

GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Working in Partnership

A Framework for Members and Officers

To aid effective partnership and shared working arrangements

February 2019

DRAFT

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Introduction

- 1.1 The council approved its first Partnership Framework in January 2006. The Partnership Framework forms part of the 'Policy Framework' under Article 4.01(1) of the Council's Constitution and was formally adopted by the Council in March 2006.
- 1.2 Since the Partnership Framework was first set-up, the landscape within which local government operates has changed significantly with councils moving even more to partnership working and developing shared service models across organisations.
- 1.3 This framework document is intended to assist both Members and officers engaged in contemplating, setting up, funding, managing, participating in, monitoring, scrutinising or ending both partnership arrangements and shared service arrangements between the council and other organisations. It should be considered at every stage of the process.
- 1.4 The Partnership Framework will be reviewed at least once every three years.

Why Have a Partnership Framework?

- 1.5 Over recent years, the council has become involved in an increasing number of partnerships and shared working arrangements which contribute to the delivery of council objectives and services. In the years ahead, it is anticipated that even more activities will come within the scope of partnerships, both between the council and various other organisations including community groups, and shared working arrangements with other local authorities.
- 1.6 The council must ensure it is accountable for the public money it spends, that this money is used efficiently and that it achieves the intended results. It is equally important that the partnerships or shared working arrangements in which the council is involved do the same - especially where substantial funding is provided by the partners and/or external funding agencies.

What is a Partnership?

- 1.7 The council defines a partnership as "an agreement between the Council and one or more independent bodies to work together to achieve one or more objectives".
- 1.8 Potentially, this can cover a wide range of partnership arrangements, from a simple agreement to co-ordinate some activities, right through to a 'virtual organisation' controlling a substantial budget and delivering important services over a wide area. It is therefore important that the council can distinguish between the different types of partnerships and the impact they have on the delivery of the council's corporate objectives for the borough and its residents.
- 1.9 Partnerships that the council becomes involved in will be categorised in one of two ways; 'significant' or 'other'. The council defines a significant partnership as ***"a partnership for which there is a council resource provision of £10,000 or greater or one that is fundamental to the delivery of a corporate objective as established within the council's Corporate Plan. Without this effective partnership therefore, the delivery of Gravesham Borough Council's key corporate goals would not occur"***. Partnerships that do not meet this definition will be considered as an 'other' partnership.

- 1.10 Partnerships most commonly take the form of ‘unincorporated associations’. This means that they do not have a separate legal existence and each of the partner organisations remains legally and financially responsible for the actions they take within, or on behalf of, the partnership. Another, less common, form of partnership is where the partners create a separate company or a charitable trust to achieve particular purposes. **This is a more complex matter involving detailed legal and financial arrangements and as such, these types of arrangements are not covered by this Framework.**
- 1.11 There is no ‘one size fits all’ set of arrangements for partnership working – they have to be tailored to the specific purposes involved. Regardless of the form, purpose, size, or importance of a partnership, however, there are several things that should be considered in creating, managing, monitoring and reviewing the partnership arrangements, and it is these that this Framework deals with.

What is a Shared Service/Working Arrangement?

- 1.12 When exploring opportunities for joint-working between local authorities, there are a number of different types of initiatives:
- **A full shared service** – this type of arrangement involves teams from two or more authorities joining to form one team, **hosted by one authority**. For example, this could involve the internal audit team from two authorities joining to form one internal audit team, employed by one authority but serving the needs of both authorities.
 - **Joint-management** – this type of arrangement involves the manager from one authority taking on the management responsibility of a team of officers at one or more other authorities. For example, this could involve the IT Manager at one authority taking on the management of the IT team at another authority. The employee remains under the terms and conditions of the employing authority, **but it is agreed that the officer will be seconded to another authority (or authorities) to provide management support with the other authority (or authorities) paying a fee for the services of the manager.**
 - **Joint-officer** – this type of arrangement is very similar to the joint-management arrangement. This involves officers, who are not managers, providing resilience to another authority either on a long-term or permanent basis.
 - **Ad-hoc resilience** – as the name suggests, this type of arrangement involves an officer (or officers) from one authority providing additional capacity to another authority on a short term basis (this could be as maternity cover or on an ‘as and when’ basis). These types of arrangements tend to be agreed on quite short-notice as a short-term ‘fix’.
- 1.13 The type of arrangement that is entered into will dictate the level of legal agreements and governance arrangements that are required.

Other arrangements

- 1.14 The council is also involved in a number of commissioning arrangements, whereby the council is paid to deliver a service on behalf of another organisation. This is not a partnership arrangement although some of the principles within this framework may apply to this way of working and it will be important for these arrangements to have agreed terms of reference or service level agreements.

2. Council Policy for Partnership Development

- 2.1 The council recognises the importance of ensuring that its partnerships serve a useful public purpose, are effective in achieving their aims and provide good value for the time, effort and money put into them.
- 2.2 As such, the council will be willing, in principle, to enter into partnership arrangements with other organisations and bodies where the following one or more conditions are satisfied:
 - a. there is a clear purpose for the partnership that will contribute to fulfilling the council's statutory duties and/or meeting its policy objectives (including the general well-being of Gravesham's communities);
 - b. this purpose cannot be achieved satisfactorily by the council or any of the partners acting alone or by some other method;
 - c. the partnership will benefit the council through providing resilience to its services, efficiency in the use of the council's resources, potential savings and /or income to the council in delivering service in a more efficient and joined-up way.
- 2.3 A key factor for consideration in all partnership arrangements, will be if and how the establishment of the arrangement is likely to aid the council in fulfilling its statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

Opportunities for Partnership Working (appendices one, two and three)

- 2.4 For all partnership working opportunities, a partnership evaluation is required to be carried out by senior officers from the department(s) most concerned, in consultation with the Head of Legal (Shared Service) (Deputy Monitoring Officer) and the Director – Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer), whilst keeping the Corporate Change Manager informed of discussions.
- 2.5 In the case of a partnership with Member level involvement proposed i.e. when council Members will form part of the Partnership Board, the relevant Director will normally be involved as well.
- 2.6 Other officers with specialist knowledge should be consulted if necessary, especially if there are few, if any, precedents for the proposed partnership elsewhere.
- 2.7 Appendix one provides a template for a Partnership Evaluation Form to assist in the assessment of a new partnership. Whilst it is not necessary for this form to be completed, it does cover all of the issues that need to be considered when contemplating entering into a new partnership and therefore its use is **strongly** recommended, **in particular as it documents the consideration and comments from the council's Statutory officers.**
- 2.8 The evaluation of a proposed partnership should attempt to draw up a list of the likely benefits, costs, risks and any potential equalities issues that the partnership may raise and, if possible, to quantify them, or at least describe them clearly.
- 2.9 A risk assessment of the proposed partnership **must** be undertaken to identify any barriers to the delivery of the partnership objectives along with clarifying any mitigation that has already been undertaken or is planned.

