

Cabinet
Council

7 January 2014
14 January 2014

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) – Councillor Mrs Lucas

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Chief Executive

Ward(s) affected:

Citywide

Title:

Coventry and Warwickshire Sub-Regional Joint Committee

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

Coventry City Council works closely with a number of other local authorities and other organisations to promote the economic growth and prosperity of Coventry. Local economic geography along with Government policy on economic growth, including the establishment of the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, has led to increased partnership working between the seven local authorities in Coventry and Warwickshire along with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

The delivery of a Coventry and Warwickshire City Deal and the future allocation of Government local growth funding both require the establishment of formal local government arrangements at a sub-regional level. After consideration of the governance options that are available to the sub-region it is proposed that a sub-regional Joint Committee is set up to address economic development, regeneration and strategic planning at a sub-regional level with the view towards moving to a sub-regional Economic Prosperity Board when this is possible.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to agree and recommend to Council that:

- (1) A Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Committee should be established to address economic development, regeneration and strategic planning at a sub-regional level
- (2) The draft terms of reference set out in appendix A should be agreed in principle, and that authority should be delegated to the Leader to agree final details with the other local authorities on the Joint Committee
- (3) There is potential to widen the remit of the Joint Committee over time with the agreement of the constituent local authorities

- (4) The Leader should represent Coventry City Council on the Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Committee with the Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) as named substitute member
- (5) It should endorse the approach of moving towards an sub-regional Economic Prosperity Board when this is possible

Council is recommended to consider and agree the recommendations set out above.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

Yes - 14 January 2014

Report title: Coventry and Warwickshire Sub-Regional Joint Committee

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The City Council is working to ensure the future growth and prosperity of the city of Coventry. Many aspects of the local economy have wider sub-regional and regional dimensions and the Council is involved in a number of sub-regional groupings including the West Midlands Joint Committee made up of the seven Metropolitan District Councils including Birmingham.
- 1.2 Current Government economic policy and allocation of local growth funding is largely based on a sub-regional approach, including the establishment of sub-regional Local Enterprise Partnerships. Research shows that the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region best reflects the real economic geography of the area – and this is reflected by the creation of the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP.
- 1.3 The City Council has been working closely with a range of partners on the development of a City Deal which focuses on promoting economic growth through support to the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering sector in the sub-region. A key requirement for the Deal from the Government is that strong governance arrangements are in place. It is becoming clear that in order to access future Government funding local authorities will need to have their own formal collective arrangements at a sub-regional level that are separate to Local Enterprise Partnerships.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The remit of the new sub-regional arrangements will be to enable local authorities to address together economic development; regeneration and strategic planning issues at a sub-regional level and provide a collective voice for local authorities in the sub-region.
- 2.2 There are three governance options available to provide formal collective local government sub-regional governance arrangements under current legislation.
 - Joint Committee
 - Economic Prosperity Board
 - Combined Authority
- 2.3 The development of some form of formal sub-regional governance arrangements is a requirement of both the City Deal and for the allocation of future government growth funding so the option to do nothing is not recommended.
- 2.4 An Economic Prosperity Board and particularly Combined Authority models (same as an EPB but also includes transport) are the sub-regional governance options preferred by Government. Constituted under legislation passed in 2010 under the previous Labour Government, every new individual Economic Prosperity Board or Combined Authority has to be set up separately through statute. Greater Manchester is the first Combined Authority and local authorities in West Yorkshire; South Yorkshire and the North East are currently in the process of setting up Combined Authorities for their sub-regions - all with the aim to get delegation of powers and additional funding from central Government.
- 2.5 However there are difficulties in pursuing an Economic Prosperity Board or Combined Authority option for Coventry and Warwickshire at this stage. The first relates to the geographic area that can be covered. The development of the City Deal – with its focus on advanced manufacturing and engineering - has led to the inclusion of Hinckley and Bosworth BC as the local economy is very closely integrated with Coventry and

Warwickshire particularly in the north of the sub-region. Current legislation would require the inclusion of Leicestershire County Council within an Economic Prosperity Board or Combined Authority which would be an additional complication at this stage. The second difficulty relates specifically to a Combined Authority. This would require governance over transport to be transferred to the Combined Authority; a particularly complicated issue for Coventry as a member of the West Midlands ITA.

- 2.6 The third difficulty in opting for an Economic Prosperity Board or Combined Authority model is the length of time the process would take. The process includes a formal review, consultation and ministerial approval and is estimated to take at least a year. It is understood that because of issues facing a number of sub-regions under the current legislation, the Government will be consulting on a number of proposed changes to increase the flexibility of the model. This could well extend the length of time it would take to get an Economic Prosperity or Combined Authority approved even further.
- 2.7 Joint Committees can be established by local authorities to undertake specific functions without Government approval - including covering the remit of an Economic Prosperity Board. This option for sub-regional governance has been chosen by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull area.
- 2.8 For these reasons it is proposed that a Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Committee should be set up to include the sub-regional local authorities: Coventry City Council; Warwickshire County Council; Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council; North Warwickshire Borough Council; Rugby Borough Council; Stratford On Avon District Council; Warwick District Council and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.
- 2.9 It is recommended that the remit of the Joint Committee should be to address collaboratively issues relating to economic development, regeneration and strategic planning at a sub-regional level and enable collective decision-making on issues that require sub-regional agreement from the constituent authorities. This mirrors the remit of an Economic Prosperity Board and would enable the sub-region to move more easily towards setting one up as a later date as this is considered to be more likely to result in the devolution of powers and funding to the sub-region.
- 2.10 It is recommended that the draft terms of reference for the Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Committee should be approved as set out in appendix 1 and that authority be delegated to the Leader to agree any final outstanding details with the other members of the Joint Committee.
- 2.11 It expected that Local Authorities should be represented on the Joint Committee by the Leader of the Council. The draft terms of reference require each council to appoint a named substitute elected member. It is recommended that Coventry City Council should nominate the Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) to be the council's named substitute.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The proposals in this report have been arrived at following discussion with other local authorities in the sub-region and have been commented on favourably by central Government via City Deal negotiations. Any proposals to move towards setting up an Economic Prosperity Board would require a formal review of current arrangements and a formal consultation process.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Committee would be set up in January 2014 once all member authorities have formal approval to do so.

