



## **GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **Corporate Register of Partnerships and Shared Working Arrangements**

**October 2018**

**Performance and Administration Committee**

# Gravesham Borough Council

## Register of Partnerships and Shared Working Arrangements

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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.

#### Partnerships

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.”***

#### **Shared Working Arrangements**

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. The council is currently involved in the following shared working arrangements:

<b>Page Ref.</b>	<b>Name of Partnership</b>
3	Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service
5	Revenues & Benefits Management Arrangements

#### **Glossary of Terms (Page 7)**

Throughout the document, there are a number of terms that are used and it was felt that it would be useful to provide a ‘Glossary of Terms’ in order to provide further clarification of some of the terminology used within the document.

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<b>Name of Partnership</b>	<b>Audit &amp; Counter Fraud Shared Service</b>
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Stuart Bobby, Director (Corporate Services)
<b>Lead Member(s)</b>	Councillor Derek Shelbrooke, Lead Member for Performance and Administration
<b>Statutory Status</b>	Local authorities statutorily required to have internal audit.
<b>Aims and objectives of partnership</b>	<p>The Audit &amp; 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 &amp; Audit Committee in March of each year.</p> <p>The vision of the service as set out in its Strategy, agreed with the Finance &amp; Audit Committee in March 2018, 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>
<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<p>The Shared Service has achieved the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Increased resilience.</li> <li>• Increased efficiency through adoption of best working practices and sharing of audit and fraud resources.</li> <li>• Maximising the opportunities presented through sharing a large common boundary, and dealing with similar day-to-day issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to GBC Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>Corporate Objective 4: <i>Sound and self-sufficient council</i></b>
<b>GBC Resources (financial, officer, assets etc)</b>	<p>The Shared Service has a total of 14 posts, currently staffed by 13FTE. One of the three part time officers has recently taken flexible retirement, freeing up the remaining hours for a full time post. Recruitment will take place ready for the new financial year.</p> <p>As set out in the Shared Service agreement, approximately 36% of these resources are directed towards delivering the Audit &amp; Counter Fraud Plan for Gravesham, equivalent to approximately 4.5 FTE (5 FTE when all posts filled).</p> <p>The Shared Service agreement sets out the budgeted cost to Gravesham for 2018-19 as £201, 692.</p> <p>The team occupy space in the Civic Centre, though all ICT hardware is provided by Medway Council.</p>
<b>Partnership membership</b>	Gravesham Borough Council and Medway Council.
<b>Governance arrangements</b>	<p>The Shared Service Agreement in place sets out the governance of the service;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S151 responsibilities in relation to the provision of internal audit have been delegated from Gravesham to Medway.</li> <li>• Schedules set out scope of services, service standards, reporting requirements and financial contributions.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Financial reporting arrangements and timeframe for reporting</b></p>	<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>		
<p><b>Performance monitoring arrangements and details of formal review of partnership arrangements.</b></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 &amp; 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><b>Risk Assessment</b></p>	<p>The Shared Service has a business plan and risk register in place for the delivery of its services.</p>		
<p><b>Safeguarding Obligations</b></p>	<p>There are no direct safeguarding obligations for this service; however, the assurance activity undertaken by the service does look at various services and their management of their safeguarding obligations.</p>		
<p><b>Date Partnership Created / Approved by Cabinet</b></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><b>Date Partnership Terminates (if applicable)</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>

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<b>Name of Partnership</b>	<b>Revenues &amp; Benefits Management Arrangement</b>
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Stuart Bobby, Director (Corporate Services)
<b>Lead Member(s)</b>	Councillor Derek Shelbrook, Lead Member for Performance and Administration
<b>Statutory Status</b>	Non-statutory partnership
<b>Aims and objectives of partnership</b>	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.
<b>Expected outcomes</b>	<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>
<b>Links to GBC Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>Corporate Objective 4: <i>Sound and self-sufficient council</i></b>
<b>GBC Resources (financial, officer, assets etc)</b>	<p>Joint management arrangement.</p> <p>Mike Bytheway, Service Manager Revenues &amp; Benefits at GBC, now manages the Revenues &amp; Benefits teams at both sites on a 50:50 basis. The Service Manager Revenues &amp; 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><b>GBC Assets</b> – whilst onsite at GBC, the Service Manager Revenues &amp; Benefits and the Principal Revenues Officer utilises desk space, IT computer network and telephone resources.</p>
<b>Partnership membership</b>	Gravesham Borough Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
<b>Governance arrangements</b>	<p>Partnership Agreement in place (signed by both partners and the secondee) which sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The agreed secondment arrangements for the officer involved including details of the services that are to be provided under the terms of the agreement;</li> <li>• How secondment costs are to be calculated and shared between the two partners;</li> <li>• The responsibilities of each partner in relation to management of the secondee;</li> <li>• Arrangements for maintaining confidentiality of information held by each partner; and</li> <li>• Arrangements for the resolution of conflicts/disputes and the termination of the secondment arrangement.</li> </ul>

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<b>Financial reporting arrangements and timeframe for reporting</b>	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.		
<b>Performance monitoring arrangements and details of formal review of partnership arrangements.</b>	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.		
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	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.		
<b>Safeguarding Obligations</b>	N/A		
<b>Date Partnership Created / Approved by Cabinet</b>	12 January 2009	<b>Date Partnership Terminates (if applicable)</b>	N/A

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**Glossary of Terms**

To provide assistance to officers, Members and members of the public when reading the council's Corporate Register of Partnerships, a **Glossary of Terms** has been developed to provide additional information about the meaning of some of the words included within the register.

<b>Term Used</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Annual Governance Review</b>	This is a review that is undertaken each year in order to assess the council's overall governance arrangements.
<b>Audit &amp; Counter Fraud Plan</b>	The Audit & Counter Fraud Plan is a document which sets out the work plan for the team for the forthcoming financial year.
<b>Business Plan</b>	A business plan is a formal statement of a set of business goals, the reasons they are believed attainable, and the plan for reaching those goals.
<b>Constitution</b>	A document which sets out the fundamental rules governing the conduct of the partnership. It may also include details of the concept and structure of the partnership.
<b>Financial Conduct Authority</b>	The Financial Conduct Authority is the conduct regulator for 56,000 financial services firms and financial markets in the UK and the prudential regulator for over 18,000 of those firms.
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time Equivalent (FTE) – the number of full-time equivalent staff that are working in the partnership.
<b>Partnership Agreement</b>	An agreement between the relevant partners setting out how the partnership will operate and the commitment each will make to the partnership.
<b>S151 Responsibilities</b>	These are the statutory responsibilities that are designated to the council's Chief Financial Officer, as defined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).
<b>Service Level Agreement (SLA)</b>	A document which is agreed between the partners and records a common understanding about services, priorities and responsibilities and clearly defines the "level of service" expected through targets etc.
<b>Shared Service Agreement</b>	This is a document which is signed by those authorities participating in a share service and sets out the governance arrangements for the shared service.
<b>Significant partnership</b>	A partnership for which there is a council resource provision of £10,000 or greater <u>or</u> 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.
<b>Steering Group</b>	A steering group is a group of senior officers/partners who oversee the delivery of a project or partnership initiative.
<b>Terms of Reference</b>	A document which describes the purpose and structure of a partnership along with basis for making future decisions and for confirming or developing a common understanding of the scope among stakeholders.