



**Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) - Joint Committee**

**The meeting will be held at 9.30am on 15 December 2022**

**Place: Council Chamber, Castle Point Borough Council, Kiln Road,  
Thundersley, Benfleet, SS7 1TF**

**Contact: Rhiannon Whiteley, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Thurrock  
Council**

**Email: [Rhiannon.Whiteley@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Rhiannon.Whiteley@thurrock.gov.uk)**

**AGENDA**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1 Apologies</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of Interest</b>	
<b>3 Minutes</b>	<b>1 - 6</b>
To approve the minutes of the Joint Committee held on 20 October 2022.	
<b>4 Chairman's Report - Verbal Update</b>	
<b>5 ASELA Joint Committee Secretariat Arrangements</b>	<b>7 - 8</b>
<b>6 ASELA Joint Committee Finance Report</b>	<b>9 - 12</b>
<b>7 ASELA Joint Committee Communications Report</b>	<b>13 - 14</b>
<b>8 Any Other Business</b>	

**Members:**

Cllr A Baggott (Leader - Basildon Borough Council), Cllr D Blackwell (Leader - Castle Point Borough Council), Cllr K Bentley (Leader - Essex County Council), Cllr M Coxshall (Deputy Leader - Thurrock Borough Council), Cllr S George (Leader - Southend-on-Sea City Council), Cllr C Hossack (Leader - Brentwood Borough Council), Cllr S Wootton (Leader - Rochford District Council and P Glading (Opportunity South Essex (Co-opted Member))



## Meeting of Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) – Joint Committee

**Date: Thursday, 20 October 2022**

**Place: Council Chamber, Castle Point Borough Council, Kiln Road,  
Thundersley, Benfleet, SS7 1TF**

---

**Present:** Councillor C Hossack (Chair) (Brentwood Borough Council)  
Councillors S Wootton (Vice Chair) (Rochford District Council), A  
Baggott (Basildon Borough Council), K Bentley (Essex County  
Council), S George (Southend-On-Sea City Council), S Cole  
(Castle Point Borough Council)

**In attendance:** I Butt (Castle Point Borough Council), E Helm (Southend-On-  
Sea City Council), A Hutching (Castle Point Borough Council), A  
Lewis (Southend-On-Sea City Council), S Logan (Basildon  
Borough Council), M Snaith, J Stephenson (Brentwood Borough  
Council and Rochford District Council), A Wardle (ASELA  
Communications Lead), T Walker (Essex County Council), K  
Wheeler (Thurrock Borough Council)

---

**Start/End Time** 10.00am – 11.35am

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Coxshall (Leader-  
Thurrock Borough Council), Councillor D Blackwell (Castle Point Borough  
Council) and Sharon Bayliss.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 14 July 2022 be  
confirmed as a correct record.

### **4. Chairman's Report - Verbal Update**

The Chair noted that nationally we are facing difficult times however he stated that ASELA knows its purpose and the things it is focussed on and continues to pursue them. The Chair also noted the issues Thurrock Council were experiencing and stressed that Thurrock remains a partner of ASELA and confirmed that all the Local Authorities that make up ASELA are supporting Thurrock.

The Chair highlighted that the time is right to re-group and for ASELA to look at its strategic priorities. The Chair proposed that within the next 3 weeks a date is agreed for a workshop to be arranged to look at the pressures Local Governments are under and to consider how to take this level of collaboration to the next level.

Councillor Bentley updated the Committee that Essex County Council has completed their submission to Government for Investment Zones in 4 areas, the North of Essex - Clacton, in the south of Essex - the A127 corridor, the A120 corridor and over to the west of Essex - North Weald. Councillor Bentley praised staff for their hard work on the submission which was put together in just two weeks. The outcome of the submission should be received before Christmas. Councillor George confirmed that Southend-On-Sea City Council's submission related to the city centre and linking it up with the area around Southend Airport. The Chair confirmed he had received communications from Environment groups referring to investment zones as an attack on nature. The Chair clarified that all the submissions from Essex were part of Local Development Plans already or brownfield sites and are not an attack on nature.

The Joint Committee members present agreed to attend a workshop in November to look at ASELA's priorities in the context of devolution and current financial pressures.

*Councillor Baggott joined the meeting.*

## **5. ASELA Joint Committee - Finance Report**

The Joint Committee received the ASELA finance report. Members were advised that since the last meeting Homes England have confirmed the grant to ASELA of £250k of funding and Southend-On-Sea Borough Council are just waiting for this to be received into their account. The forecast is for ASELA to end 2022/23 with a surplus of £2k. There have been some other grants received since the report was written and they will be contained within the next finance report.