5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

There are no immediate or direct financial implications for the City Council in approving the recommendations. The remit of the Joint Committee is at a sub-regional level and includes the development of joint strategies including decision making about external funding. It is anticipated that one of the local authorities would act as an accountable body for any funding that would come within the remit of the Joint Committee in the future. Any requirement for Coventry to act as the accountable body would be reported back for subsequent approval.

5.2 Legal implications

Joint Committees may be established under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000. Regulations made under the 2000 Act make detailed provision for the approval of arrangements for a joint committee and its membership. As it is likely that the proposed joint committee will be exercising both non-executive (Council) functions and executive (Cabinet functions), Cabinet must agree to the establishment of the joint committee which must then be approved by Council.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

The proposed Joint Committee would specifically address economic growth and strategic planning at a sub-regional level. This would support the Council's key objective to promote economic growth and create jobs.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The Joint Committee once set will be a separate body and will be required to manage risk. It is expected that one of the member local authorities would become the accountable body for any funding associated with its functions.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None at this stage.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

No specific impact at this stage. Once a sub-regional body is set up local authority members will be responsible for ensuring that any functions; policies and decisions undertaken meet the requirements of the Equality Act

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

No specific impact at this stage.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

The setting up of the Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Committee will strengthen the partnership of the local authorities within the sub-region including Hinckley and Bosworth BC. The Joint Committee will work closely with the CWLEP.

Report author(s):**Name and job title:** Jenni Venn, Assistant Director – Policy**Directorate:** Chief Executive's**Tel and email contact:** 024 7683 3741; jenni.venn@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Martin Yardley	Executive Director	Place	2/12/13	3/12/13
Lucy Hobbs	Community Regeneration Manager	Place	26/11/13	28/11/13
Lara Knight	Governance Services Officer Team Leader	Resources	26/11/13	29/11/13
Carol Bradford	Local Legal Services Office	Resources	26/11/13	27/11/13
Other members				
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Neil Chamberlain	Finance Manager	Resources	26/11/13	27/11/13
Legal: Helen Lynch	Corporate Governance and Litigation Manager	Resources	26/11/13	28/11/13
Director: Martin Reeves	Chief Executive		2/12/13	17/12/13
Members: Councillor Ann Lucas	Cabinet Member Policy and Leadership		2/12/13	6/12/13

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Draft Terms of Reference for Proposed Joint Committee

Composition

1. The [insert name] shall comprise [insert total number of members] elected members appointed by the Authorities' Executive (or Full Council) as follows:
[Insert details of membership]
2. All elected members appointed to the [insert name] must be members of their Authority's Executive or nominated by Full Council if the Authority does not operate an Executive model. The [insert name] need not be politically balanced.
3. Appointments of Members to serve on the Panel will be made by the Authorities' Executive (or Full Council) on an annual basis. A Member shall continue to serve on the Panel unless s/he ceases to be an elected Member; s/he resigns or is removed by their Authority's Executive (or Full Council) at any time.
4. Each Authority's Executive (or Full Council) may appoint [one] named substitute elected member to attend a meeting of the [insert name] if a Member of the [insert name] is unable to attend or otherwise unable to act.

Chair and Deputy Chair

5. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the [insert name] will be appointed by the [insert name] from among its members annually.

Quorum

6. The quorum of the [insert name] will be [insert number] members.

Sub-Committees

7. The [insert name] may appoint one or more sub-committees for the purpose of discharging any of its functions.

Frequency of meetings

8. The [insert name] will meet at least [insert number] times a year and meetings will be subject to the usual Access to Information requirements for joint committees exercising executive functions.

Terms of Reference

9. The overarching aim of the [insert name] is to provide its constituent local authorities with a forum in which to address collaboratively issues relating to economic development, regeneration and strategic planning at a sub-regional level and to enable collective decision-making on issues that require sub-regional agreement from the constituent authorities. In particular the [insert name] will have the power to :
- (1) Develop and economic and growth strategies for the sub-region and to keep the same under review ;
 - (2) Develop and set joint investment strategies for the sub-region and to keep the same under review;
 - (3) Consider, approve and implement decisions relating to sub-regional investment, including expenditure of external funding within the sub-region;
 - (4) Develop and encourage a co-ordinated approach within the sub-region to inward investment ;
 - (5) Develop and facilitate collaboration between the constituent authorities in the discharge of functions relating to economic development, regeneration and strategic planning including spatial planning; and
 - (6) Produce in September of each year, an annual report to the Executive of each of the constituent authorities on its work in the preceding municipal year.