

27<sup>th</sup> June 2024**Report of the Leader of the Council****Agreement to the amendment of the Terms of Reference of the Staffordshire Leaders Board****Exempt Information**

None

**Purpose**

To enable Cabinet to consider the revised Terms of Reference agreed by the Staffordshire Leaders Board.

**Recommendations**

To consider and agree the updates made to the Terms of Reference for the Staffordshire Leaders Board

**Executive Summary**

On 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022 Cabinet endorsed the report of the Leader of the Council where they agreed participation in the Staffordshire Leaders Board and approved the Leader of the Council as the representative, along with the Deputy Leader as a substitute member.

Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 approved the revised Terms of Reference agreed by the Staffordshire Leaders Board (Appendix 1)

The County, Stoke and Staffordshire's eight District and Borough Councils have worked together over a number of years in many ways to benefit residents. This includes our collective response to the pandemic, supporting businesses and the economy, creating jobs and opportunities, delivering nationally important employment sites (such as i54 South Staffordshire and, Keele University Science and Innovation Park), reducing waste and increasing recycling, tackling climate change, and by reimagining and reshaping our High Streets and Town Centres.

The Leaders Board was created to build on this collaboration by recognising that a formal joint committee would be able to speak to central Government for the area and our communities. It also provides the foundation for exploring the potential of a deal with government, when the right time comes to do so, for the devolution of powers and funding to the area.

Although Stoke on Trent were not one of the original members of the Leaders Board it was always hoped that they could be brought on board at some point, and agreement has now been reached to enable this to happen. This will however require a number of amendments to be made to the Terms of Reference of the Board, and these amendments need to be considered and agreed by all parties, hence this report.

**Terms of Reference updates**

Further to the previous Cabinet agreement of the Terms of Reference (2022), the key changes to note are summarised below:

- a. Stoke-on-Trent City Council are added as a 'constituent authority', with the Board comprising of all ten authorities across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- b. The Terms of Reference now include a clause allowing the Board to exercise additional functions given to it by members.
- c. The remit section has been reworded in a number of places largely to change the emphasis around the Board's role (e.g. "oversee" rather than "lead and oversee").
- d. Health, Housing and Homelessness remain in the Terms of Reference but with the Board's role being one of coordination.
- e. The Terms of Reference now make clear that the scope of any potential Devolution Deal is not limited by the Terms of Reference themselves.
- f. The Terms of Reference now reserve the co-option of additional non-voting members and winding up the Board to the constituent authorities rather than being dealt with by unanimous voting at the Board.
- g. The notice period for exit has been reduced to three months.

The remit for the Leaders Board will be:

- a. To develop options for a devolution deal or deals for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent with HM Government.
- b. To oversee the alignment of relevant local authority action on Climate Change, Waste and Sustainability.
- c. To oversee the alignment of relevant local authority plans for enterprise development and organisation of business voice.
- d. To coordinate the alignment of local authority interaction with the Health sector in Staffordshire.
- e. To oversee the alignment of relevant local authority plans for future development and infrastructure.
- f. To coordinate the alignment of relevant local authority plans in relation to Housing and Homelessness.
- g. To develop Staffordshire-wide joint initiatives to enhance local government efficiency and effectiveness.
- h. To develop plans and coordinate delivery for strategic economic growth that spans local boundaries.
- i. To develop opportunities for joint action with respect to addressing social inequalities across the geography.
- j. To act as a conduit for coordinated engagement with other sub-regional and regional bodies the Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect.
- k. Where appropriate, to agree shared priorities and bids for funding to existing and new external funding sources.
- l. To monitor and evaluate projects and programmes of activity commissioned directly by the Committee.
- m. To communicate and, where collectively agreed, to align activity across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent on a range of other key public priorities that affect citizens.
- n. To prioritise and make decisions on the use of the funding that the Committee may influence or control.

The full updated Terms of Reference proposed for the Leaders Board are attached as (Appendix 2).

#### **Options Considered**

None

**Resource Implications** There are no immediate and significant financial implications arising from the updated Terms of Reference for the Leaders Board in itself. The Board will continue to derive its support from its constituent members. As and when individual projects

are commissioned the Board will consider the resource requirements necessary to deliver those projects.

### **Legal/Risk Implications Background**

The Joint Committee will act as a Joint Committee under Section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 and pursuant to Regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.

### **Equalities Implications**

As and when individual joint projects are commissioned by the Board, and where appropriate, County Council consideration will be given to any specific Community Impact Assessment requirements.

### **Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)**

In terms of Climate Change, as noted above a key remit of the Board is to oversee the alignment of relevant local authority action on Climate Change, Waste and Sustainability. This will further benefit Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent's joint Climate Change challenges and opportunities.

### **Background Information**

Cabinet 17 February 2022  
Staffordshire Leaders Board 23 June 2022  
Cabinet 29 September 2022

### **Report Author**

Stephen Gabriel – Chief Executive

### **List of Background Papers**

Nil

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Terms of reference/constitution of the Leader's board  
Appendix 2 - Updated Terms of Reference for the Staffordshire Leaders Board.

This page is intentionally left blank