

Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee

Draft Terms of Reference for the Strategic Leadership Board

Date:	28 September 2023
Key ambition area:	Whole Programme
Sponsors:	Emma Alexander
For publication:	Yes

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To update the Joint Committee on progress in establishing a new single governance framework for Derbyshire Councils, including the draft Terms of Reference for the new formal decision-making committee to be called the Strategic Leadership Board.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Note the progress in developing the draft Terms of Reference, articles and procedures for the new Strategic Leadership Board
- 2.2 Consider the proposed arrangements and make comments and/or suggest amendments where appropriate
- 2.3 Receive a future report to finalise the Strategic Leadership Board's Terms of Reference for agreement at the next Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee on the 23 November 2023.

3.0 Reason for recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure that the governance arrangements across the county are inclusive, streamlined, fit for purpose and can work collaboratively across a range of issues.
- 3.2 To provide a mechanism to enable the nomination and appointment of District and Borough Council East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)

representatives and collectively discuss, agree and align positions at the EMCCA.

4.0 Report details

Background

4.1 On 20 July 2023, the Joint Committee agreed that following actions would be progressed in respect of the governance arrangements for Vision Derbyshire:

- The Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee and the D2 Economic Prosperity Committee be merged into a single new framework for Derbyshire Councils, to include a new formal decision-making committee called the Strategic Leadership Board.
- All Derbyshire Councils be invited to be a participating members of the Strategic Leadership Board and the Committee 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 be developed to reflect the drivers for collaboration and delivery priorities, whilst also providing a mechanism for political appointments onto the EMCCA.

4.2 It was also recommended that proposals for the development and implementation of the future governance approach be phased as follows:

Phase 1 (July 2023 – December 2023)

- Meetings of the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee and D2 EPC be aligned to support the transition to new arrangements
- Terms of Reference and Articles be developed to support the revised approach and establish a mechanism for political appointments onto the EMCCA
- Relevant committees be dissolved through the appropriate procedures
- The new Strategic Leadership Board be established and will meet in shadow form in November 2023
- EMCCA issues will be discussed through the SLB in shadow arrangements

Phase 2 (January 2024 onwards)

- Sub-committees, sub-groups and advisory groups be developed and established when applicable and aligned to the new thematic delivery programme
- Members to the EMCCA be formally appointed once the new Authority has been established

- Additional governance structures be consolidated when and where necessary in the future.

Progress

- 4.2 Since the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee (VDJC) met in in July 2023, work has taken place to commence Phase 1 actions with particular focus on:
- Developing draft Terms of Reference
 - Refining timescales; and
 - Exploring potential transitional arrangements.
- 4.4 Discussions about the merging current arrangements and drafting of revised Terms of Reference has taken place through the previously established Governance Working Group. This comprised Monitoring Officers, Legal Officers and DCC Strategy and Place representatives who met on 17 August 2023 to discuss the tasks set by the VDJC outlined in Phase 1 above.
- 4.5 James McLaughlin (Director of Corporate & Customer Services and Monitoring Officer, Derbyshire Dales District Council) has subsequently led the development of the revised and merged Terms of Reference, articles and procedures, working with Governance Group colleagues. These **draft** articles, functions and responsibilities and procedure rules for the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee are attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.6 The draft arrangements provide a framework and collaborative working model which seeks to exercise all functions granted from the EMMCCA to improve outcomes for people and place through a shared ambition and collective priorities for local government. New arrangements also provide a framework to establish a model of joint strategic leadership that will enable local authorities in Derbyshire to work collaboratively to make strategic choices according to the needs of our people and place, as well as to speak with one voice to residents, business and regional and national stakeholders.
- 4.7 It is proposed that the new Joint Committee will be known as the Strategic Leadership Board and will work to the following revised principles (which have been aligned to those of the EMCCA):
- Strong collective leadership and seek to deliver better local outcomes and more joined-up public services
 - Clear, transparent and accountable decision-making which will ensure best value for taxpayers' money and maintain strong ethical standards
 - An inclusive model of governance across an appropriate geographical footprint in Derbyshire

- Flexibility to work across organisational boundaries to deal with strategic and emergent challenges whilst maintaining local control.
- 4.8 The draft articles set out the main aims and purpose of the Strategic Leadership Board, which are to:
- Provide collective strategic leadership for local government in Derbyshire
 - Drive forward shared ambition and collective priorities for local government across Derbyshire
 - Improve joint working across local government in Derbyshire
 - Have collective understanding of matters impacting Derbyshire
 - Form a collective view on matters impacting Derbyshire
 - Understand the pros and cons of matters impacting Derbyshire
 - Exercise all functions that the Combined Authority is granting
 - Enable agile, timely and effective decision making.
- 4.9 It is proposed that the Board, on behalf of the participating authorities, will be responsible for improving the delivery of functions already within the remit of local authorities through statute or through specific collaborative work to improve the economic, environmental or social wellbeing of the areas within Derbyshire from the following broad definitions:
- Incorporating existing partnership arrangements
 - Areas for collaborative system changes across authorities
 - Specific thematic projects and priorities
- 4.10 It is proposed that the Committee would cover Derbyshire and be made up of all local authorities within the area.
- 4.11 Under the proposed draft terms of reference for the Board, individual participating councils will still be required to approve recommendations made by the Joint Committee, ahead of implementation, on substantive matters such as proposals for shared services arrangements or systems changes. It is important to stress that under these draft terms of reference, no authority represented on the Strategic Leadership Board may participate in voting upon, or discharging a function for which it has no responsibility in law.
- 4.12 It is recommended that members of the Joint Committee are invited to consider the new draft Terms of Reference as a basis for their further development over forthcoming weeks and make comments and/or suggest amendments where appropriate. This will support the ongoing development of the new arrangements and ensure the full involvement of all prospective participants.

Transitional arrangements

- 4.13 Ensuring a smooth transition from current to future arrangements across the Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee and the D2 Joint Committee for Economic Prosperity will be important over the coming months in terms of work activity and to ensure that Councils retain the ability to progress key pieces of work and make joint decisions as necessary, whilst new arrangements are established.
- 4.14 Current Committee meetings are diarised and aligned for the current financial year 23/24 and it is necessary in the short term to convene meetings with agendas and work concurrently for a short period of time.

Next steps

- 4.15 Work will take place over the coming months to finalise the Strategic Leadership Board's Terms of Reference and it is recommended that this is brought to Vision Derbyshire Joint Committee on the 23 November 2023 for agreement.
- 4.16 All participating Councils will need to seek approval to establish any new arrangements through their respective decision-making processes and it is proposed that this is undertaken in anticipation of the first formal Board meeting which is scheduled for the 25 January 2023. A template report to support this process will be developed and shared with Councils in due course in advance of these being considered following the next Joint Committee in November.

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
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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