



a truly unique partnership



# INTRODUCTION

The Anglia Revenues Partnership is a truly unique partnership delivering the Revenues and Benefits Services for five partner local authorities as equals rather than a separate entity charging for services.

The partnership allows us to take the best practice and experience from each of the five council districts. Taking the very best from each partner to deliver the best services, the ARP is able to focus staff in becoming experts in their field and further their career development.

Having achieved the alignment of systems across the four back office locations, the ARP are focusing development by working with suppliers to enhance the customer experience with straight forward digital service available 24 hours a day and automation of some back office processes, reducing the amount of manual data input required.

Recently we have seen the added pressures brought on by the cost of living crisis. The ARP are a central force in ensuring that residents and businesses receive the help and guidance they need and are entitled to.

At the heart of the organisation is of course our staff, many of whom have worked at the ARP since its inception. Together they are pioneering innovative ways of working at a time of great change in how Local Government Services are delivered.

Councillor Paul Ashton, Chair.  
ARP Joint Committee  
Corporate Services Cabinet Member  
East Suffolk Council



## Councillors



Councillor Diane Hind  
ARP Joint Committee Member  
Vice Chair  
Resources Cabinet Member  
West Suffolk Council



Councillor James Lay  
ARP Joint Committee Member  
Finance and Assets Committee  
Member  
East Cambridgeshire District Council



Councillor Jan French  
ARP Joint Committee  
Deputy Leader  
Fenland District Council



Councillor Philip Cowen  
ARP Joint Committee Member  
Executive Member  
Breckland Council

# Size of partnership

The Anglia Revenues Partnership is the largest revenues partnership in England continuing to look for innovative ways of reducing costs, while improving services, with a focus remaining on excellent customer service.

- As an organisation the ARP has the third largest Revenues & Benefits caseload in the country , only exceeded by the large urban authorities of Birmingham and Leeds.
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	Ctax Properties	Business Rates	Housing Benefit	Total
Birmingham	455,410	47,910	67,571	570,591
Leeds	366,170	31,590	31,758	429,518
Anglia Revenues Partnership	352,730	29,976	21,932	404,638
Cornwall UA	278,470	36,350	21,319	336,139
Sheffield	257,530	19,000	25,913	302,443
Manchester	243,980	27,420	30,361	301,941
County Durham UA	251,100	16,180	23,807	291,087
Liverpool	236,281	19,760	32,963	289,624

## ARP provides the following services to partner Councils

- Collection of Council Tax
- Collection of Business Rates
- Administration of Housing Benefit
- Administration of Local Council Tax Support (introduced on 1 April 2013)
- Fraud and Compliance
- ARP Enforcement (previously known as Bailiff Services) across the partner council areas
- Consultancy Services

The Partnership continues to take on new innovations beneficial to ARP Partners, our businesses, families and communities.

However, it needs to be stressed that ARP is not simply a money collecting agency. Through administering Council Tax Support (CTS) and Housing Benefit on behalf of the Partners, it provides low income working age families and pensioners with a means tested Housing Benefit to assist with rent and a reduction on the amount of council tax they have to pay.

By working together through this partnership, the councils are reducing costs and providing a more efficient, effective service.

The aim of the partnership is to run an efficient Council Tax and Business Rates Collection service and to assess Housing Benefit and Council Tax support, while reducing administration costs to each partner council.

## How the Partnership has developed

**2003**

Breckland District Council and Forest Heath District Council first combined their Revenues and Benefits services to form the ARP.

**2007**

East Cambridgeshire District Council joined the partnership

**2011**

St. Edmundsbury Borough Council joined the Partnership

**2014**

Fenland District Council joined the partnership

**2015**

Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils joined the Partnership



## From April 1st 2019 – Four Partners become two Councils

- St. Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils merged to become West Suffolk Council.
- Suffolk Coastal District and Waveney District Councils merged to become East Suffolk Council.

ARP promises to continue to provide the same high quality of service and ongoing savings for the partner councils.

# ARP'S CORE PURPOSE

At the heart of the ARP's role is the maximising of Council Tax and business rates income streams just under £800 million per annum on behalf of partner Councils and the delivery of Housing Benefit.

The Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) has delivered over £3 Million in efficiencies to the partners through innovative working, including the introduction of the ARP Enforcement Agency (ARPE). Those efficiencies are demonstrated as an individual council's cost as a partner of the ARP has been, to 2022/2023, the same, or less, for the delivery of their service than it was nearly 10 years ago.

The members of the Joint Committee have agreed the ARP look to work with other Councils and public bodies to deliver specific services in partnership.

