

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Change and Delivery	Governance Committee	Tuesday, 26 March 2024

Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework Refresh

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Not applicable
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Purpose of the Report

- To present the Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework (included at Appendix A).

Recommendations to Governance Committee

- To consider the updated Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework for approval by Executive Cabinet.

Reasons for recommendations

- To ensure the framework remains fit for purpose and supports aligned ways of working within shared services.

Other options considered and rejected

- To not refresh the framework, which would result in the identified improvements not being implemented. This has been rejected as it would not ensure the framework remains fit for purpose.
- To not share the updated framework with Chorley Council. This would mean that shared officers must adhere to different framework criteria, in some cases for contracts monitored by both councils. This has been rejected as it would not support aligned ways of working.

Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council	Healthy and happy communities
Opportunities for everyone	Green and clean neighbourhood

Background to the report

7. The Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework sets out monitoring arrangements for contracts and partnerships where their significance justifies additional scrutiny. The framework was first introduced in 2021.
8. South Ribble's Key Contract and Partnerships Framework currently monitors 13 contracts, of which 10 are also included within Chorley Council's Key Contracts and Partnerships framework. These are reported to Senior Management team jointly due to the contracts/partnerships being in common across the councils, and to Cabinet on an annual basis. Areas reported include progress against objectives, known risks or issues, and financial stability.
9. The framework refresh proposes to create a shared framework with Chorley Council, to support aligned ways of working for shared services staff while ensuring the framework remains fit for purpose.

Outlining the Refreshed Framework

10. The council is involved in many contracts and partnerships, with many different partners. The framework differentiates the level of governance and risk management required based on the following criteria:
 - Their financial value
 - Their impact on the delivery of the council's strategic objectives
 - How reliant the Council is on the proposed partner for service delivery
 - There is a significant degree of risk
 - The length/timescales of the commitment are significant
11. The updated framework has looked at best practice from other organisations, compared the existing frameworks and considered internal audit recommendations to create improvements.
12. Changes to the framework include:

Key Changes	Rationale
An aligned framework across Chorley and South Ribble	There are a number of similarities in the existing frameworks for each council which are available here and here . Aligning the frameworks will support officers who are working across both councils as a number of key contracts or partnerships are shared across Chorley and South Ribble. Reporting and separate lists of each contract/ partnership will remain sovereign for each council.
Introducing a checklist for identifying key contracts and partnerships	The introduction of standardised criteria will provide greater clarity for the reasons why the contracts and partnerships included on the framework are more significant and justify additional scrutiny.
Reformatting Layout	The new layout provides a clear diagram of the framework process, and the actions needed at each stage. This should improve the framework's functionality as a reference document for officers.

Introducing a governance self-assessment for responsible officers to complete	A a checklist of required governance arrangements, has been introduced to set clear expectations for the governance arrangements that need to be in place for key contracts or partnerships. As the checklist will be referred to at each monitoring update, it should also support and maintain officer awareness of governance expectations.
Spot Checks	Spot checks will be introduced to ensure governance arrangements are in place.
Updating the role of the responsible officer	To reflect current expectations of responsible officers.

13. The framework's function as a reporting mechanism to members remains unchanged, with annual monitoring reports being presented to the Cabinet. These provide an update against the contracts or partnerships annual objectives, set new objectives for the financial year, and provide additional reassurances with comments on contract/partnership financial stability and monitoring arrangements.

14. The current contracts and partnerships monitored by the framework are provided in the below table. These will be reviewed against the updated criteria areas after the framework is refreshed.

Contract/Partnership	Purpose
South Ribble Leisure	To provide leisure facilities to residents
Firmstep	To deliver the Customer Relationship Management system
City Deal	To enable growth in South Ribble and Preston by delivering infrastructure to support 17,000 new homes and 620,000 new jobs.
IDOX	To provide planning, land changes, environment, and licensing software (Regulatory Services)
NEC	To provide Electronic Document Management System software.
Civica (Financial System)	To provide core financials system software and maintenance.
Shared Services	Sovereign councils working together with shared functions to deliver council services.
Local Plan	To develop and deliver the Central Lancashire local plan for 2024.
Select Move	To provide a sub-regional choice-based lettings scheme with a common allocations policy.
Enghouse	Telephony, to provide the functionality for omnichannel contact centre
Goss	Website module- content management system
Blackpool Council (Payroll)	To provide a payroll and expense service for all employees and elected member.
Capita	To provide Revenues and Benefits Software and a Remote Support Service

15. Alongside the refresh of the framework, a separate piece of work is taking place to review all of the partnerships and collaborative working arrangements across the council to ensure that they are driven by good practice, are joined up, and are not duplicating each other.

Climate change and air quality

16. 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.

Equality and diversity

17. The work outlined in this report does not pose any equality and diversity implications. As a reference document for staff, consideration has been made to ensure the document is accessible.

Risk

18. A key function of the framework is the identification and management of risk. The Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework provides a mechanism for mitigating the risk to service delivery through monitoring and management.

Next Steps

19. Following feedback from Governance Committees, the final framework will be presented to Cabinet in for approval.

20. Once the framework is approved, next steps will be:

- Review of included contracts and partnerships – Summer 2024
- Launch staff training and embed the new framework – Summer 2024
- Update GRACE risk register

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

21. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. A review of the financial forecasts for contracts is included within the quarterly financial monitoring reports.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

22. There are no concerns with what is proposed from a Monitoring Officer perspective.

Appendices

Appendix A – Key Contracts and Partnerships Framework

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