

| Report of | Meeting | Date |
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| Director of Change and Delivery (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources)) | Executive Cabinet | Thursday, 13 July 2023 |

Key Partnerships Update

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| Is this report confidential? | Partly Appendix 1 and 2 (included in part 2 of this agenda) is exempt by virtue of paragraph 3, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person. |
| Is this decision key? | No |

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on the performance of the council's key partnership arrangements.

Recommendations to Executive Cabinet

2. That the report be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

3. To ensure effective monitoring of the council's key contracts and partnerships.

Other options considered and rejected

4. No other options have been considered as this report is for information only.

Executive summary

5. The key partnerships performance report is produced in accordance with the requirements of the council's key contracts and partnerships framework. It informs members of:
 - i. The performance of the council's key partnerships against targets set for the current year;
 - ii. Any emerging issues
 - iii. An assessment of the key partner's financial strength and stability.

6. Overall, the performance of all key partnerships is strong, and the financial assessment of the partnerships are positive with the financial standing of all key partnerships monitored in Appendix A.

Corporate priorities

7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

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| Housing where residents can live well | A green and sustainable borough |
| An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas | Healthy, safe and engaged communities |

Background to the report

8. Key partnerships are those partnerships that are especially significant due to their financial value, scale of resources involved, the length of contract term or whether they deliver a core service.
9. To ensure that they are closely monitored, the Council's framework for partnership working sets out a range of controls and measures. These safeguard the success of partnerships and ensure that they are meeting their main objectives. This report forms part of the monitoring arrangements, with reports to be presented to Cabinet annually in July.

Key Partnerships' Performance

10. This section of the report provides a summary of each of the Key Contracts and Partnerships. Appendix 1 includes any confidential updates and appendix 2 includes full contact details including value, monitoring arrangements and financial assessment.

| Shared Services | |
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| Purpose | Shared Services is the partnership between Chorley Council and South Ribble Borough Council, two sovereign councils working together with shared functions to deliver excellent and efficient council services. |
| Objectives 2022/23 | Objectives set out for 2022/23 included embedding the Phase 2 Services (ICT and Customer Services & Revenues and Benefits), and to work with Members to identify future opportunities for Shared Services. |
| Progress and benefits realised | Future opportunities for shared services have been progressed with phase 3 of shared services (Property and Development) being implemented on the 1 February, delivering improved resilience to these service areas. Work has also continued to embed Phase 2 of shared services including the recruitment to vacant posts within the service which will improve capacity in addition to the design and delivery of a training and development programme for Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits which will improve skills and knowledge. |
| Risks | No new risks or issues have been identified in this update, although work continues to monitor staff morale through the council's pulse surveys and People Strategy programme, alongside ensuring full engagement during any shared service review process. |
| Objectives 2023/24 | Objectives for 2023/24 are to continue exploring opportunities for sharing and to continue to embed the phase 2 and 3 services. |

| Blackpool Council | |
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| Purpose | Blackpool Council provides the payroll and expenses service for all employees and elected members. |
| Objectives 2022/23 | The key objectives for this contract in 2022/23 included the implementation of the new time management system (HFX) across all sites and to explore phase 2 modules for the HR Hub system including recruitment, onboarding and back office systems. |
| Progress and benefits realised | HFX has now been implemented across all sites aside from South Ribble Leisure which will be in progress shortly. This means the same system is now used across Chorley and South Ribble meaning managers only need to use one system to manage staff leave, clockings and sickness, ensuring consistency in the recording of payments and quicker and efficient processes. The further development of the HR Hub has now also been scoped out into four main workstreams including personal files, DBS recording and reporting, driver information and manager dashboards. This will help to automate processes in these areas, enable manager self-service and provide more information to managers and the organisations. |
| Risks | Capacity was identified as an issue to deliver the phase 2 work, however specified resources have been allocated including recruitment to a Senior HR Consultant role. |
| Objectives 2023/24 | Objectives for 2023/24 are to develop the functionality of the HR Hub to ensure that we are making best use of the system, develop manager understanding of responsibilities within the system and remove barriers to self-service. |

| Select Move | |
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| Purpose | Select Move provides a choice-based lettings allocation scheme, operating across Chorley, South Ribble and Preston. Part of this partnership is commissioning Civica as the software provider for the housing register and homeless database. |
| Objectives 2022/23 | Objectives for 2022/23 including implementing system improvements to the Civica system and agreeing and updating the new allocations policy. |
| Progress and benefits realised | <p>The system improvements have now been implemented, enabling customers to use mobile devices to access the Select Move website and offering greater transparency within the system through a function that allows users to access waiting lists for houses. There is now also additional filtering functionality which enables more specific search criteria to be applied by customers, facilitating more effective searches for customers.</p> <p>The new allocations policy is currently out for consultation which is due to finish in July 2023. After the end of the consultation, the policy will be presented to each council for adoption. The consultation for the policy has been delayed slightly due to a delay in approval by Preston Council.</p> |
| Risks | <p>An ongoing issue the partnership is experiencing is insufficient housing numbers to meet demand and this is expected to increase further in the coming months due to upcoming changes in the private rented sector, with more landlords looking to sell their properties due to increasing mortgage costs and new regulations.</p> <p>The new allocations policy is expected to help mitigate some of these issues by improving the management of waiting lists for local people. This is alongside ongoing activity to encourage landlords</p> |

