

# STOUR VALLEY AND POOLE PARTNERSHIP

## SVPP JOINT COMMITTEE

Report subject	<b>Partnership Business Plan, Collaboration Agreement and Delegated Functions 2021/22</b>
Meeting date	8 February 2021
Status	Public
Executive summary	To detail the Business Plan of the Partnership for 2021/22 Financial Year and to give delegations to officers to administer accounts in accordance with the Collaboration Agreement between BCP Council and Dorset Council.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The Partnership work to the objectives detailed within item 7 of this report for the 2021/22 Financial Year and that a full timetable be presented to the next meeting of Scrutiny Panel and Joint Committee for review and endorsement</li> <li>(b) the Collaboration Agreement / Delegated Functions Proforma for 2021/22 be passed to each Council Partner for adoption</li> <li>(c) the updated Scheme of Delegation for 2021/22 be adopted for the Partnership and reviewed in line with each Council's Constitution and Scheme of Delegation</li> <li>(d) Section 151 officers of each Council can instruct the SVPP to undertake "delegated roles" as necessary for the delivery of legislative changes</li> </ul>
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 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 SVPP and BCP Council (Bournemouth area) were due to operate to one staffing structure in 2020 to perform the Revenues and Benefits functions for BCP Council and SVPP. This was deferred due to all resources being allocated to supporting each Council with Covid19 measures.
4. The Forward Plan for 2021/22 will be produced once a decision has been reached by both Councils on the future of SVPP. This will be presented to the next meeting of Joint Committee for approval.
5. The Business Plan for SVPP remains unchanged to that agreed previously for the period from April 2020 to March 2022.

## **BUSINESS PLAN / ACTION PLAN**

6. 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 was produced for two financial years from April 2020 to March 2022.
7. The planned actions to be undertaken are to :
  - deliver a new service staffing structure
  - establish support required for Dorset Council software system conversion
  - implement Agile working alongside accommodation review
  - align BCP Debtors software databases
  - despatch of all post / documentation through CFH contract

- review LCTR schemes
- review 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 – not yet commenced*

8. Due to the pandemic and resource allocations to process Grants, discounts, Test & Trace payments and implementation of Agile working most of these objectives listed above were delayed by the partnership and by both Councils. Full details will be presented with the 2020/21 year-end review to Scrutiny Panel for review at their first meeting of 2021/22.

## **COLLABORATION AGREEMENT & SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

9. The attached Delegated Function Proforma (Appendix 1) 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.
10. 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 Manager, when acting in the role of "Head of Revenues and Benefits" for each Council has the ability to undertake functions as required for all service areas with approval of each Council's Section 151 officer.
11. The Joint Committee will be presented with a revised Delegated Functions Proforma / Scheme of Delegation for approval when the revised structure is published.

## **THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

12. The attached Scheme of Delegation (Appendix 2) has been updated to ensure the Partnership can carry out the functions detailed in the Collaboration Agreement for each Council.
13. 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.
14. 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. Examples of this are "flood relief" and recent "grant" administration which was duly delegated to the Partnership.

15. Officers 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 legal implications**

16. 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.
17. BCP Council and Dorset Council through their constitution acknowledge the role of SVPP.
18. Any new Partnership would result in a new Collaboration Agreement.
19. Each Council can give 'a financial years' notice to end the Partnership in accordance with the Collaboration Agreement.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

20. Human Resources of BCP Council support the SVPP in their capacity of Employing Authority.
21. Human Resources would play a key role in any partnership disaggregation.

### **Summary of environmental impact**

22. The Partnership will in line with BCP Council review the impact on the 'carbon footprint' of the organisation by office closures and homeworking / agile working.

### **Summary of public health implications**

23. Not applicable to this report

### **Summary of equality implications**

24. EQIA will be produced for all scheme changes, staffing structure alignment and agile working policies

### **Summary of risk assessment**

25. The Risk Register for 2021/22 will be presented to Scrutiny Panel based upon the Business and Action Plan for the Partnership and the decision by the Partner Councils on the future of SVPP.

## **CONCLUSION**

26. 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.
27. 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.
28. The Business Plan details the activities of the Partnership for the year.

29. 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. Delegated Proforma
2. Scheme of Delegation