

Economic Development Committee



29 September 2022

Title	<i>Surrey Delivery Board – economic development stream</i>
Purpose of the report	To note
Report Author	<i>Heather Morgan, Group Head Regeneration and Growth</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	
Corporate Priority	Recovery Service delivery
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: <i>Note the progress which has been made to date on collaboration and partnership working between Districts and Boroughs and Surrey County Council</i>
Reason for Recommendation	

1. Summary of the report

1.1 This report updates the committee on the activity which is currently taking place to look at collaborative opportunities across Districts/Boroughs and County on economic development activities. Progress is being regularly reported to the Surrey Delivery Board, on which the Chief Executive and Leader sit.

2. Key issues

2.1 The information below will also be reported to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 27 September 2022.

2.2 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:

- The need for a county-wide approach.

- An evidence-based approach to interventions required to drive economic development.
 - Building on work such as the existing collaboration in East Surrey.
 - Developing skills to support employment opportunities.
 - The importance of data analysis.
 - The development of a Surrey brand.
- 2.3 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:
- East Surrey – Mole Valley, Tandridge, Epsom & Ewell and Reigate & Banstead.
 - North West Surrey – Spelthorne, Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Woking and Elmbridge.
- South West Surrey – Guildford and Waverley.
- 2.4 It is anticipated that any formal agreement on these clusters would need to be formally agreed at a future Surrey Delivery Board.
- 2.5 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’.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 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".

- 2.8 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 the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 11 July 2022, where the full £1m was agreed to be allocated to dedicated Spelthorne projects (including one joint project with Runnymede).

3. Options analysis and proposal

3.1 Option 1

- 3.2 To note the activity undertaken to date and the next steps. The areas which are suggested to fall within the remit of Surrey have been agreed in principle by the Chief Executives and Leaders at the Surrey Delivery Board which was held in July 2022. This is the recommended option.

Option 2

- 3.3 To request that officers consider other approaches and areas of potential collaboration and partnership working. All the economic development teams across the districts and boroughs, plus Surrey, have met on a number of occasions to consider how to better define the relationships at different levels, and where collaboration can achieve outcomes which are greater than the sum of its parts. The suggestions going to the Surrey Delivery Board have been developed as a result. Whilst other options could be explored, these would then have to be discussed agreed with all other councils at officer and political level. This would delay bringing forward those opportunities to develop more joined up working. This option is not recommended.

Option 3

- 3.4 To ask officers to withdraw from the on-going discussions. This would run counter to the decision made by Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 20 April 2022 that "Spelthorne Borough Council should provide full active engagement in exploring the potential benefits of a future County Deal". This option is not recommended.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 As the collaborative work progresses, opportunities may arise to secure savings on commissioning advice, consultancy to support the development of strategies etc. the report itself has no direct financial impacts.

5. Risk considerations

- 5.1 There are inevitable risks around collaboration and joint working unless there is clarity around purpose, outcomes and lines of responsibility. Without this there is a risk of confusion, lack of ownership and people taking different messages out of an on-going conversation.
- 5.2 This can be mitigated through the development of formal partnership arrangements/frameworks or memorandums of understanding. This option is under active consideration.

6. Procurement considerations

6.1 There are no specific procurement matters at this stage. If joint procurement opportunities are progress in the future (say for example on joint evidence bases for economic strategies) then our procurement team will be involved at that stage.

7. Legal considerations

7.1 There are no legal matters which need specific consideration at this stage, but will be advised if any formal partnership arrangements/frameworks or memorandums of understanding between districts/borough and county are developed as the work progresses.

8. Other considerations

8.1 None at this stage.

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 Detail how the recommended proposals will impact equality and diversity and mitigation measures being taken.

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

10.1 Sustainability for businesses is a key issue, and something that the NW Surrey cluster in particular is looking into (e.g. how we can bring together expertise across the five authorities to roll out across the cluster). .

11. Timetable for implementation

11.1 Regular updates are being reported into the Surrey Delivery Board, and tie in more generally with the work being undertaken in connection with the Surrey County Deal.

12. Contact

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Background papers: There are none.

Appendices: