

ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP

Report of Paul Corney - Head of ARP

To: ARP Joint Committee, 5 December 2017

Subject: The Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) Service Delivery Plan.

Purpose: To recommend the Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register at Appendix A are approved and to report on the progress in respect of the December 2016 Service Delivery Plan.

Recommendation(s):

- That the progress in respect of the December 2016 Service Delivery Plan is noted.
- That the ARP Joint Committee Approve the revised Service Delivery Plan and risk register at Appendix A

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 In accordance with the ARP agreement a revised Service Delivery Plan should be agreed by the Joint Committee by the end of December each year and the risk register is reviewed 6 monthly.
- 1.1.2 A Service Delivery Plan (called transformation programme) was agreed in December 2016 and information below details progress against this plan.
- 1.1.3 In addition to service aims and objectives the plan includes a risk assessment and detail of the major projects that ARP will implement in the next year.

1.2 December 2016 plan update

- 1.2.1 The ARP has seen significant success in the last year and we have achieved the following;
- Benefits performance ahead of the DWP averages
 - Improvements in Waveney processes to meet the challenges of Universal Credit being introduced – this will benefit all other partners as they go live
 - Implementation of drip feed on our document management system is almost complete which automates the harmonisation of work distribution
 - All customer teams are able to use customer contact software to sign customers up to e-services upon contact.
 - The further recovery work jointly funded by County Councils secured recovery of over £460k last year and is already on target to secure higher recovery in 2017/18
 - The Fraud teams work also jointly funded by the County Councils identified just under £1.5 Million in fraud and error.

Some other achievements relating to the Transformation Programme are detailed below:

- 1.2.2 The ARP Trading shareholders agreement for the 7 partners has been signed and a business plan and business cases have been agreed. Once insurance for the company and trading contracts have been developed the company will be able to trade.

- 1.2.3 Negotiations have commenced with Registered Providers to offer fraud services through the trading company. Initial discussions have been very promising and we expect to be able to provide services to initial customers soon.
- 1.2.4 On the 1st April 2017 the shared management arrangement with Norwich City commenced and has been very successful to date. Partnership arrangements will be extended to include the provision of fraud services for Norwich (jointly funded by Norfolk County Council) and Norwich will also be delegating their enforcement work to the ARP Enforcement Agency from November 2018.
- 1.2.5 We have been approached by other Councils to discuss joining our Enforcement Agency and if discussions are successful up to 4 more Councils may join. The Enforcement Agency has offered a better service for vulnerable customers and the net income generated from statutory fees is estimated at £600k for 2017/18.
- 1.2.6 The website redesign is underway and recently the new business rates transactional pages have gone live. Council Tax redesign is taking place and benefits will follow. The redesign uses UX (user experience) methodologies from the interaction lab of the City of London University
- 1.2.7 The Digital work stream has progressed with the procurement of a forms designer and some bespoke forms that integrate with the Capita system. Robotics/automation software has also been purchased to provide full automation of the assessment process in selected cases. The benefits from these purchases will be seen from 2018/19.
- 1.2.8 A number of letters, bills and reminders have been redesigned using nudge techniques to deliver messages that will emphasise key data and encourage customers to respond to the information in a manner that will resolve any issues.
- 1.2.9 The roll out of Universal Credit continues there is a separate report updating members concerning welfare reform.
- 1.2.10 The transformation programme seeks to deliver efficiencies to the partner councils of £531k in 2017/18 and £1.03 Million in 2018/19. We are currently on target to achieve the efficiency target for 2017/18 and measures have been put in place to be able to achieve the 2018/19 increased target.

1.3 Revised Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register

- 1.3.1 The service Delivery Plan (Appendix A) details the high level actions that the service must implement to ensure that the varied demands on the service are met. The plan has 4 areas:
 - Transformation – delivery of commercial and operational changes to meet future requirements and channel shift
 - Service plan – business as usual activities
 - Projects
 - Risk matrix

There will be an amount of overlap between these areas but the intention of separating them out in this way is to provide clarity over the high level work programme for ARP.

- 1.3.2 The Joint Committee reconsidered the strategic direction of the ARP going forward and the Service Delivery Plan seeks to detail actions to achieve the visioning detailed in the report to members in September 2017.
- 1.3.3 Great progress has been made against the original plan for transformation and the infrastructure to trade has been put in place. In 2018/19 the emphasis moves to building further income and efficiencies through trading and partnership agreements.

- 1.3.4 The infrastructure to be able to increase on-line transactions has been put in place and software to enable automation of assessment processes should be installed by December 2017. In 2018/19 the digital transformation team (the customer service lead officers from each Council and the ARP strategic team) will drive cultural change to enable officers to assist customers to learn to use the on-line services to reduce future footfall and telephone calls.
- 1.3.5 Welfare reform is still high on the Governments agenda which will lead to fundamental changes in our service provision and so the plan includes actions to understand the impact on the partner councils of the changes, as information becomes available, there are also actions concerning the monitoring of the financial impact of the changes we have already seen.
- 1.3.6 The risk surrounding income from Business Rates remains red at this time because there is still risk in relation to subsequent appeals that may be received and reduce rates payable
- 1.3.7 The risk register includes a new item related to the merger of databases that will be necessary if final approval is given to Waveney and Suffolk Coastal to merge to become East Suffolk Council and for St. Edmundsbury and Forest Heath to merge to become West Suffolk.
- 1.3.8 The register also continues to highlight the need to monitor the impact of Universal Credit on customers and grant income. We continue to influence changes in delivery through representation on DWP steering groups.

2 Options

- To suggest changes and additions to the Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register.
- To approve the Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register.

3 Reasons for recommendations

A Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register are requirements of the ARP agreement and are needed to agree the short to medium term priorities of the ARP in delivering services as effectively, efficiently and economically as possible and to identify the risks associated with the services.

4 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Risk

If a Service Delivery Plan is not agreed then the direction and priorities of service delivery can lose focus. The Plan allows members to monitor and direct service provision. The identification and mitigation of risk is necessary to ensure that Councils minimise the impact of risk on customers and the partner councils.

4.2 Financial

The Service Delivery plan requires the ARP officers to monitor and report on financial matters of relevance to the Section 151 officers of the ARP.

4.3 Legal

The ARP agreement requires a Service Delivery Plan to be agreed before the end of December each year.

4.4 Equality and Diversity

Not applicable.

Background papers:- None

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Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A – Service Delivery Plan December 2017