

PROPOSED DEESIDE PARTNERSHIP

1.0 Introduction

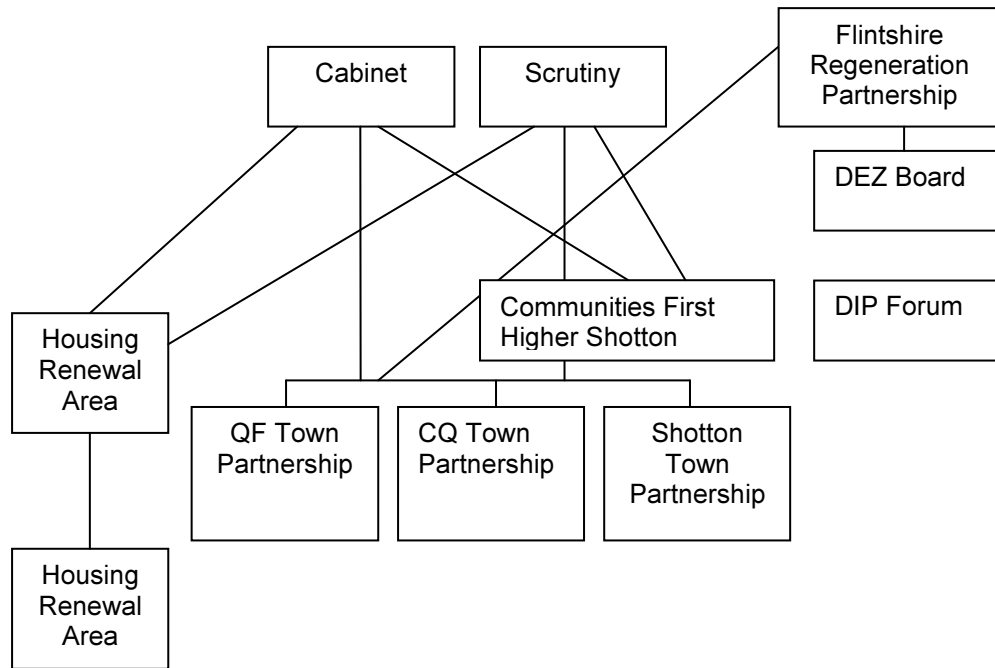
Deeside is the heart of Flintshire's economy and continues to be a significant contributor to the economies of North Wales and North West England. The area also contains most of the County's regeneration challenges in terms of deprivation (with four of the ten most deprived wards), housing quality and unemployment. It is these issues that have led the Council to identify this area as its regeneration priority. A coordinated programme of activity will drive forward the changes needed to: attract and guide investment; improve transport; raise skills and employment opportunities; regenerate the town centres; tackle poverty; improve housing and the quality of life for residents. Currently, these are addressed by a wide range of partnerships and working arrangements. This leads to difficulties in coordinating activity and is an inefficient use of limited funds and officer time. Secondly, the designation of Deeside Enterprise Zone brings a major new opportunity for the area, if we are to realise the potential benefits here, a much more strategic approach is needed.

What is now proposed is to bring these various working groups together to provide a joined-up, strategic approach towards regenerating Deeside – Stronger Together.

Development on such a strategic scale requires a long term vision together with an appropriate and effective governance structure, one which will maximise the potential which is now available within the wider Deeside area.

Numerous partnerships focusing on regeneration have been in operation in Deeside for several years, including three Town Centre Partnerships, the Deeside Housing Renewal Area groups, the Higher Shotton Communities First Partnership Board, as well as a number of community regeneration groups (not shown on diagram below) and, since 2012, the Deeside Enterprise Zone Board. In addition, the three Town Councils also have arrangements in place to support and encourage investment and regeneration. This has proven difficult to sustain in terms of the demands on increasingly stretched Council, partner and community resources, it also brings risks of duplication of effort and confusion, whilst clarity of roles, accountability and governance are also weak. The current Deeside partnership arrangements are shown below:

