Meeting Notes – One Surrey Growth Board (22.09.2026, 14:00-16:00)

Welcome and Introductions

Matt Furniss (Chair)

Introductions from Board members.

FSA / Devolution update

Dawn Redpath (Director – Economy & Growth, Surrey County Council) and Patricia Huertas (Assistant Director – Economy & Growth, Surrey County Council)

This item provided an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), Devolution, and a Foundation Strategic Authority (FSA) for Surrey. The key points were as follows:

- Surrey is now the only area going through LGR following the central Government pause to review the process in other areas.
- Surrey has established two shadow authorities – East and West Surrey Council, with the transition to the new authorities taking place on 1st April 2027.
- It has been confirmed the Economy & Growth service will be hosted by one of the unitary authorities to continue work at a county-wide level (supported by an Inter-Authority Agreement across both unitaries).
- A consultation regarding an FSA in Surrey closed on 20th September which requires Ministerial and Shadow authority decision to establish an FSA.
- If approved, the FSA will be established as a core organisation to be further enhanced / evolve during its operation.

The implications for the One Surrey Growth Board (OSGB):

- The OSGB already operates as a strategic county function, working across a single functional economic area with an evidence base underpinning the work.
- It is currently constituted that the OSGB will come to an end as of 31st March 2027, but a similar Board role will likely be required for the future FSA.
- Looking back – engagement with Royal Holloway, UoL, is taking place to conduct an independent evaluation to assess whether we have achieved the ambitions set out in the Hammond Commission in 2020.

- Looking forward – Surrey County Council Leader, Tim Oliver, and Andy Haldane will be leading an Economic Commission, which will involve a discursive piece of work to understand the future ambitions for Surrey.

Key discussion points:

The intention is for the economic commission to act as foundational work to contribute to FSA functions and set out the blueprint for future strategic requirements and drivers.

If an FSA is not agreed, there will be continued areas of work that will need to operate on a county-wide basis – the recommendation would be for one of the unitary authorities to host the relevant services on behalf of the county (with the shadow unitary authorities responsible for this decision).

The previous Local Enterprise Partnerships were raised, which covered Surrey and neighbouring areas. The current plans are to establish an FSA for just the county of Surrey, but there is the potential for future expansion across wider regions if there is agreement for a directly elected mayor.

Surrey Economic Commission

Tim Ridgway (Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Manager – Economy & Growth, Surrey County Council) and Charis Long (Place Partnership Manager – Economy & Growth, Surrey County Council)

This was a discussion-based item about the planned economic commission, following on from the Board's request at the last meeting to understand more about the context and data that set the foundation for the economic commission roundtable themes.

Several strategies and national policy have driven the work to date, including:

- Lord Hammond's Commission (2020), focusing on post-covid recovery.
- Surrey's Economic Growth Strategy, 2025-2035.
- A new Prime Minister and drive for further devolution.
- Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution in Surrey.

The economic commission looks to review past achievements and respond proactively to the future vision, challenges, and ambitions for Surrey, setting out the county's asks and opportunities. The commission will require cross-party and stakeholder support, led by Andy Haldane as Chair with a core commission including national and sub-regional bodies. The roundtables will include a range of representatives such as business, academia, and health covering thematic / cross-cutting topics. An action-orientated final

report will be published in Spring 2027, setting out what's needed to drive growth, alongside the Royal Holloway impact evaluation.

The OSGB will support with framing the scope of work and review outputs from the roundtables – updates from discussions and the final report will be fed back at OSGB meetings. These roundtables will consider constraints across the identified themes and agree how to address issues that are impacting growth in the county. Surrey is strategically placed with national and international links, and we now have an opportunity to be bold about the county's ambitions and take a proactive approach to identify where to guide investment and resources to drive further growth.

Key data and insights were presented on the roundtable themes (see slide deck).

Key discussion points:

Noted the identified themes are widely recognised as key areas of growth – deliberately designed to be cross-cutting to enable broader discussions during roundtables.