Resolved:

That the Joint Committee note the content of the ASELA Finance report for September 2022

## **6. South Essex Estuary Park Programme - Highlight Report**

The Joint Committee received an overview of the current progress regarding the South Essex Estuary Park (SEE PARK) programme.

S Logan confirmed that the Pathfinder Demonstrator Project is being developed. A business case for each of the 5 landscape spaces has been completed and the focus is now on how in the current climate to resource SEE Park.

The Vice Chair raised that it would be helpful to see in future highlight reports where the income stream may be coming from and where the expenditure is for the programme.

Members were advised that the SEE Park vision contained within the South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure study has won a World Architecture Festival award. The World Architectural Festival takes place at the end of November and will be an opportunity to showcase the work going on in South Essex on a global stage.

Councillor Baggot raised the need for further detail on what the financial costs to each Council will be once SEE Park is created and what the plan will be for ongoing maintenance and security.

Resolved:

That the progress of the South Essex Estuary (SEE Park) programme be noted and that the continued provision of support to deliver the programme, be endorsed.

## **7. South Essex Technical University Programme - Highlight Report**

The Joint Committee received an overview of the current progress with regard to the South Essex Technical University programme.

S Logan reported that the key workstreams they are focussing on are setting up the Operating company, procuring the HE Provider to deliver the planned courses and procuring a HE Advisor.

Councillor Baggott queried what the process is for assessing and finding the Provider.

S Logan confirmed they are starting work on a soft marketing exercise and will then invite interest. It will be the businesses who make the decision as to who the Provider is.

S Logan reassured the Committee that they have got a number of experts involved with the programme now who have experience of this process.

Resolved:

That the progress of the South Essex Technical University programme to be noted and the continued provision of support to deliver the programme, be endorsed.

## **8. Digital Programme - Highlight Report**

J Stephenson introduced the Digital Programme Highlight Report and requested that Item 8 and Item 9 of the agenda are heard together as item 8 provides details of the work completed in the last quarter and item 9 summarises the work undertaken over the last 2 years. J Stephenson highlighted the four key themes of the Digital programme and confirmed that the 200km of full fibre network has been delivered and is due to be lit very soon. He stated that the Project Manager M Snaith will provide a more detailed summary to the Joint Committee.

## **9. Digital Programme Briefing Report**

M Snaith thanked all colleagues that have supported this programme and stated that they wouldn't be where they are today without this level of collaboration. M Snaith explained that they had been fortunate in securing 7.5 million pounds of funding to deliver 200km of full fibre network which has now linked over 200 public sector buildings.

M Snaith highlighted that in July 2021 the level of full fibre coverage in Rochford was 8%, it is now 33%. In Thurrock coverage was at 13.6% and is now at 48%. M Snaith acknowledged that Castle Point is still at 4.5% and commented that this is not good enough.

M Snaith confirmed that Thurrock have now lit the network and have derived over a million pounds worth of savings over the next 4 years. All other sites will be enabled with a lit service over the next 12 months. There is connectivity for all the sheltered housing in Thurrock and they are working with colleagues in adult social care who support those sites to use that fibre to provide virtual opportunities for residents to engage in such as to provide yoga sessions across 29 sites or a digital skills course. This can then be extended to other sites in the ASELA area. Community sites and village halls can also be used as digital hubs and this may provide somewhere to work for residents who work from home. M Snaith highlighted that the network can also collect anonymous data to inform policy.

The Joint Committee discussed the issue of inclusion. M Snaith confirmed in the current climate take up of full fibre connectivity is quite low and the issue of affordability needs to be looked at. The Chair requested if data could be provided to confirm the amount of people taking it up. M Snaith responded that it is likely to be commercially sensitive information to the companies and internet providers.

S Logan highlighted the need to communicate the wider benefits of the Digital programme and other ASELA programmes to residents and businesses.

Resolved:

That the progress of the Digital programme be noted and the continued provision of support to deliver the programme, be endorsed.

## **10. ASELA Communications Update Report**

A Wardle reported that there has been a delay in the communication of the success around the digital programme as they are waiting to get a few key milestones over the finish line first. They have also joined up with Highways England to help promote this through some video work. A Wardle also advised the Committee that there are a number of opportunities for communications coming up with SEE park and the World Architecture Festival and also SETU.

The Joint Committee discussed how to maximise communication opportunities around each of the programmes and using the ambassadors of the programmes to do this. It was also raised that ASELA communications should be linked up with all 7 of the ASELA Local Authority Communications teams to maximise reach as it was noted that the majority of the Council's staff are also Essex residents.

