

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 25 JUNE 2024****REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****LEAD OFFICER: MICHAEL COUGHLIN, INTERIM HEAD OF PAID SERVICE****SUBJECT: DELIVERING FOR SURREY THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS****ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: GROWING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY SO EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT/ TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITY/ ENABLING A GREENER FUTURE/ EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES****Purpose of the Report:**

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

In order to ensure continued transparency, clarity and engagement in partnership activity, the report proposes some refinements to county-wide strategic partnership governance arrangements, following a number of changes in policies, responsibilities and functions. It further sets out the opportunity that has been taken to rationalise, de-duplicate and streamline them, to continue to contribute towards delivery of Surrey County Council's four priority objectives and underlying principle of 'no-one left behind':

- i) Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit,
- ii) Enabling a greener future,
- iii) Tackling health inequality and
- iv) Empowered and thriving communities.

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 to deliver the Community Vision for Surrey 2030.
2. Note the implications for strategic partnerships of the devolution of certain Government functions to the County Council through the County Deal framework, in particular in relation to the economy, skills and the environment.
3. Approve the proposed changes to the strategic partnerships' governance arrangements set out and the ongoing role of the County Council in them.

Reason for Recommendations:

In light of recent changes in national policies, including the devolution of functions and responsibilities to the County Council, it is proposed that a number of refinements are made to the county-wide strategic partnership boards. This report sets out those proposed changes and invites Cabinet to endorse them, in order that the boards can continue to play a key role in overseeing progress towards delivering the Community Vision for Surrey 2030 and ensuring the alignment of partners' strategic priorities, decisions and resources.

Background:

1. The 'Surrey Community Vision 2030' was developed in 2018 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.

We want our county's economy to be strong, vibrant and successful and Surrey to be a great place to live, work and learn. A place that capitalises on its location and natural assets, and where communities feel supported and people are able to support each other."

2. It was recognised that no single partner could deliver the 2030 Community Vision alone, as the ambitions for people and place could only be achieved through all partners aligning their efforts. The County Council set out its approach to delivering the Community Vision 2030 through the Organisation Strategy in which the council's four priority objectives and guiding mission of 'no-one left behind' are embodied.
3. A number of strategic partnership boards have been established to enable joint discussions, alignment of priorities, collaboration and partnership working in order to deliver against the ambitions set out in the 2030 Community Vision and Organisation Strategy. To date, this has been clearly demonstrated in activity coming out of these boards including the adoption of key neighbourhoods and priority populations, the development of the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan, the agreement of the Surrey Skills Strategy, and ongoing joint work regarding key priorities for the County such as housing, mental health, poverty and collaborative working in towns and villages.
4. In 2013, the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) was established, bringing together partners focused on improving health outcomes. This was later merged with the Community Safety board in recognition of the similar preventative drivers such as education and employment. The One Surrey Growth Board (OSGB) was set up in 2020 to bring key stakeholders together to focus on growing a sustainable economy in Surrey from which everyone can benefit. In 2021, the Greener Futures Board (GFB) was established to ensure coordination and delivery of partner's ambitions around achieving Net Zero and tackling climate change. Lastly, the Surrey Forum was established at the end of 2021, bringing together a range of senior partners to better align, co-ordinate and strengthen collaboration between partners on cross-cutting issues and embed new ways of working to empower communities.

5. More recently, the Health and Care Act 2022 established 42 Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) across England. The Surrey Heartlands ICS was formed in July 2022 and consists of two statutory elements, Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) which is a statutory committee jointly formed between the ICB and Surrey County Council. The ICP is responsible for producing an integrated care strategy on how to meet the health and wellbeing needs of the local population, promoting partnerships that will champion improvements in the health and wellbeing and socioeconomic conditions of residents. Ambition One of this strategy aligns with and feeds into the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities.
6. A number of delivery focused partnership groups sit under these key strategic partnership boards, including; Surrey Adults' and Surrey Childrens' Safeguarding boards, the Skills Leadership Forum, the Innovation Leaders Group, the Greener Futures Steering Board and the Climate Change Board. These groups play an instrumental role in helping to translate the strategic discussions that take place in the overarching strategic boards into partnership activities.