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| | and social housing providers to join Select Move, including lower rates for public sector landlords with smaller property numbers. |
| Objectives 2023/24 | Objectives for 2023/24 are to finish the consultation on the allocations policy and adopt the new policy, communicating the changes to allocations and eligibility clearly to customers and partners to ensure understanding and adherence. |

IDOX

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| Purpose | IDOX provides the case management software for planning, land charges, environment and licensing (regulatory services). |
| Objectives 2022/23 | Previous objectives for the contract were to move to a shared contract and align modules and functionality across Chorley and South Ribble. |
| Progress and benefits realised | A new shared contract is now in place with the alignment of modules scheduled. This will provide an opportunity to review processes to ensure they are as efficient as possible, enable consistent work practices across the organisations, whilst also simplifying the ongoing maintenance of the systems for the shared ICT team allowing time for more complex work. |
| Risks | A previous issue had been identified in relation to specialist knowledge at the councils to deliver the alignment progress. This has now being progressed with support from IDOX whilst staff are trained on the system. Recent recruitment to the ICT team has also provided additional capacity to support business systems. |
| Objectives 2023/24 | Objectives for 2023/24 are to implement the shared workflows for the platform to enable automation and align functionality across the councils. |

Capita

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| Purpose | Capita provides the Revenues and Benefits Software and a remote support service. |
| Objectives 2022/23 | Previous objectives were to move to a new cloud-based system that would be shared across Chorley and South Ribble Councils, and to continue to align modules across the councils where appropriate. |
| Progress and benefits realised | <p>The move across to the cloud systems took place in October 2022. The cloud-based system has delivered cost benefits as servers are no longer on-site resulting in reduced running costs, and improved business continuity in the event of network issues at either local authority meaning much less system downtime. In addition, the ICT team no longer have to upkeep physical servers which enables the team more time for more complex work and significantly improves data security.</p> <p>The new system means that staff working within the shared Revenues and Benefits will be able to access Capita through one single system. The alignment of software modules across the councils is ongoing, with modules implemented at South Ribble including automating Housing Benefit Claims, Universal Credit Claim, Council Tax Valuation and Housing Benefit online review. The new processes offer increased automation and more efficient processes, which allow officers to focus more of their time on complex cases and processes whilst offering quicker resolutions for customers.</p> |
| Risks | No new risks or issues have been identified as part of this update. |
| Objectives 2023/24 | The objectives for 2023/24 are to implement new modules for |

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| | council tax move automation, council tax refund automation, council tax direct debit automation and exemptions automation. A further objective is to move to a shared services desktop with a single log in for both council databases. |
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Local Plan

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| Purpose | The Local Plan partnership between Chorley Council, South Ribble Borough Council and Preston City Council aims to develop and deliver the Local Plan for 2024. |
| Objectives 2022/23 | Key objectives included developing and delivering the Part One draft preferred options document for public consultation. |
| Progress and benefits realised | The public consultation on the preferred options for the Local Plan was completed from December to mid-February with analysis of the results currently taking place within teams. Consultants will then produce a formal outcome report on the consultation. The next milestone is for the draft plan to be developed in line with the results of the consultation, with an aim to be complete for publication within Q2 2023/24. |
| Risks | There are currently resourcing issues that may impact on the deadline for the draft Local Plan. The team have developed short- and longer-term options to address this. In the short term, to go out to recruitment for the vacant posts working with recruitment to ensure we are advertising in the right places and these are attract roles for a hard to recruit area. The team are identifying options for consultants to complete certain packages of the remaining work if recruitment is unsuccessful. |
| Objectives 2023/24 | Objectives for 2023/24 include the analysis of consultation responses, securing budget approval to procure all remaining required evidence for the Local Plan, completing the Part Two Preferred Options (Draft Local Plan,) and to recruit to or secure capacity within the team. |

Duxbury Golf Course

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| Purpose | Parkwood Leisure Ltd. manage the Duxbury Park Golf Course which is owned by Chorley Council. |
| Objectives 2022/23 | The objective for the contract over 2022/23 was to continue embedding the partnership and maintain strong relations between the Council and Parkwood Leisure Ltd. |
| Progress and benefits realised | Partnership meetings are ongoing between the Council and Parkwood Leisure, with quarterly meetings taking place as per the contract to monitor financial performance. Regular communication has allowed for new opportunities to be brought forward including a joint project with Golf in Society (a charity specialising in designing and delivering golf sessions for people living with chronic illnesses to introduce dementia friendly golf sessions. Progress is also being made in costing and agreeing a series of aesthetic improvements to be made to the site to be paid for by Parkwood Leisure. |
| Risks | No issues or risks have been identified during this update, and the partnership has seen benefits over the last year including better take up of the foods and beverage offer, and increasing the range of activities such as the dementia friendly golf sessions. |
| Objectives 2023/24 | Objectives for 2023/24 will include completing the aesthetic improvements to the site. |

