

Partnership working: achieving a better Surrey for everyone

The engagement process for the Surrey 2030 vision has underlined the fact that partnership working holds the key to delivering on our shared ambitions. This was a particularly strong message from the voluntary, community and faith sector throughout the extensive engagement programme. Colleagues in public services and institutions, including the county, district and borough councils, health, police and the universities and further education colleges have also focused on partnership as the essential way of working to secure better outcomes.

Local evidence for the need to change:

Surrey County Council facilitated, and listened to, many conversations with partners over the summer. In particular, in early July, two major partner events were organised where a number of principles for partnership working were identified including:

- Directing more resources into prevention and early intervention work for vulnerable children and adults
- Collaborating to meet the county's housing challenge
- Thinking collectively about developing long-term, sustainable infrastructure solutions for a growing population
- Supporting communities to take more responsibility for themselves and for vulnerable people in their neighbourhoods
- Working together in new and creative ways, through a culture of honesty and mutual respect
- Strengthening the financial sustainability of public, voluntary, community and faith sectors so they have stability to deliver services over the long term.

Some residents called for public organisations in Surrey to be better at listening to the needs and concerns of their residents and more meaningful engagement with local communities in their decision-making processes.

Stakeholders wanted to see services working in a joined-up way and decision-making based on evidence and with a long-term view over short-term gain.

Partnership provides the key to unlocking the strengths inherent in our communities, businesses, public and civic life through sharing skills, insights and experiences to enable us to make the changes we need to.

There are of course already a wide range of partnership arrangements in Surrey. Now is a significant moment to re-affirm a collective commitment to build on these partnerships and extend and enhance them for the benefit of Surrey residents. We will increasingly face volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity and our services will progressively become more integrated, our resources shared or pooled and our staff deployed more flexibly. This will involve joining up and innovating in

ways we have not done before, taking a fresh, place-based approach to leadership, and together we believe we can find ways of achieving this.

Based on the above Surrey County Council would like to invite all partners to collectively develop a statement of partnership working that articulates our renewed commitment and focus to delivering outcomes for people in Surrey. To start the discussions, we have set out some areas that could be covered in a shared partnership statement, and we will work with stakeholders to develop these ideas further.

Purpose of a partnership statement

A partnership statement will demonstrate the commitment of organisations from the public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors in Surrey to extend and enhance partnerships to achieve the Vision for Surrey in 2030. We suggest this can be achieved through shared principles and commitments, and a shared approach to how we work.

The idea of a statement emerged through the extensive engagement with partners on the Vision for Surrey 2030. Taking the feedback on board, our proposal for a statement recognises that partnership working is critical for achieving the shared Vision and that developing a genuine collaborative partnership culture is essential. The statement could build on existing partnership agreements such as, to name a few, the Surrey Compact, Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board, Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership, Community Safety Partnership and the Surrey Waste Partnership.

There are significant and complex challenges in Surrey, characterised by the growing needs of residents and reducing resources across the county to respond. Working collaboratively and collectively leading effective partnerships that work across the whole system of services and support in Surrey will be at the core of a sustainable future. This is the only way to deliver the best outcomes for everyone in Surrey – success is only achievable together.

Developing shared principles:

Experience of partnerships elsewhere suggests that developing an agreed set of shared principles can act as a strong foundation for partnership working. Below is a list of some of the key principles typically adopted in current arrangements. We will discuss and refine these in discussion with partners.

- Partnerships work towards shared common goals
- The contribution of partners is encouraged and valued
- Every partner is respected - they have equal right to be heard and involved in decisions affecting them
- Partners share and learn together
- Partners are honest about the difficult issues
- Trust is at the foundation of every partnership

Developing shared objectives:

Through the engagement work a number of key shared areas of focus emerged. These would benefit from being discussed and developed further, but do provide a helpful starting point:

- Early intervention and preventative support
We will prioritise early intervention and prevention work to identify issues before they escalate thereby avoiding higher costs.
- Support community resilience, inclusivity and equality of access
We will foster safer, more inclusive and connected communities and actively support vulnerable and deprived residents. We will all work with communities to help them feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for those around them. Organisations will make accessing support easier and commit to the continuous improvement of equality of access.
- Deliver value for money
Public services and other organisations have finite resources to respond to the increasing needs of residents. However, together we have the responsibility to deliver the best possible outcomes for residents. So despite these challenges we commit to making best use of our resources, skills and talent to deliver value for money.

Developing a shared approach:

Through the engagement process partners identified the need to work differently to respond to our changing environment. Some key ideas emerged about the behaviours and structures that could better position us for the challenges we are facing. For example:

- Establish a culture of place based leadership
Encourage a culture of honesty, respect and collaboration across organisations and support organisational leaders to work across structural and cultural boundaries to deliver better outcomes for residents. Decisions should be taken at the most appropriate local level.
- Inspire a shared purpose
Build understanding and awareness with communities of shared challenges and establish greater respect for residents through producing and investing in more genuine evidence based solutions that are based on stakeholder and feedback.
- Harness digital ways of working
Embed an open culture that values, incentivises and expects digital ways of working, to help us design and deliver services that best meet people's needs
- Engage and collaborate early and often
We will engage with each other early and often and collaborate to solve problems, reducing duplication and waste. We will engage residents and

communities early on in decisions that affect them, and involve them in the design of solutions, using a commissioning approach which starts with a deep understanding of current experiences and needs

- Be transparent
Partners champion transparency and develop, use and share data and insights openly in order to secure better outcomes for everyone

Next steps

Surrey County Council will test our proposals detailed here with partners before we present them to Council in October in draft format.

We will then develop the ideas and support for it over the autumn, including at a stakeholder event planned for 29 October 2018.

We plan to bring a revised version of a statement of partnership working back to Council in February 2019, and we hope that partners will similarly show their commitment to a statement. We will explore the best way of collectively demonstrating our commitment.

We will then work with partners to begin to implement the agreed statement, and how we will measure the impact of our efforts.