

WOKING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Executive Summary

Effective partnership working underpins our Woking for All Strategy and in particular our objectives to support prospering communities and healthier communities. Successful and effective partnerships are key to our work in supporting the health and well being of residents, the sustainable economic growth of the borough, the delivery of its “Green” agenda and retaining and developing a strong business sector, a vibrant cultural, visitor and leisure offer.

The Council has strong partnerships in place and works collaboratively with Surrey County Council, neighbouring district and borough councils, NHS, Police and the voluntary and faith sector.

This paper sets out a new framework for working with our partners in order to support the Council’s strategic priorities set out within the Woking for All Strategy and proposes effective arrangements following a number of changes currently planned, or on the horizon:

- the need to agree new arrangements where required following the County Council’s decision to end the Woking Joint Committee arrangements;
- the opportunity to develop a strong “Place Brand” and support the continued economic growth of the borough through the development of a Woking Place Board and the development of a Woking Strategic Partnership Board, focused on infrastructure, climate change, health outcomes and safer neighbourhoods; and
- in addition, this paper reports on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and the County Council’s proposed level 2 County Deal – which could see its implementation from 2023. The paper seeks to update Members on the County’s position in relation to a proposed ‘County Deal’ and its potential impact on Woking Borough Council as a key partner and Woking residents.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) a Woking Strategic Partnership Board be established with key partners;
- (ii) the Council works with key businesses and major employers to create a “Woking Place Board” and a business lead place brand for Woking; and

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (iii) the positive work underway to pursue a County Deal for Surrey be noted;
- (iv) the current Woking Joint Committee arrangements for small scale neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the Health and Wellbeing Task Group and the Community Safety Task Group will continue to the end of

March 2023, and that CIL Neighbourhood funds to a value over £10k will be approved by the Executive; and

- (v) from the start of the Municipal Year 2023/24, a new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Committee be created with delegation to determine of the allocation and spend of small scale CIL Neighbourhood funds to the value up to £10k.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To ensure strong partnership arrangements are in place that support the delivery of the Woking for All Strategy, and to ensure that effective arrangements are in place for the remaining actions of the former Woking Joint Committee.

The Executive has authority to determine recommendations (i) and (ii) above, (iii) to (v) will need to be dealt with by way of a recommendation to Council.

Background Papers:	None.
Reporting Person:	Giorgio Framallicco, Strategic Director - Place Email: giorgio.framallicco@woking.gov.uk , Extn: 3440
Contact Person:	Giorgio Framallicco, Strategic Director - Place Email: giorgio.framallicco@woking.gov.uk , Extn: 3440
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Ann-Marie Barker Email: cllrann-marie.barker@woking.gov.uk
Shadow Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Ayesha Azad Email: cllrayesha.azad@woking.gov.uk
Date Published:	10 November 2022

1.0 Partnership working and current position

- 1.1 Effective partnership working underpins our Woking for All Strategy and in particular our objectives to support prospering communities and healthier communities. Successful and effective partnerships are key to ensuring the health and well being of residents and the sustainable economic growth of the borough retaining and developing a strong business sector, and a vibrant cultural, visitor and leisure offer.
- 1.2 Partnership working between local authorities and other agencies - public bodies, the private sector and the voluntary sector - is an increasingly important aspect of public service delivery. Good governance of partnership arrangements enables an authority to work more effectively and to manage risk and use resources effectively to the benefit of residents and other stakeholders.
- 1.3 The Council has strong partnerships in place and works collaboratively with Surrey County Council, neighbouring district and borough councils, NHS, Police and the voluntary sector. It is through these partnerships that we ensure better access to health services and support for residents in most need and the management over critical service areas. While the 'health' partnership is critical, the 'place' partnership needs to be effective to secure the right infrastructure is developed such as schools, flood defences, transport improvements as well as securing safer and vibrant neighbourhoods.
- 1.4 Woking already works with partners for the benefit of residents.

