

COUNTY DEAL - MEMBER/OFFICER WORKING GROUP

Head of Service:	Jackie King, Interim Chief Executive
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision? (Yes/No)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 Terms of Reference Appendix 2 Devolution Framework Appendix 3 Timeline for submission of County Deal proposal

Summary

This report advocates the establishment of a cross party Member/Officer Working Group to explore how the Council's views should be represented in any submission to government (by Surrey County Council) of a proposed 'County Deal for Surrey'.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- 1. Agree the set-up of a County Deal Working Group;**
- 2. Agree the membership and Terms of Reference of the Working Group (Appendix 1);**
- 3. Delegate authority to the Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Working Group, to make representations to Surrey County Council and/or other parties in connection with the process for developing a 'Surrey County Deal' proposal to government.**

1 Reason for Recommendations

- 1.1. Recently the Leader of Surrey County Council (SCC) has undertaken a series of presentations to all Surrey Districts and Boroughs and has put forward a very demanding timeline for submission of a County Deal proposal to government. (Appendix 3).

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- 1.2 Input from partners will be crucial in developing and shaping a comprehensive proposal that will deliver an effective deal for Surrey. The scope and ambition of the proposals included will in a large part require the collective support of partners, including Surrey's District and Borough Councils, who will play a key role in supporting delivery of certain aspects of any deal.
- 1.3 The Surrey Delivery Board, set up by SCC, consists of the District & Borough Leaders and Chief Executives along with essential SCC Members and Officers, and is a key stakeholder group that will support both the development and delivery of any proposed devolution deal in Surrey. It is important that we are able to articulate EEBC views on a range of proposals for key service areas in a timely manner through this Board.
- 1.4 This Working Group will provide a mechanism for cross party Member and officer engagement to determine this Councils position on issues and proposals relating to a County Deal, including any 'red lines'. Also, to ensure that this Councils members of the Delivery Board can enter into a dialogue with SCC regarding the preparation of a County Deal proposal which may also include:
 - Engagement with partners and stakeholders in all matters relating to the County Deal proposals;
 - Engagement in dialogue with SCC regarding the preparation of a County Deal proposal to government and a desire to enhance working relations between the two Authorities;
 - Explore more effective District/Borough/Cluster working relationships aimed at improving the quality of services through collaboration or sharing of resources.

Background

- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 The White Paper has established a new devolution framework (see Appendix 2) as a mechanism to support Government in offering a devolution deal to every part of England that wants one. County geographies are seen as the appropriate strategic level to devolve functions to, and the White Paper establishes upper tier councils (e.g. Surrey County Council) as being the core vehicle to deliver devolution to a county area and will work with them to negotiate and develop deals.
- 1.6 Ahead of publication of the White Paper, the Government requested that local areas submit expressions of interest to be considered as pilot areas in the first phase of County Deal negotiations. SCC submitted an expression of interest in August 2021.

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- 1.7 The White Paper also indicates that there is scope for areas to negotiate further powers, on a case-by-case basis, and an opportunity to adopt innovative local proposals to address specific challenges and opportunities.

2 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

2.1 Equality Impact Assessment

None for this report

2.2 Crime & Disorder

2.2.1 None for this report

2.3 Safeguarding

2.3.1 None for this report

2.4 Dependencies

2.4.1 None for this report

2.5 Other

While specific impacts of a final devolution deal are not known at this stage and will be subject to the outcome of negotiations with government on a devolution deal, there will likely be local impacts for district and borough partners. Active engagement with districts and borough partners through the Surrey Delivery Board and Surrey Chief Executives group will be maintained during the development of devolution proposals.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 Section 151 Officer's comments:

There are no direct financial implications arising from the establishment of a Working Group. However, the budgetary impact of any specific proposals arising from the County Deal would have to be assessed through the normal decision-making process.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 The proposed arrangements for County Deals set out in the levelling up White paper are set out in the body of the report. There are no further specific legal implications at this time and further support will be provided as a proposal is developed.

5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

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6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

- Effective Council
- Green and Vibrant
- Cultural and Creative
- Opportunity and Prosperity
- Safe and Well
- Smart and Connected

6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:**

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:**

6.5 **Partnerships:**

- Surrey County Council
- Other Surrey District and Borough Councils

7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- None