

STOUR VALLEY AND POOLE PARTNERSHIP

SVPP JOINT COMMITTEE

Report subject	Partnership Business Plan, Forward Plan, Collaboration Agreement and Delegated Functions 2020/21
Meeting date	16 March 2020
Status	Public
Executive summary	To detail the Business Plan of the Partnership for 2020/21 Financial Year and to give delegations to officers to administer accounts in accordance with the Collaboration Agreement between BCP Council and Dorset Council.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Partnership work to the objectives detailed within item 8 of this report for the 2020/21 and 21/22 Financial Years and that a full timetable / Action Plan be presented to the next meeting of Scrutiny Panel for review (b) it is acknowledged that from 1 April 2020 the SVPP will be responsible for the administration of all Revenues and Benefits functions for BCP Council and the Dorset Council 'East and North database billing areas' (c) the Collaboration Agreement / Delegated Functions Proforma for 2020/21 be passed to each Council Partner for adoption (d) the updated Scheme of Delegation for 2020/21 be adopted for the Partnership and reviewed in line with each Council's Constitution and Scheme of Delegation (e) section 151 officers review budget and cost share at their next meeting in accordance with the financial implications detailed in this report (f) that section 151 officers of each Council can instruct the SVPP to undertake "delegated roles" as necessary for the delivery of legislative changes
Reason for recommendations	To detail the Business Plan and Scheme of Delegation for the Partnership in line with the Collaboration Agreement.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable - SVPP
Corporate Director	Not applicable - SVPP
Contributors	Paul Hudson. SVPP Partnership Manager
Wards	All
Classification	Note and Comment

BACKGROUND

1. The Stour Valley and Poole Partnership (SVPP) was established in 2014 and is responsible through the Joint Committee and Scrutiny Panel for the provision of Revenues and Benefits Services for BCP Council (Christchurch and Poole areas) and Dorset Council (East and North areas).

Since 2017 the SVPP has worked in Partnership with an agreed cost share arrangement with BCP Council (Bournemouth) Revenues and Benefits Service to deliver efficiencies and share roles.

2. In accordance with the Collaboration Agreement the Partnership will set a Business Plan for service delivery and officers will operate to a Scheme of Delegation to undertake functions on behalf of BCP Council and Dorset Council.
3. The Management Board and Joint Committee in December approved the 2020/21 budget and acknowledged the delivery of the budget would require further integration and alignment of roles between SVPP and BCP (Bournemouth area) Revenues and Benefits Services.
4. The Forward Plan details items considered relevant for the Joint Committee and Scrutiny Panel to consider in 2020/21.
5. The Business Plan for BCP/SVPP Revenues and Benefits Services details activities to be undertaken as from April 2020 to March 2022.

BUSINESS PLAN / ACTION PLAN

6. The Joint Committee must set the Business Plan for the Partnership. In 2019/20 it was decided the Business and Action Plans would remain unchanged from the one set for 2018/19 as the service was dealing with Local Government Re-Organisation.
7. An options appraisal on the future of Revenues and Benefit Services in Dorset is expected late in 2020/21 which will decide upon the future of SVPP. Based upon this the Partnership Business / Action Plan has been produced for two financial years from April 2020 to March 2022.
8. The planned actions to be undertaken are to :

- Consult and implement a new staffing structure for SVPP which integrates the staff from BCP (Bournemouth) to deliver £275,000 of savings to meet 2020/21 budget
- establish support required for Dorset Council software Revenues and Benefits system conversion
- support Dorset Council in the transfer of the Sundry Debtors function for the East area from the SVPP to the Dorset database
- align BCP Debtors software databases
- implement Agile working alongside accommodation review*
- despatch of all post / documentation through CFH contract
- tender and deliver the SVPP/BCP Council software system conversion
- review LCTR schemes
- review eligibility of all CTAX discount cases for two years*
- process claims for Benefits and collect Taxes / Rates in accordance with each Council's objectives
- Implement Partnership wide individual and service performance reports to align to Partnership objectives & regular 1-2-1 reviews*

**Funded from SVPP reserves*

9. If members agree the Business Plan objectives as itemised above they be fully detailed and used for Service Objectives, monitoring the Partnership and publicised accordingly.

FORWARD PLAN

10. The Forward Plan for the Partnership has been established in accordance with the Collaboration Agreement and the previous five years of the Partnership to ensure performance and budget are monitored and service delivery options reviewed for each Council.
11. The Draft Forward Plan for 2020/21 is attached as Appendix 1.

COLLABORATION AGREEMENT & SCHEME OF DELEGATION

12. The attached Delegated Function Proforma (Appendix 2) has been updated to reflect where appropriate the Constitution and Financial Regulations of the two new Councils which came into existence on 1 April 2019 and replaced the preceding Councils within the Partnership.
13. It is acknowledged that the Delegated Functions Proforma defines roles and responsibilities of officers and that during any year the officer in post or their post may change within either the Partnership or the Sovereign Council. Where this

does occur the Management Board will acknowledge and note any changes and impact on delegated roles. The Partnership, in its role for each Council has the ability to undertake functions as required for all service areas with approval of each Council's Section 151 officer.

