

Name of meeting: Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 4th March 2019

Title of report: Effective Regional Working – annual update

Purpose of report

Kirklees Council has always been a strong advocate and willing participant in regional working. This report backs up the presentation and provides a detailed update for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on progress with effective regional working and sets out some key priorities for the coming year.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	N/A.
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	N/A
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	N/A
Date signed off by Strategic Director & name	Karl Battersby 21/02/19
Is it also signed off by the Service Director (Finance)?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	N/A
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Pandor

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or private: Public

(Have you considered GDPR?)

GDPR has been considered but the report and processes involved in regional working do not contain any personal data.

1. Summary

Each year a report is presented at Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee updating members on progress with effective regional working. The report has traditionally focussed on emphasising the continuing need for regional working, identifying the benefits and successes of the previous year and setting out future implications for the Council.

For this year's session we are taking a slightly different approach in line with a previous request to provide more detail of what and where we've contributed to the West Yorkshire

Combined Authority (WYCA) as well looking at our working relationship and how this could be improved. This report and presentation from the Service Director (Economy and Skills) focuses on how we can improve our working relationship with WYCA and what are our 'asks' moving forward should be. Hopefully this approach will stimulate a much more rounded discussion and enable all members to contribute.

Background information

The Leeds City Region (LCR) Partnership was first formed in a declaration made by 11 council leaders at a City Region summit in 2004 and has been at the forefront of cross-boundary working for over a decade. The current arrangements are built on a proven track record of informal regional working and a consensus that the potential of the region could only be realised through cross-boundary local authorities working alongside an entrepreneurial private sector.

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) was founded on 1st April 2014 by the five West Yorkshire constituent District Councils; Bradford, Calderdale, Leeds, Wakefield and Kirklees. The City of York Council and the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) have been made associate members.

WYCA was established to take on board devolved Government funding and powers related to the 2012 Leeds City Region City Deal and 2014 Local Growth Deal. Both of these included new funding and decision-making powers to promote economic growth in the Leeds City Region, of which Kirklees is a key constituent member.

Although we've discussed some of the points previously, it's worth re-iterating why regional working continues to be important for Kirklees and its communities:

- **Contribute to growth and share in benefits**
The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for the LCR states that between 2014 and 2021 £5.2bn additional economic output will be achieved resulting in 62,000 extra jobs. The LCR secured £572.9 million in the initial round of Growth Deal Funding, the largest settlement in the country.
- **Future government funding opportunities** are likely to come through and be administered via the LCR Partnership.
- **Connectivity is a major issue**, particularly in terms of accessing the numerous employment centres across the district (Kirklees has the highest net outflow of workers in the LCR i.e. residents traveling into other districts to find work) and for freight movements for our numerous small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).
- **Quality of life for the majority of our communities** is dependent on the success of the wider West Yorkshire and Leeds City Region partnerships.
- **Strong collective voice to influence national decision-making**; we cannot do it by ourselves
- **Widespread recognition that housing markets, connectivity and local economies** do not reflect administrative boundaries so we have to work accordingly
- **Continued economic resilience** - individual councils working in isolation will not avert the current economic situation. Strong partnership working is essential, coupled with the efficiencies and innovation that working together brings.

Below are a series of questions we have used to assess progress so far and to start teasing out the future direction of travel.

Where have Kirklees and its residents benefited from WYCA membership?

In terms of funding and investment, Kirklees have successfully secured upwards of £140m from the Growth Deal and Transport Fund pots which will have a significant impact on connectivity, affordable housing and employment opportunities for our communities. Like the

other 4 WY authorities in the CA, spend has been slow to begin with; complex transport schemes take time to deliver (feasibility, consultation etc), challenging resource issues (Local Plan priorities, reduced staffing due to austerity etc). However, the majority of early spend on feasibility is now complete and with much better and more robust processes in place in terms of governance and risk mitigation, the future is extremely bright in terms of delivery.

Other headline projects benefiting Kirklees include the Enterprise Zone in Lindley and the Superfast Broadband contract (Kirklees has gained a 42% share from the second contract).

Another key success has been the number of Kirklees businesses accessing the various business grants that are available through the LCR Partnership. Through the continuing support from council officers, Kirklees SME's have drawn down 19% of all grants approved from just a 13% SME base across West Yorkshire. This is a real success story.

What have we contributed?

