

Name of meeting: Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 22nd July 2019

Title of report: Effective Regional Working in Kirklees

Purpose of report

Kirklees Council has always been a strong advocate and willing participant in regional working. This report provides some general information on regional working for new members of the Scrutiny Management Committee as well as setting out key work areas 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 10 th July 2019
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

1.1 Kirklees Council has always been a strong advocate of regional working and we have a long track record of collaborating with others on key strategic issues. Since the arrangements at the regional level have become more formal, officers have brought an annual report to 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.

- 1.2 At this year's session in March members argued that as regional working has increased importance and significance this last few years, it makes sense to update Scrutiny more regularly. An update each quarter was agreed.
- 1.3 As this is the first update of the year and we have some new members on the Committee, the report provides some background to regional working including why it is important and how we've benefited from collaboration this last few years. It also explores our relationship with WYCA and sets out the outcomes and outputs for the next 12 months.
- 1.4 Members of the Committee are also asked to discuss and suggest themes or topics they would like to discuss at future meetings.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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. 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.
- 2.3 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are private sector-led partnerships between businesses and local public sector bodies. They were created in 2011 to drive economic growth in local areas. There are currently 38 LEPs in England, the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership being one of those. The LEP is an associate member of WYCA.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Appendix 1 shows the WYCA Committee and panel representatives for 2019/20. Appendix 2 captures the governance arrangements.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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. We need to be central to this if we are to deliver our spatial priorities.
- **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).
- **Strong collective voice to influence national decision-making**; take devolution for example, 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.

2.9 As well as highlighting the importance of regional working, it is also worth touching on examples of where Kirklees and its residents have benefited from collaboration at the regional level.

2.10 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. Schemes about to commence on site include the **A62 Smart Corridor** (Leeds Road phase 1) 2019/2020 and **A629 Phase 5** (Ainley Top into Huddersfield) 2020/21.

2.11 Other headline projects benefiting Kirklees include the **3 Enterprise Zones** (Lindley West and East plus Moor Park) attracting business and providing employ. **The Superfast Broadband** contract (Kirklees has gained a 42% share from the second contract).

2.12 In terms of Energy Strategy and initiatives, we have had some noticeable success;

- The **Better Homes Yorkshire scheme** is a regional partnership led by WYCA. The scheme helps us to access external funding for schemes to improve the energy efficiency of housing stock in Kirklees. Most recently £500k of WYCA LGF funding helped insulate 291 properties in the Riddings area of Huddersfield.
- **LCR Heat Network Programme** – The Huddersfield Heat Network scheme was a beneficiary of early-stage support and co-ordination via the WYCA/ LCR programme. This has progressed to be a viable project in its own right, and is now a key project in the Kirklees Economic Strategy.
- The forthcoming **LCR Energy Strategy** will focus on five priority action areas to help deliver a zero carbon energy economy in the LCR. For Kirklees, this will help Kirklees in developing our own future targets and prioritising projects that make the biggest difference in reducing our emissions.

2.13 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.

2.14 In terms of future ambition and future delivery, some of the Kirklees schemes are crucial to the ongoing success of the Leeds City Region. For example our **Big Build programme of 10,000 homes by 2023** is central to WYCA achieving its key outcomes and outputs.

3. KEY ISSUES

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

3.1 Although the collaborative working with partners and relationship with WYCA continues to go from strength to strength, there are some areas where this could be improved. If we are to be successful and take advantage of the opportunities that arise, we need to continue to challenge ourselves and explore where we can do better.

3.2 In practical terms there needs to be much better communication and information sharing with WYCA. Better quality and more timely meeting papers would certainly help. 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 and the information not concise enough. Improvements have been made but there is still a way to go especially when detailed or complex projects are involved.

3.3 Are we able to describe our priorities to WYCA well enough so they clearly understand them and are able to see where they support and deliver the region's outcomes? We've recently invited WYCA staff to visit our key regeneration sites to talk through our schemes so they have much better understanding of what we are trying to achieve. Officers are currently working on mapping out our priorities for the next 12 months or so and we shall be sharing these with WYCA to identify opportunities for support and delivery.

