

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
CABINET**



DATE: 30 APRIL 2019

REPORT OF: MR TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
LEAD OFFICER: MICHAEL COUGHLIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND PROSPERITY
COMMUNITY COUNCIL VISION
OUTCOME:
SUBJECT: DELIVERING THE COMMUNITY VISION FOR SURREY IN 2030: WORKING WITH PARTNERS AND RESIDENTS

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Working in partnership is key to achieving better outcomes for residents. We know we can't realise the aspirations in the [Community Vision for Surrey in 2030](#) (Vision for Surrey) alone - all organisations in Surrey with a role in delivering the Vision need to collaborate effectively. This report sets out the progress we're making to strengthen partnership working across the county.

Residents have a critical role in delivering the Vision by helping themselves and others in their communities less able to support themselves. Evidence confirms there are solid foundations in Surrey to enable this. The report explains how we are changing our relationship with residents and how we will work with partners to create more opportunities for residents to participate in their communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Endorse the direction of travel for improving how we work with partners and residents;
2. Endorse the partnership commitment in Annex A and recommend it is presented to the Council meeting on 21 May 2019 for approval; and
3. Agree that a new model for locality partnership working in Surrey is developed with partners, with a view to foundational new arrangements being in place by October 2019, with full operation by March 2020.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The council has committed to being a better partner, and is focused on developing stronger relationships with partners. This is a central principle of our [Organisation Strategy](#) as it will help us to deliver our contribution to the Vision for Surrey.

Developing new relationships with our residents, and enabling new opportunities for our residents to participate, underpins the successful realisation of one of the ten ambitions in the Vision:

Communities are welcoming and supportive, especially of those most in need, and people feel able to contribute to community life.

DETAILS:

Partnerships for stronger communities

1. A clear foundation for delivering the Vision for Surrey for the benefit of residents is to have strong communities across the county. This means having communities where:
 - There are strong and active social networks
 - No-one is socially isolated
 - Community assets are known and used to the full
 - Individuals and families support one another
 - People are healthy and well, happy and safe.

2. We have spent the last six months working with our partners to organise strategic partnerships in ways that strengthen existing, and forge new, relationships that will help achieve the Vision for Surrey. For instance:
 - A [draft Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) has been developed, which is the product of unprecedented collaboration between the NHS, Surrey County Council, district and borough councils and wider partners, including the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) and the police.
 - Supporting children and young people in Surrey to fulfil their potential and keep them safe is some of the most important work we do. This includes looking at how we work with colleagues in the health sector, schools, police and VCFS.
 - ‘Surrey Next’ signals a new and co-ordinated way for the district, borough and county councils to work together to achieve outcomes for the residents we collectively serve. A number of workstreams have been identified to form the scope of Surrey Next.

A strengthened commitment to partnership working

3. Partners across the county – district and borough councils, public sector organisations, the VCFS and businesses - face multiple, complex and, in some cases, interrelated challenges, including demographic changes, rising service demand, government policy changes and uncertainty, and the cumulative impact of reducing resources.
4. Through the engagement work on the Vision for Surrey, it became apparent that, given these challenges, the ambition of the Vision could only be secured through effective partnership working. Discussions with partners identified both where partnerships were working well and how we needed to change and improve the way we work together. Evidence from the [engagement exercise on the Vision](#) also highlighted residents’ expectations that partners work in a joined up way.
5. The behaviours, positive relationships and ways of working that partners adopt when collaborating are critical to success, and are just as, if not more, important as defining the priorities they work on and the support they need to deliver. In response to feedback from partners and residents, we set out our intention to work with partners to develop a partnership commitment to define these.