Changes to the Strategic Context

7. Over time, Surrey's strategic partnership arrangements have matured, expanded and adapted to changing policies, priorities, and pressures and the needs of local residents, the economy and environment. Since the development of the 2030 Community Vision, events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis have challenged Surrey's communities and required partners to work together in new and innovative ways. Other changes, such as securing a County Deal for Surrey and the introduction of the 2022 Health and Care Act have seen new functions and ways of collaborating emerge for the County Council and its partners.
8. The Government's 2022 Levelling Up White Paper set out a Devolution Framework, detailing the powers and functions available for devolution to upper-tier local authorities. In early 2024, Surrey agreed a Level 2 Devolution Framework Agreement with Government, devolving a set of functions to the County Council, including the integration of Local Enterprise Partnerships, the designation of Surrey County Council as the Lead Climate Change Authority with responsibility for the eventual formation of a Local Environment Improvement Plan. The addition of these devolved functions requires some amendments to existing partnerships around economic growth and the environment.
9. In parallel with these changes, health governance has also been impacted by legislative and structural changes. The formation of the ICP following the Health and Care Act 2022, has led to it working alongside the already established statutory HWBB, with some duplication of membership and agendas. In order to address this duplication, it is proposed to bring the ICP and HWBB together in a new streamlined model which will improve efficiency, reduce duplication and allow for more effective and transparent collaborative engagement and decision making on key issues.

Delivering the Community Vision for Surrey 2030 – Strategic Partnership Arrangements

The Surrey Forum:

10. The Surrey Forum complements other, specifically focused partnership boards, and being cross-cutting in nature, enables partners to better co-ordinate, align and collaborate on longer-term 'wicked issues'.

11. The Forum acts in effect as an informal sounding/advisory board for leaders of Surrey organisations by bringing together senior stakeholders from different organisations to hold discussions and propose action on cross-cutting issues impacting local residents, the economy and/or environment. The nature of the meetings does not require them to be held in public.
12. The Forum is non-statutory, voluntary-based group in which constituent members have an active role in identifying and developing areas for discussion, action and improvement. Where conclusions reached in discussions require decisions, these are taken by individual members' organisations in line with their usual governance and reporting processes.
13. In parallel with the Forum, Surrey Leaders meet regularly together, often with the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Chief Constable, Health Partners, and LGA Principal Adviser to promote Surrey's interests, collaborate across projects and discuss items of business where agreements need to be made in a collective forum.

Growing a Sustainable Economy so Everyone can Benefit

One Surrey Growth Board (OSGB):

14. From 1st April 2024, Surrey County Council became the lead authority for regional economic growth and has taken on the functions previously managed by the two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) covering the Surrey geography: Coast to Capital LEP in the East and Enterprise M3 LEP in the West.
15. Through the LEP integration process, one of the Government's priorities was to ensure that the role of "effective, independent and diverse business representation" is retained in upper-tier local authorities and "embedded into decision-making processes". This has been made an eligibility requirement for LEP grant funding, Growth Hub funding, and is a key principle of the English Devolution Accountability Framework
16. The County Council is well-positioned to respond to the requirements from Government due to the effective partnership arrangements which are already in place, with the OSGB, being the main business-led advisory board for helping to steer the County Council's economic growth policy and programmes. The terms of reference for this group, membership and associated policies, are being updated to ensure greater transparency and formality.
17. The new key principles underpinning the OSGB are as follow:
 - a. The membership of the OSGB has a private sector majority.
 - b. Surrey businesses are appointed as a diverse and representative group of companies drawn from across the county.
 - c. The businesses attending are representing the voices of a wider group of stakeholders.
 - d. Members are appointed by the group that they represent.
 - e. The role of the OSGB is embedded in the County Council approval processes.
18. In order to abide by these principles, a set of changes will be made to how the OSGB is run:
 - a. The Surrey Business Leaders Forum will become the mechanism from which business representatives on the OSGB will be drawn.

- b. As Chair of the OSGB, Matt Furniss will invite the Chair of the Surrey Business Leaders Forum to provide the vice-Chair.
 - c. The OSGB will have a specific role in influencing decisions relating to the Surrey economy including, for example, providing formal comment to relevant Cabinet papers.
19. The board will continue to fulfil a strategic leadership function: informing, advising, and endorsing key decisions regarding Surrey’s economic strategies and related activity.
20. The OSGB is supported by the Surrey Business Leaders Forum (SBLF), which has a wider business membership representing a diverse, local, business voice. It provides challenge and insight on the business impacts of public sector initiatives and will raise awareness and understanding of local business and economic needs. The SBLF is supplemented by a number of working groups, such as the Surrey Skills Leadership Forum, Innovation Leaders Group and Place Directors Group.

