

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET****DATE: 21 DECEMBER 2021****REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****LEAD OFFICER: MICHAEL COUGHLIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR PARTNERSHIPS, PROSPERITY AND GROWTH****SUBJECT: DELIVERING THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND THE SURREY FORUM****ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: ALL****Purpose of the Report:**

This report sets out an overview of the framework of strategic partnerships across Surrey and their governance, that drives, aligns and enables the delivery of the ambitions for people and place in Surrey set out in the Community Vision 2030.

In order to secure greater transparency, clarity and engagement, the report sets out how a number of county-wide strategic partnership boards (the Health and Wellbeing Board, the One Surrey Growth Board and the Greener Futures Board) that oversee and respond to issues of major significance in Surrey, come together to contribute towards delivery of Surrey County Council's four priority objectives: i) Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit, ii) Enabling a greener future, iii) Tackling health inequality and iv) Empowered and thriving communities.

In order to better align and co-ordinate the work of these boards, strengthen collaboration between partners, and embed new ways of working to empower communities, an overarching Surrey Forum has been established. This formalises previously informal arrangements bringing together a range of leaders from the public, private and voluntary, community and faith sectors.

This report sets out the proposed purpose and Terms of Reference of the Surrey Forum and provides an update from the first meeting of the group. It also sets out the strategic partnership and governance landscape to ensure there is clarity about the interrelations between the different county-wide strategic partnership boards.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Note the convening and facilitating role Surrey County Council has played in developing co-ordinated and aligned Surrey-wide collaborative leadership.
2. Endorse the establishment of the Surrey Forum and its place in a wider framework of county-wide strategic partnership boards.

3. Agree that the multi-agency Surrey Forum partnership lead an inclusive, comprehensive refresh of the Community Vision 2030 to 2050

#### **Reason for Recommendations:**

Building on the strong partnerships already in existence across the county, the response to the Covid-19 pandemic across the county has highlighted the benefits and need for improved alignment, coordination and collaboration between communities and the public, private and voluntary, community and faith sectors, to collectively deliver for residents. The Surrey Forum will play a key role in overseeing progress towards delivering a single shared vision for the county and ensuring alignment of partners' strategic priorities, decisions and resources.

#### **Strategic context:**

1. In 2018, the Community Vision 2030 (Vision 2030) was developed with residents, communities, and partners to establish a shared vision for the county, as follows:

*“By 2030 we want Surrey to be a uniquely special place where everyone has a great start to life, people live healthy and fulfilling lives, are enabled to achieve their full potential and contribute to their community, and no one is left behind”*

2. Following a review in Spring 2021, Cabinet reaffirmed the ambitions set out in the Vision 2030 as remaining sound, while recognising that the complexity and uncertainty brought about by Covid-19 over the past 18 months had highlighted new challenges and exacerbated inequalities in Surrey's communities. In addition, the experience of an effective collective and collaborative approach to dealing with Covid-19 in Surrey had highlighted the value of strong and visible leadership in partnership and collaboration to realise the full economic, social and environmental potential of the county.
3. No single partner can deliver the Vision 2030 alone as the ambitions for people and place can only be achieved through all partners aligning their efforts. We have set out our unique contribution as a council to delivering the ambitions through our Organisation Strategy 2021-2026, in which the council's four priority objectives and underlying principle of 'no-one left behind' are embodied.
4. The strategic partnership landscape in Surrey has been developing over a number of years with some strong and effective existing partnerships. For example, the Health and Wellbeing Board 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 was set up in 2020 to bring key stakeholders together to focus on Surrey's economy, homes, infrastructure and quality of life. More recently, the Greener Futures Board was established earlier this year to ensure coordination and delivery of partner's ambitions around achieving Net Zero and tackling climate change.
5. Each of these boards has a specific purpose and remit, as reflected in their Terms of Reference and composition. Notwithstanding this, there are a number of powerful interdependencies and shared interests arising from their ambitions, priorities and work (for example, employment and mental health, green tech and Surrey's economy, skills and inequalities). The need for a mechanism to i) take a multi-agency, wider view, ii) identify the common and/or interrelated issues and iii) better

co-ordinate (and avoid duplication) across the existing partnerships has been identified.

### **The Surrey Forum:**

6. The Surrey Forum is a multi-agency partnership set up to provide strong and visible leadership for Surrey and realise the full economic, social, and environmental potential of the county. It will complement existing partnerships and enables partners to better co-ordinate, align and collaborate as the county emerges from Covid-19.
7. The inaugural meeting of the Surrey Forum was held on 22 October 2021, and a summary of the meeting can be found in Annex A with a copy of the Terms of Reference in Annex B.

