

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 07 February 2022

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| Portfolio: | Health and Public Protection |
| Subject: | Renewal of Environmental Health Partnership Agreement |
| Report of: | Director of Leisure and Community |
| Corporate Priorities: | Protect and enhance the environment |

Purpose:

That the Executive delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer to renew the Environmental Health Partnership Agreement with Gosport Borough Council on an open-ended basis with appropriate clauses to allow for future reviews and/or termination.

Executive summary:

The latest agreement between the two Councils in respect of the Environmental Health Partnership was for a period of 5 years from 01 April 2014 until 31 March 2019. Prior to the pandemic, work was underway to renew the agreement, however progress has been hampered over the last couple of years or so. The current Partnership Agreement has technically expired and a new one needs to be put into place for the legal and financial security of both Councils.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

It is recommended that the Executive agrees to delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to renew the Environmental Health Partnership Agreement with Gosport Borough Council on an open-ended basis with appropriate clauses to allow for future reviews and/or termination.

Reason:

The Environmental Health Partnership is continuing to offer good value for money, resilience and a good quality Service to Fareham Borough Council. The Agreement, which underpins it, has expired and it would be prudent to see a new partnership agreement put into place as detailed above.

Cost of proposals:

The cost of this proposal can be met from within existing budgets.

Appendices: None

Background papers: None

Reference papers: None

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Executive Briefing Paper

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INTRODUCTION

1. In 2009 there was a national drive towards sharing services between public authorities, mainly driven by efficiency and transformation agendas. At that time the Council started to explore any opportunities that may exist, following the establishment of the very successful Building Control Partnership that was formed some years earlier initially with Gosport Borough Council. It was recognised at that time that there may be an opportunity to share a single Environmental Health Service particularly as most of the management team within Environmental Health at Gosport Borough Council were nearing retirement age.
2. Due to the complex nature of setting up any such arrangement, it was agreed between the two Councils in late 2009 to share a joint Head of Environmental Health from 1st January 2010 and that officers would undertake further work to investigate the development and delivery of environmental health services through joint working on a fully shared basis.

FORMAL PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

3. At the beginning of 2011 a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed by the two Councils to formalise the sharing of a Head of Environmental Health. This initial arrangement was set out on a three-year term, with each Council meeting half the cost of the Head of Environmental Health.
4. The partnership worked well from the outset, delivering savings to both Councils and also enabling greater efficiency and resilience in their Service provision.
5. On 1st April 2014 the former Gosport employees were transferred to Fareham for employment purposes (TUPE) and an initial 5-year agreement between the two Authorities was put into place.
6. The latest agreement between the two Councils in respect of the partnership was for a period of 5 years from 1 April 2014 until 31 March 2019. Prior to the pandemic, work was underway to renew the agreement, however progress has been hampered over the

last couple of years or so. It is now proposed to make the agreement open ended, albeit subject to clauses that would enable termination of the arrangement if it no longer suited both Councils.

7. There is a Partnership Panel which oversees the operation of the Partnership, which is represented by Officers and elected members from each Council. The Panel is satisfied that the partnership continues to offer the benefits already detailed above and recommend that the Partnership agreement is now renewed on an open-ended basis, subject to the protection of both Councils detailed above.
8. Gosport Borough Council are also reviewing these arrangements and seeking approval of the new agreement from the relevant Board at the end of January.

CONCLUSION

9. The current Partnership Agreement has technically expired and a new one needs to be put into place for the legal and financial security of both Councils.
10. The Environmental Health Partnership is continuing to offer good value for money resilience and a good quality Service to Fareham Borough Council. The Agreement which underpins it has expired and it would be prudent to see a new partnership agreement put into place as detailed above.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Lindsey Ansell (Ext 4567)