

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee



27 September 2022

Title	Surrey Delivery Board update
Purpose of the report	To note
Report Author	Daniel Mouawad – Chief Executive Lee O’Neil – Deputy Chief Executive Terry Collier – Deputy Chief Executive
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	Community Affordable housing Recovery Environment Service delivery
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Note the contents of the report.
Reason for Recommendation	Not applicable

1. Summary of the report

- 1.1 On 20 April 2022, the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee (CPRC) received a report on Surrey County Council’s (SCC’s) proposals for a County Deal, the Surrey Forum and Surrey Partnership Boards. The Leader of SCC, County Councillor Tim Oliver, attended that meeting to give an overview of the County Deal they were hoping to secure from the Government.
- 1.2 The CPRC agreed that Spelthorne Borough Council should provide full active engagement in exploring the potential benefits of a future County Deal and that update reports should be put to the Committee setting out the current and future work of the Surrey Delivery Board (the Board).
- 1.3 This report provides a summary of some of the progress made to date based on feedback from recent meetings of the Board, the most recent of which was held on 4 July 2022. The next meeting of the Board was due to be held on 19 September 2022 but has been postponed due to the funeral of Her Majesty the Queen.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 Surrey County Council are intending to bring a report to their Cabinet on 25th October 2022 setting out their initial draft proposals for a County Deal for Surrey.
- 2.2 Following discussions at the last Surrey Delivery Board, the Leader of SCC, Tim Oliver, recently wrote to District and Borough Council Leaders to invite them to put forward their proposals for consideration and inclusion under a Level 2 County Deal for Surrey. He has asked for any suggestions and thoughts on initial proposals for consideration and inclusion to be fed back by Monday 3rd October, to enable the County Council to take them into account.
- 2.3 Councillor Oliver has emphasised that at this stage any such proposals will only be 'draft', and that as the County Council look to enter into negotiations with government, there will be opportunities to amend, refine and add to them. These negotiations with the Government and subsequent refinements are planned for winter 2022 into spring 2023, with Surrey anticipating that the deal would then be approved sometime later in 2023.
- 2.4 Cllr Oliver has also outlined that this is an opportunity for local government and key stakeholders in Surrey to come together and develop collective and collaborative approaches and solutions that utilise the additional powers/functions the County Council are looking to secure.

Collaborative working opportunities

- 2.5 Surrey County Council have already identified a number of areas they would want to collaborate on such as:
 - (a) Waste and recycling,
 - (b) Economic development, and
 - (c) Accommodation housing and homes.

***Note:** The following updates marked with an * are largely based on minutes from recent Surrey Delivery Board meetings. More detail will be required before further comment can be made on the proposals under consideration.*

Waste and recycling*

- 2.6 The Board have discussed opportunities for collaboration around waste services and it is planned that they will receive a proposals report in the autumn, to include consideration of a number of areas:
 - (a) Behaviour change to improve recycling a public awareness campaign to reduce contamination in kerbside containers,
 - (b) A county-wide infrastructure strategy to improve collection efficiency and reduce disposal costs (recyclable material),
 - (c) Implementation of a shared data system for waste information, and

- (d) Improved incentivisation scheme for district and borough authorities through recycling credits and a benefit share mechanism.
- 2.7 A number of projects are also planned to be completed by the autumn including:
- (a) A review to take into account impacts of the Government's National Waste strategy.
 - (b) SCC and districts and boroughs to jointly commission a review of potential options for collaboration on waste management in Surrey.
- The work would include a cost/benefit analysis and would be overseen by the Surrey Chief Executives' Group.

Aligning Economic Delivery*

- 2.8 Work continues looking at opportunities for aligning economic development activity across Surrey, following a workshop in June 2022 attended by representatives from the borough and district authorities. The key points identified through the workshop included:
- (a) The need for a county-wide approach.
 - (b) An evidence-based approach to interventions required to drive economic development.
 - (c) Building on work such as the existing collaboration in East Surrey.
 - (d) Developing skills to support employment opportunities.
 - (e) The importance of data analysis.
 - (f) The development of a Surrey brand.
- 2.9 There has been support to base the approach on collaboration at three levels – i.e. County, Borough and District, and clusters. Three clusters were proposed, comprising:
- (a) East Surrey – Mole Valley, Tandridge, Epsom & Ewell and Reigate & Banstead.
 - (b) North West Surrey – Spelthorne, Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Woking and Elmbridge.
 - (c) South West Surrey – Guildford and Waverley.
- It is anticipated that any formal agreement on these clusters would need to be formally agreed at a future Surrey Delivery Board.
- 2.10 A follow-up workshop was held on 20 July 2022 involving Borough and District Councils and Surrey County Council, where areas for work going forward were scoped out, identifying any gaps in the proposals across the three levels suggested. A number of areas have been identified between Districts and Boroughs and County where Surrey are best positioned to take the lead including: an overarching Inward Investment Strategy for Surrey (but with niche marketing for districts/boroughs/clusters); spearheading the skills and education agenda alongside higher education to ensure that we deliver what business needs; reinvigorating the visitor economy offer across the County; and a seamless data flow between tiers to ensure that effort is placed where required in order to ensure that 'no-one is left behind'.