14. The Joint Committee will be presented with a 'in-year updated' Delegated Functions Proforma / Scheme of Delegation for approval when the new SVPP structure is published. This is detailed on the Forward Plan.

THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION

15. The attached Scheme of Delegation (Appendix 3) has been updated to ensure the Partnership can carry out the functions detailed in the Collaboration Agreement for each Council.
16. It details the SVPP management responsibilities for decision making and acknowledges the role of each Councils Section 151 officer in approving decisions of the Partnership for each Council.
17. It may be necessary for delegation to be given directly by the Section 151 officer to the Partnership to carry out certain legislative functions as they arise in any financial year. An example of this was "flood relief" administration which was duly reported to each Council and then delegated to the Partnership.
18. Officers from BCP/SVPP will ensure each Council's delegated functions, where changes may be necessary, reflect the delegations given to the SVPP by the Joint Committee in the Scheme of Delegation for 2020/21 financial year.

Summary of Financial Implications

19. The Joint Committee on 23 December 2019 set the following budget for 2020/21 for the Partnership

SVPP Customer Access Team	SVPP Processing	SVPP Admin Payments to Partner Councils	SVPP Total	BCP Council Contribution (65.32%)	Dorset Council Contribution (34.68%)
£847,328	£4,032,972	£212,500	£5,092,800	£3,326,617	£1,766,183

20. As from 2017 it was agreed that SVPP would work in Partnership with Bournemouth Borough Council (now BCP Revenues and Benefits) to deliver the following efficiencies (which were identified in the Bmth & SVPP Business Case)

	Comment	Estimate 2018/19	Estimated 2019/20	Estimated 2020/21	Estimated 2021/22	Total
Staffing	1 Service Head Reduction staff	75,000 250,000	0 175,000	0 175,000	0 100,000	75,000 700,000
ICT Software	Move to 1 ICT provider	0	0	75,000	25,000	100,000
Printing and Postage	External Contract	25,000	25,000	25,000	0	75,000

Enforcement Service	SVPP & BBC Service	75,000	25,000	0	0	100,000
Total		425,000	225,000	275,000	125,000	1,050,000

21. It was agreed in 2017 that all costs and savings would be shared at a ratio of 60% to SVPP and 40% to Bournemouth (BCP) as detailed for each and all costs associated with change. Effectively this agreement since 1 April 2019 means for every £1.00 spent or saved will be at a ratio of 79.19% BCP Council and 20.81% Dorset Council.
22. BCP and SVPP Revenues and Benefits during the last two years have operated with a Joint Management Team and shared resources. Bringing all of BCP services within the management of the SVPP in 2020/21 will not change the original Partnership cost share principles, the financial process will ensure the budget for the BCP - Bournemouth area is suitably identified as from 1 April 2020 in all budget monitoring proposals and suitably apportioned for the salary contributions.
23. The SVPP Management Board, consisting of each council's Section 151 officers will review the budget and recommend to Joint Committee any modifications.

Summary of legal implications

24. The SVPP Collaboration Agreement is the legal document which enables SVPP to carry out its delegated functions on behalf of BCP Council and Dorset Council.
25. The Deed of Variation acknowledges the changes made to Collaboration Agreement are in accordance with the provisions of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole (Structural Changes) Order 2018 mandating the creation of 2 new unitary authorities, and the wish of parties (BCP & Dorset) to amend the agreement as from 1 April 2019 (Variation date).
26. BCP Council and Dorset Council through their constitution acknowledge the role of SVPP in processing their Revenues and Benefits Services.
27. Each Council can give 'a financial years' notice to end the Partnership in accordance with the Collaboration Agreement.

Summary of human resources implications

28. Human Resources of BCP Council support the SVPP in their capacity of Employing Authority.
29. Human Resources and the Unions will be fully involved in the alignment of BCP/SVPP revenues and benefit services.

Summary of environmental impact

30. The Partnership when introducing Agile working will look to reduce 'carbon footprint' of the organisation to support both Council' objectives.

Summary of public health implications

31. Not applicable to this report

Summary of equality implications

32. EQIA will be produced for all scheme changes and staffing structure alignment

Summary of risk assessment

33. The Risk Register for 2020/21 will be presented to Scrutiny Panel based upon the Business and Action Plan for the Partnership.

CONCLUSION

34. The Collaboration Agreement is the Legal document detailing the activities of the Partnership being undertaken for each Council and the Scheme of Delegation authorises officers of the SVPP to make decisions for each Council.

35. The Collaboration Agreement details each phase of the partnership formation and the Scheme of Delegation has been reviewed accordingly to align to the new Constitution / Financial Regulations of BCP Council and Dorset Councils.

36. The Business Plan details the activities of the Partnership for the year and will see the management of all of BCP Revenues and Benefits Services within the Partnership alongside the Dorset Council Revenues and Benefits functions for the preceding Council areas of East and North Dorset.

37. It is expected during 2020/21 that a decision is reached between BCP Council and Dorset Council to either provide Revenues and Benefits Services together in Partnership or to provide their own services.

38. The role of each Council and their Section 151 officers as members of the Management Board ensures each Council's responsibilities are delivered through the Partnership.

Appendices

1. Forward Plan
2. Delegated Proforma
3. Scheme of Delegation