- 2.10 The evaluation form includes a section specifically to give consideration to an 'exit strategy' for the partnership. This is to ensure that, before the partnership is formally approved, it is clear how partners can either end the partnership or remove themselves from the partnership if required. It is understood that, at this stage, a comprehensive exit strategy may not be known, but consideration to this should be given at an early stage. This is a very important aspect of the partnership evaluation whether the template is used or not; Members, Directors, the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer should only look to approve a partnership where proper consideration has been given to an 'exit strategy'. An exit strategy must be explicit within the partnership agreement.
- 2.11 Before formally entering into the partnership the opinions of the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Section 151 Officer must be sought and recorded accordingly (ideally on the evaluation form if it is being used). Approval must then be sought as follows:
- 2.11.1 A proposed 'significant' partnership must be discussed at Management Team prior to being submitted to the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder for formal approval alongside the Leader of the Executive. It is the responsibility of the lead officer to present the item to Management Team.
- 2.11.2 A proposed 'other' partnership must be formally approved by the Director, Leader of the Executive and relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder.

3. Council Policy for Shared Services Development

- 3.1 The council appreciates that there may be alternative ways to delivering council services, and that working with other local authorities presents a number of benefits to the public.
- 3.2 As such, the council will explore opportunities for shared working and shared services development where one or more of the following conditions are satisfied:
- a. the shared service/shared working arrangement will provide a saving or income stream to the council whilst maintaining a good standard of service for the public;
 - b. the arrangement will benefit the council through providing resilience to its services, and efficiency in the use of the council's resources
- 3.3 A key factor for consideration in all shared working arrangements, will be if and how the establishment of the arrangement is likely to aid the council in fulfilling its statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
- 3.4 In addition, a set of core principles for the development of shared services has been drawn up with colleagues from other authorities in Kent, which will be the general principles used moving forward in any shared working arrangements. These principles are set out across two key areas:

Central Principles

- **No detrimental impact to our community and residents:** services will only be shared where new arrangements offered do not result in the detriment of services received by our community and residents. Unless there are specific reasons not to, there will be a presence retained at each site, even if minimal.
- **Clarity of purpose, vision, objectives, values and intended outcomes:**
 - Shared service arrangements will be founded on clearly articulated, common aims and outcomes. This could include improved customer services, better resilience, reduced revenue costs, building a momentum towards a bigger, more formal partnership. In each case these will be clarified at the outset.
 - Business cases will include consideration of the extent of risk transference that is acceptable, the degree of formality/informality in any agreement, and the extent of prescription/variation.
- **Working in partnership:**
 - Openness and transparency will be displayed from the outset.
 - All decisions will be taken collectively, in the spirit of partnership working.
 - Regular Project Board meetings will be established to ensure the momentum of projects continues.
 - Opportunities generated as a result of the shared service will be considered benefits for each of the partners; e.g. if the shared service creates an opportunity to let out space in one organisation, the proceeds of this will be shared amongst the partners.

Operational Principles

- **Engaged, flexible and resilient workforces:**
 - Staff will be communicated with about any proposed new arrangements at an early stage, with senior management representatives from the authorities involved to present a fully joined-up approach regardless of the host authority.
 - Staff should all be transferred to the same employing organisation (likely via TUPE transfer), supported by a formal delegation of responsibility for that service from one authority to another.
 - Staff within the shared service will be seen as employees of each respective authority regardless of the host authority, with messaging reinforcing this at every opportunity.
 - Staff will retain access to all resources necessary at each respective authority, regardless of the host authority in the same way as they would if they were directly employed by that authority.
 - Recruitment exercises will be undertaken involving all interested parties (unless agreement is reached to leave this to the host authority); e.g. when the head of the service leaves, the recruitment panel consists of officers from each of the respective partner organisations.
- **Funded fairly:**
 - Agreement to the split of costs will be made early in the development of shared services and the agreed split will be the basis for annual cost sharing and the sharing of set-up costs.
 - Budgets for shared services will be agreed as early as possible, with any review mechanisms and subsequent shared service payments also established at an early stage.
 - Budgets consist only of directly attributable costs relating to service; back-office overheads are not recharged into the arrangement.
 - Where possible, additional funding will be allocated at the outset of the shared service to cover costs arising from the set-up of arrangements e.g. IT costs, furniture, equipment etc.
- **Consistent, effective ICT support:**
 - Staff will be provided with the necessary equipment and IT hardware to carry out their roles efficiently across multiple sites, even if this means providing them with equipment beyond that provided to non-shared service officers.
 - ICT teams will work together to establish the necessary flexibilities in firewalls and network access, e.g. allowing another authority's network to operate within the buildings.