The initial areas offering future opportunities for partnership working include:

- Resilience services to assist other councils with backlogs
- Fraud and Compliance services for public sector bodies
- Enforcement and debt collection services
- Consultancy services

## OUR CUSTOMERS

### Area and population

	Area in square miles	Population
Breckland	504	141,476
East Cambs	251	87,762
East Suffolk	487	239,552
Fenland	211	102,462
West Suffolk	400	179,948
Total	1,853	751,200

With an area of over 1,800 square miles, most of the population of 750,000 have contact with the Anglia Revenues Partnership for Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support.

# OBJECTIVES

- A strategic plan for the wider impact of revenues and benefits changes and proposals for businesses, families and communities.
- Use of data and intelligence to:

<b>A</b>	Improve collection rates by collating behavioral information and predicting modeling impact of schemes	<b>B</b>	Maximise income where due
<b>C</b>	Provide analysis to individual Councils	<b>D</b>	Be at the forefront of innovation across the country
<b>E</b>	Digital Transformation and automation of services	<b>F</b>	Provide best advice to businesses on business rates to facilitate their growth and working with economic development teams

## Enforcement Agency

In 2015 the ARP Enforcement Agency (ARPE) was set up. The ARPE team works much more closely with the Council Tax and business rates teams than external providers are able to. We are better able to respond in cases where vulnerable people are involved, to help those who are genuinely having difficulty in paying, and where appropriate, the team can withdraw statutory fees.

Debtors are asked to enter into arrangements that are affordable and take account of new debt from new year Council Tax bills. The enforcement actions seek to help debtors to find ways to break their current cycle of debt through referral to agencies and through ongoing dialogue.

In addition to providing a more responsive and compassionate service, the statutory fees collected provide a net income. This income can now be used to reduce the cost of the partnership to each Council.

## Fraud and Compliance

When the DWP introduced the Single Fraud Investigation Service most Councils passed the whole of the Fraud team over to the DWP. The ARP retained part of the team to investigate Council Tax Support cases and other Council Tax discounts and exemptions as well as Business Rates and Tenancy Fraud.

The fraud and compliance activities carried out by the ARP Fraud team, along with other further recovery initiatives, identified fraud exceeding £2.5 million last year, and the cost of staff providing these services is shared by the County Councils.

# OTHER PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

In November 2016, South Norfolk District Council and in April 2022, Broadland District Council delegated their Council Tax and Business Rates debt enforcement work to Breckland Council for the ARPE to collect.










From April 2018 the ARP entered into a partnership agreement with Norwich City Council to provide fraud services.

This has led to fraud prevention and generated savings with funding by Norfolk County Council.

Norwich has passed their Council Tax and Business Rates debt to Breckland Council for the ARPE to collect from July 2019.

From April 2023, the ARP entered into a partnership with Broadland and South Norfolk to provide fraud services.

## Highlights of the ARP

<p><b>Largest revenues partnership in England formed in 2003</b></p> 	<p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> largest Revenues &amp; Benefits caseload in the country</b></p> 	<p><b>Savings of over £3 million a year</b></p> 
<p><b>Handling over £1 Billion In transactions a year</b></p> 	<p><b>Councils costs for the service as a partner of the ARP are equal or lower than they were nearly 10 years ago</b></p> 	<p><b>Providing fraud services to Norwich City Council from 2018 and Broadland and South Norfolk from 2023.</b></p> 
<p><b>Receipt of incoming paper documents reduced by 65% between 2020 &amp; 2023</b></p> 	<p><b>Direct Debit take up Up to 80% of residents across all 5 partners opting to pay their Council Tax by Direct Debit.</b></p> 	<p><b>Flexible, multi-disciplinary staff training &amp; generic working with an in-house training team</b></p> 

**E-form usage increasing yearly to over 111k submitted in 2022-23. Getting the correct information first time, without the need to contact for further information.**



# GAINING OF SCALE

# FROM

# ECONOMIES

The Anglia Revenues Partnership Enforcement (ARPE) focuses on those who “will not pay” and provides advice and assistance for those who “cannot pay”

ARP Enforcement also acts on behalf of the authorities who are not partners of the ARP

Joint partnership procurement, for example mailing with over 1 million letters per year generated by the partnership

Investment in automation software improving completion times for repetitive data entry operations

Centralising of the in-house post room to one location, at Thetford, for all partners

Retention of in-house Fraud and Compliance team, identifying over £2.5m in the 2022-23 year

Single Person Discount  
Business Rates  
Tenancy Fraud  
Council Tax  
Local Council  
Tax Support

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery  
Resilience with alignment on all partners work at all locations