Surrey Wide Arrangements

- 1.5 Attached as Appendix A is the current Surrey wide partnership structure.

Surrey Forum

- 1.6 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. The forum brings together partners from Surrey County Council, district and borough councils, local authorities, the business community, higher and further education, and the voluntary community and faith sector (VCFS). It complements existing partnerships and enables partners to better co-ordinate, align and collaborate. The Surrey Forum meets on a quarterly basis.

One Surrey Growth Board

- 1.7 Surrey's economic growth agenda is led, overseen and co-ordinated by the One Surrey Growth Board (OSGB). Chaired by Surrey County Council's Leader, the OSGB is a multi-agency partnership made up of senior representatives from the region's Universities and Science Park, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), district and boroughs, business representative groups, non-departmental public bodies, the community and voluntary sector and local politicians, including Lord Philip Hammond. The OSGB was established in July 2020 and meets quarterly to oversee the design and delivery of a long term 'One Surrey Plan for Growth' and provide guidance and advice to wider sub-regional partnerships on the delivery of key infrastructure priorities needed to support the Plan.

Greener Future Board

- 1.8 In 2020, Surrey's Climate Change Strategy was published in response to Local Authorities declaring a climate emergency and setting a target for Surrey to become net-zero carbon by 2050. This Delivery Plan sets out what needs to happen over the next five years; the first step in a 30-year-long delivery phase. The Greener Futures Delivery Plan focuses on what needs to happen to tackle climate change with two main areas of focus:
- Reduce energy demand through retrofitting buildings including social, private rented and owner-occupied housing, public sector buildings (e.g. schools, NHS, council buildings, libraries), community facilities, commercial and industrial buildings.
 - Reducing energy demand in transport as set out in Surrey Local Transport Plan 4 including: liveable neighbourhood schemes, local cycling and walking infrastructure plans, public transport and EV charging roll-out.
- 1.9 Successful delivery requires effective partnerships with district/borough councils, other local organisations and engagement with residents.
- 1.10 A recent Motion was passed at SCC where the County Council has resolved to establish a cross-party working group to consider how Members should meet publicly with Borough/District councillors and together engage with residents and local organisations to agree upon how the Greener Futures Delivery Plan will be implemented at a local level.

Health and Wellbeing Board

- 1.11 The Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board is a group of NHS commissioners, public health, social care, local councillors, Surrey Police, borough and district council and public representatives that work together to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Surrey, closing the gap between communities that are doing well and those doing less well.
- 1.12 The Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board reviews the progress of local shared projects supporting the delivery of the three priorities of the Health and Well-being Strategy. The Community Safety Board has also now been adopted by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

North West Surrey Alliance

- 1.13 The North West Surrey Alliance is part of Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System and one of the largest public sector alliances in the country. Its vision is for “working together for better health, care and wellbeing”. The Alliance is made up of eleven partners - Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust; Runnymede Borough Council; Woking Borough Council; Surrey Heartlands; Woking and Sam Beare Hospice; CSH Surrey; Spelthorne Borough Council; North West Surrey Integrated Care Services (NICS); Elmbridge Borough Council; Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Surrey County Council.

Woking Joint Committee

- 1.14 Woking Joint Committee is a Joint Committee of Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council and is set up under the provisions of Section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Joint Committee's were set out to improve outcomes and value for money for residents in Woking by strengthening local democracy and improving partnership working within the borough of Woking. Given the disestablishment of the joint arrangements, governance for the following functions need to be agreed:
- Health and Well Being Task Group & Community Safety Partnership
 - Joint Infrastructure Group
 - Community Infrastructure Levy Group

1.15 On 26 September 2022 the Leader of Surrey County Council (SCC) wrote to the Leader of Woking Borough Council in relation to the joint committee arrangements. The letter confirmed that as part of the County's engaging with communities initiative, and to enable the County to drive at pace the integration of health and social care, local arrangements had been reviewed. This had meant some changes to the work of the Local and Joint Committees which, earlier this year, had their executive highway functions removed. The remaining area of responsibility (libraries opening hours, community safety, youth, and Public Rights of Way) and all advisory functions were removed this autumn. In effect, this will mean that the Woking Joint Committees would be disestablished and that there will be no SCC functions left for Joint Committees. The County served the agreed six months' notice of their withdrawal from the Joint Committees in October.