Opportunities for Shared Service Arrangements

- 3.5 The Director (Corporate Services), supported by the Corporate Change Manager, has responsibility for the exploration and progression of shared working arrangements across the council. They will work closely with the relevant service Director and Assistant Director/Service Manager in processing these arrangements as required.
- 3.6 Where opportunities for shared working are identified, an initial discussion should take place with the Director (Corporate Services) and following discussions can then take place with the authority/authorities that have been identified or are supportive of shared working arrangements.
- 3.7 It will be necessary for a business case to be prepared for all full shared service and joint management arrangements. Appendix two provides a template for a Shared Services business case to assist in the assessment of a new arrangement. Whilst it is not necessary for this form to be completed, it does cover all of the issues that need to be considered when contemplating entering into a new shared service arrangement and therefore its use is recommended.
- 3.8 For joint officer and more ad-hoc arrangements, it is not necessary for a full business case to be drawn up. It is however, useful to consider the key points within the business case for such arrangements in order to ensure that they will provide the service that is required by the council as a whole.
- 3.9 Before formally entering into any shared service arrangement the opinions of the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Section 151 Officer must be sought to ensure that there are no legal implications and a thorough financial analysis has been completed.
- 3.10 Approval must then be sought as follows:
 - 3.10.1 For all full shared service, joint management or joint officer arrangement, the Leader of the Executive, in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Portfolio holder(s), has delegated responsibilities for all shared services/joint-working initiatives.
 - 3.10.2 For ad-hoc arrangements, formal Member approval is not required, although it is important that the Leader of the Executive and the Cabinet Portfolio Holder are kept informed of current working arrangements.
- 3.11 In addition, it may be necessary to keep the relevant Cabinet Committee updated with the progression of such an arrangement.

Key factors to be considered in setting-up shared working arrangements

- 3.12 There are a number of factors that need to be taken into account when establishing shared services:
 - 3.12.1 **Delivering savings and/or Increased Resilience** – a key driver for shared working is the realisation of savings for all authorities involved. Secondary to this is the potential to increase resilience for services which is particularly important where the individual teams are small.

- 3.12.2 **Officer Consultation** - where significant changes to working arrangements are proposed, it may be necessary to undertake a consultation with the officers that are to be affected by the change. The Personnel/HR Teams should be kept informed of all proposals and will be able to advise if a consultation is necessary. Where a consultation process with officers is required, the consultation will take place in accordance with all relevant guidance and/or legislation.
- 3.12.3 **Facilities Management** – consideration needs to be given to the location of the shared service/joint working arrangement and the impact this may have on the employee and the employer. This may result in additional travel costs, hardware costs etc. and these need to be considered when establishing the arrangement.
- 3.13 With any shared service, it is imperative that all staff affected by any change are kept up-to-date with any potential changes. Communication is a key factor in the success of any type of shared or joint-working arrangement.

4. Procedure for Managing Partnerships and Shared Service Arrangements

- 4.1 It is important that there are suitable governance arrangements in place for both partnerships and shared working arrangements. The partnership or shared service agreement will be the key governance document, although what they should actually include will differ depending on the type of arrangement. Appendix three provides a summary of the key elements to consider in both types of arrangements.
- 4.2 Whatever type of arrangement is in place, the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy Monitoring Officer) must be involved in the development of any formal agreement that the council enters into. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and covers everything that is necessary for the type and level of arrangement in place.
- 4.3 Specifically in terms of governance arrangement for partnerships, there are a number of things that need to be considered:
- a. eligibility for membership and rules for the admission of new partners, for the exit of partner(s) and for termination;
 - b. representation of each of the partners in the direction of the partnership's activities, and their authority to act on behalf of their parent organisations;
 - c. rules for making decisions on behalf of the partnership;
 - d. rules governing meetings (frequency, notice, quorum, chairing, voting, etc.);
 - e. recording decisions and reporting them to the partners and to the public;
 - f. ensuring that decisions are properly carried out;
 - g. the responsibilities of the partners to each other;
 - h. reviewing of performance and financial information of the partnership;
 - i. ensuring there are arrangements for any individual or partner organisations to declare and record a personal, pecuniary or other interest in the activities of the partnership.
 - j. ensuring that where interests are declared there are procedures for managing and resolving potential conflicts of interest –
 - i) to adopt rules to distinguish different categories of decision according to their importance and whether or not to permit majority voting to decide issues; and
 - ii) between the interests of individual decision-making representatives and the interests of all or some of the partners (i.e. rules for declaring personal interests and taking/not taking part in decisions);
 - k. maintaining high ethical standards in the conduct of the partnership's business, including the promotion of equality and respect for all sections of the community
 - l. amending the Partnership Agreement;
 - m. dealing with breaches of the Agreement.
- 4.4 The proposed governance arrangements for any new partnership should be considered prior to entering into the partnership and should form part of the evaluation criteria for the partnership.

Performance and Financial Management

- 4.5 The partnership or shared working arrangement should have proper arrangements for:
- a. stating the specific expected outcomes to be achieved through partnership or shared working.
 - b. setting targets to demonstrate these expected outcomes, the actions to be taken to achieve them and the responsibilities for those actions;
 - c. reporting regularly on performance against targets and the progress made towards the partnership's aims generally;
 - d. reviewing and updating targets.
 - e. regular monitoring of finances through quarterly (as a minimum) budget monitoring reports.
- 4.6 It is important that the performance of all partnerships and shared working arrangements is monitored in order to ensure that the partnership/shared service is achieving its stated objectives and is not having a detrimental impact on the overall performance of the service and/or council.
- 4.7 In addition, these arrangements will enable the council to assess whether it is achieving good value from the money it spends and the time put into it by the partners and officers.

Managing Risks

- 4.8 Risk management is a key feature of good corporate governance and sound business practice. The risk management policy of Gravesham is to adopt best practices in the identification, evaluation and cost-effective control of risks. Specifically with regards to partnership working and shared services, risk management needs to be applied at the commencement of any arrangement but also during the setting of objectives at a strategic or operation level.
- 4.9 Risk assessments are intended to ensure that risks are eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level, thereby safeguarding the partnership's assets, employees and customers and also the delivery of services to the local community.
- 4.10 A risk assessment should be delivered in the form of a risk register (the format of which is not prescribed but should consider the likelihood of the risk occurring, the impact the risk will have and any mitigating factors). The register must be monitored and reviewed and this process will contribute significantly to the performance management of the partnership with regards to progress against objectives.

Public Information and Complaints

- 4.11 If a partnership or shared service is providing services directly to the public, it is important that it gives clear information about those services, how to access them and what to do in the event of a problem or complaint. Such partnerships or shared service arrangements should have clear written Complaints Procedure (in respect of a shared service, this will normally form part of the Corporate Complaints procedure for the [host](#) authority).

Maintaining Ethical Standards

- 4.12 Members and Officers are expected to maintain the highest standards of conduct when working in a partnership or in a shared service context. The relevant Codes of Conduct and Protocols set out in Annex 3 to the Council's Constitution should apply, including when working on a secondment or exchange basis. These include the "Seven Principles of Public Life":
- a. Selflessness: They should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
 - b. Honesty and Integrity: They should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.
 - c. Objectivity: They should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.
 - d. Accountability: They should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.
 - e. Openness: They should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.
 - f. Respect for Others: They should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers, and its other employees.
 - g. Duty to Uphold the Law: They should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

5. Responsibilities for Partnerships and Shared Service Arrangements

- 5.1 The following provides guidance to Members and officers of the council participating in, managing or overseeing established partnership and/or shared working arrangements on behalf of the council;

Cabinet Portfolio Holders

- 5.2 In relation to partnerships the Cabinet Portfolio Holders, in consultation with the Leader of the Executive, have overall responsibility for overseeing and reviewing the partnerships in which the council participates. In particular, the Cabinet Portfolio Holders will:
- 5.2.1 review all new partnerships that fall within their portfolio areas and, as required, ensure these are approved through Cabinet.
 - 5.2.2 receive an annual update of the partnerships in which the council is involved to ensure that they continue to be necessary and are operating effectively and efficiently
 - 5.2.3 exercise a particular responsibility for those partnerships where the council is represented at Member level.
- 5.3 In relation to shared service arrangements, the Cabinet Portfolio Holders in conjunction with the Leader of the Executive, have delegated responsibilities for all shared-services/joint-working initiatives. In particular the Cabinet Portfolio Holders will:
- 5.3.1 review and, where appropriate, approve all new shared service arrangements that fall within their portfolio areas.
 - 5.3.2 receive regular updates from officers on the shared service and in particular, how this is actually working for the council.

Chief Executive, Directors, Assistant Directors and Service Managers

- 5.4 The senior management of the council are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the Partnership and Shared Working Framework are met for all partnerships and shared working arrangements in which their departments are involved.
- 5.5 The Monitoring Officer (or Deputy Monitoring Officer) and the Section 151 Officer are responsible for ensuring sound advice is given in relation to legal and financial aspects of the partnerships and shared service arrangements either in place or being proposed.
- 5.6 The Corporate Change team are responsible for ensuring that:
- 5.6.1 a central record is kept of all partnerships and shared working arrangements in which the council is involved;
 - 5.6.2 effective arrangements exist to make sure that partnerships and/or shared working arrangements are created, managed and reviewed in accordance with the requirements of this Partnership Framework;

- 5.6.3 a formal register of the council's partnership and shared working arrangements is maintained and published, and reported through the Cabinet Committee at least once a year.

Responsibilities in Individual Partnerships and Shared Service Arrangements

- 5.7 Those involved in partnership and shared service work have a responsibility to the council and the wider public to help make it a success, and so should collaborate with their colleagues in the arrangement to achieve its aims, exploit opportunities and overcome problems.
- 5.8 At the same time, they also have a duty to the council and the wider public to ensure that the arrangement is effective, gives value for money and is conducted in a proper manner.
- 5.9 Therefore, any Member or officer of the council appointed to represent the council's interests in a partnership or working in a shared arrangement should be made aware of these responsibilities at the time of their appointment.
- 5.10 Although the Partnership Agreement or the Shared Service Agreement should provide a framework for fulfilling these responsibilities, in the event of concern or uncertainty about how the partnership is working, the relevant Director, Assistant Director or Service Manager should be consulted and, if the matter is of serious concern, the [Head of Legal \(Shared Service\) \(Deputy Monitoring Officer\)](#) and the Director (Corporate Services) should also be consulted.

6. Partnership monitoring and review

- 6.1 Those Members and officers appointed to represent the council on partnerships, or officers who work in a shared service arrangement, have the primary responsibility for day-to-day monitoring – through their involvement in meetings, reading of reports and discussions with officers, the public and others.
- 6.2 They are expected to consult with and keep the Chief Executive, the relevant Director, Assistant Director, Service Manager and Cabinet Portfolio Holders (as appropriate) informed of important issues, achievements and any problems that may arise.
- 6.3 The Chief Executive, Directors, Assistant Directors and Service Managers, in consultation with the Assistant Director (Governance and Law) and the Director (Corporate Services) have a responsibility to make enquiries and take appropriate action concerning any issues that may arise from the various sources of information available to them about the council's partnership work or shared service arrangement.
- 6.4 Sources of information for the successful monitoring of partnerships or shared working arrangements may include:
 - a. Minutes of partnership or shared service meetings;
 - b. Budget monitoring information;
 - c. Performance reports both annual and more frequent;
 - d. Enquiry and complaints monitoring;
 - e. Formal and informal feedback from the Council's representatives on partnerships or shared working arrangements;
 - f. Bi-lateral discussions with partners/shared working authorities.
- 6.5 Information obtained from the monitoring and review process may be confidential or subject to [General Data Protection Regulations \(GDPR\)](#). Members and officers have duties to ensure that relevant information is treated confidentially and complies with data protection legislation. The Partnership Agreement or Shared Service Agreement will contain obligations upon the council and its partners for handling of confidential information and compliance with [GDPR](#).

Partnership Reviews

- 6.6 A full review of the council's Partnership and Shared Service Register will be undertaken on an annual basis with the revised Partnership register published on the council's website. This review will be undertaken during the [Autumn](#) of each year but updates will be made to the register throughout the year should it be necessary, such as with the introduction of new partnerships/shared working arrangements.
- 6.7 Cabinet Portfolio Holders will keep the partnerships and shared working arrangements within their own specific remit under regular review. Should they feel it necessary, they may seek the advice of the Members within their Cabinet Committees if they have any concerns or wish to raise any matters for wider discussion.

