

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Council
Date: 16 April 2024
Reporting officer: Stuart Bobby, Chief Executive
Subject: Working in Partnership Framework – April 2024

Purpose and summary of report:

To present Full Council with an updated *Working in Partnership Framework* for Gravesham Borough Council for adoption.

Recommendations:

Council adopts the *Working in Partnership Framework*, attached at appendix one, for incorporation into the Council’s Policy Framework.

Key Implications:	
Item	Implications
Legal	There are no legal implications arising from this. As a requirement of the council’s Working in Partnership Framework, all potential partnership opportunities and shared working arrangements are formally considered by the Monitoring Officer to ensure that the legal aspects of proposals are taken into account prior to entering into a new arrangement.
Finance and Value for Money	Partnerships and shared working arrangements can present financial and value for money savings to the council. The council’s Working in Partnership Framework requires all potential partnership opportunities and shared working arrangements to be formally considered by the Section 151 Officer to ensure that the financial aspects of all proposals are taken into account prior to entering into a new partnership.
Corporate Plan	The Working in Partnership Framework provides provisions for all partnership and joint working arrangements across the council and therefore supports delivery of all council objectives.
Climate Change	There are no climate change implications arising from this report although consideration is given to climate change implications when considering all new partnership and shared working arrangements.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In April 2021, the Council adopted an updated Working in Partnership Framework, with clear guidelines to review the framework every three years or when it is prudent to do so.
- 1.2 The review that has been undertaken has been a comprehensive review of the policy in its entirety and as such, following Cabinet's consideration at its meeting on 18 March 2024, Cabinet's recommendation was for Council to adopt the new *Working in Partnership Framework*.
- 1.3 In addition to Cabinet consideration, the draft framework has also been considered by Members of the Special Advisory Cabinet Committee.

2. Review and update of the Working in Partnership Framework

- 2.1 Appendix one to the report sets out the revised Framework (and accompanying appendices) for the council.
- 2.2 Following the review of the Framework, the changes that have been made are minimal. The review that was undertaken in April 2021, following the COVID-19 pandemic, implemented a number of changes and as such, the Framework is considered to be fit for purpose.
- 2.3 Changes that have been made are as follows:
 - 2.3.1 Inclusion of an *Executive Summary* at the start of the document to provide an overview of the benefits of partnership working, and the Framework itself.
 - 2.3.2 Minor amendments to paragraphs throughout to provide further clarification on processes to be followed and to support better understanding of the Framework in its entirety.
 - 2.3.3 Updates to the core principles to be followed when considering establishing shared services. These were previously reflective of the 'North Kent' principles agreed some time ago and have been updated to reflect the key principles for Gravesham Borough Council.
 - 2.3.4 Minor amendments throughout to update references to 'Heads of Service' in line with the restructure approved by Full Council last year where applicable (to replace previous references to Service Managers).
 - 2.3.5 Inclusion of reference to *Social Value* considerations in the assessment of any new partnerships where applicable.
 - 2.3.6 Inclusion of reference to officer working groups, to ensure that the correct governance arrangements, particularly in respect of decision making, are considered as part of the way in which these arrangements operate.
- 2.4 The amendments suggested by the Special Advisory Cabinet Committee have been incorporated into the draft Framework shown at appendix one.

3. Adoption and review of the *Working in Partnership Framework*

- 3.1 The Working in Partnership Framework will continue to be reviewed at least once every three years, or unless deemed necessary during this period, with the outcomes of this review reported to Cabinet and Council accordingly. As previously agreed by the Cabinet and Full Council, changes which do not have a material effect on the document and its content will require only Cabinet approval.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the updated Working in Partnership Framework, shown at appendix one to this report, be formally adopted by the Council for inclusion within the council's policy framework.

4. Appendices

- 4.1 The following documents are to be published with the report:
 - Appendix One – DRAFT Working in Partnership Framework

5. Background Documents

- 5.1 There are no background documents.

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Secondary Implications	
Risk Assessment	<p>Partnerships and shared working arrangements are prevalent in the work of the council and the efficient and effective delivery of services and corporate objectives. It is therefore important that the council has a clear framework for identifying and progressing partnership and shared working opportunities to ensure those which truly assist in delivering the council's objectives and/or present an efficiency saving to the council are progressed.</p> <p>The council's Working in Partnership Framework requires all potential partnership opportunities and shared working arrangements to be risk assessed but also for the risk assessment process to be undertaken on a regular basis throughout the life of the arrangement.</p>
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links. No</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/A</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk. N/A</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. No</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>The Working in Partnership Framework will be used for the development of all new partnerships and will therefore pick up any issues relating to the Crime and Disorder Act.</p>
Digital and website implications	<p>There are no digital or website implications arising from this report.</p>

Secondary Implications

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

Consideration of Safeguarding implications has been built into the process for implementing and revising partnerships, as set out in the Working in Partnership Framework.