



Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	12th February 2019
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	South West Hertfordshire Partnership Memorandum of Understanding
Contact:	Cllr Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council Author/Responsible Officer Sally Marshall, Chief Executive
Purpose of report:	The purpose of the report is to advise the Cabinet on the work being carried out by the South West Herts Partnership (SWHP) Leaders and Chief Executives to prepare for future challenges and opportunities facing the sub-region. It seeks Cabinet approval to sign the Memorandum of Understanding attached to this report.
Recommendations	It is recommended that Cabinet authorise the approval of the South West Partnership Memorandum of Understanding
Corporate Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clean, safe and enjoyable environment • Building strong and vibrant communities • Ensuring economic growth and prosperity • Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need
Implications:	<u>Financial</u>
'Value For Money Implications'	<p>There are no financial implications directly arising from the approval of the Memorandum of Understanding, however, the South West Hertfordshire Partnership will be undertaking a resource assessment to progress the various work streams and developing an Investment Strategy. Once the Investment Strategy has been developed, the financial implications will be identified across all the LAs in the partnership.</p> <p>Any future financial commitment will be the subject of future report to Cabinet together with an assessment of financial benefits.</p>

	<p><u>Value for Money</u></p> <p>Collaborative working with the South West Hertfordshire Partnership has the opportunity to provide economies of scale and enable the partnership, in the future, to bid for regional and national infrastructure funding streams and models that would not be available to an individual authority.</p>
Risk Implications	None arising from this report
Community Impact Assessment	Community Impact Assessment to be undertaken
Health And Safety Implications	None arising from this report
Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments	<p>Monitoring Officer:</p> <p>The Memorandum of Understanding does not include any legally binding obligations but does set out key areas, which the partners will focus on and work together to achieve. Any key decisions that flow from the actions of the partnership will still be subject to the Council's usual decision-making processes and constitutional rules.</p> <p>Deputy S.151 Officer</p> <p>No further comments to add to the report.</p>
Consultees:	<p>Hertsmere Borough Council St Albans District Council Three Rivers District Council Watford Borough Council Hertfordshire County Council Corporate Management Team</p>
Background papers:	Hertfordshire Fit for the Future – A collaborative ambition for sustainable growth and thriving communities.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

Background

1. The Leaders and Chief Executives of South West Hertfordshire Authorities: Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans District Council, Three Rivers Borough Council and Watford Borough Council; together with representatives from Hertfordshire County Council have been participating in a series of facilitated workshops since September 2018. The proposal to undertake this partnership work has previously been reported to Cabinet in 27 March 2018.
2. The participating Councils agreed to work together to consider the implications and opportunities of Growth for the South West Hertfordshire region. From this, potential benefits such as increased access to infrastructure funding, devolved powers from government and delivery of sound and legally compliant local development plans might be realised. Therefore, the group agreed to work together to explore what their collective ambition for the place is, to identify shared growth priorities and strategically important infrastructure challenges.
3. The workshops were independently facilitated. The work was jointly funded by each of the Authorities, Eastern Region Local Government Association and the Local Government Association.
4. The workshop phase of the South West Hertfordshire Partnership has now concluded and the attached Memorandum of Understanding has been developed to provide and commitment and scope for future partnership work.

South West Hertfordshire Partnership

5. The dialogue to date has identified many common challenges, particularly around housing affordability, housing supply, employment, travel to work area, transport and other infrastructure. The SWHP considers that, by presenting a common voice and working together, there is a greater chance of successfully addressing these challenges strategically. The SWHP will work as a distinct voice for the area while maintaining the sovereign position of each authority.
6. The aims of SWHP will be to focus on 5 strategic priorities
 - Leadership: creating the place narrative, political relationships & agreements
 - Developments that meet our housing and employment needs
 - Connectivity: ensuring our places are accessible & sustainable
 - Well Being: planning and designing our places for healthy living
 - Public Services: enabling a greater influence on outcomes and being more self-sufficient in energy, recycling, housing mix and jobs.
7. The discussions between the respective Leaders and Chief Executives have focused on areas that cannot be addressed individually, identifying areas where our collective voice and resources can have a greater impact and enabling the Partnership to promote a common proposition within and beyond the region to potential stakeholders such as government.
8. The Leaders have agreed to adopt the following seven principles:

- We shall establish an effective political and officer forum for effective joint working
 - We shall seek to formalise our joint working through a S101 formal committee or other structure
 - We shall develop and share opportunities together
 - We shall build our governance incrementally – learning from the lessons from other places who are more advanced
 - Through our collaboration we should be gaining something, not losing something
 - Local identities will not be lost
 - We shall be a voice for South West Herts.
9. A similar approach to the SWHP is now being commenced by the NE Herts grouping of authorities. In parallel, and in a complementary to the work of SWHP all councils in Hertfordshire have agreed to participate along with the LEP in a Regional Growth Board which is chaired by the Leader of HCC, Cllr David Williams.