- 2.11 A meeting of the North-West Surrey Cluster was held on 23 August 2022 which identified a number of further opportunities for collaborative working on common areas such as: developing a Film business cluster; joint Jobs Fairs and joint Leaders/Chief Executive business events; and working at scale to deliver bespoke outcomes for businesses to address the immediate energy price rise crisis.
- 2.12 The Board has discussed the future of the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in the context of SCC's County Deal proposals, and it was clear to the Members that Enterprise M3 would not be able to continue as a legal entity in the event that it no longer receives government funding (for this financial year 2022 – 23 EM3 LEP has already had its funding cut by 50% which has resulted in a diminished service and reduced staffing levels). The Board were advised that EM3 is keen to continue its role, so if SCC is successful in its bid for a County Deal one option could be the possibility of a straightforward transition of the Surrey related LEPs to Surrey County Council. Hampshire County Council put a report to their Cabinet on 19 July 2022 where it was agreed *"to prepare the ground for a pan-Hampshire LEP Integration Plan for January 2023, subject to progressing devolution negotiations with Central Government"*.
- 2.13 The Members of the Board have also considered whether there would be a possibility of including the Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF) in the collaborative proposals, but a discussion at a recent meeting of the Surrey Chief Executives' Group noted that the limited funding level did not lend itself to a collaborative project, although it was agreed that the option would be discussed further. A separate report on the SPF Investment Plan was considered by this Committee on 11 July 2022, where the full £1m was agreed to be allocated to dedicated Spelthorne projects (including one joint project with Runnymede).

Accommodation, Housing and Homes*

- 2.14 Following the discussion at the April 2022 meeting of the Board, the scope of the work around accommodation, housing and homes had been revised, looking at the impact of significant challenges faced by Surrey authorities and the benefits that greater collaboration could bring. It was intended to undertake diagnostic work before any proposals were brought back to the Board for consideration.
- 2.15 The Board has received a paper outlining a series of strategic challenges facing the Surrey authorities which, it is suggested, indicate why greater collaboration in the areas of housing and accommodation was needed, including:
- (a) Affordability rates, reflecting local high land values, property prices and rents.
 - (b) Supply of accommodation, recognising that the scale of the Green Belt and other protected land designations had a significant impact on the availability of land for development.
 - (c) Addressing inequality and promoting social inclusion and social mobility.
 - (d) Maximising the positive impact of available accommodation and homes, noting the importance of safe and decent homes for good health,

opportunities for education and learning, and access to and sustaining a meaningful occupation.

- (e) Securing inward investment.
- (f) Achieving a positive contribution towards climate change with the objective of introducing a range of initiatives, including making walking and cycling popular alternatives to driving for a higher proportion of residents.

It has been suggested that a strategic approach would also strengthen the County's influence in dealing with large scale housing developers who work across the County and exploiting funding opportunities, while providing a mechanism to share best practice between authorities. This is already being delivered to a large extent through the Surrey Development Forum which includes districts and boroughs, county, the development industry and residents' groups.

It is not clear at this stage whether SCC are considering utilising any of their asset portfolio to facilitate the development of more affordable/keyworker accommodation across the county.

- 2.16 It was emphasised that the work would not impact on the statutory powers of individual authorities around housing and planning services – so it specifically excludes any proposal to look at allocating housing numbers across the county (which is left to each Council's Local Plan to deliver). Nor does it include looking at how planning development management could be delivered in a different way. Work is already being done informally by the Surrey Planning Officers Society on sharing best practice, looking at how to best address the skills shortage/resourcing, and dealing with the ever-changing legislative landscape.
- 2.17 A report would be prepared for the Board at each stage of the work before any decisions would be made on subsequent stages.
- 2.18 Board Members raised a number of points in light of the paper, including the possibility of giving greater prominence to climate change and highlighting the importance of the quality of housing (recognising the age of elements of the existing housing stocks). Some concern was expressed over the barriers in place for elements of the ambitions, although it was suggested that the County had the opportunity to draw up tangible objectives which would be able to capitalise on any funding initiatives introduced by the Government.