6. Through two partner workshops held in February 2019, we co-designed a draft partnership commitment that sets out expectations of each other as partners (Annex A). Other key conclusions from the workshops were:
- All partners have a responsibility to take ownership of the Vision for Surrey and to promote it with stakeholders less familiar with it
 - It is important for partners to use their knowledge, skills and experience to complement the work of others, and to avoid duplication
 - Being better partners means being honest and flexible to take account of each organisation's interests
 - We shouldn't lose sight of the outcomes we are trying to achieve
 - Partners need to develop more opportunities for residents to contribute to their communities. This includes removing some of the barriers that can prevent people contributing, such as the formal nature of some voluntary roles and commitments.
7. Cabinet are requested to endorse and support the partnership commitment in Annex A, as a statement of its support for continued work to improve partnership working across the county and as a leader of this initiative. It is recommended Cabinet presents the commitment to the Council on 21 May 2019 for adoption.
8. Whilst there is some exemplar work going on with businesses in Surrey, with organisations using their corporate social responsibility (CSR) to bring benefit to the voluntary and community sectors, there is untapped potential in the business sector. In partnership with Councils for Voluntary Services (CVSs) in 2017/18, we recorded 2,000 CSR related volunteering days, and there is more engagement we will do with CVSs and businesses across Surrey to build on this. We will carry out more engagement with businesses, aligning this with the priorities and principles in the Vision for Surrey 2030.

Future of locality partnership working

9. Our ambitions for better partnership working across the county, coupled with the wider strategic environment, mean it is timely to rethink the future of locality partnerships, based on district and borough geographies, in Surrey.
10. To build on the 2018 review of Local and Joint Committees, and recognising the strong track record of locality partnership working in the county, we have started to speak with the Leaders of Surrey's district and borough councils and the Chairmen of the Local and Joint Committees on what future locality partnerships could look like. These discussions have tested the following design principles:
- Genuine partnerships of equals where no-one dominates
 - Real devolution to local level, not delegation of responsibilities
 - More about better outcomes for residents, less about governance
 - Trust, not enmity
 - Aligning priorities, planning and resources at a local level, not 'cost shunting'
 - Relationships, not process.
11. It is fully acknowledged that each place has its own unique challenges and priorities to address, and the new partnerships will need to be tailored to take account of them. Early thinking on the characteristics of such local partnerships include:
- Build on whatever is in place and proving effective
 - Chaired by districts and boroughs
 - Opportunity to align funding against shared priorities and activities (possible agreement to pool some, over time)

- Devolve decision-making over defined matters
- Comprised of senior representatives, able to endorse or take decisions on behalf of their organisations.

12. As more detailed proposals are developed and co-designed in partnership with localities, we will work closely with partners outside the local government sector to understand their potential contribution and their place on the new partnerships, as well as any mutual dependencies and alignment the new bodies would need to have with existing partnerships. There are opportunities to make local governance more efficient by, for example, aligning the work of each district and borough's Community Safety Partnerships with the new partnerships.

13. We anticipate an initial stage where all local areas will have at least the foundations in place of a local partnership body by autumn 2019, with further work being undertaken to establish them in full by April 2020. We will work with local areas to plan for the necessary changes to current Local and Joint Committees in anticipation of the new arrangements beginning. This will include looking at the best way to manage funding and decision making arrangements that are currently in place through the Local and Joint Committees.

Working differently with residents

14. Residents have a crucial role to play in making Surrey's communities stronger. We want to work with partners to create an environment where residents, individuals and families are resilient and can support one another to create stronger communities.

15. During the engagement exercise in 2018 on the draft Vision for Surrey, residents said they valued the strong community spirit in the county, supported by friendly, caring and supportive people. Evidence from the Surrey Residents' Survey (Annex B) supports this.

16. Surrey has a strong VCFS with over 6,000 organisations estimated to be operating across the county. They, along with other local partners including district and borough councils, have facilitated and developed numerous initiatives and projects over the years to enable residents to have a greater role in their communities, e.g. Good Neighbour Schemes – community based care and support for local residents who need help with some of the basics in day-to-day living.

17. Building on this, we are starting to change our relationships with residents through our transformation programme, such as having different conversations with residents to support them to recognise their own strengths and abilities to look after themselves and others. Through discussions with elected members and partners, and visits to areas that are seen as leading the way in resident engagement and participation (including Wigan and Barking & Dagenham), a range of ideas have been put forward to further change relationships with residents in Surrey, including:

- Building bridges between people within communities who do not normally interact with each other
- Creating opportunities that will give people a sense of individual fulfilment
- Continued and systematic engagement with residents on getting involved in their community
- Organisations developing infrastructure to support residents to participate, whether through digital platforms, funding or other resources.

