



TO: Audit & Governance Committee

FROM: Deputy Chief Executive

DATE: 15th January 2019

PORTFOLIOS AFFECTED: All

WARDS AFFECTED: All

TITLE OF REPORT: Significant Partnerships Register 2018/19

1. PURPOSE

To provide Members with an update on the Significant Partnerships Register for 2018/19. 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:

- Review and approve the significant partnerships submitted for inclusion in the 2018/19 register

3. BACKGROUND

The information held within the Significant Partnerships Register is captured using the Partnership Governance Framework. This document was designed to ascertain which partnerships exist across the Council and of these which ones would classify as 'significant.' The document is in two parts – guidance and template - to ensure that Directors are able to ascertain which partnerships within their remit can be defined as 'significant' and lead officers can then outline the partnership's compliance with the Council's guidelines using the template. The document has undergone changes following internal audits and changes to best practice nationally. However, it still maintains its original aim of ensuring compliance with council policy and identifying appropriate evidence of this to aid future audits.

The current framework is based on the Council's Code of Corporate Governance and CIPFA guidance on Delivering Good Governance. The Register is an opportunity to ensure that partnerships throughout the local authority are well-governed and that appropriate oversight is in place. For the purposes of this exercise a significant partnership is: *"an agreement between two or more independent bodies to work collectively to achieve an objective, normally excluding the familiar relationships between client and contractor or employer and staff."*

It is defined as a joint working arrangement where the partners:

- are otherwise independent bodies;
- agree to co-operate to achieve common goals and outcomes for the community;
- share accountability, risks, and resources;
- share relevant information; and
- agree processes and programmes to achieve the common goal.

4. RATIONALE

The Significant Partnerships Register is updated on an annual basis to review and assess partnerships to ensure that they continue to be relevant, offer value for money and that the intended outcomes are being achieved. As a result of budget pressures over the past ten years there has been a change in the number of partnerships the council is involved in. To ensure resources (assets, staff and financial) are utilised to maximum benefit, membership of various partnerships has been reviewed over the years.

5. KEY ISSUES

In October 2018 the Audit and Assurance Team undertook an audit exercise of the Significant Partnerships Register to ascertain its effectiveness. Substantial Assurance was awarded for the Control environment and Adequate Assurance was awarded for Compliance. A small number of recommendations were made to strengthen the process and these have now been implemented. In addition to these recommendations, there will be an additional follow-up with Directors after six months to ascertain if any partnerships have changed or any new ones have been created. This will increase the level of oversight and governance within the organisation and will allow a high standard of oversight to be implemented at a partnership's creation.

The Significant Partnerships Register update 2018/19 was undertaken following the completion of the audit. A copy of the entries submitted is attached as appendix A. Following approval of the Register by the Committee, lead officers for each partnership will be asked to complete an updated governance framework to ensure that the partnership is compliant with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council guidance and also CIPFA recommendations. Responsibility rests with the department to ensure that supporting evidence is available for examination upon request.

Directors have been reminded of their responsibility to ensure that completed framework documents are submitted for each significant partnership within their department. In addition, Directors must sign each framework document before submission to the Corporate Research, Policy and Partnerships team.

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

Individual Directors approve each entry on the register and also sign-off the related framework. Entries without a Director's signature are not accepted.

Contact Officer: Anisa Patel (ext. 5206)
Date: 15th January 2019
Background Papers: Significant Partnerships Register (appendix 1)