**arp**  
Anglia  
Revenues Partnership

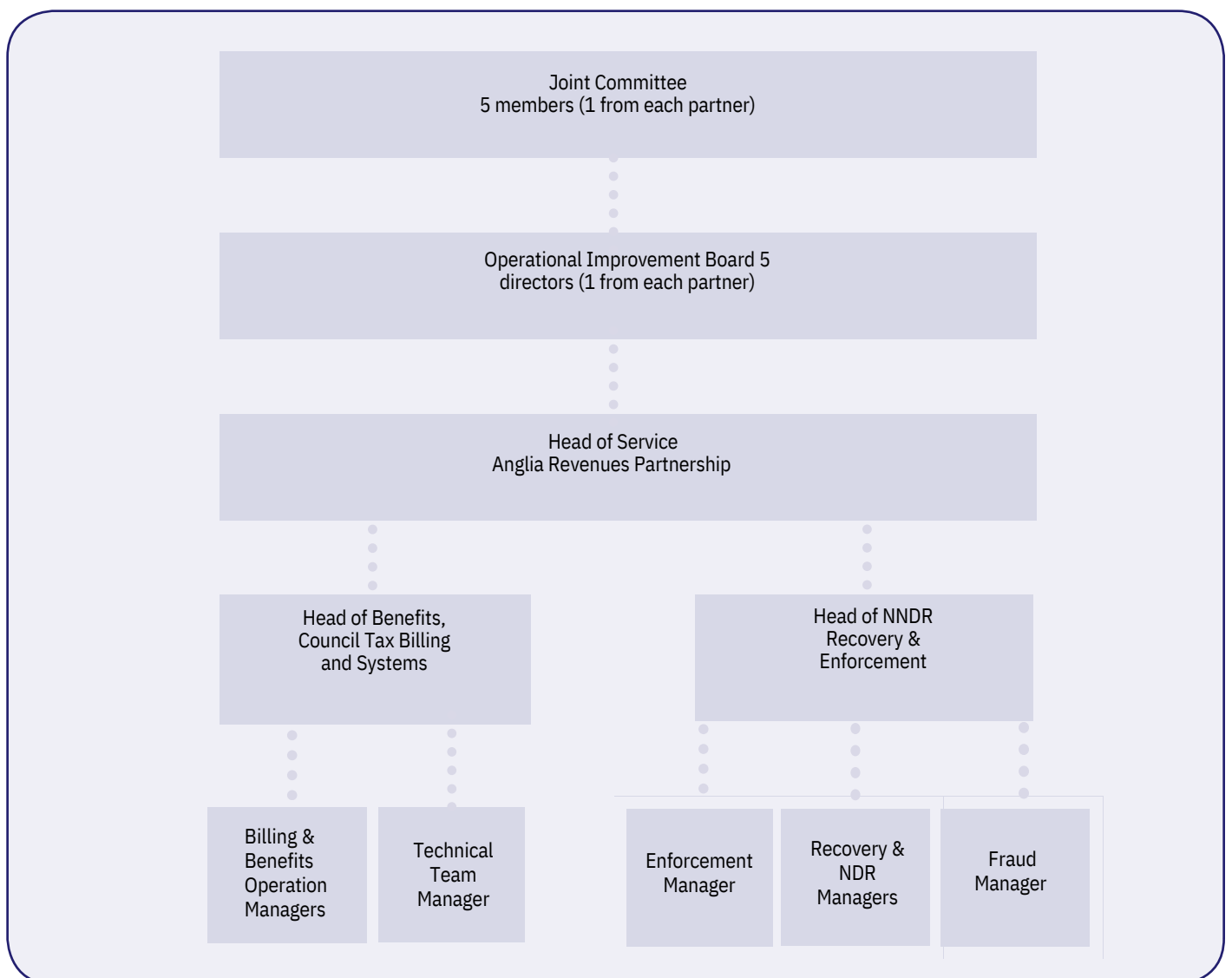


# GOVERNANCE

As its name suggests, the Anglia Revenues Partnership is a pure partnership, not a legal entity in its own right, sharing resources for the administration of Revenues and Benefits.

Governance of the ARP is provided through a formal reporting structure of one elected member representing each partner council, called the Joint Committee.

The Operational Improvement Board (OIB) consists of one director from each partner council, reporting to the Joint Committee.



# VALUES OF THE ARP

Like any organisation committed to providing a high quality, efficient service, our workforce is the lifeblood of the Anglia Revenues Partnership.

A total of over 280 people work for the ARP hybridly across four ARP sites at Thetford, March, Melton and Lowestoft, using a single integrated network whichever office they are based at. With processes and procedures aligned across the four locations, staff are allocated to any area of the partners' outstanding work.



## Positive Engagement

One team, sharing information to create positive change

## Thinking Dynamically

Championing ideas to deliver improved services for our community

## Efficient and Excellent

Delivering outstanding cost efficient services through improved technology

## Respect and integrity

Across the partnership demonstrate respect, dignity, integrity, empathy and politeness to all

## Taking Pride

Being proud in who I am, what I do and how I do this for all of us

# OUR PEOPLE

Unlike most organisations, the ARP is a Partnership made up of five councils and staff all employed by these partner councils although managed by the ARP providing our services.

