



GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Corporate Register of Partnerships and Shared Working Arrangements

July 2024

A summary of partnership and shared working
arrangements

**Performance &
Administration Committee**

Gravesham Borough Council

Register of Partnerships and Shared Working Arrangements

July 2024

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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 the council’s Corporate 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 £50,000 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. This will also include those partnerships that have been established to deliver legal or statutory requirements on behalf of the council.”

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:

Page Ref.	Name of Partnership
4	Internal Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service
6	Legal and Information Governance Shared Service

Glossary of Terms (Page 8)

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.

Shared Working Arrangements

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Name of Partnership	Internal Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service
Responsible Officer	Sarah Parfitt, Director (Corporate Services)
Lead Member(s)	Councillor Narinderjit Thandi, lead Member for Performance & Administration
Statutory Status	Local authorities statutorily required to have internal audit.
Aims and objectives of partnership	<p>The Internal 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 work plans, agreed with the Finance & Audit Committee.</p> <p>The service Strategy, which was extended to a fifth year with the agreement of the Finance & Audit Committee in February 2024, sets out the mission “to enhance and protect organisational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice, and insight, and to protect assets, resources, and public funds by ensuring they are not misused or misappropriated through fraud, bribery, corruption, and theft” and vision “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 & 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, respected advisor and critical friend at the heart of Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council.” of the Internal Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service.</p> <p>The ongoing objectives of the shared service, agreed by the Performance & Administration Committee in September 2023, are to ‘deliver the statutory internal audit function’ and ‘deliver an effective counter fraud & investigation service’.</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 Corporate Objectives	#onecouncil a well-run and innovative authority, defined by its skilled and valued workforce, committed to developing its local social impact.
GBC Resources (financial, officer, assets etc.)	<p>As set out in the Shared Service agreement, approximately 36% of internal audit resources are directed towards delivering the Internal Audit Plan for Gravesham. Following an expansion of the counter fraud resource due to increased demand at Medway, the proportion of fraud resource directed towards delivery of the counter fraud plan for Gravesham have been amended to approximately 26%. This change keeps the FTE resource at the same level as prior to expansion.</p> <p>The Shared Service agreement sets out the budgeted cost to Gravesham for 2024-25 as approximately £252,836. This is following a pay review to ensure all jobs were being paid at the correct levels and in line with market conditions.</p> <p>The team occupy space in the Civic Centre, though all ICT hardware is provided by Medway Council.</p>

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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>		
Performance monitoring arrangements and details of formal review of partnership arrangements.	<p>The Shared Service has established a suite of performance measures and arrangements to report on the outputs and performance of both the internal audit and counter fraud teams to the council's Management Team and Finance & Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Performance against the Shared Service objectives is also monitored by the Performance & Administration Committee through the annual review of the shared working arrangements.</p> <p>The council's Annual Governance Review and Statement considers the effectiveness of internal audit arrangements.</p>		
Risk Assessment	The Shared Service has a business plan and risk register in place for the delivery of its services.		
Safeguarding Obligations	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.		
Equalities Obligations	There are no direct equalities obligations for this service; however both partners are committed to developing opportunities for inclusion and cohesion.		
Climate Change Considerations	Both Councils in the partnership have climate change objectives as part of their corporate plans. While the shared service does not directly contribute to these objectives and obligations, Internal Audit will be providing independent assurance over climate change projects and the work of services contributing to the objectives.		
Date Partnership Created / Approved by Cabinet	1 June 2015: Cabinet approval given for the partnership to become a full shared service. 1 March 2016: Shared Service launched.	Date Partnership Terminates (if applicable)	N/A