Surrey's 2050 Place Ambition

1.16 The Surrey 2050 Place Ambition is a narrative about and framework for what Surrey's strategic partners want to achieve over the next 30 years in terms of "good growth". The purpose of the ambition is to:

- Outline a vision and special priorities for growth
- Provide a framework to shape the future of communities and places across Surrey
- Emphasise the need for an integrated, systemic approach to delivering good growth

1.17 There are four priorities within the Ambition:

- Priority 1 Improve connectivity both within Surrey and between strategically important hubs
- Priority 2 Enhance the place offer of Surrey's towns
- Priority 3 Maximise the potential of our Strategic Opportunity Areas
- Priority 4 Invest in natural capital and deliver nature recovery

2.0 Strengthening our Partnerships for the Future

2.1 Attached as Appendix B is a proposed new Partnership Working for Woking arrangement.

North West Surrey Alliance

2.2 North West Surrey Alliance continues to be key to support the health and wellbeing of residents. The work of the Alliance is focused on prevention and tackling the wider determinants of health. The role of borough councils is central to this and there is a greater focus on early interventions at a neighbourhood level. Specific Woking examples include leading on the first hoarding protocol in Surrey; increasing preventative technology/monitoring at home; taking an all partner approach to childhood obesity; incorporating maternity services into community centres; rolling out a digital project (including Digital Exclusion/Tech Angels project) and the Sheerwater wraparound Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) for complex cases. In addition, the Alliance is actively engaged in delivering the new health and community campus in Sheerwater.

Woking Strategic Partnership Board

2.3 A new Woking Strategic Partnership Board will be established to provide collective leadership and strategic direction to improve outcomes for local residents. It will focus on those issues which cannot be effectively addressed by one single organisation and where joint working is essential to respond to key challenges. This will include infrastructure delivery, climate change, improving health outcomes and keeping residents safe. The Woking Strategic Partnership Board membership will include senior officers and Members of Woking Borough Council and

Woking Strategic Partnerships

Surrey County Council, along with senior representatives from the North West Surrey Health Alliance, Police and the voluntary sector.

- 2.4 It is envisaged that the Woking Strategic Partnership Board will meet three times a year with terms of reference to be developed with partners and reviewed at the first meeting. A number of working groups will report into the Partnership Board, including a Wellbeing Working Group and the Safer Woking Partnership Group, replacing the current two task groups (Health and Wellbeing Task Group and Community Safety Task Group). A Joint Infrastructure Group will also report into the Partnership Board. A new, separate Neighbourhood CIL Task Group will also be formed with further details set out in this report.
- 2.5 It is recognised that the Woking Strategic Partnership Board will need to meet both in public and private and through its public meetings, have the ability for residents to address the Board on issues of importance. The terms of reference for the Board would reflect the arrangements. This was reinforced by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 17 October 2022.
- 2.6 The Board would meet three times per year and report to the Executive on a yearly basis.

Woking Place Board

- 2.7 A new Woking Place Board is proposed to drive forward inclusive economic growth and be business led. It will be responsible for providing a strategic, place-led view and leadership for the promotion and development of the place locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. The Board will be facilitated by Woking Borough Council.
- 2.8 Membership will be made up of key businesses leaders and employers, the Council's Leader, Chief Executive and other key stakeholders from key employers (both public and private). All partners would be seeking to promote the sustainable economic growth of the borough.
- 2.9 One of the key actions of the Woking Place Board is the creation of a strong place brand (Destination Woking) that supports growth, attracts new business, promotes our strong cultural offer and seeks to retain business as well as talent and skills.
- 2.10 The Board would meet twice a year.