- 6.8 In addition, as part of the annual work programme of the Overview Scrutiny Committee, the Chair and Vice-chair of the Committee will select one partnership for review each year, based upon the Partnership and Shared Service register. The responsible officer for the partnership will be required to provide additional detailed information on the partnership or shared service and attend a meeting of the Overview Scrutiny Committee to discuss this in detail.
- 6.9 A review of the governance arrangements of partnerships and shared service arrangements will be undertaken in February/March each year to feed into the council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The review will look at gaining assurance from the relevant Director, Assistant Director, Service Managers and other key managers, that each partnership/shared service has the appropriate governance arrangements in place and will ask responsible officers to provide assurance that the arrangement is still meeting the objectives set out in the register.
- 6.10 The Corporate Change Manager is responsible for co-ordinating the reviews detailed above.

Internal Audit Review of Partnerships

- 6.11 The council's Internal Audit team may conduct audits of partnership and/or shared service arrangements where a need is identified either;
- 6.11.1 Through the annual audit needs assessment. This selects the audits for the coming year on a 'risk' basis following discussions with the relevant Director.
- 6.11.2 Where the organisation seeks assurance from internal audit on either the framework as a whole or over individual partnerships/shared service arrangements.

Gravesham Borough Council Partnership Evaluation

Partnership Assessment

Name of Partnership	
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Date partnership due to commence		Date partnership due to terminate (if applicable)	
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Statutory Status	
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Where will the partnership operate (please specify)	<i>Please state whether or not this is a partnership for just the Gravesham area or if it is wider i.e. Dartford and Gravesham, Kent-wide etc).</i>
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Lead Organisation (if applicable)	
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Overall resources available to the partnership	
• Overall partnership budget	£
• Has external funding been secured for the partnership? If so, how much and what will it be used for?	Yes/No £ <i>Use: i.e. funding to be used to pay for two members of staff to manage the partnership.</i>
• Potential external funding that could be sought?	<i>Please provide brief details of other potential external; funding – this will be covered in more detail in the ‘Costs Analysis’.</i>
• Number of dedicated staff (FTE and costs if possible)	FTE £
• Other (e.g. resources provided in kind)	

Organisation involved in the partnership and budgetary contribution	Name	Contribution (£)
• Businesses/Private Sector		
• Individuals		
• Community Groups		
• Voluntary Sectors		
• Other		

Resource input by Gravesham Borough Council	
• Dedicated budget	£
• Staffing (enter number of staff and estimation of time in working days per year)	FTE No. working days
• Other (e.g. resources provided in kind)	

Member input to the partnership (if ‘Yes’ please specify which Member and their role in the partnership)	
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<p>Does the partnership contribute to the council's overall corporate objectives? (if 'Yes' please identify, in detail)</p>	
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<p>What are the anticipated outcomes for the council?</p>	<p><i>Please provide brief details of the anticipated outcomes for the council entering the partnership – community outcomes will be covered in more detail in the 'Benefits Analysis'.</i></p>
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<p>Lead officer from Gravesham Borough Council</p>	
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<p>Name and title of person completing the assessment and date</p>	
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Significant partnership¹

Other partnership

If this is to be a **significant** partnership please complete the self-assessment form fully. This will then be reviewed by the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy Monitoring Officer) and the Section 151 Officer (Director – Corporate Services). Following their review this will then be signed off by the Chief Executive/Director and Lead Member for submission to Cabinet for formal approval, prior to formally entering into the partnership.

If this is to be an **'other'** partnership please complete the self-assessment form; it is accepted that the level of detail required may differ to that of a significant partnership. This will then be reviewed by the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy Monitoring Officer) and the Section 151 Officer (Director – Corporate Services). Following their review, this will then be signed off by the Chief Executive/Director and Lead Member prior to formally entering into the partnership.

¹ A significant partnership is defined as a partnership for which there is a council resource provision of £10,000 or greater or one that is fundamental to the delivery of the goals and objectives of the Council's corporate plan. Without this effective partnership therefore, the delivery of Gravesham Borough Council's key corporate goals would not occur

Proposed Partnership - Assessment

Self-assessment - Benefits, Costs, Risk and Equalities Assessment

Benefits analysis:	
What is the partnership planning to achieve?	<i>Main aims and/or objectives of the partnership.</i>
What evidence is there that this is needed (e.g. from research and analysis or from experience elsewhere)?	<i>How do we know that we need to have this partnership? What information do we have that supports the need for this partnership? Have consultations been undertaken with the public and/or stakeholders. If so, what has been their response?</i>
Will it make a contribution to achieving the council's own aims and objectives? If so, what are the corporate priorities/targets that the partnership will help to deliver?	<i>Please specify the Corporate Plan areas of focus that this partnership will contribute to.</i>
What are the contributions towards the council's objectives that will be made by the partnership in the first year?	<i>By entering into the partnership, what will we expect to actually see delivered by the partnership within the first year – specifically for the council?</i>
What will be the outcomes for the community as a result of the partnership?	<i>What will be the outcomes of the partnership for the actual users? What will the community be able to see as a result of this partnership?</i>
If the partnership is not established, what are the alternatives for delivery of the objectives?	<i>Can the objectives/outcomes be achieved through other means other than the partnership? What would be the cost implications to the council for an alternative approach?</i>
What are the consequences of not establishing the partnership?	<i>If the council does not enter into this partnership what will be the consequences of this action?</i>
How will we know if the partnership is a success?	<i>What measures are in place to enable monitoring of the partnership? Specifically, will VfM Indicators be introduced (monitoring cost, partnership/service performance and customer satisfaction).</i>
How does the partnership contribute to the council's overall Safeguarding objectives?	<i>Will this partnership have any impact on the lives of children and/or vulnerable adults? If so, how? How does this partnership support the council's wider Safeguarding commitment? Is there a clear procedure to follow in the event that the work of the partnership and/or its members uncovers a safeguarding issue?</i>

Costs analysis:	
What is the estimated financial cost of setting up the partnership (for GBC)?	<i>How much will it cost to set up the partnership? Will this be met by existing budgets or is additional funding required? Is this capital or revenue expenditure?</i>
What is the estimated financial cost of running the partnership (for GBC)?	<i>What will be the ongoing running costs of the partnership? Will this be met by existing budgets or is additional funding required? How long will these costs have to be found by the council?</i>