Kirklees Council has always been a keen supporter of collaborative working and continues to promote a 'can do' approach when working with neighbouring authorities as well as being seen as a reliable and 'critical friend'. More specifically our ambition in terms of housing growth and regeneration is central to the WYCA growth agenda and will continue to gain importance as more opportunities for investment in Kirklees start to emerge. We also have a good track record in providing leadership and expertise on key projects and sectors such urban traffic management and inclusive growth. We continue to have good representation on the key decision-making boards and aim to ensure all Kirklees attendees are fully briefed, able to contribute and input into discussions.

Kirklees and WYCA; how can we improve our working together?

As stated above, we continue to fully commit to working collaboratively with partners, particularly WYCA but there are some areas where our relationship could be improved.

- Do WYCA understand our priorities well enough and understand we can contribute to the region?
- Better quality and more timely papers - agenda packs are still not on time (particularly for Leaders) which makes it very difficult to ensure Cllrs are fully briefed and able to contribute. Also agendas are still far too long to digest.
- Improved communication and better information sharing
- Allow members and officers to influence more effectively across all agendas
- Better sharing and use of resources - are we using our staffing resources effectively so as to achieve the best outcomes? Could we do more to share?
- The creation of an effective Relationship Manager or Key Account Manager within WYCA who understands Kirklees, our priorities and is able to sell and promote what we can offer

Is the Kirklees representation at WYCA appropriate?

Kirklees is well represented on the WYCA Panels and Committees and we seem to have the right people at the appropriate meeting. More clarity is still needed on the officer side (we are awaiting the new officer structure to ensure we're able to input and influence and understand how it fits with the decision-making structure).

The wider cllr involvement and engagement is still an ongoing issue and although we have improved (regular updates and sharing minutes at Full Council, sessions at LMT etc) there is still scope for improvement. We would welcome Scrutiny's input on this

What are our 'asks'?

In general terms, below are a series of 'asks' for WYCA to consider;

- Improved governance and decision making, more transparency from certain boards and panels is required as well as consistency in decision making.

- More clarity on who deals with what sector or area of work. Sometimes it's difficult to know who we need to be speaking to or who is responsible.
- Improved strategic connections across work areas such as housing and transport. Also recognising the impact of green infrastructure in a more consistent manner.
- Simplified meeting/governance structures particularly on the officer side.
- Align WYCA priorities with national agendas to ensure we take advantage of opportunities that may arise.
- Continue to work towards accessing other funding/investment sources.

What does the next 2 years look like in terms of regional working?

Looking forward, below are the key areas where our efforts need to be directed.

- Continued progress and delivery of major schemes
- Deliver our ambitions including a more pro-active 'selling' ourselves regionally and nationally.
- Ensure we take advantage of future investment (Transforming Cities Fund etc)
- Improved collaboration with neighbours (build on the success with Calderdale)
- Address the challenges of place-based working and diversity across WY
- Work with WYCA to increase the focus on town centre regeneration
- Making the most of cultural opportunities
- Ensure we're in a position to take advantages future rail investment
- Continue to improve support for cllrs to understand what's going on
- Reminder not to lose sight of Kirklees and the value it brings - for Kirklees to promote and re-enforce what we do – what contribution does Kirklees make.
- For Kirklees to have a clear offer to promote to Leeds City Region. Kirklees has a very good story to tell - investment and planning now coming to fruition; we need to drive future agendas
- Better alignment of our strategies to maximise investment opportunities.

2. Information required to take a decision

No decision is required today.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

Not applicable.

3.2 Working with Partners

A key theme of regional working is collaborating with other partners, regionally and on the national stage. As stated in the report we have a very good track record in this field and continue to explore how we can improve.

3.3 Place Based Working

As stated in the report, place-based working is becoming an increasing challenge for WYCA and the 5 member authorities.

3.4 Improving outcomes for children

Not applicable

3.5 Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

We will continue to benefit from Growth Deal and Transport Fund monies over the next 2 years as we deliver our major schemes.

4. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable.

5. **Next steps and timelines**
Not applicable.
6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**
To note to the presentation and contents of the report.
7. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**
To note the presentation and contents of the report.
8. **Contact officer**
Nick Howe, Policy & Strategy Team
nick.howe@kirklees.gov.uk
9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**
Not applicable.
10. **Service Director responsible**
Not applicable.