Destination Woking – a Place Brand for Woking

- 2.11 The Council's Corporate Strategy sets out an objective to 'attract investment and protect our interests by raising the profile of the borough' and seeks to agree and implement a "Destination Woking" marketing project to promote the borough to attract investment. Woking needs a clear and coherent place brand identity to strengthen its profile locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- 2.12 This commissioned work would build on the significant Council investment that has been made into the town centre and the opportunity to secure new private sector investment. The overarching place marketing strategy needs to target five broad audiences - people who live, invest, work, visit and study in Woking. We also want to reach out to those already invested and living in Woking, to encourage them to become ambassadors for the area.
- 2.13 Specific target audiences include inward investors, particularly businesses such as developers and those involved in key sectors and employment areas that are the focus for growth in our Economic Recovery Strategy.

2.14 The output from the commission would include:

- A place marketing narrative and key messages targeting different groups (audience segments).
- A visual identity and language for place marketing which 'animates' the narrative.
- A place marketing visual identity toolkit with guidelines about using the place marketing 'brand.'
- A place marketing implementation plan setting out activities, channels, platforms and products, including PR and social media, in the context of audience segmentation.

Officer Level joint Working

2.15 The County Council has grown its community level working with a number of new roles working more closely to support communities. Engaging together, seeking to hear from communities and supporting their ambitions and community led projects. This is with a particular focus on the health and well being agenda in key neighbourhoods. Working with County on this agenda will deliver shared aims.

2.16 A number of new officer level working groups have also been proposed to secure improved partnership working between the SCC and WBC, in particular to secure infrastructure priorities:

- a Surrey-Wide Infrastructure Steering Group - to continue the good work progressed through the former Surrey Future Board, but with a renewed focus on delivery, and aligning economic growth and spatial planning interests.
- an officer joint infrastructure group – to focus on Woking specific place making, infrastructure including delivery of the infrastructure delivery plans.

Community Infrastructure Levy

2.17 Executive Functions (delegated by SCC and WBC) through the Joint Committee included decisions related to the Community Infrastructure Levy, and the arrangements on managing the proportion of the CIL income earmarked for local community projects. Where there is an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan in place for the area, the neighbourhood area gets 25% of the CIL income. Where there is no Neighbourhood Development Plan in place, the local community gets 15%. Where there is no designated neighbourhood area, it is proposed that the ward boundary will be the basis for earmarking the CIL income for the local community. The Government requires the Council to pass on a proportion of its CIL income to local communities where the chargeable development occurred. Given that there are no parishes in Woking, the Government expects the Council to keep the money and ringfence it for local community projects.

2.18 The CIL Regulations prescribe what CIL income earmarked for local community projects should broadly be used on. The money must be used to support the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area.

2.19 In response to the disestablishment of the joint arrangements, the proposal from the start of the municipal year 2023/24, is to amend the Council's Constitution in order to set up a Neighbourhood CIL Task Group with delegation to make decisions on neighbourhood CIL expenditure up to 10k. The Task Group will meet on the first Monday of each month and be made up of members of WBC. SCC members with projects in their division will be invited to attend the meetings. All applications must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the relevant task group meeting. The administration of the Task Group would be completed by the Council's Democratic Services Team supported by the Planning Policy Team. Decisions on

the allocation of funds above £10k would be taken by the Executive via the normal Executive Committee process.

- 2.20 Given that CIL income is intended for addressing the impacts of development in local communities, it is appropriate that local Ward Borough Councillors take the lead role in deciding how the CIL money should be used, on what community infrastructure projects and where appropriate, take account of the views of the County division member. In making these decisions, Councillors should work in partnership with designated Neighbourhood Forums and other relevant stakeholders in the community. This will be necessary to ensure that the priority infrastructure projects that would previously have been identified and submitted to the Joint Committee for CIL funding would have broad local community support. Where there is a list of projects already identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan, the Neighbourhood CIL Task Group would consider such schemes as having broad local support given that they would have been through the statutory plan making process and the required public consultation requirements associated with that. Cross referencing and supporting other funding sources, such as Your Fund Surrey may well deliver wider ambitions.

