

Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee Review of Governance Arrangements

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

1.0 Purpose of the report

1.1 For the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee to note the governance review and agree to formally establish a new single governance framework for Derbyshire Councils, including a new formal decision-making committee called the Derbyshire Strategic Leadership Board.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Approve proposals following the review of the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee to merge appropriate governance structures into a single new framework for Derbyshire Councils, which will include a new formal decision-making committee called the Derbyshire Strategic Leadership Board.

2.2 Approve that the development and implementation of the future governance approach are phased as outlined in the report.

3.0 Reason for recommendations

3.1 To ensure that the governance across the County is inclusive, streamlined, fit for purpose and can work collaboratively across a range of issues.

3.2 To ensure the County can the nominate and appoint district and borough Council EMMCCA representation and collectively discuss, agree and align positions at the EMMCCA.

4.0 Report details

Background

- 4.1 The Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee was established and held its first meeting on 4 April 2022. At this meeting, formal governance arrangements for the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee were confirmed. These governance arrangements were developed and approved by the current full member authorities Chesterfield Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council and High Peak Borough Council.
- 4.2 A formal Joint Committee provides a framework for Derbyshire councils to work more effectively together, maximise opportunities for collaboration and enable agile, timely and flexible decision making.
- 4.3 The Governance Model was developed via a governance working group chaired by Chesterfield Borough Council's Chief Executive and made up of Monitoring Officers from 5 of the 9 councils in Derbyshire. The working group engaged throughout development with council Leaders and Chief Executives at their regular monthly meetings with comments taken on board in developing the final proposals.
- 4.4 The final articles, functions and responsibilities and procedure rules for the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee were formally approved by the current full members of Vision Derbyshire – Chesterfield Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council and High Peak Borough Council.
- 4.5 These governance arrangements provided a framework for the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee to operate as the decision-making body for matters where Derbyshire councils agree to work collaboratively and demonstrate a collective political commitment to the approach.
- 4.6 The articles set out the main aims of the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee, which were to:
- Provide collective leadership for Derbyshire
 - Progress shared ambitions for the area
 - Work together to tackle the issues and challenges outlined in the case for change
 - Enable agile, timely and effective decision making.
- 4.7 The Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee has successfully convened five times since April 2023, with Chesterfield Borough Council and its officer's instrumental in supporting the Joint Committee in driving forward Vision Derbyshire agenda and Derbyshire County Council providing strategic support, programme management and associated activity to support the overall delivery of the approach over that period.

- 4.8 A light touch review has been undertaken by East Midlands Councils and a key recommendation from the Vision Derbyshire light touch review was as follows:

‘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.’

Current position

- 4.9 The Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee and related structures such as the Vision Derbyshire Chief Executives Group and the Vision Derbyshire Leaders and Chief Executives Group have played a crucial role in driving forward collaborative priorities linked to the Vision Derbyshire delivery programme.
- 4.10 Both Leaders and Chief Executives have recognised the benefits of a collective engagement through the regular informal and formal meetings offered by the approach. The Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee also provided for a general joint decision-making platform to progress key areas of work on cross-cutting, collective priorities.
- 4.11 Committee members however, have raised concerns that there are a number of different meetings in Derbyshire often discussing similar or identical issues and streamlining is necessary to simplify arrangements and reduce the bureaucratic burden on all authorities moving forward.
- 4.12 Not all district and borough councils are participating members of the Joint Committee, although they attend the meetings. Derby City Council are currently not a member of the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee, and it is important that any changes can ensure full involvement and empower all participants.
- 4.13 Emergence of the EMCCA has also created additional governance structures with which councils need to engage and it is crucial that councils in Derbyshire can position themselves to align local arrangements to the EMCCA and ensure that the benefits of the combined authority are optimised for the county. A mechanism for political appointments onto the EMCCA is also required in the future.

Proposed Approach

- 4.14 It is proposed that the current governance and partnership arrangements in Derbyshire are merged, collapsed and/or revised into a more streamlined and effective structure, whilst also anticipating the role and types of functions

necessary to support the sub-regional delivery of a County Deal. This includes the nomination and appointment of district and borough Council EMCCA representation and collectively discussing, agreeing and aligning positions at the EMCCA, to speak with one voice and advocate for Derbyshire.

- 4.15 This would mean the merging and reworking of, as a minimum, the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee and D2 Economic Prosperity Committee (EPC), which has recently also been reviewed.
- 4.16 It is recommended that the following actions are agreed in respect of the governance arrangements for Vision Derbyshire:
- The Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee and the D2 Economic Prosperity Committee are merged into a single new framework for Derbyshire Councils, which will include a new formal decision-making committee called the Derbyshire Strategic Leadership Board.
 - All Derbyshire Councils are invited to be participating members of the Strategic Leadership Board and the Committee will be structured to utilise part and/or split agendas to discuss and agree relevant matters and take appropriate decisions.
 - The articles, functions and responsibilities and procedural rules for the Strategic Leadership Board will be developed to reflect the drivers for collaboration and delivery priorities, whilst also providing a mechanism for political appointments onto the EMCCA.
- 4.17 It is recommended that proposals for the development and implementation of the future governance approach are phased as follows:

Phase 1 (July 2023 – December 2023)

- Align the meetings of the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee and D2 EPC to support the transition to new arrangements
- Develop the Terms of Reference and Articles to support the revised approach and establish a mechanism for political appointments onto the EMCCA
- Move in principle to dissolve the relevant committees through the appropriate procedures
- Establish the new Strategic Leadership Board to meet in November 2023
- Work in shadow for arrangements on EMCCA issues

Phase 2 (January 2024 onwards)

- Develop and establish sub-committees, sub-groups and advisory groups when applicable aligned to the new thematic delivery programme
- Formally appoint members to the EMCCA once the new Authority has been established

- Consolidate additional governance structures when and where necessary in the future.

Next steps

- 4.18 Following the Joint Committee, work will then take place to implement agreed actions to ensure that new shadow arrangements become operational from September 2023.
- 4.19 A new cycle of Chief Executive, Leaders and Chief Executive and Joint Committee meetings aligned, with the D2 Joint Committee meeting cycle will be developed and diarised over forthcoming weeks. This will ensure that momentum is built and maintained over the forthcoming period.

5.0 Alternative options

- 5.1 Not reviewing governance arrangements and continue with existing approach. 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 implications for the Vision Derbyshire Programme budget linked to this report.

7.0 Implications for consideration – Legal

- 7.1 Within the articles of the Joint Committee, ‘functions and responsibilities’ the Joint Committee, on behalf of the participating authorities, will be responsible for improving the delivery of functions through collaborative work which includes incorporating existing partnerships arrangements within the approach.

8.0 Implications for consideration – Human Resources

- 8.1 A revision of current governance arrangements which looks to merge, collapse and/or revise existing committees and boards into a more streamlined and effective structure will support a reduced workload for elected members, senior officers and support staff.

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 decision.

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

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