was held at the meeting regarding external audit arrangements.

6.2 Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Constitution (Agenda Item 6)

- 6.2.1 See Report No: CAB/WS/19/003 for this item and the recommendation.

6.3 Performance Report and Service Updates: October 2019 (Agenda Item 7)



6.3.1 a. Joint Committee Performance Report October 2019

The Joint Committee received and noted an update on performance. This report provides relevant information relating to the performance of ARP as a whole and that of the individual partners. This detailed report can be viewed on Breckland Council's website at the following link:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s55098/Performance%20Report%20Oct%202019.pdf>

The report indicated that when considering performance as a whole for all partner councils, all targets as at July 2019 were currently being met in respect of the following categories:

- Business rates collection
- Council tax collection
- Number of electronic forms received
- Fraud and compliance

6.3.2 In respect of West Suffolk Council's individual performance, all targets as at October 2019 were currently being met in respect of the following categories:

- Business rates collection
- Council tax collection
- Local council tax reduction
- Housing benefit
- Fraud and compliance

The Joint Committee noted that in respect of the Business Rates collection target, there had previously been claims made by NHS Trusts for charitable rate relief and these were currently subject to a High Court appeal. If successful, this could result in a backdated refund of £4.605 million.

6.3.3 Attention was drawn to the service updates as at 31 October 2019 (*information provided where different to that in 2.2.3 above*):

- Enforcement. The Enforcement Team continue to perform well, having collected £18.995 million since the team started of which £3.576 million has been since the start of this financial year. With effect from July 2019, cases have been started to be taken from Norwich City Council. Caseload has now increased since last reported with good results recorded.
- Further recovery. The Further Recovery Team had their best year for collection in 2018/19 collecting £1,111,595 exceeding the amount collected in 2017/18 by £203k. This financial year, the team has again exceeded the amount collected in the same period during the last financial year and has collected £791k since April 2019 compared to £689k during the same period last year. In addition to the monies collected by the Further Recovery Team, a further £1.856 million is in secured debt by way of Charging Orders on property owned by the debtor.

- iii. Council Tax. In order to maximise the New Homes Bonus, which is based on the number of new properties in the year plus a reduction in empty homes at October every year, an annual review of empty properties has been undertaken with follow-ups on non-responses. The report provided a breakdown of the reasons for properties being empty.
- iv. Fraud and Compliance. There is continued success for the ARP Fraud and Compliance team who continue to work closely with local DWP Fraud Teams in a joint working initiative.

6.4 **ARP Financial Performance (Agenda Item 8)**

- 6.4.1 The Joint Committee noted the financial performance report as at 31 October 2019, which currently showed a small overspend against budget of £34k (0.4%) for the whole of ARP. Appendix A attached to that report provided further details, together with details and reasons for the specific variances. Risks were also highlighted to Members.

An update had also been provided on the remaining transformation funding which was set aside in previous years. £57k is earmarked for projects in progress this year and there is a further £93k available for future transformation projects.

Details of the funding held in the ARP ICT reserve, which had been approved as part of the budget setting process, was also contained in Appendix A. This reserve has been established to cover costs of ICT replacement in future years.

The reasons for other specific variances, together with other details, are contained in the report at:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s55041/ARP%20Financial%20Performance.pdf>

Appendix A:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s55042/Appendix%201%20for%20ARP%20Financial%20Performance.pdf>

- 6.4.2 The Joint Committee also considered whether the end of year variance should be distributed between the partner authorities, in accordance with their previously approved share, as set out in the table below, which was based on the current forecast and was unlikely to materially change significantly between now and year end:



Breckland	£7,107
East Cambs	£2,311
East Suffolk	£12,989
Fenland	£4,458
West Suffolk	£7,458
Total	£34,323

This was agreed.

6.4.3 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED: That**

- 1. The report and appendix, be noted; and**
- 2. the final full year variance at 31 March 2020 be shared between the partner authorities in the approved shares.**

6.5 **Welfare Reform Update (Agenda Item 9)**

6.5.1 The Joint Committee received and **noted** an [update](#) on welfare reform, which included (information provided where different to that in 2.4.1 above):

- a. **Universal Credit (UC):**
The summary of the latest position on the expansion of UC and concerns raised by officers regarding specific issues in respect of the expansion on a national level were contained in sections 2.1.8 and 2.1.9 of the report, and which were duly noted by the Joint Committee. New matters arising via the DWP in respect of UC were provided in Section 2.2, including that DWP had announced a £10 million Universal Credit Transition Fund for outreach programmes, which are designed to help those in specific need with their UC claims. The fund will be available to partner organisations across the UK, including charities from April 2020.
- b. **Welfare Benefit Uprating April 2020:**
The Government has confirmed an end to the four year benefit uprating freeze. From April 2020 all benefits will increase by CPI, which as of September 2019 was 1.7%. The state pension will rise by 3.9% due to the 'triple lock'.