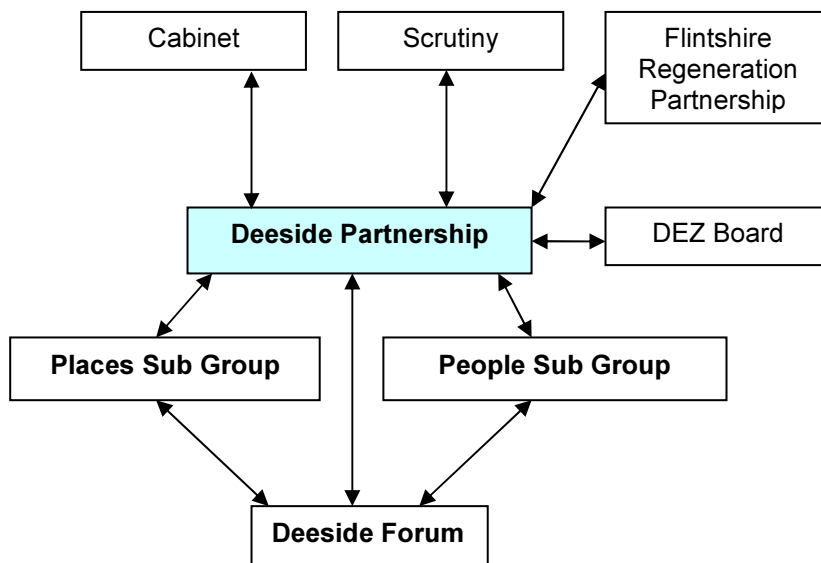
2.0 Deeside Partnerships – Current Arrangements



Discussion with local stakeholders has identified that there needs to be a simpler and more effective structure in Deeside to oversee future regeneration – particularly given the significance of the emerging regeneration opportunities in the area. A simpler and more strategic structure will allow the different strands of activity across Deeside to be effectively co-ordinated and communicated.

3.0 Deeside Partnership Structures

The proposed structure of the Deeside Partnership is set out below, together with a description of the roles of the different groups.



4.0 Deeside Partnership

The purpose of the Partnership will be to lead the regeneration of Deeside, monitor the progress of strategic programmes and projects and ensure complementarity between the implementation of the Deeside Regeneration Area and the wider strategic processes. The Partnership members will develop a shared understanding of, and seek to influence, the wider strategic context for regeneration in Deeside.

4.1 The aim of the Partnership is to:

Bring together the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to develop and implement partnership-based, practical solutions to improve the quality of life and economic prosperity in Deeside.

4.2 The Partnership will seek to:

- Take a strategic approach to the regeneration of Deeside;
- develop Deeside as a cohesive place with strong links between the traditional towns and the development sites on the northern side of the River Dee;
- develop strong transport connections within Deeside, with the rest of the County and the region, including a sustainable transport network that encourages more use of public transport, pedestrians and cyclists;
- support unemployed people, especially 16-25 year olds, from Deeside and from wider Flintshire to take advantage of the employment opportunities that arise from the investment in the Deeside Regeneration Area;
- create strong links between businesses, universities, colleges and schools to develop a suitably skilled workforce to meet existing and future employer needs;
- raise the aspirations of Deeside people and enable them to play an active part in the development of the area, whether through work, volunteering or other community activity;
- develop Deeside as a place to live that offers a mix of affordable and energy efficient housing in neighbourhoods that are safe, pleasant and close to green space, leisure facilities, schools, shops and the everyday amenities that make for a good quality of life; and
- ensure the development of Deeside is championed and that Deeside's image and profile works towards ensuring a sustainable and successful future.

4.3 The membership will include:

- Leader of the Council
- Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment
- Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure
- Cabinet Member for Housing
- Cabinet Member for Education
- Welsh Government
- Chair of DEZ Board
- Chair of Places sub group
- Chair of People sub group
- Chair of Deeside Forum
- Chief Executive
- Director of Environment

Courtesy invitation will be extended to the AM for Alyn and Deeside and the MP for Alyn and Deeside to attend as needed.

Officers from the Council and other bodies will attend in support.

- 4.4 The Deeside Partnership will not operate in isolation. In assessing the needs of the area and establishing the strategic direction for regeneration, it will engage closely with local ward members, town and community councils and wider stakeholders.

5.0 Places Sub Group (Physical & Green Environment)

The role of the group is to ensure that the physical infrastructure develops in step with the wider programmes, to facilitate investment and ensure that quality of life and sustainability are improved as far as possible.

The group will therefore ensure that they:

- Establish a strategic masterplan for the development of Deeside
- Create a clear positive identity for Deeside
- Create a framework for investment and facilitate the development of appropriate sites
- Steer the development of sustainable transport programmes and the links between areas of need and opportunity
- Lead the development of green infrastructure programmes
- Agree the programme of work for the Town Action Plan Programme and to agree allocation of funding
- Agree to the programme of work for the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme and agree allocation of funding

5.1 The membership will include:

- Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment
- Cabinet Member for Housing
- Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure
- Registered Social Landlords
- Groundwork

Supported by officers from:

- FCC Housing
- FCC Highways
- FCC Planning
- FCC Regeneration
- FCC Countryside
- Natural Resources Wales

5.2 The programmes that the Places group will cover are:

- Town Action Plan Programme
- Neighbourhood Renewal Area
- Taith North Wales Regional Transport Plan and associated programmes

6.0 People Sub Group (Employment, Training and Skill Development)

The purpose of the group is to lead and co-ordinate people based regeneration in Deeside and develop programmes to:

- link employment opportunities to areas of need
- tackle poverty and unemployment – with a particular focus on young people
- facilitate business networking and encourage investment
- Integrate with the Communities First programme
- Understand the current and future skills needs of employers and coordinate and influence skills provision

6.1 The membership will include:

- Cabinet Member for Education
- Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Leisure
- Job Centre Plus
- Careers Wales
- Deeside College
- Glyndwr University

Supported by Officers from:

- Communities First
- FCC Business Development
- FCC Lifelong Learning

6.2 The group will work with Communities First

- 7 staff
- £400k budget
- Dedicated Resources – skills/education and employment

7.0 DEZ Board

The group is already established and led by Welsh Government. A formal link between the Deeside Partnership structure and the DEZ Board will be needed.

8.0 Deeside Forum

The group will be made up of all the ward members of Connah's Quay, Shotton, Queensferry and Sealand, and representatives from Connah's Quay Town Council, Shotton Town Council, Queensferry Community Council and Sealand Community Council.

The Deeside Forum will provide the Deeside Partnership and its sub groups with effective way of interacting with the elected members across Deeside. In turn, local members will be able to help shape the development of the Deeside Regeneration Area, and will be able to receive far more coherent communication from the different programmes in operation.

The role of the Forum will be to:

- Inform needs assessments for the Deeside area

- Contribute to future strategic direction
- Contribute to the development of work programmes – especially where a geographical focus to projects is expected
- Receive reports on progress and to review and challenge where needed
- To raise local issues of concerns and share intelligence

The Deeside Forum will meet every two months and an elected Chairman will lead each meeting. Papers will be circulated to Members in advance of meetings, to give time for consideration and discussion at meetings.

9.0 Communication

One of the challenges with the current partnership structures is to ensure that all relevant people are effectively communicated with and feedback from stakeholders indicates that this has been an area for improvement. The proposed structure offers the opportunity for much cleaner lines of communication and for a more integrated approach to be taken to disseminating information to stakeholders.

The Partnership will:

- Through the Deeside Forum, communicate day to day business with ward members and town and community councils.
- Issue a period Newsletter – for wide distribution
- Ensure that the work of the Partnership is suitable, promoted under a common brand
- Report regularly at the County strategic level to FCC Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees and the Flintshire Regeneration Partnership
- Ensure that clear protocols for communication are established with the DEZ Board and with any sub group that the Partnership creates.

Roles and Responsibilities of Deeside Partnership

1. Ensure a strategic approach for the regeneration of Deeside is developed, implemented, monitored and measured.
2. Form sub groups to deliver programmes of work to meet the objectives of the partnership.
3. Co-ordinate the activities of partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to deliver the strategic approach.
4. Scrutinize, challenge and make recommendations to proposals to ensure that robust, good value for money and well developed projects are developed and delivered.
5. Recommend actions required by partner organisations and support these recommendations through the decision making processes of the relevant delivery organisation(s).
6. Scrutinise, comment and make recommendations on relevant reports from partner organisations and other partnerships.
7. Monitor the activities of the delivery organisation(s) who will undertake projects identified within the strategic approach to ensure that processes operate effectively.
8. Report to higher level partnerships and other stakeholders on activities undertaken, raise issues and opportunities, highlight resource requirements and recommend changes to the delivery initiatives.
9. Act as a hub to facilitate effective communication between partners to enable co-ordination, opportunities to be acted upon in a timely manner, and ensure resources are used effectively.
10. Liaise, communicate and co-operate with other partnerships and groups in Flintshire, neighbouring counties and sub-regionally and build upon links with similar groups in other areas.
11. Promote the work of the partnership and consult effectively with the public and stakeholders to communicate progress and seek feedback to inform future activity.
12. Promote and facilitate research and request reports and information on relevant matters. Where necessary, invite advisors and experts to provide information, advice and guidance on issues. Disseminate the results of any research undertaken to avoid duplication.
13. Build upon best practice from successful partnership working within Flintshire and elsewhere and actively participate in information networking.
14. Undertake training activities to enable Partnership members to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.