

Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework

2021

Aim of the framework

Many of the successful outcomes for South Ribble are delivered in partnership with other organisations and through key contracts supplying services on behalf of the Council.

The aim of this framework is to provide a fit for purpose, robust and streamlined mechanism to monitor and performance manage key contracts and partnerships to ensure these contracts and partnerships are delivering effective, efficient and economic services providing best value for the Council. The framework provides clarity around responsibility and accountability, ensures outcomes are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to ensure the risks for the council and for the partnership are assessed, agreed and managed.

What is a key contract or partnership?

It is important to define what we mean by a key contract or partnership:

- Contractual arrangements with organisations, both to provide services on behalf of the Council and also to supply the Council with products and services to support the smooth running of Council services.
- Organisations from various sectors that the Council brings together to improve outcomes for local people by working together.

The Council is involved in many contracts and partnerships therefore it is important to outline the reasons why some contracts or partnerships warrant more consideration than others, particularly in terms of the following:

- There is significant impact on the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives
- There is a large reliance on the proposed partner to deliver core services
- There is significant financial value
- The scale of human and other resources involved is large
- The length/timescales of the commitment are significant
- There is a significant degree of risk

These differences determine the level of governance and risk management that is needed for the key contracts and partnerships identified and managed through this framework.

Existing key contracts and partnerships

The key contracts and partnerships currently to be managed through this framework are:

- **Select Move Partnership** – choice-based housing lettings partnership and allocations policy.
- **Capita** – key supplier of revenues and benefits software and associated services, including managed system support for the Council.
- **IDOX** – key supplier, providing the Council with support for ICT, democratic and licensing services.
- **FCC Environment** – to deliver the waste contract, providing a waste and recycling collection service.
- **Firmstep** – to deliver the Customer Relationship Management, Time Management System and single sign-on technology.

- **Local Plan Partnership (South Ribble Borough Council, Chorley Council and Preston City Council)** – to develop and deliver the local plan for 2023.
- **Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal** – to deliver infrastructure investment in Central Lancashire.
- **Shared services with Chorley Council** – two sovereign councils working together with shared functions to deliver council services.
- **Civica** – provides a core financials system software licence and maintenance.
- **Lancashire County Council** – provides the payroll and expenses services.

This list will be kept under review and amended to reflect any change in status or to accommodate important new contracts or partnerships. Full details of these listed can be found at Appendix A.

Monitoring

To ensure that key contracts and partnerships are closely monitored, the framework sets out a range of controls and measures. These safeguard the success of the contracts and partnerships and ensure that they achieve the Council's priorities and goals outlined in the Corporate Strategy. Where key partners already have strong governance and reporting arrangements in place then the key contract or partnership reporting should not duplicate these but instead provide greater visibility.

It is proposed that a performance update on key contracts and partnerships will be taken through Cabinet annually. This will include the following:

- The performance of the Council's key contracts and partnerships against targets set for the current year;
- Any emerging issues including whether contracts are on budget;
- A financial assessment of key partners strength and stability; and
- An update on the changes to our key contracts and partnerships.

This formal monitoring should supplement ongoing contract management and monitoring at a service level through operational meetings, board meetings and updates to executive members as general good practice.

Responsible officer role

The responsible officer for each contract or partnership must adhere to this framework. The role includes the following:

- Establishing an agreement covering the governance arrangements of the contract or partnership on approval of a new contract or partnership.
- Reporting any proposal to enter into a new key partnering arrangement to Cabinet, incorporating all of the points identified in the 'establishing a new key contract or partnership' section of this framework.
- Ensure effective and regular monitoring arrangements are in place, as per the monitoring and review arrangements for key contract or partnership section within this framework.

Adding new contracts and partnerships

During procurement of any new services or contracts and establishing a partnership, it should be considered by the responsible officer if the contract or partnership falls under the remit of a key partnership. They should refer to this framework and the Transformation and Partnerships service for advice at this point.

If it is agreed that it does fall under the remit, any proposal to enter into a new key contract or partnership should be brought through with the annual update to Cabinet and should demonstrate the following:

- The partnerships impact on the Council's priorities
- Consideration of the Council's exposure to risk and the potential liabilities including financial risk
- Any insurable risks and clarify responsibility and ownership
- Governance and risk management arrangements, including terms of reference for the partnership
- That partnerships are fit for purpose, demonstrate value for money and have added value.