6.5.2 At the meeting, a discussion was held on the application process for the £10m Universal Credit Transition Fund and examples of organisations that could apply for a share, including local authorities.

6.6 **ARP Strategy Refresh (Agenda Item 10)**

6.6.1 The Joint Committee considered this [report](#) which sought approval for the mission, strategic themes and vision for the future of ARP.

6.6.2 A new mission statement, revised priorities now stated as strategic themes, and a new vision for the ARP service offer were considered.



6.6.3 Background and the process undertaken to develop the above was set out in the report and appendices, which culminated in a refreshed strategy, as summarised below:

6.6.4 a. Mission

Currently, the 2017 strategic priority 1 sets out ARP's core purpose. This has been augmented and turned into a draft high-level Mission statement, as follows:

"To share resources to provide fair and accessible revenues and benefits services to our communities. To maximise benefit entitlement and engage in ethical revenue collection, treating our colleagues and customers with courtesy, understanding and respect."

b. Values

ARP developed and adopted its corporate values in 2018. These remain unchanged, and were presented to elevate them alongside the Mission, Strategic Themes, and Vision.

c. Strategic Themes

Informed by the 2017 strategic priorities, partner strategy analysis, management discussions and feedback from the ARP and customer services teams, five themes were recommended for adoption. These would update and revise the existing priorities; they are of equal status and were not presented to the Joint Committee in order of priority.

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, partner integrated self-service. We will use automation to speed processing and release our teams to provide face-time for the customers who need it.

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 and environmental sustainability of our partners, through efficient collection, revenue generation and fulfilment of our partners' climate change imperatives.



d. Vision

This describes ARP's aspirational, future state in a number of respects, and should provide a framework for its target operating model and the forward development of the partnership. These are of equal status and were not presented to the Joint Committee in order of priority.

- **An engaged, highly skilled team**
- **Satisfied customers**
- **Integrated self-service across all functions**
- **Excellent, harmonised services**
- **Balanced budget and sustainable revenue**

6.6.5 The Joint Committee considered the above in detail and held a discussion on the DWP's role within the Strategy (which would fall within the 'relationships' theme); and also on the 'customers', 'colleagues' and 'digital' themes.

A discussion was also held on the automation of Universal Credit, which was presently on track to be delivered by April/May 2020.

The Appendices attached to the report are as follows, including the detailed refreshed Strategy that was recommended for approval:

[Appendix A](#) – 2017 Strategic Priorities

[Appendix B](#) – Partner Frameworks

[Appendix C](#) – Refresh Process

[Appendix D](#) – Refreshed ARP Strategy

6.6.6 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED: That the mission, strategic themes and vision set out in the report and Appendix D, be approved.**

6.7 **Anglia Revenues Partnership Service Delivery Plan (Agenda Item 11)**

6.7.1 The Joint Committee considered a report, which sought approval for the revised Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register, as set out in the appendices attached to that report at:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s55107/Joint%20Committee%20Service%20Plan%20Report.pdf>

[Appendix A](#)

6.7.2 The Joint Committee noted that ARP had seen significant success in 2019/20, including (briefly):

- Housing benefit new claims and changes are meeting targets despite the creation of East and West Suffolk Councils affecting early performance.
- The ongoing design of processes on the document management system continues to automate the harmonisation of work distribution for all partners. The EDMS drip feed has also been rolled out to Business Rates too.

- All customer teams are able to use customer contact software to sign customers up to e-services upon contact and the number of those using e-services continues to rise.
- The further recovery work jointly funded by County Councils secured recovery of over £1.1 million last year and is already on target to secure similar/higher recovery in 2019/20.
- The Fraud teams work also jointly funded by the County Councils identified £3.2 million in fraud and error (£600k more than last year).
- The East and West Suffolk merged databases were in place from April 2019 and the project to merge them has been a great success.

Other achievements relating to the Transformation Programme are detailed in the report presented to the Joint Committee, which related to:

- the progression of the Digital Transformation work stream;
- the project to automate Universal Credit records is progressing well;
- the introduction of new telephone technology, which allows ARP to manage calls to that less onerous calls are answered by less experienced staff and customers are offered online services as an alternative;
- a number of temporary posts have been made permanent and appointments made;
- the Service Delivery Plan sought to deliver efficiencies to the partner councils of more than £1 million in 2018/19, which was achieved.