### **Role and responsibility**

8. The Surrey Forum will enable greater strategic coherence of the achievement of outcomes for residents and businesses. It will ensure that residents' priorities, needs, and aspirations are, and continue to be, the primary drivers with associated decision making. Recognising the links between resident outcomes and economic success, it will provide strategic leadership and direction to better tackle the cross-cutting policy challenges that no single organisation can tackle alone and require a system-wide response, such as homelessness and poverty. It will also provide the mechanism to explore and adopt new ways of working across partners to help ensure long term financial sustainability.
9. The Surrey Forum will play a key role in agreeing, leading, and overseeing progress towards delivering a single vision for the county. Currently this is the Vision 2030 but given the recent complexity and uncertainty brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Surrey Forum in due course will support the refresh and revision of this to a 2050 timeframe.
10. The Surrey Forum will be crucial in strengthening existing partnership arrangements, brokering new relationships, and identifying opportunities to work together on shared priorities to solve strategic problems. For example, during its inaugural meeting, the Forum discussed areas such as housing affordability, gaps in life expectancy between communities, mental health, climate change and green area restoration.
11. As described later in this report, there are a number of partnership boards in existence, and the role of the Surrey Forum will be to provide strategic direction for these partnerships and consider cross cutting issues, risks and opportunities that fall outside of the remit of those boards. The Forum will also play a key role in enabling partners to individually and collectively undertake an ambassadorial role for the county and actively promote Surrey outside its boundaries.
12. To maximise economic, social, environmental opportunities, the Surrey Forum will be guided by intelligence, expertise, and best practice. Through shared data and insights capabilities, underpinned by the Surrey Office for Data Analytics (SODA), it will analyse county-wide issues to identify and act on key areas of focus. The work of SODA supports the priorities of the Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy and its focus on reducing health inequalities, particularly those exacerbated by COVID-19. For example, SODA is currently developing a Domestic Abuse (DA) tool to help build a

multi-agency place-based understanding of DA in Surrey, and driving a digital exclusion project to gain a better understanding of who is digitally excluded to help inform responses across partners. SODA is key in developing the Surrey-wide Data Strategy that will support broader ambitions to embed collaboration and be crucial in harnessing the breadth and depth of data held across partners to improve information sharing and ultimately, deliver better care and services to residents, patients and communities. There are plans to bring forward elements of the Data Strategy to Cabinet in the New Year.

## Membership

13. The Surrey Forum will meet quarterly and comprise of the County Council Leader and Chief Executive, representatives of District and Borough Councils, Town and Parish Councils, MP representation, Surrey Police Chief Constable, Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Fire Officer, Surrey Heartlands ICS, Frimley ICS, representatives from the business community, the Surrey Universities and FE colleges and the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS).

## Governance

14. Members of the Surrey Forum will have a collective responsibility to deliver the mutual aims and outcomes agreed by member organisations. This will be based on willing, voluntary, meaningful collaboration, and all constituent members will have an active role in identifying and developing areas for improvement. Collective decisions agreed at the Surrey Forum which require action by individual members would require relevant constituent member organisations to follow their usual governance and reporting processes.
15. A key principle underpinning the Surrey Forum is that decisions and responsibilities should rest at the lowest appropriate level, with collaboration and coordination at the highest level necessary. Subsidiarity is crucial for the ongoing success of the Surrey Forum and will allow constituent members to play to their individual strengths and ensure the most effective delivery mechanisms are deployed.
16. The Leader of the County Council's role as Chair will be to convene partners and support the Surrey Forum to agree a way forward on items for discussion, steering and guiding on issues of strategic importance to the county.
17. For Surrey County Council, the Leader would bring any actions agreed in principle at the Surrey Forum back to the council for this to be formally considered through its established decision-making framework (depending on the nature of the action), to determine the council's action for any agreed recommendations.
18. The Leader of the Council does not have the power to unilaterally make decisions or commit the Council to action (unless already prescribed in the Council's Constitution).
19. It is proposed that the Leader provides regular, timely updates to Cabinet and to all Members through his Leader's Statement at Council on items discussed at the Surrey Forum. Cabinet Members may also pick up areas of specific interest in their Cabinet updates.

## **Accountability and transparency**

20. The Surrey Forum will conduct its business in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable and visible to the public. The Forum will seek input from a wider audience of Surrey residents, businesses, and VCFS organisations to help inform discussions and decision making.
21. The Surrey Forum will hold an annual public meeting that will be accessible online to enhance transparency and visibility for all residents.
22. The Surrey Forum will publish information about the purpose of the Forum, its current membership and dates of future meetings. All in year quarterly meetings will have a published agenda, papers, and summary notes online for public access.

