Report of    Paul Corney - Head of ARP
To:          ARP Joint Committee, 11 September 2014
Subject:     Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils.
Purpose:     To recommend full membership of the Anglia Revenues Partnership for
             Waveney District Council and Suffolk Coastal district Council.

Recommendation(s):

- That the report is noted
- That the ARP Joint Committee recommends to each partner Authority that Waveney
  District Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council become full members of the
  Anglia Revenues Partnership.
- That the ARP Joint Committee recommends to each partner Authority that the
  Operational Improvement Board should be given delegated authority to negotiate a
  new Anglia Revenues Partnership agreement that includes Waveney District
  Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council as full members of the Anglia Revenues
  Partnership.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Waveney District Council (WDC) and Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC)
Academy databases were moved into the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) infrastructure as part of phase 1 of partnership working.

1.1.2 WDC, SCDC and the ARP have recently completed phase 2 of partnership working in creating a single officer core for the 7 councils in the partnership. The current arrangement with WDC and SCDC is through an agreement using Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 which 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.”

1.1.3 The section 113 agreement has exactly the same effect as the Joint committee ARP agreement except that WDC and SCDC do not sit on the joint committee. The creation of a single core of staff with WDC, SCDC and Fenland District Council (Fenland became full ARP members from the 1st April 2014) has realised approximately £470,000 per annum savings in respect of the reduction in employees.

1.2 Matters for consideration

1.2.1 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.
1.1.1 The 7 councils are already generating further savings through partnership discounts and joint procurement, we are working on a number of initiatives that are leading or should lead to further economies brought about by the strength of our partnership:

- Joint procurement of mailing services which anticipates an average reduction in cost of 30% per item of post mailed (excluding year end mailing)
- Merging Document management systems may lead to significant annual savings.
- Procurement of training services
- Discounts for the future development of the Academy revenues and Benefits system
- Channel shift through a website development and expansion of the use of e-forms

1.1.2 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.

1.1.3 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 2 forms of arrangements and governance.

1.1.4 The 7 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.

1.2 Options

- To do nothing.
- To agree to WDC and SCDC becoming full members of the ARP

1.3 Reasons for recommendations

Full membership of the ARP for WDC and SCDC will offer the following:

- An income in excess of £150,000 per annum from Bailiff fees;
- The continuance of robust strategic and operational management;
- A management model to offer future potential partners.
- Other benefits such as those detailed in this report
- To ensure that all members working in partnership work with in the same governance model.
- Simplified arrangements for determining shares of cost and income

2. IMPLICATIONS

2.1 Risk

Full membership of the ARP for all 7 partners will mean that all partners have a say in all decisions affecting them which removes the current risk referred to in 1.2.1 above.

2.2 Financial

The partnership is delivering annual savings and will continue to deliver additional efficiencies and income that benefit all 7 partners if these recommendations are accepted.

2.3 Legal
The revised partnership agreement will be negotiated by the Operational Improvement Board (in consultation with Members) and will be drafted and agreed by the Councils’ legal teams.

2.4 Equality and Diversity

Not applicable.

Background papers:- None

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Appendices attached to this report: