

## BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Report of:** Ellen Jolly, Executive Member Income & Prosperity

**To:** Strategy Board, 7 September 2015  
Cabinet, 22 September 2015

**(Author:** Jo Andrews, Strategic Manager Revenues)

**Subject:** Joint ARP Debt Management and Recovery Policy

**Purpose:** To create a Joint ARP Debt Management and Recovery policy reflecting practices that have been adopted in this area as a result of Shared Services across the Anglia Revenues Partnership and the addition of three new partners

### **Recommendation(s):**

- 1) That the policy set out in Appendix A is approved

### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Anglia Revenues Partnership (covering the seven partners) is looking at the development of an ARP wide debt management policy. ARP has recently shared a draft policy with Breckland, along with all other ARP partners for our comments and scrutiny as we each see fit. This policy (attached at Appendix A) is to set out the policy in relation to the billing, collection and recovery of Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments across Breckland and the wider Anglia Revenues Partnership.
- 1.2 The policy document replaces previous policies of the Anglia Revenues Partnership and updates the content to reflect the changes introduced by the recent changes to enforcement legislation. This policy excludes the activities relating to sundry debt of the Council – this is the subject of a separate policy.
- 1.3 Breckland Council is part of the Anglia Revenues Partnership and it is therefore essential to operate clear and common practices across all council partners. The aims of the policy are to:
  - ensure that debts are managed in accordance with legislative provisions and good practice;
  - maximise income collected by the council;
  - ensure a professional, consistent, cost effective and timely approach to recovery action across all of the councils' services;
  - customers' circumstances and ability to pay are fully taken into account so as to distinguish between the customer who won't pay and the customer who genuinely can't pay;
  - minimise debts outstanding at the end of the financial year, and therefore the need for bad debt provisions, and actual debt write offs.

### **2.0 OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The policy set out in Appendix A is approved

2.2 The policy set out in Appendix A is not approved and the Council continues using the existing policy

### 3.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

3.1 To provide a consistent policy across all seven partners of the ARP. Continuing with separate policies would not be efficient given the shared provision of Revenues collection across the partnership.

3.2 To update the policy in this area in order to make clear to customers what the recovery process entails.

### 4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

4.1 A consistent policy across the ARP for all seven partners, making the process more efficient.

4.2 Maximising income to the collection fund and reducing write offs.

4.3 Making it clear to customers what the recovery process entails.

### 5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

#### 5.1 **Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues**

5.1.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

#### 5.2 **Constitution & Legal**

5.2.1 This is a revised policy and its adoption will ensure consistency across the ARP

#### 5.3 **Contracts**

5.3.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

#### 5.4 **Corporate Priorities**

5.4.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

#### 5.5 **Crime and Disorder**

5.5.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

#### 5.6 **Equality and Diversity / Human Rights**

5.6.1 The policy covers ways of handling vulnerable customers and considering individuals' circumstances e.g. signposting to debt advice.

#### 5.7 **Financial**

5.7.1 Maximising income to the collection fund and reducing write offs.

#### 5.8 **Health & Wellbeing**

5.8.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

## 5.9 Risk Management

5.9.1 Risks have been considered and mitigating processes included in the policy where necessary.

## 5.10 Safeguarding

5.10.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

## 5.11 Staffing

5.11.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

## 5.12 Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales

5.12.1 The policy has been discussed and agreed with all seven partner authorities

## 5.13 Other

5.13.1 None

## 6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

6.1 All

## 7.0 ACRONYMS

7.1 ARP – Anglia Revenues Partnership

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Background papers:- [See The Committee Report Guide](#)

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### Lead Contact Officer

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**Key Decision:** Yes (Policy)

**Exempt Decision:** No

**This report refers to a Mandatory Service**

### Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A Joint ARP Debt Management & Recovery Policy