3.0 County Deal

Background

- 3.1 On 2nd February 2022 the Government published its Levelling Up White Paper which laid out an agenda for tackling inequality across the country. It outlined the future landscape for devolution in the UK and provided a blueprint for improving opportunity and outcomes in education, the economy, infrastructure, transport, and health by 2030. The White Paper also set out a commitment to bring devolution in the form of County Deals 'to every part of England that wants one by 2030'.
- 3.2 The White Paper also provided details of 12 new missions across four broad areas: boosting productivity and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging; spreading opportunities and improving public services, especially in those areas where they are weakest; restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost; and, empowering local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency.
- 3.3 The White Paper confirmed that upper tier authorities across the country would be the lead negotiating bodies, though they could choose how they deployed the responsibility and how they chose to involve others.
- 3.4 The Devolution Framework (Appendix C) set out the powers, flexibilities and freedoms that would be afforded through a County Deal; the definitions however were relatively loose and could be open to interpretation, allowing for locally established approaches.

County Council's Position

- 3.5 The Leader of Surrey County Council attended sessions with each of the 11 Surrey district and borough councils earlier this year. The session in Woking was held on 31st May 2022 in the Council Chamber.
- 3.6 Further to this session, the Cabinet of the County Council considered an update on the progress made at its meeting on 25th October 2022 and a core set of proposals the County are recommending for inclusion in the County Deal, for Surrey to take forward for negotiation with Government.

- 3.7 Of particular note are the draft set of proposals representing the “core” set that Surrey County Council will seek to negotiate with government on:
- A Single Surrey Growth and Investment Fund
 - A Surrey Growth and Enterprise Hub
 - Devolved Skills Functions and Budget
 - Lead Climate Change Authority
 - Surrey Infrastructure Investment Plan
- 3.8 The County invited Surrey district and borough councils to submit suggestions and ideas for inclusion into the development of these draft proposals. A meeting was arranged between the Surrey district and borough leaders and chief executives on 16th September 2022 in order to develop a response that had county wide coherence and consistency. This meeting was cancelled as Government respected the national period of mourning for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
- 3.9 A meeting of Surrey district and borough leaders and chief executives was subsequently held on 22nd October 2022. Whilst the outcomes of this meeting was not able to provide formal feedback to incorporate into the SCC report to the 25th October meeting of their Cabinet, it was agreed and accepted by County that this feedback will follow and can be incorporated into the proposals that are being taken forward for negotiation with Government up to the date when negotiations begin.

A Focus on Local Priorities

- 3.10 The Woking for All Strategy, and the supplementary and amended priorities 2022-23 from the new administration, establishes the strategic priority outcomes for the Council and how it will achieve these. Woking welcomes opportunities that will support the delivery of these priorities and in principle views a County Deal as such an opportunity.
- 3.11 Through the Surrey district and borough leaders and chief executives groups, the Council will work to support the development of a strong and unifying view on behalf of all district and boroughs where this can be established. Woking believes that a County Deal that represents a joint submission between the county, and district and boroughs should be our collective aspiration. It should be noted that a level 2 deal does not require organisational change or integration of county and districts but would subsume the responsibilities of the two LEPs into the county. A Level 2 County Deal does not require a Directly Elected Mayor or Leader.
- 3.12 The Executive will also engage with all Woking Borough Councillors over the coming months to seek feedback on the ideas and areas that WBC will recommend including in a County Deal. This should include areas where it supports devolution from Government to County; areas where it supports greater influence from County on functions currently delivered at district and borough level, and also areas where devolution from County to Woking Borough Council would better support the delivery of the Woking for All Strategy.
- 3.13 For a County Deal to deliver the greatest benefit to the communities of Surrey it will require strong partnership working that is built on trust, an ethos of collaborative working and placing the interest of local communities at the forefront. Partnership working should not therefore be limited to or focus solely on the additional functions devolved within a County Deal, but should span across all areas where greater value from public service spend can be delivered.
- 3.14 Woking Borough Council recognises there are functions that are of a scale and breadth that are best delivered county wide, for example Adult Education and Local Skills Improvement Plans. Equally there are functions that benefit from a grounded and detailed understanding and representation of Place where powers would be better shared between County and District and Boroughs, Enterprise and Growth for example.

