

**Bracknell Forest Council
Record of Decision**

Work Programme Reference	I119146
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1. **TITLE:** Creation of a Joint Committee – Berkshire Prosperity Board

2. **SERVICE AREA:** Place, Planning & Regeneration

3. **PURPOSE OF DECISION**

To agree the creation of a Joint Committee with the six Berkshire Unitary Authorities, for the purposes of driving Economic Prosperity

4 **IS KEY DECISION** Yes

5. **DECISION MADE BY:** Executive

6. **DECISION:**

RECOMMENDED to Council that:

- i. the establishment of a fully constituted Joint Committee (to be known as the Berkshire Prosperity Board) from May 2024 to deliver a Berkshire-wide vision for inclusive green and sustainable economic prosperity is approved.
- ii. the proposed constitution for the Joint Committee as set out in Appendix A - Functions and Procedure Rules for a Joint Committee, Appendix B - Responsibilities of the accountable body and Appendix C - Governance structure is recommended to Council for approval subject to the Monitoring Officer being authorised to make minor amendments to the Functions & Procedure Rules in conjunction with the participating authorities.
- iii. the Chief Executive be delegated to reach a legally binding agreement between the member Authorities setting out the supporting arrangements and responsibilities between the Authorities, particularly that between the Lead Authority, known as the Accountable Body and the other member Authorities and go through the relevant democratic process if required.

7. **REASON FOR DECISION**

i. Developing a Joint Committee and sharing common goals across a functional economic area will provide Berkshire Authorities with exciting new opportunities for collaboration on economic development. Providing more flexibility and influence than a single council would have on its own. Helping local authorities speak with one voice to secure more funding from Government and other agencies and sources to help get key projects and initiatives off the ground.

ii. In particular, Berkshire Authorities, through collaboration, will benefit from:

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- Working together to a shared vision of inclusive and sustainable economic prosperity through working together to address challenges and meet opportunities whilst retaining the sovereignty of each Local authority.

- Having a strengthened case to Government and private investors for funding And greater investment for strategic projects across Berkshire.
- Acting as a vehicle to commission the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and others in response to the Government’s review of Local Economic Partnerships.
- Having a stronger, collective voice in lobbying Government and other agencies. Taking a collaborative mindset in targeting external bodies effectively for the benefit of Berkshire
- Advantageously positioning Berkshire in readiness for potential devolution proposals to benefit from additional responsibilities and funding opportunities. Setting up a Berkshire that is better able to efficiently, seize future opportunities and adapt to challenges.

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- Working on six shared themes: health and inequalities, education and skills, affordable housing, sector development, strategic infrastructure and net zero.
- Transform Berkshire’s productivity through, responsive, agile collaboration.

iii. The first official board would take place in April following the decision making for each of the six Unitary Council’s to establish the Board. The Board would meet four times a year. Each Council would lead on one of the six themes, with Bracknell Forest leading on Climate Change, and assisting on the Affordable Housing theme.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- i. The main alternative approach is to continue to work on economic development in each unitary area as exists at the moment. This no change approach does not resolve matters relating to the functions passing to Local Authorities with the end of government LEP funding which takes place in April 2024. It also does not build a stronger voice for Berkshire and does not enable streamlined collective decision making.
- ii. the other main alternative option considered was to develop a Combined Authority/Mayoral Combined Authority, and seek a formal Devolution Deal. Berkshire Leaders have agreed not to pursue a directly elected Mayor.

9. **DOCUMENT CONSIDERED:** Report of the Executive Director: Place, Planning & Regeneration

10. **DECLARED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** None

Date Decision Made	Final Day of Call-in Period
6 February 2024	14 February 2024