## **Surrey Delivery Board and future opportunities**

23. The council has initiated discussions to explore establishing a Surrey Delivery Board made up of all tiers of local government to support the Surrey Forum and Strategic Partnership Boards with delivering county-wide programmes, such as the Climate Change Delivery Plan (CCDP). The Delivery Board would also play an important role in identifying and developing new ideas for effective and efficient shared service models that reduce duplication and improve value for money across local government in Surrey. For example, a report by KPMG on potential collaboration between local authorities in Surrey, outlined economic development, waste, building control, procurement, and IT as important opportunities that could be explored collectively.
24. The government has indicated their interest in working with county councils to develop County Deals as part of their devolution agenda. If in the future Surrey was granted a County Deal by government, then the Surrey Forum could provide an effective model for governance and accountability to oversee and guide delivery of any deal. The Surrey Delivery Board would then play an important role in supporting the Surrey Forum and bringing all tiers of local government together to coordinate delivery.

## **Strategic Partnership Boards:**

### **Overview**

25. There are three existing county wide strategic partnership boards that have been established to oversee and respond to issues of major significance in Surrey, which in turn will help to contribute towards delivery of the council's priority objectives: the Health and Wellbeing Board (statutory), the One Surrey Growth Board (non-statutory) and the Greener Futures Board (non-statutory). The terms of reference for these boards are attached in Annex C.
26. The Surrey Forum will work closely with these existing strategic partnership boards and have a guiding role, identifying interdependencies and enabling cohesion and alignment of shared agendas, to maximise positive outcomes for Surrey residents.
27. The officer supporting the board will ensure that all minutes and relevant papers from the boards are shared with the Surrey Forum. It is proposed that each board will identify any areas of strategic focus, risks and opportunities that they would like the Surrey Forum to consider and take action on. As Chair, the Leader of the County

Council will engage with each of the boards to discuss and agree how this will function will work in practice.

28. A regular summary note will be shared with all board members and the Surrey Forum, as well as being published on the council's website, to highlight the themes that have been discussed in recent meetings. Representatives from constituent members will play an important role in feeding in views from their sector/organisation and communicating the business of the boards and Surrey Forum back with wider stakeholders and interested parties. For example, representatives from voluntary, community and faith sectors will act as a conduit between the Surrey Forum and the Surrey Charities Forum. Health sector representatives will provide a crucial link to Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) as they become statutory bodies and enhance collaboration across system partners as the Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) role in the local health and social care landscape develops.
29. A diagram representing the connections between each of the strategic partnership boards is attached in Annex D.

### **One Surrey Growth Board**

30. The One Surrey Growth Board brings together key stakeholders who have a vital role in safeguarding and supporting improvements to Surrey's economy, homes, infrastructure and quality of life. The board is Surrey's strategic partnership to oversee delivery of issues of key importance to the economy and 'whole-place'.
31. A core responsibility of the Growth Board is to develop, maintain, and support delivery of a long-term 'Plan for Growth' across partners. As part of this, there is a close alignment to the 'People' strategies linked to the Health and Wellbeing Board. This is through shared objectives to safeguard and improve the quality of life and economic prosperity of Surrey residents with a focus on addressing issues of inequality and inclusion through access to educational and personal development opportunities.
32. The Growth Board maintains connections to other related groups, including the Surrey Skills Leadership Forum, the Business Leadership Forum and wider partnership arrangements.
33. Membership consists of representatives from Surrey County Council, districts and boroughs, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Surrey universities and colleges, the VCFS, local MPs, and businesses.

### **Health and Wellbeing Board**

34. The Health and Wellbeing Board provides Surrey-wide systems 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.
35. Under the Health and Social Care Act (2012), it has a statutory duty to oversee a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; form and deliver a Health and Wellbeing Strategy; 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.

36. The board meets every month either in public or private. At these meetings the board oversees the delivery of Health and Wellbeing strategy's priorities and focuses on other topics set out in its forward work programme.
37. This multi representative Board will work closely with the newly established statutory ICS as referred to in paragraph 28 above.