Woking Strategic Partnerships

- 3.15 Many of the issues raised through the community engagement were not under the direct responsibility and control of Woking Borough Council. The distinction between which department of government delivers services in the borough is not important to communities. They do however expect the Woking Borough Council elected Members to be their voice and to work in partnership for the communities best interests.
- 3.16 Only 16% of residents said the Council 'do enough to influence their public sector partners' and many of the comments raised during the roadshows centred on issues such as the condition of road surfaces, cycle ways, traffic congestion and road closures, provision of medical facilities, public transport and pressure on existing infrastructure. Work needs to be carried out to illustrate to communities that the Council does work with partners to advocate for communities and ensure that partners understand the issues that affect residents' day to day living.
- 3.17 Woking Borough Council views the County Deal, and the development of greater partnership working that this facilitates, as an opportunity to respond to the feedback from our communities with greater pace and certainty.
- 3.18 Extracted below are the key issues raised through our community engagement, with points highlighted where there is a strong correlation with the "core" set of proposals in the County Deal being proposed by Surrey County Council.
- Climate Change and Sustainability: how the Council is supporting this, how can it adapt its policies, encouraging people to use their cars less, electric vehicle charging provision (Surrey County Deal - Lead Climate Change Authority)
 - Sustainable Transport: enhancement of cycleways, footpaths, public bus services, easier to travel around the borough, traffic flows and congestion (Surrey County Deal - Surrey Infrastructure Investment Plan)
 - Local villages: how the Council is supporting these local economies and supporting vibrant village high streets (Surrey County Deal - A Single Surrey Growth and Investment Fund) (Surrey County Deal - A Surrey Growth and Enterprise Hub)
 - Partnership working with Surrey County Council, Surrey Police, the NHS, developers and others
 - Keeping the Borough Safe; Anti-Social behaviour
 - Listen to residents
 - Support for vulnerable older people
 - Homelessness and its causes
 - High quality affordable and key worker housing
 - Parking: lack of provision, lack of enforcement, new homes and provision of parking spaces

4.0 Corporate Strategy

- 4.1 The Woking for All Strategy, and the Supplementary and amended priorities 2022-23 from the new administration, establishes the strategic priority outcomes for the Council and how it will achieve these. Many of the objectives cannot be achieved or achieved well without effective partnership engagement and active involvement. Further, Woking welcomes opportunities that will support it to deliver against these priorities and in principle views a County Deal as such an opportunity.
- 4.2 The Council's Corporate Strategy sets out an objective to 'attract investment and protect our interests by raising the profile of the borough' and seeks to agree and implement a Destination Woking marketing project to promote the borough to attract investment. Woking needs a clear and coherent place brand identity to strengthen its profile locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

5.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications raised by this report.
- 5.2 Risks are mainly associated around the failure to secure and fully utilise partnerships which would directly impact on the delivery of the Corporate Strategy.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 5.3 There are no direct equalities or human resources.

Legal

- 5.4 The proposals to form new partnership arrangements will need to be considered in the context of the Constitution and any amends required to it would need to be approved by Council.

6.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a high level presentation on the proposed new partnership structure and the County's intention to develop a County Deal bid. At the time of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the County's formal position had not been published.
- 6.2 The proposals set out in this paper have been shared with County Council Officers. Terms of Reference will be agreed with partners and presented back to the Executive.

REPORT ENDS