

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Change and Delivery (Introduced by Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member (Policy, Reform and Communications))	Cabinet	Wednesday, 5 July 2023

Key Contracts and Partnerships Update 2023

Is this report confidential?	Partly Appendix 1 and 2 are confidential 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 contracts and partnership arrangements.

Recommendations to 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 considered as the report is for information only.

Executive summary

5. The key contract and partnerships update 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 the council's and partnerships are progressing well. The financial assessment of the partnerships is also positive with the financial standing of all key partnerships remaining strong.
7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council	Thriving communities
A fair local economy that works for everyone	Good homes, green spaces, healthy places

Background to the report

8. The Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework was approved in July 2021, setting out the Council's definitions and monitoring arrangements for key strategic contracts and partnerships. This report forms part of the monitoring arrangements, with reports to be presented to Cabinet annually in July.
9. Key Contracts and Partnerships are those which may involve any of the following:
- Significant impact on the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives
 - Large reliance on the proposed partner to deliver core services
 - Significant financial value
 - Scale of human and other resources involved is large
 - Length/timescales of the commitment are significant
 - Significant degree of risk

Key Contracts and Partnerships' Performance

10. This section of the report provides a summary of each of the Key Contracts and Partnerships. Appendix 1 includes the updates that are confidential due to commercial sensitivities and appendix 2 details the full information for each contract or partnership including contract term, value and financial stability

Shared Services	
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	
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	
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	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. 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.
Risks	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. 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

	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	
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	
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</p>

	complex cases and processes whilst offering quicker resolutions for customers.
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 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.

Local Plan	
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.

South Ribble Leisure Ltd.	
Purpose	South Ribble Leisure provides leisure facilities to residents that offer value for money and provide local facilities to promote health and wellbeing to residents.
Objectives 2022/23	Previous objectives were to deliver decarbonisation funding and to review the terms and conditions and management structure for leisure staff.
Progress and benefits realised	The review of terms and conditions has been completed, with changes approved by South Ribble Cabinet in November 2022. This has resolved historic management structure issues at the Leisure Company and aligned terms and conditions with wider Council staff, introducing better terms and conditions to help attract and retain staff. The decarbonisation of the Leisure Centres has is now being progressed and will be phased across the leisure sites with an expected completion for the end of 2023. This will help ensure the

	<p>buildings are modernised and energy efficient in line with the council's carbon neutral objectives. There are stipulations around the grant funding that means all work must be completed by year end, there is a risk of the funding being pulled if this deadline is not met. The team are closely monitoring progress and working closely with partners to ensure this deadline is met.</p> <p>Key benefits of the wholly owned company include greater partnership between the leisure offer and the Council including more collaborative working with the Leisure Local approach which will help promote active health across the borough. This has allowed the HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) scheme to be successfully delivered in house.</p>
Risks	<p>Current issues include financial risk, with the leisure company underperforming financially due to the increase in energy costs, the pay award, and the cost of living crisis changing consumer habits. Extra funding was requested from Council in November 2022 to help resolve this issue. This is in line with general financial risks within the leisure sector currently. There is a long term strategy in place to deal with the sustainability in the form of a five-year plan, focused on areas including reviewing energy contracts, decarbonisation and staff development.</p> <p>There also remains an issue with recruitment and retention. It is anticipated over the next couple of months we will see the impact of the new terms and conditions and pay award which should help to make the rate of pay competitive against other leisure centres. Internal training opportunities are also being utilised as part of a 'grow our own' approach.</p>
Objectives 2023/24	<p>The objectives for 2023/24 include the completion of decarbonisation works by the end of 2023 and increasing the number of staff within the leisure service, specifically swimming teachers.</p>

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 an 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.

NEC-EDMS Software

15. NEC provides the electronic document management system software for the councils. The objectives for the system will be to implement a shared cloud-based system across Chorley and South Ribble by September 2023. This will include a single database which is split by authority to support single ways of working across the two sovereign authorities.
16. As the data would be stored online in a cloud-based system, this migration will offer improved business continuity as data will still be able to be accessed in the case of on-site outages. As NEC also manage all updates on the system, there is reduced risk to the council of system downtime and cyber risk to the council, and it will remove the need to maintain on-site legacy hardware.

Climate change and air quality

17. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

Risk

18. 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 ensuring regular monitoring and management.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

19. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

20. The report is for information and noting – as such there are no direct legal implications arising. There are no concerns from a Monitoring Officer perspective.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Part Two updates

Appendix 2- Full contract information

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Caroline Winstanley (Transformation Coordinator)	caroline.winstanley@southribble.gov.uk		20.06.23