

Audit & Governance Committee  
12 July 2023

**Update on the Surrey Forum and the four associated strategic partnership boards: Health & Wellbeing Board, One Surrey Growth Board, Greener Futures Board, and Thriving Communities Board.**

**Purpose of the report:**

To respond to a request from the Audit & Governance Committee in June 2022 to consider the governance around the Surrey Forum and four associated county-wide, strategic partnership boards, once they had matured (Health & Wellbeing Board, One Surrey Growth Board, Greener Futures Board, and Thriving Communities Board).

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Audit & Governance Committee:

- 1) Recognise the contribution that the Strategic Partnership Boards (SPBs) make to partnership collaboration in pursuit of the Community Vision 2030.
- 2) Acknowledge the critical role played by the County Council in convening the SPBs, in a spirit of place and system leadership.
- 3) Acknowledge and support the work of the SPBs and the achievements of all partners engaging with them.

**Introduction:**

1. The Surrey Forum was established in late 2021 to bring partners together to oversee and drive progress towards delivering a single shared vision for the county (the 2030 Community Vision) and ensure alignment of partners' strategic priorities, decisions, and resources (see Cabinet paper on Tuesday 21 December 2021<sup>1</sup>). The Forum acts as a countywide

<sup>1</sup> [Cabinet Report- Surrey Forum and delivering through partnership FINAL.pdf \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

mechanism to provide a multi-agency, system-wide view of shared ambitions and provide coordination across existing partnerships.

2. In addition, a number of thematic county-wide strategic partnership boards oversee, drive and co-ordinate partners' activity in respect of issues of major significance in Surrey, which helps to contribute towards delivery of the County Council's priority objectives (set out in the Organisation Strategy<sup>2</sup>). Each of these boards is at a different point in their maturity, as follows:

- The Health and Wellbeing Board (statutory) was established in 2013, and has been integral in bringing partners together to help improve health outcomes and community safety.
- The One Surrey Growth Board (non-statutory) was set up in 2020 to bring key stakeholders together to focus on Surrey's economy, homes, infrastructure and quality of life.
- The Greener Futures Board (non-statutory) was established in 2021 to ensure coordination and delivery of partner's ambitions around achieving Net Zero and tackling climate change.
- The Thriving Communities Board (non-statutory) was set up in March 2022 to ensure clear strategic visibility of the programmes and activities underway across SCC and key partnerships, to put the thriving and empowered communities' priority objective ambition into practice.

In terms of governance, it should be noted that apart from the Health and Wellbeing Board, which is statutory and follows specific governance arrangements, the four other boards are non-statutory. As such, they are informal and voluntary and therefore are not required to have or be bound by Council rules of procedure or statutory provisions.

## **Update on the Surrey Forum and the Strategic Partnership Boards**

### **3. The Surrey Forum**

#### **3.1. Purpose and membership**

The Surrey Forum is a voluntary, non-statutory and non-executive multi-agency partnership, to provide collaborative leadership for Surrey, and realise the full economic, social, and environmental potential of the county. Membership of the Forum is set out at Annex A.

The Surrey Forum aims to ensure that residents' priorities, needs, and aspirations are, and continue to be, the primary drivers associated with partners' decision making. Recognising the links between resident outcomes and economic success, it enables partners to better tackle those cross-cutting policy challenges that no single organisation can effectively address alone and that require a system-wide response. It also provides the mechanism to explore and adopt new ways of working across partners to help ensure long term financial sustainability.

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<sup>2</sup> [Our organisation strategy](#)

Collective decisions agreed at the Surrey Forum to be actioned by individual partners require relevant member organisations to follow their usual governance, decision-making and reporting processes.

The Surrey Forum has met approximately quarterly since October 2021, covering topics such as: housing affordability, differential life expectancy, mental health, climate change and green area restoration, health inequalities, empowered communities and early help/prevention.

## **4. Health & Wellbeing Board**

### **4.1. Purpose and membership**

The Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) provides Surrey-wide leadership for the integration of health and wellbeing services, promoting partnership working to secure the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes for the residents of Surrey. The Board is Chaired by Councillor Bernie Muir and membership comprises of NHS commissioners, Public Health, social care, elected Members, Surrey Police, Borough and District Councils and representatives from the VCFS.

Under the Health and Social Care Act (2012), the HWB has a statutory duty to oversee a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; form and deliver a Health and Wellbeing Strategy<sup>3</sup>; approve the Better Care Fund for Surrey; publish the Surrey Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment and any resulting supplementary statements; and review the Community Safety Agreement annually. The Board meets monthly, alternating between in public and in private.

### **4.2. Board activity**

Following the June 2023 meeting, a new HWB Strategy Summary Implementation Plan should be delivered (please note that at the time of writing, the outcome of the meeting is not yet known). The Board is aiming to reassert their joined-up efforts to create the best conditions for physical and mental health and well-being. This includes addressing the wider determinants of health - such as housing, the economy, and the environment. The Board remains focused on prevention and the most vulnerable.

The Board's strategy acknowledges the importance of building trust and a deeper understanding of communities if it is to make a difference, and therefore has an increased focus on working together at a local level, in a Towns-based approach and with communities, in line with the Fuller Stocktake and Hewitt Review.

## **5. One Surrey Growth Board**

### **5.1. Purpose and membership**

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<sup>3</sup> [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

The One Surrey Growth Board is an alliance which brings together key stakeholders who have a vital role in securing improvements to Surrey's economy, homes, infrastructure and quality of life. The Board is Surrey's strategic partnership representing issues of key importance to the economy and 'whole-place'. The Board was chaired by the Leader of Surrey County Council until recently. Cllr Matt Furniss has been confirmed as the new Chair in June 2023. The Membership includes SCC's Chief Executive, elected Members, Borough and District Councils, representatives of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Chamber of Commerce, Community Foundation for Surrey, and the higher education sector.

