

County Deal Initiative - Member Working Group

Strategy & Resources Committee Thursday, 30 June 2022

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

This report advocates the establishment of a Member Working Group to consider how this Council's views should be reflected in the submission to government (by Surrey County Council) of a proposed 'County Deal for Surrey'.

This report supports the Council's priorities of:

- Building a better Council
- Creating the homes, infrastructure and environment we need
- Supporting economic recovery in Tandridge
- Becoming a greener, more sustainable District

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Recommendations to Committee:

That:

- A. a County Deal Working Group be established to consider:
- (i) how this Council's views should be reflected in the submission to government (by Surrey County Council) of a proposed 'County Deal for Surrey'; and
 - (ii) in more general terms, the scope for more effective District / County working relationships aimed at improving the quality of services

- B. the Group comprise eight Councillors with the following political representation:
- Independents and OLRG Alliance x 3
 - Liberal Democrat x 2
 - Conservative x 2
 - Independent Group x 1
- C. Group Leaders to advise the Democratic Services team of their nominees at the earliest opportunity with a view to the Group meeting before the end of July 2022; and
- D. authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Working Group, to make representations to Surrey County Council in connection with its (SCC's) process for developing a 'Surrey Deal' proposal to government.
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Reason for recommendation:

To provide a mechanism for cross party Member engagement in this Council's dialogue with SCC regarding the preparation of a County Deal proposal to government and the desire to enhance working relations between the two Authorities.

Introduction and background

- 1 On the 25th May 2022, Councillors Tim Oliver and Becky Rush, the Leader and Deputy Leader of Surrey County Council, gave a briefing to TDC Members to explain SCC's approach to developing a 'County Deal' proposal (in the context of the Government's Levelling White Paper) and to answer questions. This was attended by 17 District Councillors. A recording of the session was then circulated to all Members.
- 2 As explained by Councillor Oliver, SCC is proposing the development of a County Deal for Surrey in line with 'Level 1' and 'Level 2' powers defined within the Levelling Up White Paper Devolution Framework. These powers fall short of the Level 3 'elected leader / mayor' model and would rely on effective partnership working between existing local authorities, with no change to the structure of local government throughout Surrey.
- 3 The key objective of a County Deal is to secure greater local powers to improve the quality of life for Surrey residents and support the County's economic recovery and future prospects.
- 4 The proposed Working Group could, for example, consider what additional powers and responsibilities TDC might wish to acquire; how TDC could help shape a County Deal; and, aside from the specifics of the County Deal discussions, what could be done to enhance District / County working relationships to improve the quality of services.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

There are no direct financial implications arising from the establishment of a Working Group. However, the budgetary impact of any specific proposals affecting the Council's operations (arising either from a County Deal or other initiatives aimed at more effective public-sector relationships) would have to be assessed on their merits.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

There are no legal implications arising from this report. Any implications, legal or otherwise, relating to the remit of this Working Group will be considered by the Group and recommendations made to this Committee, as needed.

Equalities

One of SCC's suggested 'areas of focus' for a County Deal is to secure a strategic role for tackling health inequality, including via the delivery of housing services.

Climate change

A further proposed 'areas of focus' is to identify innovative proposals to reach net carbon zero.

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