Chorley Leisure

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| Purpose | Chorley Leisure Ltd. is a wholly owned leisure company that provides leisure facilities to residents while ensuring value for money. |
| Objectives 2022/23 | Objectives for 2022/23 included to review the investments into infrastructure at the leisure centre, to improve outdated centres and offer improved facilities to local residents. |
| Progress and benefits realised | The review has now been revised and is expected to be completed within the 2023/24 financial year. |
| Risks | Key issues for the leisure company include increasing operating costs (due to rising energy and staffing costs,) coupled with changes to consumer habits as a result of the cost of living crisis. A finance request was approved by the Council in November to provide additional funding to help mitigate this issue, with the general financial risks in line with the wider leisure sector. Capacity and recruitment also remains a challenge for the leisure centres, with internal training opportunities being progressed with the aim of developing job progression for hard to recruit to roles. The Leisure Company currently has a 1 year business plan in place for 2023/24 covering areas including growth of membership base, community programmes, recruitment and staff development and capital investment. Moving forwards, the Company will produce a 5 year rolling business development strategy to ensure that the company operates in line with the council's corporate strategy. |
| Objectives 2023/24 | Objectives for 2023/24 are to continue to review into capital investments and to recruit to and fill vacancies in swimming teacher roles. |

| NEC | |
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| Purpose | There are two contracts with NEC, previously called Northgate, included within the key contracts and partnerships framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provision of Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) software, which is a desktop software package providing document management solutions and ii. Provision of Docs Online, a contract for remote scanning of correspondence and information. |
| Objectives 2022/23 | The previous objective for the EDMS was to migrate to the new cloud based system to allow for all data to be sorted online, allowing for improved business continuity in the case of on-site outages. The previous objective for Docs Online was to continue the back-scanning of existing documents and images and to continue using the service for incoming correspondence. |
| Progress and benefits realised | The move to the cloud based EDMS system is ongoing and due to launch in September 2023. The EDMS contract includes a single database which is split by each authority, allowing staff to work across both councils whilst still separating out data for each council. Some of the benefits of the contract include all updates being managed by NEC which reduces the risk of council downtime, with no need to maintain any on site legacy hardware. The Docs Online contract reduces reliance on paper and provides increased security and capacity compared to storing copies of correspondence for manual indexing by staff. Docs Online also |

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| | improves business continuity and efficiency as documents and correspondence are available digitally rather than just in paper form. |
| Risks | No new risks or issues have been identified as part of this update. |
| Objectives 2023/24 | Objectives for 2023/24 are to complete the migration to the new EDMS cloud system and to continue using the Docs Online service to reduce reliance on paper and maintain digital security. |

New contracts for 2023/24

11. The following contracts have been included in the reporting for the Key Contracts and Partnerships framework for the first time in 2023/24. Objectives have been set for 2023/25 and an update on progress will be brought against these in July 2024.

Enghouse

12. Enghouse provides the telephony functionality for Chorley and South Ribble councils alongside a omnichannel contact centre. The system has been rolled out across both councils over the last year for telephony, with objectives for 2023/24 to roll out to the leisure centres, implement additional digital channels such as email and webchat and introduce automated live reporting.
13. Following its rollout to the council's contact centres, the contract has been identified for inclusion in the framework due to its key role in providing council services and enabling customer contact.
14. This new system will help to support the digital strategy by making it easier for customers to contact the council through a range of channels. The system integrates with existing council software such as Microsoft Teams which is used by officers and members for voice calls and will introduce new contact channels such as web chat.

Climate change and air quality

15. The work noted in this report has an overall neutral impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Equality and diversity

16. The work noted in this report does not pose any equality and diversity implications.

Risk

17. Key risks and issues related to each Contract or Partnership are outlined within the narrative of the report. The Key Contract and Partnerships Framework provides a mechanism for mitigating the risk of service delivery through the council's strategic partnerships by ensuing regular monitoring and management.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

18. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Routine budget monitoring includes monitoring of contract costs and these are reported as part of the overall financial position of the council

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

19. The report is for information and noting. There are no direct legal implications arising. There are no concerns with the report from a Monitoring Officer

Appendices

Appendix 1- Part 2 updates

Appendix 2- Full contract details

| Report Author: | Email: | Telephone: | Date: |
|--|------------------------------------|------------|----------|
| Caroline Winstanley (Transformation Coordinator) | caroline.winstanley@chorley.gov.uk | | 09.06.23 |

This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.