A core responsibility of the Board is to develop, maintain, and support delivery of a long-term 'Plan for Growth' across partners, considering how to grow Surrey's leading edge through developing our GVA and nurturing innovation. There is a close alignment to the strategies linked to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Greener Futures and Communities Boards. This is through shared objectives to safeguard and improve the quality of life, reduce our impacts on the environment and supporting economic prosperity of Surrey residents with a focus on addressing issues of inequality and inclusion through access to educational and personal development opportunities.

The Growth Board meets quarterly, and it has direct relationship with wider partnerships some of which have been specifically set up to reach out further to stakeholders including the Surrey Skills Leaders Forum, the Business Leaders Forum and wider partnership arrangements. The strength of partnership work and the structures in place are a key element of a future role for the Council in taking on more of an economic leadership role and carrying out economy related functions (e.g. Careers, skills, strategic housing, place-based investments).

## 5.2. Board activity

Following a workshop in May 2022, the Board produced a Delivery Plan aligned to the four economic priorities within the Surrey Economic Strategy. The delivery plan highlights six key Challenges and identifies activities that should be undertaken to address them (below). The delivery plan recognises that the Board has no dedicated resource but delivers through coordination, alignment and influencing.

- Challenge 1: Recruitment and skills,
- Challenge 2: Housing affordability,
- Challenge 3: Availability of development land,
- Challenge 4: Infrastructure,
- Challenge 5: Strengthening our key clusters and innovation,
- Challenge 6: Branding and Promoting Surrey.

## 6. Greener Futures Board

### 6.1. Purpose and membership

The Greener Futures Board brings together an alliance of key stakeholders, partner organisations and influential parties to co-ordinate the delivery of Surrey's Greener Futures ambitions. Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment co-chairs the Board with the Director of the Institute for Sustainability at the University of Surrey. Membership of the board includes the Chief Executive of Surrey County Council, Elected Members and Borough and Districts Councils, as well as representatives of the Environment Agency, Surrey Nature Partnership, Surrey Climate Change Commission, the Community Foundation for Surrey, Surrey Nature Partnership, National Farmers Union, the Country Land and Business Association, Extinction Rebellion, and Hampton Estate.

Fragmentation and the need to coordinate action is one of the key challenges in delivering on the county's shared ambitions to tackle climate change. The Greener Futures board is integral in providing the joined-up and coherent approach that is required.

## 6.2. Board activity:

The Greener Futures Board aims to meet quarterly, although additional meetings are arranged as required and has successfully engaged partners in the following areas:

- The development of the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan and the one-year review of the Plan.
- The approach and principles to financing our environmental work.
- Decisions about appropriate land management through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Land Management Framework.
- Communications and engagement on environmental issues and opportunities with all sectors, and in particular with residents and community partners.

## 7. Thriving Communities Board

### 7.1. Purpose and membership

Supporting 'Thriving Communities' is one of four strategic objectives for the County Council and has a focus on the Councils relationship and work with residents and communities at a local level. The council has embarked on an ambitious programme of embedding this new way of working across major strategies and delivery programmes, to engender deeper, effective engagement with residents and activity that stimulates community-led action, not only within the Council, but also across the county and with system-wide partners.

An internal to the County Council Thriving Communities Board has been established, chaired by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety, and membership comprises of elected Members and senior officers from across the council. The board meets bi-monthly and alternates between visits to a key neighbourhood to see communities work in action, and business meetings where the visits are reflected on and decisions taken on how best to address themes highlighted at the visits. Importantly, the visits to key neighbourhoods also

include relevant Divisional Members, local partners, and key stakeholders from that particular community.

## 7.2. Board activity

The Board has overseen the shift to a new engagement model and community based ways of working for the County Council including the introduction of Community Link Officers. More recently the Board has visited Merstham, Old Dean, Hurst Green and Stanwell. In each case specific local actions were identified to help address key issues for the community – these have been built into local action plans and cover a range of issues such as community spaces, mental health support, public realm, green spaces, and local transport. In addition, the Board has started to pull together key themes gathered from community insight from neighbourhoods across the county in order to identify where additional strategic action is required and which formal governance and partnership groups are best placed to deliver these.

## Financial and value for money implications

8. There are no additional financial and value for money implications to note. The partnerships' main financial implications are in managing board meetings, which equates to officers' and members' time.

## Equalities and Diversity Implications

9. An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this decision, but it is worth noting that the ambitions of closer alignment of Surrey-wide partners will ensure more effective co-ordination and delivery of the Vision 2030 and the strategic partnership boards all have a key focus on addressing inequality and ensuring no one is left behind.

## Risk Management Implications

10. The partnership governance arrangements in place for the SPBs help to strengthen collective oversight of shared risks with key partners in the county.

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### Sources/background papers:

[Cabinet Report- Surrey Forum and delivering through partnership FINAL.pdf \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

Membership of the Surrey Forum comprises:

- County Council Leader (Chair) and Chief Executive
- Representatives of District and Borough Councils, Town and Parish Councils
- MP representation
- Surrey Police Chief Constable
- Chief Fire Officer
- SRO Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (ICS)
- SRO Frimley ICS
- Representatives from the business community
- Surrey Universities
- Further Education (FE) colleges
- Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS)

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