Costs analysis:	
What additional resources are required for the partnership, provided by GBC?	<i>What other resources will the council provide to the partnership in terms of officer time (and level of officer support i.e. admin, senior officer etc.)? What other resources will the council provide 'in kind' such as property etc.</i>
What other potential sources of income exist and have they been explored?	<i>Are there any grant funding streams that could be utilised for the partnership or other government funding? If so, provide details of how this has been explored or is expected to be explored.</i>
Will the creation of this partnership have an impact on the council's ability to deliver any other services/ objectives?	<i>If this partnership is created, will resources have to be taken from one task and re-allocated elsewhere. Will this have an impact on other services?</i>
How will the partnership be able to demonstrate value for money?	<i>What measures are to be introduced in order for the council to assess whether or not the partnership is delivering value for money. Specifically, will VfM Indicators be introduced (monitoring cost, partnership/service performance and customer satisfaction).</i>

Risk analysis:	
Has a risk assessment of the proposed partnership been undertaken	<i>Yes/No If 'Yes' please ensure a copy of the risk assessment is attached. If 'No' a risk assessment must be completed prior to the partnership being put forward to Cabinet for formal approval.</i>
How likely is it that something could cause serious problems	<i>Examples - external funding being withdrawn, accidents, vandalism, changing public demand or taste, shortages of expertise, legal claims, other partners withdrawing and leaving the Council with liabilities, etc.)?</i>
Does the council and partners have adequate insurance to cover the partnership?	<i>Have you checked with the Finance Team that the council's insurance is adequate for the partnership that is being entered into? Do the partner organisations have adequate insurance and how can you be sure of this.</i>
Where there are risks not covered by insurance, is it possible to insure against any of these risks?	
What does experience elsewhere tell us about how risky this type of partnership is?	
Is it possible that the nature of the risks involved and their impact on the partnership could change dramatically over the expected life of the partnership (e.g. due to demographic changes, political or economic uncertainties)?	

Equalities Analysis	
Does the proposed partnership pose any potential issues in respect of the equalities protected characteristics?	<i>The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civic partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. A summary should be provided to show the partnership has been reviewed to determine if there is any 'negative impact' on any of the protected characteristics.</i>
If there is any 'negative impact', what action will be taken to mitigate it?	<i>Provide details of how any potential 'negative impacts' are being managed to ensure the partnership can work fairly across all protected characteristics.</i>

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)	
Does the proposed partnership pose any potential issues in respect of GDPR? If so, what and how are these to be overcome?	<i>Consideration must be given to the GDPR regulations and ensuring that the partnership is able to operate within the constraints of GDPR. A Data Protection Impact Assessment may not be required but if it is, should be appended to the evaluation form.</i>

Partnership Governance Arrangements

It is essential that all partnerships that the council enters into has good governance arrangements. As a council we have a responsibility for ensuring that we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It is therefore essential that for any partnership that the council is involved in, there are clear arrangements in place to ensure we are meeting all of the above elements of good governance. .

The partnership has the following governance arrangements in place (or drafted ready for formal approval):	
Terms of reference and/or Constitution	<i>Yes/No and provide details of where this will be held if the partnership is formally adopted.</i>
Eligibility for membership and rules for the admission of new partners	
Rules for making decisions on behalf of the partnership	
Rules governing meetings (frequency, notice, quorum, chairing, voting, etc.)	
Rules for recording decisions and reporting them to the partners and to the public	
Policy for managing conflicts in the partnership	
Code for maintaining ethical standards	
A (draft) Partnership Agreement outlining the above	
Performance monitoring arrangements	

The partnership has the following governance arrangements in place (or drafted ready for formal approval):	
Financial monitoring arrangements	
Risk monitoring arrangements	
Dealing with public complaints and compliments	
Audit requirements	

NB: a number of the above may be included within the Constitution and/or terms of reference and therefore may not be separate documents.

Partnership Exit Strategy

Please provide details of the 'exit strategy' that has been discussed in relation to the partnership.	<i>Before agreeing to enter into a partnership, an understanding of how the partnership can end will be required. The exit strategy should include details of how the partnership will be suspended, dissolved or terminated as required.</i>
--	---

**Gravesham Borough Council
Partnership Evaluation
Partnership Endorsement**

Officer Completing the Form _____ Date: _____

Based on the information above, should the partnership be agreed and put forward for formal adoption at Cabinet?	Comments to be provided by the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy Monitoring Officer) and the Section 151 Officer (Director – Corporate Services) to provide their endorsement of the partnership or to provide details as to why the partnership will not be endorsed.
---	--

Agreed (put forward to Cabinet for formal approval if a significant partnership)

Chief Executive/Director _____ Date: _____

Leader of the Executive _____ Date: _____

Cabinet Portfolio Holder _____ Date: _____



Shared Services / Joint Working Business Case

#####

Author: *Relevant Directors who will be presenting the report for approval at each authority involved.*

Client: *Relevant departments involved at each authority*

Date:

Contents

		Page Reference
1.	Introduction and Strategic Requirements of the Service	
2.	Strategic and Operational Benefits	
3.	Constraints and Dependencies	
4.	Legal and Constitutional / Governance Issues	
5.	Equalities Impact Assessment	
6.	Risks	
7.	Existing Working Arrangements	
8.	Cost/Benefit Evaluation of Options and Recommendation	
9.	High-level Options	

Appendices

1. Business Case History
2. Current Staffing Arrangements

1. Introduction and Strategic Requirements of the Service

1.1 Scope for shared service/joint working arrangements

Brief outline of the shared service/joint-working opportunities and the services involved in the proposed arrangements.

1.2 Potential stakeholders/partners

The councils and/or any other organisations that may be involved in the proposed arrangements.

1.3 Current service provision arrangements of potential stakeholders/partners

Explain whether the existing services are in-house, shared or outsourced and give high-level reporting lines. (NB: section 7 will provide details of the existing working arrangements)

1.4 Contribution to key council objectives

Service links to corporate plan or corporate objectives.

1.5 Statutory Obligations

List any statutory obligations regarding the service.

