

## **Report to ARP Joint Committee**

### **Moving to a single member Joint Committee**

#### **Background**

1. At the ARP Joint Committee on 13 March 2014, members tasked the Operational Improvement Board to look at the implications of the partnership expanding in terms of the size of the Joint Committee.
2. Fenland District Council joined ARP on 1 April 2014, taking the number of full partners to five. The Joint Committee now therefore consists of ten members.
3. ARP has also just entered a Section 113 arrangement with Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils to share a senior management team (now appointed) and set up a bailiff service.
4. While Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils have not yet become full partners, it is possible to envisage a situation whereby managing the partnership with a Joint Committee for five of the partners and separate committee reporting lines for Suffolk Coastal and Waveney (through their respective Cabinets) will become unwieldy.
5. It may therefore be the time to consider reducing the representation on the joint committee from two members to one per authority.

#### **Current Situation**

6. The current terms for the Joint Committee are set out in Appendix 1.
7. Legally all members of the Joint Committee must be executive members of their own council.
8. Appointments to ARP Joint Committee or changes to the legal agreement are made through the following committee processes:
  - i. Breckland – Cabinet decision
  - ii. East Cambridgeshire – Council decision
  - iii. Fenland – Cabinet and Council decision
  - iv. Forest Heath – Cabinet decision
  - v. St Edmundsbury – Cabinet decision
9. Changes to this arrangement would require:
  - i. An amendment to the legal agreement, confirmed through each council's procedure (as above)

- ii. Amendment to nominate only one member to the Joint Committee by each council (as above).

10.If Joint Committee were to agree to reduce the number of members from two to one, it would be likely to take 3-4 months to complete all five councils' democratic process.

### **Reasons to Change**

11.The Joint Committee has worked very effectively since the inception of ARP. However, as the partnership expands both in terms of membership and activities, it is likely to need to be able to respond more quickly to events. The bailiff service is a new venture which will require close guidance from members.

12.There is significant evidence that a board of ten or more creates coordination and communication issues which have a negative effect on performance<sup>1</sup>.

13.Latterly if a joint committee meeting has had to be rearranged it has proved extremely difficult to get a date which is suitable for everyone. This was the case last year when the meeting was delayed by more than three weeks due to difficulties coordinating the diaries of eight members.

14.ARP has been through significant change over the last year, with a complete change of senior management team, the introduction of a fifth partner, a Section 113 agreement between ARP and Suffolk Coastal and Waveney.

15.However, these changes are only the start. The implementation of Universal Credit will have an even greater impact on how the service is delivered. Establishing the bailiff service is one way of responding to this change, and creating a secure and growing income for the partners. The possible loss of further government funding will be another blow.

16.The ability to act swiftly and decisively to these changes may mean that it is worth considering a smaller Joint Committee.

### **Recommendation**

17. Members are asked to consider the following three options:

- i. Move to a single member per authority immediately
- ii. Move to a single member per authority if and when Waveney and Suffolk Coastal become full members

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<sup>1</sup> The European Journal of Finance, Volume 15, Issue 4, June 2009, Pages 385-404; The Impact of Board Size on Firm Performance: Evidence from the UK

- iii. Do nothing and continue with two members per authority.

**18. Appendix 1 – extract from 2012 agreement  
Joint Committee Members**

- 3.1 Subject to Clause 3.2 each of the Four Councils shall appoint two of its members for the time being to be members of the 2011 Joint Committee. In addition each of the Four Councils shall appoint two substitutes, who may attend meetings of the 2011 Joint Committee in the absence of their Council's JC Members.
- 3.2 All such appointments (whether made under Clause 3.1 or 3.4) shall be made in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions of Sections 101 and 102 of the LGA 1972 and of the 2000 Regulations or 2012 Regulations, as they may from time to time be applicable to each of the Four Councils.
- 3.3 Each JC Member shall remain in office until removed or replaced by his or her appointing Council or until ceasing to be a member of his or her appointing Council (or of the executive if Regulation 12 of the 2012 Regulations is applicable to his or her appointment).
- 3.4 Each of the Four Councils may remove and replace its JC Members at any time by giving notice of such removal or replacement to the 2011 Joint Committee by sending such notice to the Secretary within 5 days of effecting such removal or replacement.
- 3.5 The proceedings of the 2011 Joint Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy or by any defect or purported defect in the appointment of any JC Member.