Other areas for collaboration

- 2.19 The County Council have also been very active in trying to initiate discussions about collaborative working through a range of officer working groups that meet across the county. One such example are the discussions which have been pursued through the Surrey Treasurers' Group where specific areas put forward by SCC for consideration have included:
 - (a) Working in partnership to improve travel and transport experiences for residents (with an initial focus on home to school/college and Adult Social Care users).
 - (b) Procurement and commissioning of services.

- (c) Optimising funding – working together to increase local tax collection rates (council tax and business rates) and debt management to mitigate the potentially negative impact caused by the cost-of-living crisis.
 - (d) Prevention spend mapping – use of preventative services (such as meals on wheels, handyperson and telecare services), moving away from the traditional service-led approach
- 2.20 Other future pipeline discussions which have been suggested and outlined to the Surrey Delivery Board include:
- (a) Asset planning for the future (part of the Agile programme)
 - (b) Customer access and experience

Greener Futures Delivery Plan

- 2.21 Surrey has developed a Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery (GFCCD) Plan 2021-2025 which they have requested all Surrey Borough and District Councils to support/endorse (Spelthorne agreed to support this in April 2022). The expectation is that Spelthorne works collaboratively with other Surrey partners and authorities to deliver the action set contained within the GFCCD Plan, alongside Spelthorne's own Corporate Plan priorities and commitments to address climate change.
- 2.22 As part of this, Spelthorne is expected to report regularly on its emissions and provide information and case studies on its actions to move to net zero by 2030.
- 2.23 Working with Surrey and other partners does open-up opportunities to seek funding for various projects and activities such as Sustainable Warmth, which aims to assist with energy efficiency measures in homes of those that need it most.
- 2.24 However, SCC have built up a sizeable climate change team and recently advertised for a 'Climate Change Planner'. With the size of their team, it does open-up questions on how they will wish to work with Borough and District Councils in the long term, and whether this will lead to capacity issues within those authorities.

Highways verge maintenance and parking enforcement

- 2.25 Surrey County Council issued a press release on Friday 5th August 2022 announcing that they would be taking highway verge cutting, weed control and on-street parking enforcement management back in-house from the boroughs and districts that currently undertake these functions on their behalf. This was a unilateral decision by the County, with no consultation with the boroughs and districts. The County currently has agreements in place with eight Borough and District Councils (including Spelthorne) to manage the verges on the County Council's behalf, and all on-street parking enforcement is managed by the districts and boroughs. From April 2023, the County Council will be managing all of these functions across Surrey.

- 2.26 The transfer of these functions may have significant implications for Spelthorne in terms of staffing, financial impacts (both one-off and ongoing) and the frequency and quality of work undertaken.

The main impacts our residents are likely to experience as a result of these changes include:

(a) Highway Verges:

- A change of frequency from 12 urban cuts to 4 and rural cuts reducing from 4 to 2,
- No management of any shrub beds,
- Response times to complaints being much longer,
- Reduced weed control,
- Reduced standard of cutting,
- No control over litter clearance before cutting,
- No sweeping after cutting.

(b) Parking enforcement:

- No immediate response to parking complaints, such as driveway parking,
- Schools parking control will not be controlled by the borough,
- No control and additional costs to Spelthorne related to road closures for street maintenance.

3. Options analysis and proposal

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report which outlines progress with a County Deal for Surrey and ongoing discussions on a range of potential areas of collaborative working at the Surrey Delivery Board.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 Although there are potentially significant financial implications for Spelthorne depending on the outcome of any future County Deal and areas for collaborative working, these are difficult to quantify until the details of any such arrangements are known.

5. Risk considerations

- 5.1 The risks associated with any future County Deal or areas for collaborative working will have to be considered as and when any proposals are developed further.

6. Legal considerations

- 6.1 The legal implications of SCC taking highways verge maintenance and parking enforcement back in-house are currently being considered. Otherwise, there are no other direct legal considerations to be reported on at this time.

7. Other considerations

- 7.1 There are none.

8. Equality and Diversity

8.1 There are no direct equality and diversity considerations at this stage.

9. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

9.1 Discussions at the Surrey Delivery Board have highlighted the need to consider climate change/environmental issues relating to any current and future proposals under consideration.

10. Timetable for implementation

10.1 The proposed timetable for progressing SCC's County Deal is outlined in paragraph 2.3 above.

10.2 The detailed timescales for progressing any collaborative working opportunities discussed at the Board are not known at this time.

11. Contact

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Background papers: There are none.

Appendices: There are none.