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Name of Partnership	Legal and Information Governance Shared Service
Responsible Officer	Sarah Parfitt, Director (Corporate Services)
Lead Member(s)	Legal Services - Councillor John Burden, Leader of the Executive Information Governance – Councillor Narinderjit Thandi, Lead member for Performance & Administration
Statutory Status	Non-statutory partnership
Aims and objectives of partnership	The aims and objectives of this arrangement are two-fold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a shared Legal Service across the two authorities. To provide a shared Information Governance Service across the two authorities.
Expected outcomes	The key aim of the partnership is to provide a high quality, value for money service that continues to meet the need of the customer (both internal and external) in terms of information governance and legal services.
Links to GBC Corporate Objectives	#onecouncil a well-run and innovative authority, defined by its skilled and valued workforce, committed to developing its local social impact.
GBC Resources (financial, officer, assets etc.)	The Gravesham Borough Council and Medway Council Shared Legal Services team has provided legal services to both councils since April 2017. The cost of the team is met by both partners based on agreed percentage contributions. The Gravesham Borough Council and Medway Council Shared Information Governance Team provides resource to both Councils to support their information governance arrangements. The cost of the team is also met by both partners based on agreed percentage contributions.
Partnership membership	Gravesham Borough Council and Medway Council
Governance arrangements	A legal agreement is in place for the Shared Service which sets out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of the services that are to be provided under the terms of the agreement. How service costs are to be calculated and shared between the two partners. The responsibilities of each partner in relation to management of the shared service officers. Arrangements for maintaining confidentiality of information held by each partner. Arrangements for the resolution of conflicts/disputes and the termination of the arrangement. This agreement is backed up by monthly management performance reports and regular meetings between the Responsible Officers of the two authorities to respond to demand and, where necessary, adjust the level of support required.
Financial reporting arrangements and timeframe for reporting	The financial arrangements for the shared working arrangements are set out in the Legal agreement. In respect of the Shared Legal Service the costs of the shared service are split 43/57 between GBC and Medway. For the Information Governance shared service GBC pay 100% of the salary of one post and 43% of other posts within the IG team. The council has access to the whole team.

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Performance monitoring arrangements and details of formal review of partnership arrangements.	As detailed above, there are monthly management performance reports produced and regular meetings between the responsible officers at GBC and Medway Council in order to monitor the overall performance of the arrangement set out within this register.		
Risk Assessment	The service arrangements were put in place to address resilience concerns with Gravesham's legal and information governance resources; the shared service arrangement with Medway Council addresses this risk. The operation of the service is reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose and enables the council to continue to provide the appropriate level of the service to both its internal and external customers.		
Safeguarding Obligations	No specific obligations, but there are clear procedures to follow in the event that the work of the partnership and/or its members uncovers a safeguarding issue.		
Equalities Obligations	The shared Legal Services and Information Governance Team are aware of the council's Equality Policy and advise client departments of any relevant issues on projects to ensure the council's obligations are met.		
Climate Change Considerations	Climate change issues are advised upon by the shared service on projects where relevant.		
Date Partnership Created / Approved by Cabinet	April 2017	Date Partnership Terminates (if applicable)	N/A

Glossary of Terms

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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.

Term Used	Meaning
Annual Governance Review	This is a review that is undertaken each year in order to assess the council's overall governance arrangements.
Best Practice	A working method or set of working methods that is officially accepted as being the best to use in a particular business or industry.
CIPFA	The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) - the professional body for people in public finance.
Corporate Plan	A document which sets out Gravesham Borough Council's corporate priorities for a period of years and provides details of the actions to be undertaken towards achieving those objectives.
FTE	Full-time Equivalent (FTE) – the number of full-time equivalent staff that are working in the partnership.
Local Government Act 1972	An Act of Parliament in the United Kingdom that makes provision with respect to local government and the functions of local authorities in England and Wales.
Local Government and Housing Act 1989	An Act of Parliament in the United Kingdom which provides amendments to the Local Government Act 1974 in respect of finances and expenditure of local authorities(including provision with respect to housing subsidies) as well as a number of other amendments.
Partnership	The council defines a partnership as “an agreement between the Council and one or more independent bodies to work together to achieve the council's Corporate objectives”.
Performance Indicator	A performance indicator or key performance indicator (KPI) is a type of performance measurement which helps a company measure its success versus a set of targets, objectives, or industry peers.
S151 Responsibilities	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).
Service Level Agreement (SLA)	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.
Shared Service Agreement	This is a document which is signed by those authorities participating in a shared service and sets out the governance arrangements for the shared service.
Shared Working Arrangement	Arrangements put in place to jointly deliver services across one or more local authorities.
Significant Partnership	A partnership for which there is a council resource provision of £50,000 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. This will also include those partnerships that have been established to deliver legal or statutory requirements on behalf of the council.

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Term Used	Meaning
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations – the United Kingdom's implementation of the European Union Business Transfers Directive, protecting employees whose business is being transferred to another business.