



<b>Report to:</b>	Strategy & Resources Committee	<b>Date:</b>	11 April 2016
<b>Report title:</b>	The Growth Agenda: London, the South London Partnership and the London Borough of Sutton.		
<b>Report from:</b>	Jessica Crowe - Executive Head, Customers, Commissioning and Governance.		
<b>Ward/Areas affected:</b>	Borough wide		
<b>Chair of Committee/Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Ruth Dombey - Leader of the Council and Chair of Strategy & Resources Committee.		
<b>Author(s)/Contact Number(s):</b>	Nathan Yeowell, Strategic Policy Adviser, 020 8770 4355.		
<b>Corporate Plan Priorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● An Open Council</li> <li>● A Green Council</li> <li>● A Fair Council</li> <li>● A Smart Council</li> </ul>		
<b>Open/Exempt:</b>	Open		
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	31 March 2016

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The aim of this report is to give members an update on our work as a member of the South London Partnership (SLP); alert them to current and proposed streams of work; to note the overall direction of the devolution agenda in South London; and to agree our continued approach to working within the SLP and how we might prioritise it across the council. In addition, the recent peer challenge review of the council conducted by the Local Government Association (LGA) suggested that the council needed to foster a greater understanding of sub-regional arrangements and priorities amongst members, and this paper aims to rectify that.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That members endorse the current and proposed streams of work undertaken by the SLP.
- 2.2 That the council continues to investigate the possibilities raised by sub-regional working - in particular, the ability to unlock money and explore deepening partnerships with public sector (and other) bodies.
- 2.3 That the council undertakes a review of scrutiny committee responsibilities to ensure that members can better oversee and scrutinise the work of the SLP.



- 2.4 That, working with the SLP, the council reviews the sub-region's working with the relevant Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and proposes a strategy that optimises future collaboration between the council and the business community.
- 2.5 That members authorise officers to review the institutional changes that may be needed to better equip the council to pursue this agenda and to bring back proposals as appropriate: e.g. reconfiguration of committees and internal officer structures; extended opportunities for members to engage in the sub-regional agenda; extended delegated authority to senior officers on partnership bodies; extended remit for the corporate core to coordinate and drive the council's corporate priorities; greater emphasis on place-based outcomes across the full remit of council and other partner responsibilities; reconfiguration of the existing Corporate Plan.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The SLP is a sub-regional collaboration of five London boroughs: Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond and Sutton. Together, these boroughs make a significant and distinctive contribution to London as a world city and are well positioned to contribute to wider growth opportunities in the south east of England.
- 3.2 Long-standing joint working between the five boroughs was strengthened in May 2015 with the formal establishment of a Joint Committee. The Joint Committee has statutory responsibility and legal authority to make decisions on behalf of the sub-region, having been through the political process of each of the five boroughs. It was established to ensure that south London is in a position to respond to ongoing devolutionary opportunities as they arise, and to work with central government with a single will and voice.
- 3.3 Cllr. Stephen Alambritis (Merton) is the current Chair of the SLP. Cllr. Dombey is the Vice-Chair. The committee meets quarterly. Under this sovereign body there is a Chief Executives' Board that monitors and implements the priorities and agreed work programmes of the partnership, supported by the Director of the SLP, Sarah Sturrock.
- 3.4 The partnership has established two other officer-led bodies, dedicated to promoting and accelerating economic development, and maximising investment, where applicable. These are: The South London Growth Board, working with the Greater London Authority (GLA), convened by Niall Bolger (CX, Sutton); and the South London Transport Strategy Board, working with Transport for London (TfL), convened by Roy Thompson (Joint Acting-CX, Kingston).
- 3.5 In May 2015, SLP agreed the following priorities:
- Skills and employment;
  - Growth, enterprise and business support;
  - Transport;
  - Health



#### 4. Issues

4.1 There are currently four broad areas of work being undertaken by the SLP and the five boroughs: growth (including critically assessing, planning and making the case for the transport, housing and other infrastructure requirements for our sub-region associated with predicted population and economic growth in London); skills and the area-based review of post-16 educational provision; employment and complex dependency; and health and social care integration.

