

One Surrey Growth Board – Meeting Minutes

23 March 2022, 1pm to 3pm

Microsoft Teams

Board Members in attendance

Cllr. Tim Oliver - Leader of Surrey County Council
Cllr. Joss Bigmore - District/Borough Leader (Guildford Borough Council)
Lord Philip Hammond- Former Chancellor of the Exchequer & Surrey MP
Professor Max Lu – Vice Chancellor, University of Surrey
Julie Fisher – District/Borough CX (Woking Borough Council)
Kathy Slack – Enterprise M3 LEP
Paul Layzell - Royal Holloway University
Louise Punter – Chambers of Commerce
Tim Wates – Wates Group, as Business Representative
Charles Amies – Homes England
Vijay Luthra – Institute of Directors (attending on behalf of Claire Fuller)
Frances Rutter – NESCOL, as Further Education Representative
Julie Kapsalis – Coast to Capital LEP Chair
Jean Launberg - Gordon Murray, as Surrey Business Representative

Presenters and Observers

Dawn Redpath, Surrey County Council
Daniel Murray, Surrey County Council
Rhiannon Mort, Surrey County Council
Natalie Wilton, Surrey County Council
Laura Bridges, 31ten
Chris Shepherd, 31ten

Apologies

Claire Coutinho MP – Member of Parliament for East Surrey
Joanna Killian – Surrey County Council CX
Claire Fuller – Health Representative (ICS)
Paul Harwood - Network Rail
Dr Julie Llewellyn – Community and Voluntary Sector
Sue Lawrence – Institute of Directors

1. Welcome and Introductions

Tim Oliver opened the meeting and noted the intention for a face-to-face workshop to take place in May as an opportunity to come together for a more interactive session.

2. Surrey Economic Position Update

Dawn Redpath introduced the economic context, as presented within the slides circulated in advance of the meeting. Dawn noted that the data is fast becoming out of date due to the rapidly changing situation with the impact of the war in Ukraine, increasing cost of living and the announcements by the Chancellor (on the day of the meeting) of some measures to help ease the pressure of increasing costs.

Reflections and points of discussion

- The next 6 – 9 months could be very challenging as costs increase, NI increases and increase in consumption seen after the pandemic restrictions start to fall back in line with previous trends. UK growth rate will likely return to approx. 1-1.5% p.a.
- EM3 are undertaking work to understand impact of Ukraine War on west Surrey businesses. One sector potentially impacted is the gaming industry, prominent in Guildford, due to the exporting of products to Russia.
- Some of the key reflections from the recent Business Leadership Forum include:
 - Extensive recruitment at Gatwick airport (7,000 vacant posts) and Heathrow (10,000 vacant posts).
 - The issues impacting recruitment include public transport access and the cost of housing.
 - FE Colleges are working with businesses. The skills needs of businesses are rapidly changing. There could be a role for the Colleges to support cross-cutting skills, with employers providing more of the specialist training, as the requirements are rapidly changing.
- There was discussion about the potential to fill posts in Surrey through recruiting people who will work from home from other parts of the country where housing costs are lower. In effect, breaking the link between where you live and where you work.
- If we're unable to address the housing pressures in Surrey, then an alternative option is to increase participation in labour market, such as through encouraging people to retrain and work beyond retirement age and provide suitable/ affordable childcare offers to encourage increased work force participation.
- Colleges are seeing increase in apprentices and retraining of over 50s, who are looking for a career change.

3. Spatial Alignment

A presentation was received from Katie Stewart, SCC, which focused on the place making agenda and introduced the Place Ambition report. The development of the Place Ambition report has been led by the Surrey Future board and traction has been gained through joint working across district and boroughs (D&Bs), with a commitment to “good growth”. The need to bring together the Place Ambition work and the Plan for Growth, developed by the Growth Board, is recognised.

The Growth Board was asked to consider the potential to increase their remit to include transport, planning and infrastructure, and for the development of a Spatial Investment Framework which brings together these considerations with economic growth.

Reflections and points of discussion

- There was support for the need to look beyond borough and district boundaries when considering planning and regeneration to ensure that local plans across Surrey are complementary and make the best use of the limited land supply available.
- There is potential for a Spatial Investment Plan to provide the data and evidence to fulfil the duty to co-operate and support informed decision making. Town Masterplanning is taking place in various locations in Surrey which could benefit from a partnership approach to the development and implementation of the plan.
- The remit of the Growth Board is already fairly large so on a practical basis a sub-group of officers who support the delivery of the actions and mandate set by the Growth Board may still be required

Action

- **A proposal for the development of a Spatial Investment Plan/Framework will be brought back for consideration at the next meeting of the board.**

4. Delivery Programme Update

4.1 Securing Investment in Surrey

Daniel Murrey provided an update on the impact of the Invest in Surrey service following the soft launch of the website earlier in the year and highlighted the considerable interest and demand for commercial sites across Surrey. Since the last meeting, there has been widespread engagement with partners, including district and boroughs and LEPs, about the development and operation of Invest in Surrey.

An Invest in Surrey launch event is taking place on 28th April from 4pm – 6.30pm at Woodhatch which board members are encouraged to attend

The Invest in Surrey presentation was followed by a joint update from Julie Kapsalis, Coast to Capital, and Kathy Slack, Enterprise M3 LEP. Julie introduced the role and work programme for LEPs, and how the two LEPs are working together across the Surrey geography.

Kathy presented a series of slides setting out the activities and impact of the two LEPs across Surrey, in support of the Growth Board priorities.

4.2 Skills

Stacey King, as Chair of the Skills Leadership Forum, presented an update on the development of a Local Skills Development Plan. Two groups have been established, one

looking at the immediate skills needs of businesses, and with a second group looking at the longer-term demand.

Reflections and points of discussion

- There was discussion about how quickly interventions could be identified and implemented, in advance of the full report being completed.
- The twin track approach will help identify more immediate actions required, as well as supporting forward planning
- Colleges are already positioning themselves to align with existing skills needs and are engaging with businesses across Surrey.

Action

- **Further consultation and engagement to be provided to the Growth Board as the Local Skills Improvement Plan progresses**

4.3 Innovation Fund

Presentation was received from Laura Bridges from 31ten, with contributions from other colleagues, to introduce the feasibility work to be progressed for the potential development of an Innovation Fund for Surrey. The consultants reflected on their experience in working with local authorities in other parts of the country to establish funding streams.

Reflections and points of discussion

- There was discussion about how 'Innovation' should be defined and how the fund can be directed in light of the economic context discussed under agenda item 2.
- The Growth Board provided a steer on partners to involve in their engagement activity, including the LEPs and universities, particularly in relation to aligning with the SETsquared programme.
- The Growth Board discussed the need for clear justification and case for intervention to be identified before the concept of an Innovation Fund proceeds to the next stage of development.

Action

- **The outcome of the feasibility work will be presented back to the Growth Board for consideration before the next stage of work is progressed.**

4.4 Joint Greener Futures and Economic Growth Actions

An update was provided within the agenda pack, for information. This item was not discussed during the meeting.

5. Levelling Up White Paper update

The Chair provided a brief update on the main points from the Levelling Up White Paper. Whilst Surrey was not included in the list of 10 local areas to be considered within the first wave of County Deals, it is expected that the remaining authorities who wish to progress a County Deal will proceed quickly once the first deals have been agreed.

6. Any Other Business

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 23 June 2022 from 1pm – 3pm and a face-to-face workshop will take place on the 19 May at SCC Woodhatch Offices, Reigate, from 10am – 3pm.