Enabling a Greener Future

Surrey Greener Futures Board (GFB):

21. The GFB brings together a powerful alliance of key stakeholders, partner organisations and influential parties to strategically lead the delivery of Surrey’s Greener Futures ambitions. Initially the Board focused on the delivery of the Climate Change Strategy and accompanying Delivery Plan, but more recently has expanded its vision statement to include a commitment to “complete integration between society and nature,” and as part of this commitment, improved social inclusion, healthy food and a nature-positive approach to the environment and climate change.
22. As a result of the Civic Agreement with Surrey academia, the GFB is co-Chaired by Marisa Heath, the County Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment; and Lorenzo Fioramonti, the Director for the Institute of Sustainability at the University of Surrey. It meets quarterly and has successfully engaged partners in areas including the development of the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan and Finance Strategy, the development of a Climate Adaptation Strategy and Delivery Plan for Surrey and the development of local nature and biodiversity management policies and approaches.
23. The devolution settlement confirms the strong role that local action must play in the delivery of net-zero and improving the environment. It paves the way for the GFB to support further local action to address climate change, including the development and implementation of Local Area Energy Plans, amongst other possibilities. In the longer term, the GFB will also be instrumental in the development and implementation of a Local Environmental Improvement Plan, where all the relevant duties and plans for Surrey will sit under a single strategy and delivery framework linked to England’s Environmental Improvement Plan.

Tackling Health Inequality and Empowering Thriving Communities

Integrated Care System (ICS) (Comprised of the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and the Integrated Care Board (ICB)) and Health and Well-being Board (HWBB)

24. It is widely accepted that the Integrated Care System (ICS), which includes the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and the Integrated Care Board (ICB), is complex. As such, the Surrey Heartlands ICS governance arrangements are currently being reviewed. The Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) is an independent statutory body with responsibility for developing a county-wide Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Surrey joint

Strategic Needs Assessment and Surrey Pharmaceutical Needs assessment. The HWBB covers a larger geography (e.g. the whole of Surrey) than the ICS and includes additional representatives from other key partners including from Frimley Health and Care ICS. To date, the two elements of the Surrey Heartlands ICS (the ICB and ICP) and HWBB have all met separately despite there being duplication of membership and agendas between the boards.

25. It has been agreed by the respective boards that greater alignment and streamlining of governance be explored, aimed at improving efficiency, allowing for more collaborative strategic direction setting and decision making, and ensuring adequate assurance flows are in place. As part of this alignment, the HWBB and the ICP will see their memberships and agendas streamlined thereby allowing them to run consecutively in a more effective and less duplicative manner.
26. The HWBB assumed responsibility for oversight of Community Safety in March 2020. With the advent of the Police and Crime Commissioner's half-yearly Community Safety Forums and the role played by local District and Borough Community Safety Partnerships, it is proposed that the discharge of the County-wide responsibility for reviewing and strategic action-planning of Community Safety be removed from the remit of the HWBB and be subject to further consideration and discussions with the relevant partner agencies.
27. Officers have been tasked with developing a plan for the implementation of these changes by Autumn 2024, to include maintaining wider organisational representation and enabling the revised boards to hold meetings in towns and key neighbourhoods across the County.

Thriving Communities Board

28. Since the Thriving Communities Board was established, new arrangements with local NHS and other partners have developed and matured, as set out above.
29. In order to simplify and streamline strategic partnership governance for locality working with communities, especially given the focus on reducing health inequalities in neighbourhoods, it is proposed that the current Thriving Communities Board is stood down, and that its functions are transferred to the ICP, including its role in providing assurance that:
 - a. plans, resources and activities are effectively joined up at a local level in Surrey's towns and key neighbourhoods to local needs and tackle health inequalities.
 - b. system-wide strategies are having practical on the ground impacts in towns and neighbourhoods,
 - c. thematic insights from communities are informing and shaping services and investments to ensure they are effective.

