

GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Corporate Register of Partnerships

October 2017

A summary of partnership and shared working
arrangements

Performance & Administration Committee

Gravesham Borough Council

Register of Partnerships – October 2017

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Introduction

The council maintains a comprehensive register of its partnerships and shared working arrangement that is reviewed on an annual basis.

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”***.

In addition to this, the council also splits the partnership register into ‘Significant’ and ‘Key other partnerships’. In order for a partnership to be classified as significant it must meet the following definition:

“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 strategic objective within the council’s Corporate Plan. Without this effective partnership therefore, the delivery of Gravesham Borough Council’s key corporate goals would not occur.”

In addition to partnership working, the council also has a number of shared working arrangements in place which range from a full-shared service with another local authority to shared manager/officer arrangements.

All of the partnerships and shared working arrangements the council is involved in are included in the register as follows:

Page Ref.	Name of Partnership	Significant
3	Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service	
5	Revenues & Benefits Management Arrangements	

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Name of Partnership	Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service
Responsible Officer	Stuart Bobby, Director (Corporate Services)
Lead Member(s)	Councillor Leslie Hills, Lead Member for Performance and Administration
Statutory Status	Local authorities statutorily required to have internal audit.
Aims and objectives of partnership	<p>The Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service was established on 1 March 2016 to provide internal audit, counter Fraud and investigation services to Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council. The work of the service for Gravesham is driven by an annual plan, agreed with the Finance & Audit Committee in March of each year.</p> <p>The vision of the service as set out in its Strategy, agreed with the Finance & Audit Committee in March 2017, is to “deliver high quality assurance, consultancy and counter fraud work to help ensure the authorities meet their objectives. We will act as a catalyst for driving positive change, promoting improvement, learning and innovation so that we can truly add value. By investing in our staff and working to raise our profile, we aim to become the default and respected advisor and critical friend at the heart of Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council”.</p>
Expected outcomes	<p>The Shared Service has achieved the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced cost of the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Service to each council, taking into account any reductions in funding arising from the introduction of the Single Fraud Investigation Service. • Increased resilience. • Increased efficiency through adoption of best working practices and sharing of audit and fraud resources. • Maximising the opportunities presented through sharing a large common boundary, and dealing with similar day-to-day issues.
Links to GBC Strategic Objectives	Corporate Objective 4: <i>Sound and self-sufficient council</i>
GBC Resources (financial, officer, assets etc)	<p>The Shared Service has a total of 14 posts, currently staffed by 11.45FTE. Two posts are currently vacant with recruitment pending.</p> <p>As set out in the Shared Service agreement, approximately 36% of these resources are directed towards delivering the Audit & Counter Fraud Plan for Gravesham, equivalent to approximately 4 FTE (5 FTE when all posts filled).</p> <p>The Shared Service agreement sets out the budgeted cost to Gravesham for 2016-17 as £216,221.</p> <p>The team occupy space in the Civic Centre, though all ICT hardware is provided by Medway Council.</p>
Partnership membership	Gravesham Borough Council and Medway Council.
Governance arrangements	<p>The Shared Service Agreement in place sets out the governance of the service;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S151 responsibilities in relation to the provision of internal audit have been delegated from Gravesham to Medway. • Schedules set out scope of services, service standards, reporting requirements and financial contributions.
Financial reporting arrangements and timeframe for reporting	<p>Gravesham Borough Council is invoiced on a quarterly basis by Medway Council as host of the Shared Service.</p> <p>The expenditure budget for this arrangement is monitored through the council’s internal budget monitoring processes and reported via the established financial reporting arrangements.</p>

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<p>Performance monitoring arrangements and details of formal review of partnership arrangements.</p>	<p>The Shared Service has established a suite of performance measures and arrangements to report on the outputs and performance of the team to the council's Management Team and Finance & Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>The council's Annual Governance Review and Statement considers the effectiveness of internal audit arrangements.</p>		
<p>Risk Assessment</p>	<p>The Shared Service has a business plan and risk register in place for the delivery of its services.</p>		
<p>Date Partnership Created / Approved by Cabinet</p>	<p>1 June 2015: Cabinet approval given for the partnership to become a full shared service.</p> <p>1 March 2016: Shared Service launched.</p>	<p>Date Partnership Terminates (if applicable)</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Significant partnership

