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Chief Executive

A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL of the Borough of Castle Point will be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kiln Road, Thundersley, on **WEDNESDAY, 17TH JANUARY, 2018 at 7.30 p.m.**, and all Members of the Council, listed below, are hereby summoned to attend to transact the undermentioned business.

Councillors B.S. Wood,(The Worshipful the Mayor), A.C.Walter,(Deputy Mayor), A.J. Acott, J. Anderson, A.J.Bayley, D.A. Blackwell, B. Campagna, S. Cole, D.T. Cross, W.J.C. Dick, Mrs B. Egan, E. Egan, Mrs W. Goodwin,P.C. Greig, S.Hart, N.R. Harvey, R.C. Howard, J. Hudson, R. Hurrell, G.I. Isaacs, Mrs.J.King, N.E.Ladzrie, C.A. MacLean, P.J. May, C.E. Mumford, B.A. Palmer, J.A.Payne, Mrs. J. Payne, A. Partridge, C.G. Riley, Mrs C.J Sach, W.K.Sharp, A.G. Sheldon, T.F. Skipp, N.G. Smith, J.A. Stanley, A. Taylor, P.E.Varker, Mrs L. Wass, Mrs G. Watson and N. Watson.

Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I

(Business to be taken in public)

1. Apologies for absence

2. Members' Interests

3. South Essex Strategic Planning
To receive a report from Cabinet.

4. Notice of Motion

Councillor Dick has given notice of the following Motion which in view of its relevance to the matter before the Council and time being of the essence it will be considered at this meeting:

‘This Council is fully aware of the needs for housing and the necessary infrastructure requirements and is fully supportive of the 2050 Group’s aim to improve the whole South East Essex road and green networks. (The 2050 Group

comprises Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock and Essex County Councils)

Their initiative for Spatial Planning throughout the whole of the South East Essex for housing numbers and infrastructure improvements is to be welcomed and is fully supported by this Council.

Castle Point Borough Council will produce its own local plan as an integral part of the whole spatial plan for the South East Essex area.'

CABINET

17th January 2018

Subject: South Essex Strategic Planning

**Cabinet Member: Leader of the Council – Councillor Riley
Deputy Leader of the Council – Councillor Stanley**

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to recommend to the Special Council endorsement of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to take forward the collaborative work being undertaken by South Essex Councils - Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock and Essex County Council - to create a vision and sense of place for South Essex through the Association of South Essex Local Authorities

2. Links to Council's Priorities and Objectives

The initiatives described in this report are directly linked to the Council's "Transforming our Community" priority – incorporating objectives for a sustainable future.

3. Recommendations

Having regard to all those matters raised within this report and the recent letter from the Secretary of State giving notice of his intention to intervene in the Castle Point Local Plan process that it is particularly important to draw to his attention, the following :

- 1. To recommend to Special Council approval and endorsement of the Memorandum of Understanding of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities.**
 - 2. To recommend to Special Council to note and support the work taking place to develop a Spatial Strategy for South Essex.**
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4. Background

South Essex

History of joint work

- 4.1 The local planning authorities in South Essex have for some time been defined as Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock and Essex County Council. More recently Brentwood has been incorporated in the group, given its close relationship with Basildon, Thurrock and key infrastructure affecting the area, such as the A127.
- 4.2 There is a long established tradition of working in partnership on strategic planning matters, dating from the era of the former Thames Gateway South Essex Board. Examples of this work include a Planning & Transport Strategy for the Thames Gateway South Essex area, a series of Strategic Housing Market Assessments, Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, and more recently an Economic Development Needs Assessment.
- 4.3 Furthermore Planning Portfolio Holders/Cabinet Members acknowledged in 2016 that a strategic planning framework of some kind was necessary for the area in order to assist with the preparation of individual local plans and demonstrate that the “duty to co-operate” was being effectively discharged. A Memorandum of Understanding for Strategic Planning in South Essex was subsequently agreed in early 2017.