### **Greener Futures Board**

38. The Greener Futures Board provides Surrey-wide leadership of the Greener Futures agenda, specifically climate change and net zero carbon emissions. It connects, aligns, and mobilises key stakeholders to enact the Greener Future Climate Change Strategy and Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan for 2021-2025.
39. This is the newest county-wide partnership board to be established. Fragmentation and coordination are one of the key challenges in delivering on our shared ambitions to tackle climate change. The Greener Futures board will be integral in providing the joined-up and coherent approach that is required.
40. Membership consists of representation from Surrey County Council, district and borough councils, health sector, education sector, VCFS the business sector, and relevant experts in climate change.

### **Empowered and Thriving Communities**

41. Empowering communities is one of four priority objectives for the council although it is different in nature to the other three priority objectives. It is a fundamentally different way of approaching our relationship with residents and communities that will power climate action, drive an inclusive economy and tackle health inequalities.
42. The council has embarked on an ambitious programme of embedding this new way of working across our major strategies and delivery programmes, as they all require deep, meaningful, and effective engagement with residents and activity that stimulates community-led action. It is important that this movement extends beyond the council and across system-wide partners.
43. As this is not a project or traditional policy area, the model for the political and managerial oversight and steering of the Empowering Communities work will be different to the other strategic boards. Further work is being undertaken on what the best approach might comprise, as the complex and embryonic work of engaging and empowering communities develops and matures, so that arrangements can be put in place in the early part of the New Year. It will also be informed by any government proposals on devolution or health to ensure there is a focus on increasing engagement and input from local residents and communities.
44. All the strategic partnership boards will be informed and guided by the deeper insights and connections we make to all communities through what we are calling the community network approach - this will help ensure that all voices are heard, strategic decisions respond to local context, and residents are supported to participate more in their local community.

<b>Consultation:</b>
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45. As set out in this report, a wide range of stakeholders have been engaged in the establishment of the Surrey Forum and the existing strategic partnership boards.

### **Risk Management and Implications:**

46. Agreed partnership governance will minimise any risk to the council from a lack of clarity about decision making power. The partnership governance arrangements set out in this report will also strengthen collective oversight of shared risks with key partners in the county.

### **Financial and Value for Money Implications:**

47. Improved co-ordination and partnership working at a strategic level presents many opportunities, and ultimately will support delivery of the Community Vision 2030, the council's priority objectives, and deliver the best long-term outcomes for residents.
48. No direct financial implications are known at this stage, however there may be opportunities through closer working with partners to identify ways to deliver future efficiencies.

### **Section 151 Officer Commentary:**

49. Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the council's financial position, the medium term financial outlook beyond 2021/22 remains uncertain. The public health crisis has resulted in increased costs which may not be fully funded. With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of this and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might be affected in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.
50. The Section 151 Officer supports the establishment of the Surrey Forum and its place in a wider framework of county-wide strategic partnership boards. There are no direct financial implications of these proposals. The cost of administering the Surrey Forum will be contained within existing budgets. Any investment requirements or expenditure decisions coming forward to SCC as a result of initiatives or activities discussed in the Surrey Forum will need to be contained within the existing budget envelope of the relevant Directorate. Closer working relationships may identify opportunities to make future efficiencies and these will be built into the MTFS as appropriate.

### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:**

51. The report sets out the proposed governance arrangements and terms of reference of the Surrey Forum and partnership boards. The Surrey Forum is a non-statutory strategic partnership between the Council and its partners to help drive, align and enable the delivery of the ambitions for people and place in Surrey set out in the Community Vision 2030.
52. The Surrey Forum and Boards (with the exception of the statutory Health and Wellbeing Board) are not legal entities and do not themselves deliver functions or services. The delivery of functions and services are the responsibility of the Council and its individual partners, who may collectively and individually agree a Surrey wide strategy to meet shared strategic priorities.



## Equalities and Diversity:

53. 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 Surrey Forum will have a key focus on addressing inequality and ensuring no one is left behind.

## What Happens Next:

- Information about the strategic partnership boards and the Surrey Forum will be made available on the Surrey County Council website.
- Discussions will be had with each of the boards and the Surrey Forum about alignment of activity and improving communication to reduce the risk of overlap.
- A proposal for refreshing the Community Vision 2030 will be developed by the Surrey Forum

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### Consulted:

- SCC Corporate Leadership Team
- Surrey Police/PCC, Heartlands ICS, Frimley ICS, Community Foundation Surrey, Nescot College, University of Surrey, Representatives of District and Borough Councils, Town and Parish Councils and Surrey MPs.

### Annexes:

Annex A – Summary of inaugural meeting of Surrey Forum

Annex B – Surrey Forum Terms of Reference

Annex C – Strategic Partnership Boards Terms of Reference

Annex D – Diagram showing the relationship between the Strategic Partnership Boards and the Surrey Forum

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