18. Based on our research, discussions with stakeholders, learning from others and existing work to support this agenda, we propose to take forward work around the following themes over the next six months:

- Social connections – bringing residents together to strengthen relationships within communities and creating new opportunities to build on the community spirit that already exists
- Social action – working with communities to identify practical solutions to deliver better outcomes, particularly for those that are most vulnerable
- Social innovation – taking grass-roots ideas for improving communities and working with partner organisations to help them be nurtured and to flourish. There may also be opportunities to learn lessons or scale up and replicate good practice across Surrey
- Insight – including developing a better understanding of the enablers and barriers to community participation in Surrey
- Social infrastructure – the processes and tools that support greater community participation, for example, funding for community projects or digital platforms that provide information and resources.

19. We recognise that changing our relationship with residents at scale will take time. Cabinet will receive an interim progress update in the summer, followed by a fuller report to its meeting on 29 October.

CONSULTATION:

20. A wide range of engagement activity has taken place including:

- Facilitating two workshops with partners from the VCFS, district and borough councils and health on 13 and 25 February 2019
- A seminar for county council elected members on working with partners and residents on 18 March 2019
- Discussion with Surrey district and borough Leaders on 3 April 2019
- Discussion at the meeting of Local and Joint Committee Chairmen on 9 April 2019.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

21. If partners and residents do not buy in to the value of this work, they are less likely to commit to and engage in it. Having a clear rationale for change and helping stakeholders understand the tangible benefits will be a crucial mitigation for this.

22. Presenting the partnership commitment to Council, and raising awareness of this with officers, gives some practical steps for behaviours that elected members and officers should be observing when working with partners and residents. This will ensure partners are being treated with the respect and transparency they deserve from us.

FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

23. There are no immediate direct financial implications arising from this report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY

24. These proposals do not yet have any direct financial implications. As the council's partnership working develops there may be a requirement for joint or community based budgets and/or contributions required to jointly fund initiatives. Any potential financial

implications will be developed alongside the further partnership work outlined in this paper.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER

25. At this point the decisions that the Cabinet is being asked to make are limited to the approval of a direction of travel and underpinning statement of principles (partnership commitment). There are no legal implications that flow from this. The position will need to be reconsidered when the new model for partnership working is developed.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY

26. There are no direct implications for equality and diversity arising from the decisions made on this report.

27. One of the potential benefits of strengthening relationships with partners and residents is likely to have a knock-on effect on improving the experiences and outcomes for some of the county's most vulnerable residents, such as some older residents who may be less able to take care of themselves.

28. Moving to a new relationship with residents is likely to open up new opportunities for residents with protected characteristics to influence decisions and be part of co-design processes for services. This could then lead to services that are more inclusive and better take account of the needs of Surrey's diverse population.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

29. Next steps include:

- Co-designing a new future model for locality partnership working in Surrey with partners
- Engagement with businesses to drive a more coherent partnership working environment
- Developing clearer insight of the factors that support or prevent residents being able to actively contribute to their local communities
- Insight used to establish infrastructure and support to enable more residents to make a local contribution
- Review with partners to determine how we can bring to bear our collective resources to support social action and community participation
- Finding ways to streamline partnership governance to make the landscape easier to navigate and reduce duplication and waste
- Supporting more residents to be active contributors to their communities.

30. Cabinet will receive further update reports at their meetings on 16 July 2019 and 29 October 2019.

Contact Officer:

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Annexes:

Annex A – Draft Partnership Commitment

Annex B – Community cohesion and participation in Surrey – key metrics snapshot

Sources/background papers:

- [Draft Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)
 - MEL Research: [Future of services: results from residents survey – Surrey County Council January 2019](#)
 - New Local Government Network (2019), [The Community Paradigm: Why public services need radical change and how it can be achieved](#), published February 2019
 - [Our Surrey: Report on engagement feedback on the Vision for Surrey in 2030, September 2018](#)
 - Report to Council, A Community Vision for Surrey in 2030, 9 October 2018
 - Report to Cabinet, Cross-Party Review of Local and Joint Committees, 17 July 2018
 - Surrey Community Action, [Beyond Tomorrow: State of the sector \[VCFS\] survey report 2016](#)
 - Surrey County Council Organisation Strategy 2019 - 2023
 - Surrey Residents Survey Quarter Three 2018/19 results
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