

22 July 2020		ITEM: 15
Cabinet		
Report from Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA)		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key	
Report of: Councillor Robert Gledhill, Leader and Portfolio Holder Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour		
Accountable Assistant Director: Ian Hunt, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer		
Accountable Director: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

In early 2018, the Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work together with other local authorities in South Essex through a partnership collectively known as the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA).

This report sets out ASELA's intention to engage with Central Government regarding the agenda for the South Essex region, how it can deliver: new jobs and better jobs; new transport infrastructure; and accelerate the delivery of new homes that are essential to support a growing economy.

ASELA have also begun work to consider and explore the most appropriate and effective future governance arrangements to deliver on this potential and shared ambitions and a further report on this will be considered in due course.

1. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1.1 Note ASELA's intention to immediately engage with Central Government ahead of the autumn Spending Review, regarding the economic agenda for the South Essex region, how it can deliver new jobs, new transport infrastructure, new homes, and the future governance arrangements to deliver better outcomes for its existing, and new, residents and businesses as set out in the 'Growth and Recovery Prospectus 2020' at Enclosure No. 2;**

- 1.2 **Note the work commenced by ASELA to begin to consider and explore the most appropriate and effective future governance arrangements to realise South Essex's full economic and social potential and shared ambitions as set out in the independent Review of Governance in South Essex at Enclosure No. 3. This report does not seek approval or endorsement of any specific governance proposals; and**
- 1.3 **Note that a further report will be presented later in the calendar year to provide an update on the outcome of the discussions with Central Government and any proposals for more formal interim governance arrangements for ASELA to ensure transparency and accountability.**

2 Introduction and Background

- 2.1 As referred to above, the Council signed a MOU in early 2018 to work together with other local authorities in South Essex through a partnership collectively known as the Association of South Essex Local Authorities ("ASELA" or "Partner Authorities").
- 2.2 The work of ASELA has been overseen by ongoing governance that has included monthly meetings of the authorities' Leaders and Chief Executives.
- 2.3 The report asks the Council to note the recent and planned activity of ASELA and that a further report will be presented to the Council later in the year.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The report from ASELA at Appendix 1 provides an update on work it has recently undertaken and its planned engagement with Central Government over the next few months. Cabinet is only being asked to note the report and is not being asked to discharge any of the authority's functions.
- 3.2 ASELA's governance arrangements currently have no direct formal basis and arise from the MOU and the wider joint working. Part of the ongoing work is to assess whether there are more appropriate forms of governance for the future arrangements of ASELA.
- 3.3 All formal decisions for the Council will be subject to future consideration through the relevant decision making frameworks.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 This report updates the Council on the activity which has been undertaken by ASELA and its intended work in the coming months. Cabinet is asked to note this in order to be aware of and informed about this work.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 This report has been developed jointly between the constituent ASELA authorities.
- 5.2 Should the proposed work of ASELA progress with a suggestion for any forms of governance changes, these will be considered through the Council's formal decision making framework including consultation with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 5.3 ASELA is undertaking public engagement to inform its wider consideration of the different forms of governance and the potential formation of a Combined Authority.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The report from ASELA refers to the economic agenda for the South Essex region, how it can deliver new jobs, new transport infrastructure, new homes, and the future governance arrangements to deliver better outcomes for its existing, and new, residents and businesses as set out in the 'Growth and Recovery Prospectus 2020'.
- 6.2 This prospectus links strongly with the Council's own agenda developing the programme across the three priorities of People, Place and Prosperity.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

The report has no direct legal implications, it should be noted that the various proposed forms of governance under consideration will all require each of the authorities to consider this through their own existing governance structures and that in some cases (such as Combined Authority) there would need to be the support of Central Government to proceed.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
**Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer**

There are no direct diversity implications arising from this report. The aim of ASELA is for the Partner Authorities to collaborate to secure greater prosperity for all residents and communities within the South Essex sub-region regardless of any protected characteristics.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

There are no other specific relevant considerations associated with consideration of this report.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None other than those identified in the attached report.

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1: ASELA report on the Future Governance Arrangements to Realise the Full Potential of South Essex

Report Author:

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Legal and Democratic Services