Leaders & Chief Executives

- 4.4 Stemming from housing and local planning issues initially, there has been a growing recognition of the opportunity and need for greater cross-boundary working on strategic infrastructure planning and growth across South Essex. In June 2017 Leaders and Chief Executives of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock and Essex County Council (the Authorities) agreed to initiate and shape a programme of work through the summer and autumn to explore a joint ‘place vision’ and the scope for greater strategic collaboration along the South Essex growth corridor.
- 4.5 The work during the summer and autumn has resulted in an emerging vision and identification of strategic growth opportunities that need testing and strengthening with the people and stakeholders of South Essex and beyond. It has also built a strong commitment amongst the Authorities to collaborative working. It was agreed that an Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) should be established to continue this collaborative work.
- 4.6 The Authorities wish to record the intention to establish ASELA and basis of collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This MoU sets out:
 - a) The core purpose and aims of ASELA
 - b) The principles of collaboration

Association of South Essex Local Authorities

- 4.7 The core purpose of ASELA is to provide place leadership for South Essex. Recognising that through a collaborative approach Councils will be best placed to develop and deliver a vision for South Essex up to 2050, promoting healthy growth for our communities.
- 4.8 ASELA will focus on the strategic opportunities, regardless of individual local authority boundaries for the South Essex economic corridor to influence and secure the strategic infrastructure that will help our individual areas to flourish and realise their full economic and social potential.
- 4.9 The aims of ASELA will be to:
- Provide place leadership;
 - Open up spaces for housing, business and leisure development by developing a spatial strategy;
 - Transform transport connectivity;
 - Support our 7 sectors of industrial opportunity;
 - Shape local labour & skill markets;
 - Create a fully digitally-enabled place;
 - Secure a sustainable energy supply;
 - Influence and secure funding for necessary strategic infrastructure;
 - Enhance health and social care through co-ordinated planning; and
 - Work with and provide a voice for South Essex to the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission and Commissioners.

Potential funding

- 4.10 This work has coincided with the recent announcement by Government of a Planning Delivery Fund, again heralded in the Housing White Paper earlier in the year. The Government's intention is that the Fund would support:
- *more and better joint working, across local authority boundaries, ensuring that there are the skills and capacity where they are needed to plan strategically for housing growth, and to manage delivery of new homes and infrastructure;*
 - *a step change in the design quality of new development, as well as design advice and support to local authorities delivering growth; and,*
 - *innovation in the planning system, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of processes and enable the delivery of more high quality homes.*
- 4.11 Expressions of interests for funding were invited and were made by 11th January 2018. The Government is expected to announce the successful bids by the end of January. For joint working and design, successful bids are expected to be up to £250,000 per bid for expenditure incurred by the end of March 2018. For innovation, no award amount information is yet available since this will be dependent on the number and nature of bids.

5. Planning Implications

- 5.1 The collaborative work described above will allow all local planning authorities in the area to demonstrate effective on-going cooperation on strategic planning matters, thereby satisfying the “duty to co-operate”.
- 5.2 Where those authorities have been identified by the Secretary of State of being at risk from intervention, the work described demonstrates on-going commitment to joint working on strategic planning matters as advocated by Government.
- 5.3 Furthermore for those authorities with no up-to-date local plan or five year housing land supply, the on-going commitment to joint working on strategic planning matters is likely to prove an important material consideration in resisting unwelcome or ill-timed development proposals, pending the completion of the joint strategic plan.

6. Corporate Implications

(a) Financial Implications

- 6.1 The additional Government funding of up to £250,000 through the Planning Delivery Fund would augment the resources at each individual local planning authority level for joint work.

(b) Legal Implications

- 6.2 Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a local authority to perform any of its functions jointly. Section 50 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 allows for the joint preparation of local plans.

(c) Human Resources and Equality Implications

- 6.3 Support for the Association and for the collaborative work has been possible from within existing resources and any additional funding ,if agreed can be used to support existing resources for future collaboration.

(d) IT and Asset Management Implications

- 6.4 There are none to be addressed by this report.

7. Timescale for implementation and Risk Factors

- 7.1 South Essex Leaders and Chief Executives are committed to continuing with the “vision” work beyond January 2018.
- 7.2 The risks of not pursuing further collaborative work across South Essex are not being able to demonstrate effective strategic planning and requiring a significantly greater number of Statements of Common Ground with the risk that agreed strategic infrastructure priorities may not be aligned.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 There has been significant recent work undertaken across South Essex in recent months to understand the importance of and develop ideas around

place making and the role which strategic planning can perform in delivery of infrastructure and growth.

- 8.2 The natural progression of this work is to ensure that suitable governance arrangements are in place, to allow joint work to progress whilst respecting the “sovereignty “ of individual local planning authorities, to ensure that the right level of resources is available, and to make progress with the preparation and delivery of a joint strategic plan.

9. Background Papers

Association of South Essex Authorities Memorandum of Understanding.

Report Author:

David Marchant – Chief Executive