3.4 There is also the opportunity for 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? We do have WYCA officers now based in Kirklees working on specific transport projects but more could be done. The creation of a Relationship Manager or Key Account Manager within WYCA who understands Kirklees, our priorities and is able to sell and promote what we can offer would be a real step forward.

3.5 In general terms, below are a series of 'asks' we would like WYCA to consider;

- Improved governance and decision making; more transparency from certain boards and panel 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 or who is responsible.
- Improved strategic co-ordination across work areas such as housing & transport and more recently Climate Emergency work. 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 advantages of opportunities that may arise.
- Continue to work with all local authorities towards accessing other funding/investment sources.

Is the Kirklees representation at WYCA appropriate?

3.6 As Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 show, 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) but we are in a much better position now to input and influence key decisions.

3.7 The wider councillor involvement and engagement is still an ongoing issue both with WYCA and ourselves. We have certainly improved (regular updates and sharing minutes at Full Council, sessions at LMT, specific topic briefings such as devolution etc) but there is still scope for improvement. We would welcome Scrutiny's input on this.

What are the objectives and outcomes for regional working over the next 12 months?

3.8 Below are a series of bullets which set out the key objectives and outcomes for the coming 12 months with regional working. Some of these are ongoing pieces of work which we continue to try and improve whilst others provide new opportunities and challenges.

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

- **Continued progress and delivery of major schemes** funded through the Growth Deal or Transport Fund. Kirklees has a very good story to tell - investment and planning now coming to fruition; we need to use this to drive delivery.
- **Identify what our key priorities** are within regional working and ensure they align with our outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan. This will ensure there is a clear offer to promote to Leeds City Region and better alignment of our strategies to maximise investment opportunities.
- **Deliver our ambitions** including a more pro-active 'selling' ourselves regionally and nationally. 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.
- Ensure we continue to **take advantage of future investment** when it becomes available (the recent success with Transforming Cities Fund is a good example of this)
- **Improved collaboration with neighbours** (build on the success with Calderdale)
- Work with WYCA to increase the focus on town centre regeneration to support our **Town Centre Master Planning**
- **Make the most of cultural, tourism and sporting opportunities** sub-regionally and regionally to support our own ambitions e.g. re-location of Channel 4, Tour de Yorkshire, Rugby League World Cup etc.
- Ensure we are in a position to **take advantage of future rail investment** particularly the TransPennine Route upgrade (*given that the £2.9 Billion is committed to be spent by 2024 the works proposed for Kirklees should be viewed with real positivity and a lynchpin to our regeneration priorities for Huddersfield and the North Kirklees Growth Zone*).
- Continue to support and **influence the 'One Yorkshire' proposals** for devolution and identify the opportunities for Kirklees
- **Improve support for councillors** to understand what's going on with regional working. There is a real opportunity to work with scrutiny on this.

4. INFORMATION REQUIRED TO TAKE A DECISION

No decision is required today.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL

5.1 Working with People

Not applicable

5.2 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.

5.3 Place Based Working

Place-based working is becoming an increasing challenge and opportunity for WYCA and the 5 member authorities. More work is required in joining this up and learning from what happens in other authorities.

5.4 Improving outcomes for children

Not applicable

5.5 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.

6. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable.

7. Next steps and timelines

7.1 As stated in the summary section, this is the first update of the year and the aim is have a regional update every quarter. The next meeting is scheduled for 9th September and the Chair would like to invite officers of the Combined Authority and the LEP to attend to discuss how those bodies are working in partnership with Kirklees.

7.2 For future meetings, members are asked to suggest other items or work areas within regional working that they'd like to discuss. Suggestions from the meeting in March include air quality, green infrastructure, Enterprise Zones, punching our weight in transport and spatial/physical projects.

8. Officer recommendations and reasons

Member are asked to note to the contents of the report and suggest future topic or work areas they'd like to discuss at future meetings.

9. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Not applicable.

10. Contact officer

Nick Howe, Policy & Strategy Team

nick.howe@kirklees.gov.uk

11. Background Papers and History of Decisions

O&SMC 4th March 2019 '*An Update on Effective Regional Working*'

'Effective Regional Working - Annual update' presentation by Angela Blake

12. Service Director responsible

Angela Blake, Service Director Economy & Skills