

CABINET

Wednesday 15 February 2017

ANGLIA REVENUE PARTNERSHIP (ARP) NORWICH CITY COUNCIL SECTION 113 AGREEMENT (REP1526)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) is a partnership of seven district / borough councils working together to provide Revenue and Benefit shared services. The partnership is between:
 - Breckland District Council
 - East Cambridgeshire District Council
 - Forest Heath District Council
 - Fenland District Council
 - St Edmundsbury Borough Council
 - Suffolk Coastal District Council
 - Waveney District Council
2. In March 2015, the ARP 2015 Joint Committee decided that ARP would be closed to any new full partners or members of the Joint Committee for the time being.
3. The Joint Committee has subsequently agreed that, where it benefits the seven ARP partners, ARP will work in partnership and/or provide services to other Councils with regard to specific elements of their services but not their whole service.
4. ARP has been approached by Norwich City Council to discuss the potential for ARP to provide strategic and operational management support for the service.
5. Section 113 allows a local authority to enter into an agreement with another authority to place its officers at the disposal of the other authority.
6. A negotiated section 113 agreement will enable partnership working without the need for Norwich to become members of the Joint Committee and in the future may lead to trading and other partnership opportunities.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All Wards in the District
Cabinet Member:	Councillor M Barnard Cabinet Member for Resources & Welfare Reforms

Supporting Officer:	Homira Javadi Chief Finance Officer 01394 444529 homira.javadi@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
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1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 On the 19th March 2015 the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) 2015 Joint Committee decided that ARP would be closed to any new full partners or members of the Joint Committee for the time being.
- 1.2 The 2015 Joint Committee has all Revenues and benefits functions delegated to it from the seven partners and ARP operates as a single officer core providing equal service provision for all partners across these functions.
- 1.3 The Joint Committee has subsequently agreed that, where it benefits the seven ARP partners, ARP will work in partnership and/or provide services to other Councils with regard to specific elements of their services but not their whole service. This will mean that ARP can build resilience and generate efficiencies to meet the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 1.4 On the 20th September 2016 the Joint Committee agreed that, subject to formal approval from each Council, a Section 113 agreement leading to a shared management arrangement with Norwich City Council should be put into place.
- 1.5 Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables Local Authorities to enter in to an agreement as follows:

“a local authority may enter into an agreement with another local authority for the placing at the disposal of the latter for the purposes of their functions, on such terms as may be provided by the agreement, of the services of officers employed by the former, but shall not enter into any such agreement with respect to any officer without consulting him.”

Reason for opportunity

- 1.6 Recent developments mean Norwich City Council will be taking their Revenues and Benefits service out of the current partnership arrangement with Local Government Shared Services (LGSS) with effect from 1st April 2017.
- 1.7 The service will be brought back in house which will mean that the Senior Management Team for LGSS Revenues and Benefits will no longer manage Norwich City's service after the 31st March 2017. The transfer back to Norwich will include two operational managers for Revenues and for Benefits but, no head of service function.
- 1.8 Norwich City Council approached ARP to discuss the potential for ARP to provide support for the service when they bring it in house. The support would involve providing mentoring and coaching for the operational managers and to provide strategic management services for Norwich, essentially to act as the Head of Service for them.
- 1.9 The current Revenues and Benefits employees already work in Norwich and so transfer will only involve handing the Management of the service from LGSS to ARP on the 1st April 2017. It will however be necessary to acclimatise ARP management team to the current statistics and ways of working at Norwich so that we can be proactive in understanding any priorities for Norwich City Council Service from 1st April 2017 and so, it is recommended that approval is given for the Management team to start working with Norwich before April where necessary to effect as seamless a handover as possible.

- 1.10 Norwich are also interested in joining the Enforcement Agency at a later date (once their existing contract expires) and in looking at ARP providing other services through trading and partnership.
- 1.11 A negotiated section 113 agreement will enable partnership working without the need for Norwich to become members of the Joint Committee and in the future may lead to trading and other partnership opportunities.
- 1.12 The Operational Improvement Board have agreed steps to reinforce the existing structure to support the Strategic Managers in managing an 8th Council. This will mean that we retain the resilience that we need for the existing partners.

2 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 2.1 ARP runs the Council's revenues and benefits services and are front facing with members of the community. The proposal will help reduce the management costs of ARP that the Council incurs.

3 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There is always a risk in spreading resources more thinly however, the management team will operate at a strategic level and in the main will be able to remove duplication and offer all eight Authorities a single solution. The risk is mitigated by steps introduced by the operational Improvement Board.
- 3.2 Initially Norwich City Council would be contributing £80,000 towards the cost of the shared management team.
- 3.3 Subsequently, Norwich City Council have also stated that they would be interested in ARP providing / sharing other services such as:
- Resilience services (processing, Appeals etc.)
 - Project management (larger projects)
 - Fraud and Compliance services
 - Enforcement Agency Services, etc.
- 3.4 The Section 113 agreement will be negotiated by the Operational Improvement Board (in consultation with Members) and will be agreed by the Councils' legal teams.

4 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 No other key issues to note.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 All seven partners of ARP are being consulted and taking a report to their Cabinet meetings for approval of the Section 113 agreement being negotiated with Norwich City Council.

6 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 Other options considered were to continue as just seven partners of ARP.

7 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Approval from the Cabinet's of all seven members of the ARP partnership is required before the Operational Improvement Board of ARP are able to negotiate and enter into a Section 113 agreement with any other potential partners.

7.2 A Section 113 Agreement will offer the following: -

- Efficiencies of £80,000 per annum;
- The potential for the provision of chargeable services later.
- A future potential partner for the Enforcement Agency leading to additional efficiencies;
- The continuance of robust strategic and operational management;

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That Cabinet notes the report.
- That Waveney District Council instructs the Operational Improvement Board to negotiate and enter in to a Section 113 agreement with Norwich City Council so that officers' services can be placed at all authorities disposal (shared).
- That approval is given for ARP management team to start working with Norwich City Council immediately to carry out any necessary work prior to 1st April 2017 that will assist with the commencement of the agreement.

APPENDICES - None

BACKGROUND PAPERS - None