Options and Reasons for Recommendations

10. The recommendations reflect the need for a broader Council commitment to continue in this collaborative exercise. Alternatively, the Council could choose not to participate in the evolving Partnership. This would leave the Council as an isolated voice within the context of a developing Regional Growth Board and an emerging partnership in the North East.

Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

11. The recommendations in this report enhance the Council's agreed policy to develop its Local Plan. There are no financial implications at this stage because the Council has already agreed to contribute a small sum along with all other Herts LAs to support resources working through the Growth Board. It is expected this resource will also support the emerging sub-regional partnerships..

Recommendation

12. That Cabinet endorse the Memorandum of Understanding, in order to provide place leadership for South West Herts and to develop and deliver a vision for the SWHP area up to 2050, promoting healthy sustainable growth for our communities.

South West Herts Partnership
Memorandum of Understanding

between

Hertsmere Borough Council

St Albans District Council

Three Rivers District Council

Watford Borough Council

Dacorum Borough Council

Hertfordshire County Council

1. Background

- 1.1 The South West Herts Partnership (SWHP) group of councils has been considering the challenges and opportunities ahead for their part of Hertfordshire. These include developing spatial strategies, social and affordable housing, the green belt, employment and external investment, the role of central government as a key partner in realising economic and infrastructure objectives. The combined authorities are seeking to respond to such challenges within existing borders and beyond, recognising that shared resources and a combined voice representing over 500,000 residents is more effective, powerful and cogent than the voice of any single authority.
- 1.2 To explore the potential for collaborative working further, the Council Leaders and Chief Executives have been meeting every fortnight since September to assess whether a partnership could be established among willing partners. Representatives from the County's political administration and officers were also present to make their contribution. Parallel to these developments, the HCC has now established a Growth Board for the region that includes all the local authorities' Leaders and Chief Executives, as well as the LEP. The Eastern Region is also beginning to explore its own discrete partnership similar to the SWHP.
- 1.3 The dialogue to date has identified many common challenges, particularly around housing affordability, housing supply, employment, travel to work area, transport and other infrastructure. The SWHP considers that, by presenting a common voice and working together, there is a greater chance of successfully addressing these challenges strategically. The time frame is accordingly medium to long-term up to 2050. The LAs acknowledge the pressing needs of their communities to be able to live and work in areas that support a good quality of life, leisure, educational and employment opportunities.

1.4 The SWHP will both work together as a distinctive voice for the South West while also collaborating with the emerging agenda of the Hertfordshire Growth Board, the LEP and local business. The SWHP acknowledges this approach will provide challenges at the political and organisational levels that are new, uncharted and challenging. However, we consider that by working in an open collaborative manner we can apply our local knowledge and skills to taking our own agenda forward. We are therefore adopting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will be a declaration of intent and an important building block for each authority involved and the wider region.

1.5 This MoU sets out:

- a) The core purpose and aims of the SWHP
- b) The principles of collaboration

2. **Core Purpose and Aims**

2.1 The core purpose of SWHP is to provide place leadership for South West Herts recognising that through our collaborative approach we will be best placed to develop and deliver a vision for the SWHP area up to 2050, promoting healthy sustainable growth for our communities.

2.2 SWHP will focus on the strategic opportunities to influence and secure the strategic infrastructure that will help our individual areas to flourish and realise their full economic and social potential. This is regardless of individual local authority boundaries.

2.3 The aims of SWHP will be to focus on 5 strategic priorities:

- Leadership: creating the place narrative, political relationships & agreements
- Development: creating a joint spatial plan to that meets our housing and employment space needs
- Connectivity: ensuring our places are accessible & sustainable
- Well Being: planning and designing our places for healthy living
- Public Services: enabling a greater influence on outcomes and being more self-sufficient

3. **Principles of Collaboration**

3.1 Our collaboration will be focused on three key areas:

- Tackling problems we can't solve individually
- Creating collective scale and impact
- Providing the place leadership to promote the SWHP proposition

3.2 The Authorities agree to adopt the following principles in working together:

- We will establish an effective political and officer forum for effective joint working
- We will seek to formalise our joint working through a S101 formal committee or other structure
- We shall develop and share opportunities together
- We will build our governance incrementally – learning from the lessons from other places who are more advanced

- Through our collaboration we should be gaining something, not losing something
- Local identities will not be lost
- We need to be a voice for South West Herts.

4. Term and Termination

This MoU shall commence on the date of the final signature by all Authorities, and shall expire if the SWHP dissolves.

5. Variation

The MoU can only be varied by written agreement of all the Authorities.

6. Charges and liabilities

Except as otherwise provided, the Parties shall bear their own costs and expenses incurred in complying with their obligations under this MoU.

7. Status

This MoU cannot override the statutory duties and powers of the parties and is not enforceable by law. However, the parties agree to the principles set out in this MoU.

Signed by

Local Authority	Leader	Chief Executive	Date
Hertsmere Borough Council			
St Albans District Council			
Three Rivers District Council			
Watford Borough Council			
Dacorum Borough Council			
Hertfordshire County Council			