

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 17 JULY 2018****REPORT OF: MS DENISE TURNER-STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES****LEAD OFFICER: JASON RUSSELL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT****SUBJECT: CROSS-PARTY REVIEW OF LOCAL AND JOINT COMMITTEES****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Cabinet is invited to consider and respond to the conclusions and recommendations contained within the report of the Cross-Party Review of Local and Joint Committees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet examine the report and recommendations of the Cross-Party Review Group of Local and Joint Committees; and following full consideration of the findings and their implications, determines how to respond and take forward any changes as part of the wider transformation programme.
2. Cabinet thank the members of the Cross-Party Review Group for the diligent work they have undertaken in completing the review.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. A cross-party review of local and joint committees (LCs/JCs) was established at the direction of the Leader, under the Chairmanship of County Councillor Mary Angell, to review the current model of LCs/JCs, and to make recommendations to Cabinet as to how it can improve joint working and engagement with residents.
2. The Review Group, consisting of County Councillors Mary Angell (Lead), Will Forster, Tim Hall, Jeff Harris and Ernest Mallett has now completed its review and makes a number of recommendations for Cabinet consideration.
3. The Review Group has undertaken a wide-reaching and detailed review, and the findings highlight a number of areas where the County Council can be proud of its local engagement and devolved decision making structures, which represents best practice nationally.

4. The review has also identified areas for improvement and the report makes a number of recommendations for Cabinet to consider.
5. The Council is embarking on a wholesale transformation programme to address the unprecedented demand and financial challenges it faces. In light of this, it is important that Cabinet gives careful and thorough consideration to the report and its findings, before determining how to address them.

DETAILS

6. The Review Group's approach, findings, and the rationale for their recommendations are set out in detail in Annex 1.

CONSULTATION:

7. The Review Group has undertaken extensive consultation, as detailed below:
 - Sent questionnaires to all 81 borough and district members of LCs/JCs;
 - Sent questionnaires to all 81 SCC members;
 - Sent questionnaires to all 475 borough/district councillors;
 - Sent questionnaires to all Surrey Leaders and Chief Executive Officers (CEO) of district/borough councils;
 - Sent questionnaires to 87 parish/town councils;
 - Sent survey to residents associations – 46 responses received;
 - Set up online survey on SCC website for residents and businesses - 377 responses received;
 - Visited 10 out of 11 local/joint committees to gain views;
 - Met with Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Elmbridge Local Committee;
 - Visited CEOs/district/borough leaders when individual meetings requested;
 - Visited Worplesdon Parish Council;
 - Met with SCC CEO Joanna Killian;
 - Met with Executive Director Jason Russell;
 - Met with Head of Economic Growth, Kevin Lloyd;
 - Met with Leader David Hodge and SCC Cabinet;
 - Interviewed North Yorkshire and Cumbria councils via conference calls.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

8. There are no significant risk management implications arising from this report.
9. Increased partnership working should reduce the risks of fragmented service delivery and duplication or omission.
10. The Review Group has produced a suggested action plan to deliver the Review Group's recommendations, which will be considered as Cabinet determines how to take the review forward.

11. The established joint committees are bound by the approved policies, budgets and financial regulations of both participating councils.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

12. The Section 151 Officer confirms that all material financial and business issues and risks have been considered in this report. Agreeing to the recommendations will not expose the council to any significant additional costs or risks.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

13. Sections 101(5) and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 empower local authorities to agree to discharge functions jointly, and to establish joint committees to enable this to happen. The annex to this report sets out the Review's recommendations for future governance arrangements for joint committees in Surrey. As new joint committees are set up, in each case the detailed arrangements will be approved by Cabinet and Council in accordance with regulations.

Equalities and Diversity

14. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed covering the options for change regarding local committees as part of the November 2012 Cabinet report on the public value review of the Community Partnership Team. A summary of the key impacts and actions was provided at this time and has been reviewed.
15. An initial screening has been undertaken of any potential equalities and diversity impacts arising from the annex to this report, which sets out the Review's findings. This has identified no significant concerns of potential negative impact on any protected characteristics.
16. Taking forward any changes to current arrangements arising from this report as part of the wider transformation programme will effectively deliver some of the positive impacts identified through the original EIA, such as enabling better partnership working with improved shared outcomes for local residents and communities.
17. Equalities issues, particularly in relation to any disabilities, will be given consideration in the arrangements for public participation in connection to LC/JC to ensure that anyone with a protected characteristic is not disadvantaged.
18. Officers will continue to consider possible impacts and mitigating actions during consideration of the review.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

19. Cabinet will consider the findings and recommendations and will determine how to respond and take forward any changes as part of the wider transformation programme.

20. Future changes to the role of local and joint committees arising from Cabinet's consideration of the review report, will be discussed with relevant members and officers before implementation.
21. Implementation of any changes arising from Cabinet's consideration of the review such as the establishment of additional joint committees, may require further Cabinet or full Council approval.

Contact Officers:

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Consulted:

Mrs Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Community Services
Mr David Hodge, Leader of Surrey County Council
Joanna Killian, Chief Executive, Surrey County Council

Annexes:

Annex 1: Local and Joint Committee Review Group report
Appendix A – Member Review Group Terms of Reference
Appendix B – Feedback on local and joint committees from members
Appendix C – Survey results
Appendix D – Overview of LCs/JCs Ideal Channels of Communication
Appendix E – LC & JC Frustrations
Appendix F - LC & JC what we are good at
Appendix G - Review Group action plan

Sources/background papers:

County Council vision for 2030, 22 May 2018 County Council meeting