- 6.7.3 The Joint Committee has reconsidered the strategic direction for the ARP (as set out in Section 6.6 above) and the Service Delivery Plan seeks to detail actions to achieve the visioning detailed in the report. In 2020/21, emphasis will be placed on developing digital online solutions; driving customer cultural change through digital transformation; continuing to invest time and resource into developing automated processes; continuing to influence national initiatives such as Universal Credit; continuing to maintain a flexible workforce, including having resilience in key areas; and ensuring appropriate actions continue to be put in place to enable the challenges and financial impact of the fundamental changes regarding welfare reform to be suitably handled and monitored.
- 6.7.4 The Joint Committee also considered the Partnership's Risk Register, which includes items relating to the risk surrounding income from business rates, which presently remains red because there remains a risk in relation to subsequent appeals (see 6.3.2 above) that may be received and reduce rates payable. The Register also continues to highlight the need to monitor the impact of Universal Credit on customers and grant income.
- 6.7.5 Discussion was held at the meeting on historical outstanding appeals and staff turnover, which had previously been relatively high due to the previously high number of temporary posts. Training was also discussed which had been modified to enable staff to become fully operational much sooner.



6.7.6 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. The progress in respect of the December 2018 Service Delivery Plan, be noted; and**
- 2. the revised Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register at Appendix A of the report, be approved.**

6.8 **ARP Joint Committee Partnership Budget (Agenda Item 12)**

6.8.1 The Joint Committee considered a [report](#) which sought approval for the partnership budget for 2020/2021.

6.8.2 Whilst the majority of budgets have been set in the same way as previous years, there are some key changes for the 2020/21 budget. These had been considered by the Joint Committee, as follows:

- Proposals to make temporary fixed term contract roles permanent;
- In setting the budget the following key assumptions have been made:
 - A pay award of 2% each year;
 - A vacancy factor of 2.5% in all years;
 - No inflation of general non contracted supplies and services
 - An efficiency target of £120k to be achieved from 2021/22 onwards.

Largely as a consequence of the above assumptions, the overall budget had been recommended to be increased by £450,000 when compared to 2019/20. The majority of the increase relates to salary costs (£334k) as a result of pay pressures. Alongside these increases are contractual inflationary increases on items such as software maintenance (£65k) and business rates (£10k), a small reduction in Government grants (£10k) plus other small value changes. Costs of Enforcement within Supplies and Services have increased due to additional work but these are fully offset by additional income.

6.8.3 [Appendix A](#) sets out the proposed budget for 2020/2021 compared to the budget for 2019/2020, with indicative budgets for the following two years, as illustrated in the table below:

Description	2019/20 Budget £	2020/21 Budget £	2021/22 indicative £	2022/23 Indicative £
Employee costs	9,150,882	9,485,073	9,674,920	9,996,070
Premises costs	272,822	285,440	293,976	303,072
Transport costs	154,129	149,856	151,306	152,781
Supplies & Services	1,586,221	1,742,120	1,740,706	1,770,966
Support Services	531,162	555,000	560,960	567,099
Income	(2,337,027)	(2,408,696)	(2,402,416)	(2,396,591)
TOTAL PARTNERSHIP COSTS	9,359,189	9,808,793	10,019,452	10,393,397

Further tables show the share of costs for each authority and the proportion that any additional costs or savings against the budget will be shared.

- 6.8.4 West Suffolk Council's current and future contribution to the total budget is set out below:

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 indicative £	2022/23 indicative £
West Suffolk	2,238,330	2,238,288	2,428,672	2,516,420

- 6.8.5 The Joint Committee thoroughly considered the budget for 2020/21 and asked several questions of officers, particularly in relation to proposed budget increases and the rationale for this.

- 6.8.6 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED: That the Partnership Budget at Appendix A for 2020/2021, be approved.**

6.9 **Joint Committee ARP Brochure (Agenda Item 13)**

- 6.9.1 This item was deferred from the meeting held on 17 September 2019.

- 6.9.2 See section 2.1 above for a summary of the background and purpose of the brochure.

- 6.9.3 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED: That**

- 1. The new ARP brochure be adopted for use by the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership to provide information to Members, new Joint Committee Members and new staff working as part of the ARP; and**
- 2. the December version of the ARP brochure be approved.**

6.10 **Forthcoming Issues (Agenda Item 14)**

- 6.10.1 No forthcoming issues were discussed on this occasion.

7. **Minutes**

- 7.1 For further information on the discussions held at the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee meeting on 17 December 2019, the draft minutes of the meeting may be viewed on Breckland District Council's website at the following link:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/g4496/Printed%20minutes%2017th-Dec-2019%2011.00%20Anglia%20Revenues%20and%20Benefits%20Partnership%20Joint%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

8. **Background papers**

Breckland DC Website:

[17 December 2019](#)