Governance

Following approval to establish a new key contract or partnership, control measures and governance arrangements should be set out in an agreement or contract. This should cover:

- **Aims and objectives;** there should be a common vision and agreed objectives that are aligned with the Council's strategic objectives.
- **Roles and responsibilities;** there needs to be clear roles and responsibilities of the Council and the key partners which should be supported by clear reporting lines and a decision-making framework.
- **Decision making procedures;** there needs to be some alignment between the Council's decision-making processes and timetables with the partners. This enables decisions with significant policy or financial implications to be planned carefully and executed effectively. Key contract or partnership representatives should have sufficient authority to commit their organisations to a particular course of action.
- **Behaviours;** we also expect partners to demonstrate high standards of honesty, integrity, objectivity, openness, personal judgement, respect for others and a strong commitment to achieving the goals and common vision of the partnership.
- **Risk management;** good risk management is key to delivering successful outcomes and this should be captured in a joint risk register.
- **Equality and diversity monitoring (includes Integrated Impact Assessment);** the Council will work with partner organisations to promote equality and diversity in line with the Council's procedures. The agreement should include a statement on how the partnership will operate on the basis of principles that actively value the benefits of diversity and ensure fair treatment and equality of opportunity.
- **Anti-Fraud and corruption;** partners of the Council and all companies with whom it is contracted, will be fully informed of the procedures the Council has in place to combat fraud.
- **Data quality;** it is critical that any information or data supplied to the Council to monitor performance, make decisions or allocate resources is robust with relevant data sharing and data quality protocols should be in place.

- **Whistleblowing policy:** the Council should take active steps to ensure that key contractors providing services on behalf of the Council either have their own whistle blowing arrangements in place or adopt the Council's.
- **Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children;** the Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and to delivering services for children and vulnerable adults that promote best practice. It expects representatives, colleagues and partners to share this commitment. Partners should refer to the Council's safeguarding policies which set out the Council's guidance on protection procedures and specifies the roles and responsibilities of the Council's representatives.
- **Sustainable procurement and local spend;** work proactively to achieve sustainability and environmental objectives and extend sustainability improvements in accordance with the Council's social value commitments and policies.
- **Business continuity arrangement:** there should be effective, relevant business continuity arrangements that are maintained throughout the life of the partnership or contract.
- **Dispute prevention and resolution controls;** the partnership agreement should also contain agreement variation and dispute resolution mechanisms so that if problems arise they are resolved quickly and amicably.
- **Exit strategies;** develop a clear exit strategy for all of its key contracts and partnerships in order to mitigate the financial, reputational and other risks that could materialise. Notice periods and exceptions to notice periods should also be included.

Appendix A – Key Contracts and Partnerships 2021

Key contract / partnership	Purpose	Lead directorate	Value – per annum	Reason for inclusion
Select Move partnership	Choice based lettings partnership and allocations policy – part of this is commissioning CIVICA as the software provider for the housing register and homeless database	Communities	£9k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is significant impact on the delivery of the council's strategic objectives • Delivery of core services
Capita	Key supplier of revenues and benefits software and associated services, including managed system support for the council.	Customer and Digital	£100k approx.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of core services • Significant degree of risk • Significant financial value
IDOX	Key supplier, providing the council with support for ICT, Democratic and Licensing services.	Customer and Digital	£250k approx.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of core services • Significant degree of risk • Significant financial value
FCC Environment	To deliver the waste contract, providing a waste and recycling collection service.	Customer and Digital	£1.9m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of core services • Significant financial value • Scale of human and other resources involved is large • The length/timescales of the commitment are significant • Significant degree of risk
Firmstep	To deliver the CRM, TMS, single sign on technology.	Customer and Digital	£58k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of core services • Significant degree of risk
Local plan partnership – SRBC CBC and Preston	To develop and deliver the local plan for 2023.	Planning and Development	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale of human and other resources involved is large • The length/timescales of the commitment are significant • Significant degree of risk
Shared Services with Chorley Council	Sovereign councils working together with shared functions to deliver council services.	Policy and Governance	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of core services • Scale of human and other resources involved is large

Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal	To deliver infrastructure investment in Central Lancashire.	Planning and Development	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is significant impact on the delivery of the council's strategic objectives • Significant degree of risk
Civica	Provides a core financials system software licence and maintenance.	Policy and Governance	£64k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of core services • Significant degree of risk
Lancashire County Council	Provides the payroll and expenses services.	Policy and Governance	£23k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of core services • Significant degree of risk