2. Strategic and Operational Benefits of Joint Working

2.1 Strategic Benefits

Benefit	Measure
<i>List the benefits to the councils and customers.</i>	<i>How will we know each 'benefit' has been achieved – satisfaction, processing times etc?</i>

3. Constraints and Dependencies

3.1 Constraints to the project progressing

- **Organisational Constraints**

- *E.g. geographical locations, legal issues, cultural differences, political issues*
-

- **Resource Constraints**

- *E.g. system/equipment compatibility, staff terms & conditions, other staff issues, availability of skill sets*
-

- **Time Constraints**

- *E.g. key deadlines which may impede the progression of this arrangement*
-

3.2 Dependencies for the project progressing

- *Impact of other factors on the long-term viability or ongoing return on investment of the project e.g. known or predicted future events*
-

4. Legal and Constitutional/Governance Issues

4.1 The partnership/joint-working arrangement will be made pursuant to section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972, which allows a local authority to place any of its officers, who consent to the arrangement, at the disposal of another local authority on such terms as may be agreed between the parties.

4.2 *Details of committees and reporting mechanisms along with details of any schemes of delegations in place and other constitutional issues that need to be taken into account.*

5. Equalities Impact Assessment

5.1 *An equalities impact assessment should be undertaken for all proposed shared/joint-working proposals. This should focus on:*

- *What will be the equalities impact on the customer*
- *What will be the equalities impact on officers/staff involved*
- *If there is any 'negative impact' on either groups, how will this be resolved in order for the initiative to be progressed.*

6. Consideration of General Data Protection Requirements (GDPR)

- 6.1 *A consideration of any specific requirements in relation to GDPR should be considered and recorded . A full Data Protection Impact Assessment may not be required but if it is, it should be appended to the business case.*

7. Risks

7.1 'Do Nothing' Risks – if there is no change to existing arrangements

Risk identified	Action to mitigate risk
<i>Risks to either council if there is no change to existing working arrangements</i>	<i>Action that could be taken to mitigate this risk?</i>

NB: A risk assessment has been undertaken for each option and is contained within section 7.

8. Existing Working Arrangements

8.1 Departmental Structures

Insert current departmental/team structures of both authorities (liaise with Corporate Change Manager re: format for this).

8.2 Summary of arrangements –

	Gravesham BC	
Salary costs (including oncosts)		
Staff numbers (FTE)		
Staff numbers (actual)		
Scope of service	<i>Provide details of the areas of work covered by the departments/teams at each authority to identify similarities/differences.</i>	
Performance levels: <i>List key performance indicators and most recent outturns.</i>		
Current IT systems in use	<i>Provide details of the key IT systems currently being used by the service</i>	

NB: there may be more than one team involved in the shared service/joint working arrangements and therefore it may be necessary to show the set-up of the different teams separately:

8.3 Summary of arrangements – where more than one department/team is involved

	Gravesham BC	
Salary costs (including oncosts)		
Staff numbers (FTE)		
Staff numbers (actual)		
Scope of service		
Performance levels:		
Current IT systems in use		

9. Cost/Benefit Evaluation of Options and Recommendation

- 9.1** *Clear evaluation of the options contained in section 9.*
- 9.2** *Recommended option including copy of financial summary box from recommended option.*

10. High-level options

10.1 Service delivery options

10.1.1 Option 1 –

Project	Responsible Lead	Other Stakeholders	Implementation options

Insert organisation/department structure diagram for this option (liaise with Corporate Change Manager re: format for this).

Key Benefits of this arrangement	Key disadvantages of this arrangement
<i>Key benefits to either organisation of taking this option forward.</i>	<i>Any potential disadvantages to either authority of taking this option forward.</i>

Risks of progressing the option	Mitigating factors
<i>Identify any risks associated with progressing this option.</i>	

Investment/set-up costs

Include all initial and one-off set-up costs

Additional ongoing costs

Include any ongoing, additional costs resulting from this e.g. travel costs etc

Staff cost analysis

Insert staff costs table (liaise with Corporate Change Manager re: utilisation of costs spreadsheet template as well as the Finance Team).

Option 1 – Financial Summary

	Year 1 (£)	Year 2 (£)	Year 3 (£)
Investment/set-up costs			
Additional ongoing costs			
Staff cost savings at GBC			
Staff cost savings at			
Total savings			

Evidence of similar projects (where applicable)

- *Provide details of any areas where this type of arrangement has already been applied and whether it has been successful.*
-

10.1.2 Option 2 -

Project	Responsible Lead	Other Stakeholders	Implementation options

Insert organisation/department structure diagram for this option (liaise with Corporate Change Manager re: format for this).

Key Benefits of this arrangement	Key disadvantages of this arrangement
<i>Key benefits to either organisation of taking this option forward.</i>	<i>Any potential disadvantages to either authority of taking this option forward.</i>

Risks of progressing the option	Mitigating factors
<i>Identify any risks associated with progressing this option.</i>	

Investment/set-up costs

Include all initial and one-off set-up costs

Additional ongoing costs

Include any ongoing, additional costs resulting from this e.g. travel costs etc

Staff cost analysis

Insert staff costs table (liaise with Corporate Change Manager re: utilisation of costs spreadsheet template as well as the Finance Team).

Option 2 – Financial Summary			
	Year 1 (£)	Year 2 (£)	Year 3 (£)
Investment/set-up costs			
Additional ongoing costs			
Staff cost savings at GBC			
Staff cost savings at			
Total savings			

Evidence of similar projects (where applicable)

- *Provide details of any areas where this type of arrangement has already been applied and whether it has been successful.*
-

10.1.3 Option 3 -

Project	Responsible Lead	Other Stakeholders	Implementation options

Insert organisation/department structure diagram for this option (liaise with Corporate Change Manager re: format for this).

Key Benefits of this arrangement	Key disadvantages of this arrangement
<i>Key benefits to either organisation of taking this option forward.</i>	<i>Any potential disadvantages to either authority of taking this option forward.</i>

Risks of progressing the option	Mitigating factors
<i>Identify any risks associated with progressing this option.</i>	

Investment/set-up costs

Include all initial and one-off set-up costs

Additional ongoing costs

Include any ongoing, additional costs resulting from this e.g. travel costs etc

Staff cost analysis

Insert staff costs table (liaise with Corporate Change Manager re: utilisation of costs spreadsheet template as well as the Finance Team).

