



TO: Audit & Governance Committee

FROM: Director, Chief Executive's Department

DATE: 18th March 2024

PORTFOLIOS AFFECTED: All

WARDS AFFECTED: All

TITLE OF REPORT: Significant Partnerships Register 2023/24

1. PURPOSE

To provide Elected Members with an update about the Significant Partnerships Register for 2023/24. The Register identifies all the significant partnerships the local authority is involved in as per the Audit & Governance Committee's Terms of Reference.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Audit & Governance Committee is asked to:

- A) Note the contents of this report
- B) Review the Significant Partnerships Register (appendix 1).

3. BACKGROUND

The Significant Partnership Register is part of the Council's Annual Governance Statement, and the annual and mid-year review ensures that the Council's representation is appropriate and the governance arrangements that are in place are adequate. This ensures we fulfil our responsibilities under the Council's Constitution and Code of Corporate Governance.

The Council's Constitution requires the Chief Executive to maintain and annually review a register of the Council's significant partnerships. The review and administration of the process is undertaken by the Chief Executive's Support team. Upon review it is then the responsibility of the Director to identify the significant partnerships in which they or their staff are involved. This is undertaken using the Guidance which is circulated with each review. With the Director's approval, partnerships can be added or removed from the register subject to any changes within the governance arrangements. An annual update is then presented at Audit & Governance Committee. The mid-year review is undertaken on an informal basis alongside frequent updates to the Register throughout the year based on changes in departmental responsibilities and lead officers.

The Significant Partnership Register plays a key role in the Council being able to evidence its commitments to the value for money assessments which are focussed on improving economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. The Significant Partnership Register is involved here in so far that these commitments ensure significant partners are meeting their stated objectives in relation to service and / or performance quality, transparency and openness and the financial suitability of each partnership.

Further to this, the Council Constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The Significant Partnership Register's inclusion in the Constitution,

demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensuring Significant Partnerships are operating with integrity, ethical values and within the law; ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement; and determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcome.

4. RATIONALE

The Significant Partnership Register provides value to the Council in that it documents all governance arrangements of each significant partnership. This ensures that these arrangements are agreed by all involved parties as laid out by the framework. This further ensures that partners and the Council are aligned with the same aims, objectives, principles and values. These principles are often applied to non-significant partnerships as well thereby ensuring a high standard of governance across the organisation. The Register is subject to internal audit on a two-year cycle. This ensures the requirements of the Register are being met. The framework document for each Significant Partnership requires compliance under the following headings as recommended by CIPFA:

- A) Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
- B) Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- C) Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.
- D) Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcome.
- E) Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- F) Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- G) Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

The Council's Code of Corporate Governance defines the partnerships that are included in the Register because not all partnerships are classed as '*significant*'. Following a recommendation from the BwDBC Audit and Assurance team, the Register is fully updated annually and then supported by a smaller mid-year review to capture any key updates. The general review takes place in quarter one and the comprehensive review takes place in quarter three. Onus remains on Chief Officers to ensure the entries are correct and up to date. All contact with Chief Officers and partnership leads is logged as per a recommendation from the BwDBC Audit and Assurance team. This year we have continued with the use of SharePoint in updating the Register and frameworks which allows for a more streamlined and efficient process for both the lead officers and the CE's Support Team.

5. KEY INFORMATION

Updates to the Register in quarter three include changes in personnel and portfolios and staff will continue to update these throughout the year as required. Each department was asked to review its partnerships and the following additions and deletions were made:

Additions:

- A) Albion Mill Partnership Board
- B) BwD School Effectiveness Board
- C) CSAP Blackburn with Darwen Place-Based Board
- D) Corporate Parenting Partnership
- E) Young BwD Foundation
- F) Darwen Town Deal

Deletions:

- A) Intermediate Care Board
- B) Road Safety Partnership Board

- C) Strategic Alliance Partnership
- D) BBCL School Improvement Board
- E) Corporate Parenting Executive Board
- F) Strategic Youth Alliance Partnership Board
- G) Children’s Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (formerly LSCB)
- H) Pennine Lancashire Building Control
- I) Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT)
- J) Local Council Roads Innovation Group
- K) Northwest Highway Authority and Utility Committee
- L) Northwest Joint Authorities Group
- M) Lancashire Road Safety Partnership
- N) Growth Contractor & Developer Framework
- O) UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Renamed:

- A) Funded Care Implementation Board to Funded Care Partnership Board
- B) A&E Delivery Board to Urgent and Emergency Care Delivery Board (UECDB) Meeting

It is worthwhile to note that the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership will dissolve on 31st March 2024, once the Lancashire County Combined Authority is formed later this year. The Combined Authority will subsume the responsibilities that were previously held by the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership.

A general review of the Register will be scheduled in quarter 1 and this will ensure changes are recorded within an acceptable timeframe as recommended by the BwDBC Audit and Assurance team. Colleagues within the CE’s Support team will also undertake updates to partnership details as they are identified. Chief and lead officers remain committed to ensuring the Register is completed to the required standard.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications arising from this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no resource implications arising from this report.

10. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATION

There are no equality implications arising from this report.

11. CONSULTATIONS

Chief Officers approve each entry on the register and the information within the related framework. Entries without a Chief Officer’s signature are not accepted.

Contact Officer: Mohsin Mulla, Business Manager
 Date: 18th March 2024
 Background Papers: Significant Partnerships Register
 (Appendix 1 – attached separately)