Significant infrastructure opportunity to discuss during roundtables – River Thames, Heathrow, and Gatwick Development Consent Orders:

- Noted the cross-cutting connections in terms of skills and infrastructure.
- There are limited developer contributions and gaps that won't be supported by existing infrastructure.
- The Growth Board hasn't previously had infrastructure levers, and the roundtables will serve to drive a spotlight on these issues, highlighting the opportunities and asks for the county.
- Much of our infrastructure connects across Surrey but is not in or owned by Surrey.

The membership for the Core Commission Executive will require stakeholders with broad expertise to generate clear action points. Ensure engagement with constituent councils.

Consider creating a lifestyle and location to draw in businesses (particularly relationships with / attracting Directors, noting their influence on where a business is based).

Narrative to government to include the requirement of investment to address the constraints that the county location brings – such as house prices, congestion, limitations of public transport:

- Key to understand the reasons behind the data and constraints (e.g. why commercial space is declining).
- Differentiate between the features of Surrey (such as house prices and congestion) vs different constraints / more ambitious goals that will actually drive growth.

Importance of encouraging larger / governmental institutions to collaborate with smaller businesses – increases credibility of small businesses to widen their scope and market.

Asks to Government via the Economic Commission to consider links / networks / powers to leverage benefits, as well as investment:

- Identify what powers the county requires from Government to enable innovation and growth (e.g. control of R&D tax credit at Surrey level, rather than national).
- Requires a vision to align / establish criteria for investment – consider the economic identity of Surrey and the 'branding' for investment in the county.
- Establish the steps we can take ahead of a potential future mayor, to implement immediate changes to drive growth as well as enabling future ambitions if the county receives further powers / funding – balance reactive recommendations to address current constraints with proactive recommendations.

Importance of fluidity across the borders and keeping talent in the right place to drive business growth – developing existing talent through training opportunities rather than competing with a workforce that will organically move / work elsewhere.

Opportunity to bring together strategic planning and economic investment (Spatial Development Strategy and Growth Plan) – opportunity to align housing and planning elements with economy and transport.

Potential opportunities to future-proof Surrey's workforce:

- Influence where the 16-19 skills budget is directed with SurreyFE.
- Identify skills sectors that allow growth and support local business needs, directing funding into specialist areas.
- Already have devolved £12m Adult Skills Funding – able to oversee investment into 18+ education, with the Department for Education directing that first year of delivery should not de-stabilise the market. Now working with providers and colleges to shift the model to deliver courses required for the county and outcomes focused on impact rather than number of learners.

Reflections and Close

Matt Furniss (Chair)

Next One Surrey Growth Board meeting scheduled for Monday 7th December, 14:00-16:00.

Appendix: Attendees and Apologies

Attendees

Cllr Matt Furniss (Chair)	Chair (Surrey County Council)	
Chris Hurren	Vice-Chair (RSM UK)	
Christos Tsinopoulos	Higher Education rep (Royal Holloway, University of London)	
Andrew Pritchard	District & Borough CEO rep (Runnymede Borough Council)	
Terence Naidu	SME Private Sector rep (Envisionit Deep AI & Truzo)	
Mike McNicholas	Large Private Sector rep (AtkinsRéalis)	
Karen Pengelly	Employer Representative Body rep	Deputising on behalf of Tracey Palmer
Helene Hall	Employer Representative Body rep (Surrey Chambers of Commerce)	
Cllr Ann-Marie Barker	District & Borough Leader rep (Woking Borough Council	
Dawn Redpath	Economy & Growth Lead officer (Surrey County Council)	

Observers / speakers

Cllr Bradley Nelson: East Surrey Council (deputising on behalf of Cllr Kirsty Hewens, non-voting observer)

Patricia Huertas: Surrey County Council (speaker)

Tim Ridgway: Surrey County Council (speaker)

Charis Long: Surrey County Council (speaker)

Beth Chandler: Surrey County Council (secretariat)

Apologies

Tracey Palmer: BID representative (Walton Business Improvement District)

Julie Kapsalis: Surrey FE rep (Nescot)

Andrew Cawthorne: Priority Private Sector rep (Surrey Satellite Technology)

Sophia Sami: Civil Servant rep (Department for Work and Pensions)

Cllr Kirsty Hewens: East Surrey non-voting observer