Alignment Across the Partnerships:

30. The secretariats for each of the partnership boards meet on a regular basis to share information and forward plans for board agendas, ensuring that duplication is avoided, and that opportunities for join-up are identified early. In addition, summarised notes from each of the Boards is collated and provided to the Surrey Forum, so that broad strategic oversight is maintained.
31. Furthermore, following the paper on the Council's partnerships that went to the Audit and Governance Committee in Summer 2023, an internal portal was created on the Surrey County Council intranet page, sharing the agendas and meeting summaries of the OSGB,

HWBB and GFB. This portal is accessible to elected members of the Council, providing oversight of the activity taking place in these partnership spaces.

Consultation:

32. A wide range of stakeholders, included the board Chairs and Cabinet Representatives, have been engaged in developing the proposed changes to the strategic partnership landscape as set out in this report.

Risk Management and Implications:

33. Agreed partnership governance will enable and support the Council's wider risk mitigation work as collaboration and joint decision making across the partnerships strengthens collective oversight of shared risks with key partners in the county.
34. With any governance changes, there is a risk that partners do not endorse the changes being suggested, thereby impacting on the council's relationships with partners and the collaborative work needed to deliver the Community Vision 2030. This risk is being mitigated through early and ongoing engagement on changes with key partners and stakeholders.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

35. Improved co-ordination and partnership working at a strategic level presents many opportunities, and ultimately will support delivery of the 2030 Community Vision, the Council's priority objectives, and the best long-term outcomes for residents.
36. 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 and/or to more effectively attract Government or other external funding to the county.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

37. The Council continues to operate in a very challenging financial environment. Local authorities across the country are experiencing significant budgetary pressures. Surrey County Council has made significant progress in recent years to improve the Council's financial resilience and whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver our services, the cost-of-service delivery, increasing demand, financial uncertainty and government policy changes mean we continue to face challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service delivery, a continuation of the need to deliver financial efficiencies and reduce spending to achieve a balanced budget position each year.
38. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2024/25 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding 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 the stable provision of services in the medium term.
39. The recommendations do not have any immediate direct financial impacts and any financial implications from partnership arrangements will be captured as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the recommendations.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

40. No specific legal implications arise out of recommendation 1 of this report. In relation to recommendations 2 and 3, Legal Services will assist where required and once instructed will ensure that any changes to partnership arrangements which are required as a consequence of these recommendations are reflected in the relevant partnership agreements.

Equalities and Diversity:

41. The strategic partnership boards discussed in this paper are specifically focused on addressing inequality and ensuring no one is left behind. The improved collaboration and closer alignment of partners resulting from the governance shifts set out above will allow Surrey-wide partners to better deliver the Community Vision for Surrey 2030. Therefore, an Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this decision.

Next steps:

42. Following the approval of the recommendations, the changes set out in this paper will continue to be explored, developed and implemented, ensuring that all strategic partnership boards are streamlined, partners' strategic priorities, decisions and resources are aligned, and they are able to deliver to the Community Vision 2030.

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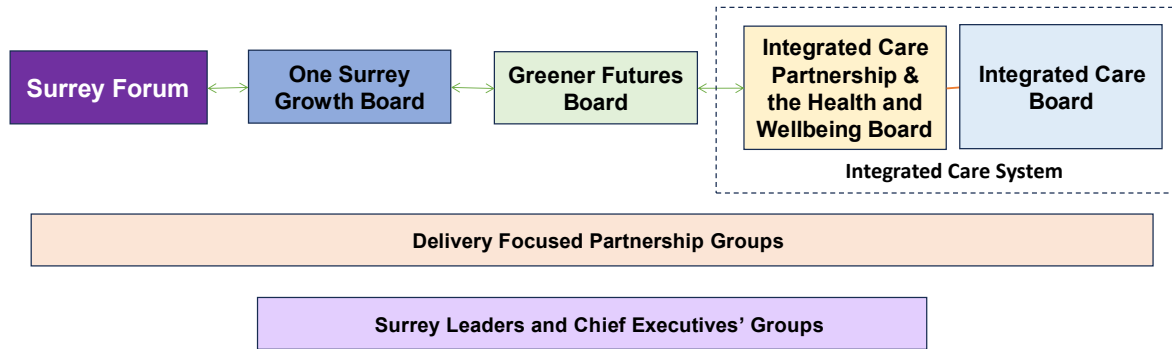
Consulted:

- SCC Corporate Leadership Team
- Cabinet sponsors of each strategic partnership board
- Strategic Partnership Board Chairs

Annexes:

Annex 1: Proposed Updated Strategic Partnership Landscape Diagram

Updated Partnership Landscape



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