

## NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE SURREY FORUM: FRIDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2021

### Introduction

The purpose of the Forum is to bring together a range of leaders from across the county in support of delivering the Community Vision 2030 through co-ordinating, aligning and collaborating to greater effect. This is particularly important as we come out of Covid-19 and new challenges (not just financial) emerge to be addressed, including the heightened inequalities across the county. Members were asked to consider how Surrey's institutions can continue to provide the outstanding collaboration and support that has been evident during COVID.

Tim Oliver set out the County Council's 4 key strategic priorities, highlighting the inter-relationships between them. Partnership Boards had been or were being established in support of each priority, some of which members of the Surrey Forum serve on. It was acknowledged that it is not possible for any one organisation to deliver on all the ambitions in the vision alone. The Boards are: One Surrey Growth Board, the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Greener Futures Board and the embryonic Thriving Communities Board. Members of the Forum were thanked for their engagement on partnership boards and the value that they added to their work.

A suggestion was made that we build on the work already being carried out – for example the community network approach and perhaps the establishment of local forums with representatives from all areas of society, reflecting different places' needs, to enable inequalities in Surrey to be addressed.

Surrey was described as a powerhouse of the national economy, with great natural assets and the only county that makes a net contribution to the exchequer. However, a sense of identity for Surrey was weaker than other counties and this is being addressed.

Some Forum members reflected on the discussions at Denbies in January 2020 about the delivery of the 2030 vision and the shared ambition and commitment to tackle the things that mattered most to Surrey e.g. life expectancy differences, an ageing population, mental health, the issues that make it difficult to do business, skills challenges and disadvantaged young people. It was noted that many of these have been heightened as a result of Covid-19. Many of the comments also resonate from a public safety and policing viewpoint where the determinants are often the same as those of good health.

### **This is Purpose: The Levelling Up goals**

The Rt Hon Justine Greening presented the [Purpose Coalition](#) and the Levelling Up goals that they have formulated. (The county council is working with Purpose Coalition to review, assess and develop metrics and measures for our levelling up goals in Surrey).

The broad aims of the Purpose Coalition, centred on social justice and equality of opportunity, is to create something that is very joined up and that mobilises civil society, by creating the sense of a county wide challenge that people can see being tackled together, while recognising the different challenges for different places and that each area therefore needs to develop its own goals and metrics within a wider framework. The Coalition has identified 14 distinct challenges that we need to tackle to deliver levelling up. These focus broadly on education and access to opportunity, infrastructure, and digital. Place-based work in particular is a systemic challenge and needs to bring multiple elements together at a local level to shift outcomes for people and communities.

Justine confirmed that measurement is key in getting this right. The metrics that exist at the moment, aren't good enough. Work is ongoing with the ONS on this.

In response to Justine's presentation, the following issues were raised:

- work is underway on county-wide data and sharing it, but further development is needed
- between Surrey's 4 colleges just over 2000 16-18 yr. olds have been taken on this year and that the colleges are working with hundreds of employers every week.
- it is hard to make requests of business unless you can demonstrate you are making progress yourself.
- the police and crime plan consultation will show that anti-social behaviour is a big issue for communities and that feeling of safety and togetherness will go hand in hand with a levelling up agenda.
- mental health will be a big issue on achieving levelling up.

### **Purpose and Terms of Reference: for discussion and Agreement**

Draft Terms of Reference were circulated with the agenda. Suggested amendments included:

- including a point on subsidiarity and ensuring that activity is undertaken taken at the most appropriate level through the most appropriate delivery mechanism. (it was felt important to utilise the strengths of each organisation).
- including the Forum having a role in promoting achievements and the initiatives already underway, e.g. giving voice to and supporting the existing strengths of the county and amplifying them.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to share and collate partners' strategic priorities, objectives, and high-level plans, (recognising that the 2030 vision was not the only strategy held by Members of the Forum) to determine and ensure they are as aligned as possible.

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### **2030 Vision and Strategic Priorities**

Members considered the 2030 vision and the strategic priorities, which the LRF review considered to remain valid, albeit that the action that delivers them needed to be refined to reflect the impact of Covid-19.

An immediate problem the County may face may be the property market becoming prohibitive for local people. This would lead to housing difficulties, particularly for those residents in most need. To address this, it was suggested that public bodies who own sites across the county could rationalise them, proactively reducing public sector occupancy of sites to free up land/property for social or affordable housing, enabling younger people to stay in the county. It was suggested that 2 or 3 areas be identified to focus on – for example housing, green areas restoration as a second.

The Forum recognised the permeability of boundaries and confirmed that we will work with others, especially those that border us.

### **Conclusions and Next Steps**

During the discussion, housing, skills, climate and 'Health in All policies' were identified as areas that need to be highlighted and prioritised in the Forum's work, with a focus on what the Forum can do to make the biggest difference. E.g. greening/rewilding areas, discouraging the use of cars and improving the carbon footprint of housing which creates circa 75% of emissions.

Partners' strategic priorities and high-level plans will be captured and collated for circulation before the next meeting.

It was suggested that the Forum meets quarterly, and members were encouraged to send a deputy if needed to maintain momentum. Mid-January was agreed for the next meeting.