Option 3 – Financial Summary			
	Year 1 (£)	Year 2 (£)	Year 3 (£)
Investment/set-up costs			
Additional ongoing costs			
Staff cost savings at GBC			
Staff cost savings at			
Total savings			

Evidence of similar projects (where applicable)

- *Provide details of any areas where this type of arrangement has already been applied and whether it has been successful.*
-

Appendices

1. Business Case History

1.1 Revision History

Revision Date	Summary of changes	Changes marked
		--

1.2 Approvals

This document requires the following approvals:

Name	Job title	Date Approved
<i>Provide details of the officers/Members at each authority who will need to be involved in the 'approval' process of the Business Case. This should meet the requirements of the approval process set out in the Shared Services Toolkit.</i>		
<i>The Monitoring Officers and Section 151 Officers at both sites will always be included.</i>		
	Monitoring Officer at Gravesham Borough	
	Section 151 Officer	

1.3 Notification List

The following need to be notified when revisions are made:

Name	Job Title	Date
<i>Provide details of the officers/Members at each authority who need to be notified once the business case is approved and ready for discussion. This will normally include the Chief Executive and any other key officers/Members.</i>		

1.4 Document storage

This document and supporting information is held within the ##### department at ##### Borough Council.

Drawing up a partnership agreement

1. The detail and complexity of any partnership agreement will vary according to the size and importance of the partnership and the resources it consumes, but the following key elements will apply in all cases:
 - 1.1 The council and its partners should agree, and state within the Partnership Agreement:
 - a. the partnership's aims and objectives and what it plans to actually achieve;
 - b. an outline of the rationale for forming the partnership - including why it will enable the partners collectively to achieve results that could not be achieved by each of them acting independently or by some other means.
 - 1.2 The Agreement should state whether the partnership is intended to last indefinitely or for a fixed period (and if so, how long). It should also provide details of any renewal arrangements for the partnership.
 - 1.3 The Agreement should clearly set out the governance arrangements for the partnership (covered fully in section three of this framework).
 - 1.4 Where a partnership will provide services directly to the public, the Agreement should require it to adopt and publish agreed arrangements for:
 - a. informing and consulting the public about the services provided;
 - b. handling complaints, with the aim of ensuring that they are resolved speedily and without 'buck-passing'; and for
 - c. performance monitoring and performance reporting procedures.
 - 1.5 Each Partnership Agreement should set out the following matters clearly:
 - a. the responsibilities for providing funding for the partnership;
 - b. who has the authority to make decisions on how partnership's money and other resources is to be spent;
 - c. whether and how resources can be re-allocated between various activities;
 - d. the partnership's financial reporting arrangements (including arrangements for reporting back to the Council and the other partners)
 - 1.6 The Agreement should require the partnership to adopt an information sharing, data protection and confidentiality protocol to ensure that:
 - a. All the partners are kept informed about matters of mutual interest and concern in order to build trust and understanding across the partnership;
 - b. The confidentiality of privileged information is respected by all partners;
 - c. a consistent and agreed approach is taken to data protection and client confidentiality in those partnerships handling and sharing personally identifiable information;
 - d. suitable indemnities are provided when considered appropriate by the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy Monitoring Officer).

- 1.7 In addition the Agreement should include a specific protocol for dealing with Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. The partnership should designate one officer from a public sector organisation as the FOI officer for the partnership and that officer should consult other partners as necessary regarding any potentially contentious enquiries.
- 1.8 The Agreement must also include provision for:
- a. resolution of disputes between partners
 - b. details of an 'exit strategy' for the partnership members:
 - c. dissolution of the partnership by mutual agreement or on completion of agreed purposes (as appropriate); and for
 - the withdrawal of individual partners from a continuing partnership.
 - within the 'exit strategy' the agreement must ensure that proper consideration is given to:
 - o the Equalities Act 2010, and the impact that dissolution will have on the equalities protected characteristics.
 - o The Children Act 2004 (s11) and Care Act 2014 (s42) and the impact that dissolution will have on the council's statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

In either case, these provisions should include arrangements for the disposition of any resources contributed by the council and held by or for the partnership; and for dealing with any outstanding liabilities that could fall on the council.

2. Once a formal partnership agreement is drawn up, the partnership will commence operation. In deciding on the tasks of the partnership, further key projects or work streams may be agreed. It may therefore be necessary to draw up specific service level agreements for the duration of said projects or work programmes
3. It may not always be necessary to have service level agreements and this will be dependent upon the type of project or work programme that is being agreed. The partnership will need to decide whether the work is covered by the overall partnership agreement or if something more specific is required.

Drawing up a shared service agreement

1. As with a partnership agreement, the detail and complexity of any shared service agreement will vary according to the level of the shared working arrangement in place and the resources it consumes. Key elements for consideration are as follows:
 - 1.1 Details of how the functions of each organisation are delegated (as required).
 - 1.2 How the services are to be provided within the shared service.
 - 1.3 Accommodation – details of where the shared service will be situated and where officers will be expected to visit as part of their duties.
 - 1.4 Staff transfers – if required, details of how staff will be transferred as part of the shared working arrangement along with details of how and when this will take effect.
 - 1.5 Funding – details of how the shared service will be funded by those parties involved and how the payments are to be made.
 - 1.6 Details of any assets and liabilities that need to be taken into account in the agreement.
 - 1.7 Termination – details of how the arrangement can be terminated including the notice period required.
 - 1.8 Freedom of Information and how these requests will be dealt with within the shared service.
 - 1.9 Scope of service – the agreement should also provide, as an annex to the agreement, a detailed description of the services that will be provided by the shared service.
 - 1.10 Safeguarding – as relevant, details of how the establishment of the arrangement is likely to aid the council in fulfilling its statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
2. Joint Manager and Joint Officer arrangements are likely to be a lot less in-depth than the full shared service; this does not however take away from the importance of having a formal agreement in place.