

# Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee Light Touch Review Report

<b>Date:</b>	20 July 2023
<b>Key ambition area:</b>	Whole Programme
<b>Sponsors:</b>	Emma Alexander
<b>For publication:</b>	Yes

## **1.0 Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To present the key findings and recommendations from the Vision Derbyshire Light Touch Review and to approve the partnership's response.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Note the key findings and recommendations of the Vision Derbyshire Light Touch Review.
- 2.2 Discuss the key findings and recommendations of the review and support and confirm the collective response.

## **3.0 Reason for recommendations**

- 3.1 To ensure the current Vision Derbyshire approach and hosting arrangements continue to be fit for purpose in the context of the developing East Midlands Devolution Deal.
- 3.2 To ensure that Vision Derbyshire achievements are identified and celebrated and that these form the foundations of future arrangements as they develop and emerge.

## **4.0 Report details**

### **Background**

*Shaping the future of Derbyshire, together*

- 4.1 At its meeting on 18 January 2023, the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee received a presentation from Stuart Young, Chief Executive Officer, East Midlands Councils on the approach taken, and the draft findings and recommendations of the light touch review which sought to:
- Support Derbyshire Leaders and Chief Executives in reviewing the Vision Derbyshire approach three years on through a series of one-to-one semi structured interviews
  - Confirm the appetite to continue with the approach and the level of ambition for future collaboration
  - Develop a shared understanding of key achievements and successes, identifying what has worked well over the last three years
  - Identify key challenges and opportunities in taking forward the approach, developing a shared understanding of potential improvements that could be made to current arrangements
  - Review and confirm existing Vision Derbyshire principles, to ensure these are fit for purpose
  - Identify and agree the conditions which would need to be in place to support the future collaboration of Derbyshire Councils
  - Identify and scope further work that may be required over the coming period.
- 4.2 Discussions at the Joint Committee were fed into the final report which is attached at Appendix A for consideration. The report outlines a number of key findings, a summary of which are set out below:
- Vision Derbyshire has supported a more collegiate approach in Derbyshire and has ensured a greater shared understanding of the common challenges facing councils across the county and how collectively these challenges may be addressed
  - Vision Derbyshire provided a helpful platform upon which Derbyshire Councils were able to develop and deliver elements of their collective programme response to the Covid-19 pandemic
  - Establishing the direct impact of Vision Derbyshire is difficult, however providing a fulcrum for activity has likely accelerated the delivery of joint programmes and has been of benefit to wider work in Derbyshire
  - The central problem remains that only a limited number of councils are full contributory members, and forcing the existing approach further forward will only serve to entrench current positions and disengagement from collective work
  - The lack of unanimity of membership undermines the ability of Vision Derbyshire to be an authoritative and representative partnership of councils
  - Nevertheless, there is potential appetite and opportunity to move forward.

- 4.3 The report also outlines a number of recommendations to support Councils in Derbyshire move forward in meeting their common objectives as follows:
- a) There is appetite for collaborative activity between councils in Derbyshire, particularly on matters relating to the Combined Authority. Given this appetite, there is an ideal opportunity to establish a refreshed and fully inclusive approach to collaborative working in Derbyshire.
  - b) The existing partnership and governance arrangements in Derbyshire should be simplified and rationalised, to be superseded by a single Derbyshire-wide partnership vehicle comprising all Derbyshire councils.
  - c) The future partnership approach should specifically align with proposals for the East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority and focus on securing collective influence. Progressing any shared services and procurement initiatives is best implemented through separate arrangements involving the relevant councils, although there is an opportunity to share best practice through the new partnership.
  - d) To support a fresh approach, the 'Vision Derbyshire' brand should be 'retired' as partners move to new arrangements.

#### **Participating Councils' Response to the Review**

- 4.4 Work on Vision Derbyshire commenced over three years ago and since that time there have been a number of significant achievements during about which Councils should be proud. These include work on the Vision Derbyshire Business Development programme, the development of the Vision Derbyshire Climate Change Strategy and Planning Policy Guidance and the creation of the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee as the basis for future joint and collaborative working moving forward.
- 4.5 Participating Councils welcome the report's findings and recommendations, in particular the clear recognition that Vision Derbyshire objectives remain relevant and worthy and that the approach has helped to lock together the county and district and borough relationships with shared ownership and equal partnership.
- 4.6 It has been clear for some time that the central issue and challenge of the approach is that currently only a limited number of councils are participating members of the Joint Committee and whilst this has not prevented work being undertaken, it is imperative that steps are taken to 'refresh' the approach in a way that can develop and seek agreement to an approach which allows for all Councils to become participating members in the future.

- 4.7 As work progresses on the Devolution Deal and the new East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority (EMCCA) emerges, it is vital that the Vision Derbyshire approach continues to evolve to meet new demands. The review has provided a key opportunity to re-engage partners in the approach and review sub-regional governance arrangements, which is critical in ensuring that Derbyshire remains well positioned to maximise the benefits from the Devolution Deal as it moves into implementation.
- 4.8 Over recent months work to develop proposals which progress the implementation of findings has been taking place in liaison with the Vision Derbyshire Chief Executive Steering Group.
- 4.9 An update on progress and an outline of proposals for the future of the Vision Derbyshire approach and governance arrangements are the subject of separate reports to the Joint Committee. Following consideration of proposals which take into account the findings and outcomes of the review, work to implement key actions will continue to take place to enable new arrangements to become fully operational from September 2023 onwards.

## **5.0 Alternative options**

- 5.1 Option 1 – Do not take on board and adopt the report recommendations. Whilst this is a viable option it does not take into account the changing devolution landscape and could result in existing arrangements not being fit for purpose.

## **6.0 Implications for consideration – Financial and value for money**

- 6.1 There are no specific financial and value for money implications for the Vision Derbyshire Programme budget linked to this report. However, approval of proposals to amend the Vision Derbyshire approach are likely to lead to changes to the current funding methodology which is considered in a separate report to the Committee.

## **7.0 Implications for consideration – Legal**

- 7.1 Any proposed changes to current arrangements would need to be considered in line with the articles of the Joint Committee, agreed at the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee on 4 April 2023, specifically Section B relating to functions and responsibilities.

**8.0 Implications for consideration – Human Resources**

8.1 There are no specific HR implications linked to this report. However, a change in approach is likely to lead to amendments to proposals to resource and staff the future approach which are considered in a separate report to the Committee.

**9.0 Implications for consideration – Climate Change**

9.1 Funding for activity relating to climate change and in particular net zero ambitions is a key element and focus of a devolution deal as is the transfer of powers and flexibilities from central government to support the delivery of identified actions. A successful deal and funding from central government would be crucial in delivering the Vision Derbyshire Climate Change Strategy in meeting Derbyshire’s agreed climate change priorities and targets.

**10.0 Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity**

10.1 There are no Equality and Diversity issues relating to this update.

**11.0 Implications for consideration – Risk management**

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

**Document information**

<b>Report author</b>
Robert Lowe
<b>Background documents</b>
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.
None
<b>Appendices to the report</b>
None