## Professional Qualifications and modern ways of working:

All staff are able to work from any of the four office locations, including agile working from other offices, remote bases or homeworking.

This effective use of technology not only allows more flexible working on behalf of

the staff - allowing them to get a better work/life balance - it also obviously saves on travel time/costs, helping reduce our carbon footprint.

Working for the Anglia Revenues Partnership gives opportunities for training and development, including career pathways to qualifications from professional bodies, such as IRRV (Institute of Rates Revenues and Valuation).

## Interested in a career with the Anglia Revenues Partnership?

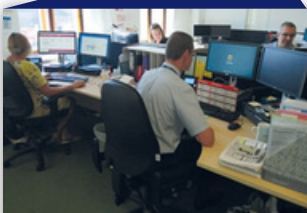
[angliarevenues.gov.uk/services/Job\\_vacancies](http://angliarevenues.gov.uk/services/Job_vacancies)



**Cambridgeshire**  
Fenland  
Hall, March,  
Cambridgeshire  
PE15 8NQ



**Suffolk**  
The Marina,  
Lowestoft, Suffolk,  
NR32 1HH



**Norfolk**  
Breckland House,  
Thetford, Norfolk,  
IP24 1BT



**Suffolk**  
East Suffolk House,  
Melton, Suffolk, IP12  
1RT

# KEYS TO THE SUCCESS OF THE ARP

There are many reasons behind the success being enjoyed by the Anglia Revenues Partnership.

- ▶ Introduction of generic working with multi- skilled staff who are Council Tax, Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Reduction trained.
- ▶ Innovative high-profile campaigns to make paper bills a thing of the past and encouraging people to sign up for on- line 'self service'.
- ▶ Aligning processes and procedures across the partnership.
- ▶ External experts have been used to carry out UX (User Experience) Testing when the ARP developed its new website reducing the number of 'clicks' the customer carries out for the website to be transactional, and get to do what they need to as quickly and easily as possible, using understandable language.
- ▶ Working with Software Providers to improve and develop working methods including automation.
- ▶ ARP sends out over 1million letters a year including some 425,000 just at year end. The Partnership was able to negotiate a competitively priced external mailing service to reduce the cost of traditional letters to the best competitive rates on the market.
- ▶ Involvement with national initiatives and Government departmental steering groups working closely with the Local Government Association (LGA). For example moving across to Universal Credit full service.
- ▶ Residents and businesses are reaping the benefits of dealing with their council tax and benefits on-line, actively embracing the use of new technology and encouraging 'channel shift'. Successfully moving customers away from time-consuming and expensive face-to-face interactions or telephone calls to using more efficient 24 hour web-based services.
- ▶ The Partnership has built close working relationships with stakeholders, including Citizens Advice, Housing Associations, Private Landlords and welfare groups.

For more information about the Anglia Revenues Partnership go to:  
[www.angliarevenues.gov.uk](http://www.angliarevenues.gov.uk)

# WORKING WITH US

The ARP has always been a great partner to work with and their input into our product development has been very valuable.

ARP now have a very flexible service delivery model offering staff a choice of four office locations and home working.

Dave Young, CAPITA

Critiqom has found working with the ARP invaluable when reviewing and developing our own product offering as ARP have always valued best practice in the industry and have been instrumental in giving feedback to new products or service improvements. ARP bring a true collaboration approach on behalf of the councils they represent to ensure optimum service levels and value for money are achieved.

Agnes Williamson, Head of Customer Services Critiqom Ltd.

The Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) have worked alongside the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for numerous years specifically attending and participating in the Local Authority Partnership, Engagement and Delivery (LA-PED) division's engagement groups. Both the Practitioners Operational Group (POG) and the Local Authority Welfare Steering Group (LAWSG) consult on upcoming changes and current issues local authorities are facing. ARP contribute valuable insight into both POG and LAWSG providing LA-PED with information and feedback to decisions which directly affect LAs.

Darren Baker, Engagement and Delivery, DWP

# THE FUTURE

- ▶ Manage the changing workload of Universal Credit migration
- ▶ Expanding ARP enforcement to more Authorities
- ▶ Expanding the ARP Fraud and Compliance team to more
- ▶ Authorities Automation of work processes and procedures
- ▶ Digital Transformation and channel shift
- ▶ Easy to use intelligent forms getting the information right first time
- ▶ Customer Services continuous improvement
- ▶ Consultancy services
- ▶ Resilience Services



For more information, contact us by email at [enquiries@angliarevenues.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@angliarevenues.gov.uk)