Other partnership

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Name of Partnership	Revenues & Benefits Management Arrangement
Responsible Officer	Stuart Bobby, Director (Corporate Services)
Lead Member(s)	Councillor Leslie Hills, Lead Member for Performance and Administration
Statutory Status	Non-statutory partnership
Aims and objectives of partnership	To jointly manage the Revenues & Benefits Teams of Gravesham Borough Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC) to provide savings while maintaining an excellent service.
Expected outcomes	<p>The key aim of the partnership is to provide a high quality, value for money service that improves benefits administration performance and maximises revenues collection rates whilst maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction.</p> <p>The joint management arrangement is already delivering financial savings in the cost of providing the service at each council.</p> <p>It is also anticipated that the joint management arrangement will increase the resilience for the two authorities through staff being able to help out at either authority as required. The ability to re-direct resources between the two authorities has already proved advantageous to each authority in helping to manage peaks and troughs in workload.</p> <p>Other benefits will be the ability to continually take the best practice arrangements from each council which should help to ensure the efficient delivery of a high quality service.</p> <p>It has also been a good opportunity to review the possibility of a full shared service arrangement between the two Revenues & Benefits Service areas</p>
Links to GBC Strategic Objectives	Corporate Objective 4: <i>Sound and self-sufficient council</i>
GBC Resources (financial, officer, assets etc)	<p>Joint management arrangement.</p> <p>Mike Bytheway, Service Manager Revenues & Benefits at GBC, now manages the Revenues & Benefits teams at both sites on a 50:50 basis. The Service Manager Revenues & Benefits remains on the GBC payroll – but half of the costs are recharged to TMBC.</p> <p>Glen Pritchard, Principal Revenues Officer at TMBC, now manages the Revenues teams at both sites on a 50:50 basis. The Principal Revenues Officer remains on the TMBC payroll – but half of the costs are recharged to GBC.</p> <p>GBC Assets – whilst onsite at GBC, the Service Manager Revenues & Benefits and the Principal Revenues Officer utilises desk space, IT computer network and telephone resources.</p>
Partnership membership	Gravesham Borough Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Governance arrangements	<p>Partnership Agreement in place (signed by both partners and the secondee) which sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agreed secondment arrangements for the officer involved including details of the services that are to be provided under the terms of the agreement; • How secondment costs are to be calculated and shared between the two partners; • The responsibilities of each partner in relation to management of the secondee; • Arrangements for maintaining confidentiality of information held by each partner; and • Arrangements for the resolution of conflicts/disputes and the termination of the secondment arrangement.

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Financial reporting arrangements and timeframe for reporting	The cost of the arrangement is included in the Partnership Agreements, TMBC agree to pay 50% of the cost of employing the Service Manager (Revenues and Benefits) whilst GBC agree to pay 50% of the cost of employing the Revenues Manager.		
Performance monitoring arrangements and details of formal review of partnership arrangements.	A Partnership Agreement is in place to set the parameters for the joint-management arrangement and performance monitoring is completed on a weekly basis and issued to the relevant directors on a weekly basis. The Partnerships are subject to on-going review by the relevant directors at each authority. It has been decided to enter into a fully shared Revenues & Benefits Service to be located at Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council as a result of the successful partnership working.		
Risk Assessment	Potential risk that the Revenues and Benefits Section may suffer some reduction in performance due to the managers not being on-site full time. However, they can access GBC IT systems from TMBC and staff are aware that they can be contacted at either authority. It is anticipated that this risk is over-compensated for by the other efficiencies derived from the partnership. Monthly performance reports are circulated to management to highlight any major areas of concern to enable action to be taken as necessary and quarterly performance management information is provided to Members.		
Date Partnership Created / Approved by Cabinet	12 January 2009	Date Partnership Terminates (if applicable)	N/A

Significant partnership

Other partnership