4.2 Growth - under the aegis of the Growth Board, the partnership is in the process of developing a growth proposition for the partnership which should provide the business case for our joint-working for several years to come. The partnership is the process of commissioning a scoping study for this proposition - and is preparing a prospectus for members and officers to use in lobbying efforts re: central government and mayoral candidates/the new administration in City Hall.

#### SLP GROWTH PROPOSITION

##### Key objectives:

- To **build a compelling case for further devolution and investment** to secure the infrastructure and development needed to support an ambitious growth strategy for South London;
- To start work towards **a model for partnership-wide working on the delivery of growth** and infrastructure needs;
- To develop a **strategic partnership with business** and other local partners across the sub-region to support sustainable growth and development;
- To establish an early, strong, relationship with the new Mayor of London post-May 2016; and
- To promote the partnership and the wider needs of the sub-region to central government, potential investors and other key influencers.

4.3 Skills and the area-based review of post-16 educational provision - the SLP is the body convening and facilitating the area-based review of skills' needs and provision across the five boroughs. This nationwide initiative will provide the sub-region to plan the necessary infrastructure, capability and capacity needed to develop and enhance the link between future post-16 provision and economic and business needs. This review could be sensitive, as the trajectory of current central government policy could lead to rationalisation.

4.4 The south London area-based review is earmarked to begin in August 2016; the steering group (which Cllr. Dombey will chair) will first meet in April. The five boroughs have liaised over this agenda for more than twelve months, and have developed good relationships across boroughs and with sub-regional colleges, schools and other providers.

4.5 Employment support - the 2015 Spending Review allowed for the London boroughs and the Mayor of London to jointly commission employment support (outside of the Jobcentre Plus



regime) to assist the long-term unemployed and those with health conditions and disabilities to (re)enter work, i.e the new Work & Health programme for London. The SLP will engage in this initiative and is in the process of establishing an officer group to support this work.

4.6 Health and social care integration - there is significant appetite from leaders and chief executives to investigate the possibility of a sub-regional framework for health and social care integration. SLP will monitor the work of the five London-based health devolution pilots that were announced in the 2015 Spending Review (looking at health and social care integration; health inequalities; strategic use of land and premises; prevention and integration of physical and mental health services). A meeting took place in March 2016 between borough leaders and CCG chairs and there was agreement to investigate potential projects for initial collaboration.

## 5. Options Considered

- 5.1 Option 1: withdraw or pull back from the SLP. Continued - and deepening - sub-regional working could have an impact on other work of the council, in that it may distract efforts and resources from local issues and priorities. All the evidence from other localities suggests that partnerships can require significant investment of time and energy to keep them working effectively, and often the benefits may only be felt in the very long term. Members should keep under constant review the balance of investment over benefits accruing to Sutton, and one option would be to withdraw or at least rein back our involvement.
- 5.2 Option 2: maintain our leading role and commitment to the SLP. It is considered worthwhile at this time for the Council to maintain its strong leadership role in the continued deliberations of the SLP, for two key reasons. Firstly it brings reputational benefits. The recent Peer Review recognised Sutton as 'punching above its weight' in helping move the SLP forward. Secondly and more importantly, Members should consider the opportunities that could be potentially lost if the council chooses not to continue down this path - with particular reference to central government's stated policy aim of only devolving further responsibilities to local government on a regional or sub-regional basis. If we wish to retain a strong voice on some key policy areas (eg skills, housing and economic growth, which all have dimensions beyond our boundaries) we need to be part of a wider grouping and the SLP gives us that access and platform.

## 6. Impacts and Implications

### Financial

- 6.1 Cost of our ongoing membership of the SLP - currently £35,000 p.a. (previously agreed).
- 6.2 Staff time (accounted for in ongoing costs).

### Legal

- 6.3 None.



## 7. Appendices and Background Documents

Appendix letter	Title
A	Supplementary information on national and London-wide devolution and growth policy

Background documents
None

Audit Trail		
Version	Final	Date: 31 March 2016
Consultation with other officers		
Finance	Yes	Phil Butlin
Legal	No	N/A

This page is intentionally left blank