Resolved:

That the Communications Report be noted.

## **11. Any Other Business**

J Stephenson provided a short update on the Housing programme. He noted that the finance report had covered the grant of funding from Homes England earlier on in the meeting. He confirmed they can now appoint a programme director to support delivery of the programme but whilst this goes out to market, Inner Circle Consulting will be working on this in the interim as there is a need to use the funding gained otherwise they will lose it.

J Stephenson confirmed he hoped to be able to provide a full update at the next Joint Committee meeting or the one after where a representative from Homes England and the programme director can also be present.

This page is intentionally left blank





<b>DATE: 15 December 2022</b>	<b>ITEM: 5</b>
<b>ASELA Joint Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Report Title: ASELA Joint Committee Secretariat Arrangements</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive, Southend-on-Sea City Council	
<b>Programme Implementation Director:</b> N/A	
<b>Accountable Programme SRO:</b> N/A	
<b>This report is public</b>	

## Executive Summary

The constituent authorities of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) Joint Committee who form part of the Joint Committee are:

- Basildon Borough Council
- Brentwood Borough Council
- Castle Point Borough Council
- Essex County Council
- Rochford District Council
- Southend-on-Sea City Council
- Thurrock Council

The report asks the Joint Committee to consider and approve the transfer of the role of Secretariat for the ASELA Joint Committee from Thurrock Council to Southend-on-Sea City Council.

### 1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 **That Southend-on-Sea City Council act as the Secretariat in relation to the ASELA Joint Committee with effect from the date of this meeting.**

### 2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Governing Documents states that a local authority will be designated to provide secretariat to the Joint Committee which shall be agreed by the Joint Committee. It is recommended that Southend-on-Sea City Council shall provide secretariat to the Joint Committee.
- 2.2 The Joint Committee has the option of asking another constituent authority to undertake this role, however this is not being recommended as Southend Council have agreed to undertake the role at no direct cost to ASELA and have

the necessary expertise to do so. Southend Council also undertake the role of Accountable Body for the joint committee and therefore provides a consistent point for support.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 No other authority was in a position to provide the support to take on the role of Secretariat and it was felt that Thurrock did not have the capacity at this time to provide the potential increased level of support required by the partnership.

### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 This report asks the Joint Committee to approve the transfer of the Secretariat from Thurrock Council to Southend-on-Sea City Council who will be able to provide the increased level of support required by the partnership.

### **5. Consultation (if applicable)**

- 5.1 Consultation on the content of this report has been undertaken with the Chief Executives for each of the constituent ASELA local authorities.

### **6. Impact on policies, priorities, performance and community impact (if applicable)**

- 6.1 N/A

### **7. Implications**

- 7.1 **Financial** – NA

- 7.2 **Legal** – N/A

### **7.3 Other implications (where significant)**

There are no direct inclusion, diversity and community cohesion implications arising from consideration of this matter. The report primarily deals with governance arrangements of the Joint Committee as opposed to impacting on any individual or group. Necessary arrangements will be made to ensure that all members, and any future co-opted members, can effectively participate in the proceedings of the Joint Committee.

### **8. Appendices to the report**

N/A



<b>DATE: 15 December 2022</b>	<b>ITEM: 6</b>
<b>ASELA Joint Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>ASELA Financial Report</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Elizabeth Helm, Senior Finance Business Partner, Southend-on-Sea City Council	
<b>Programme Implementation Director:</b> N/A	
<b>Accountable Programme SRO:</b> N/A	
<b>This report is public</b>	

## Executive Summary

This report summarises the latest forecast financial position for the various programmes within ASELA.

### 1. Recommendation

**1.1 That the Joint Committee note the content of the report and agree an approach for mitigating the forecast deficit.**

### 2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The budget for ASELA is set at the start of the financial year and adjusted throughout the year as plans are changed and updated. Provisional budgets for future years are also compiled to aid longer term financial planning.
- 2.2 Southend-on-Sea City Council maintain a separate accounting structure for ASELA and produce financial monitoring reports which are shared with Programme Implementation Directors, ASELA Chief Executives and Finance leads.
- 2.3 Financial and operational monitoring is enabled through the routine highlight reporting mechanism undertaken by each Programme Implementation Director, supported by a Finance lead, and which are also reported on this agenda.
- 2.4 Financial implications detailed in highlight reports are monitored against the budget set at the start of the financial year. Changes to a programme budget may occur when additional external funding is confirmed which enables increased programme spend or when unavoidable costs have been incurred.

### 3. 2022/23 Current Forecast

3.1 The 2021/22 outturn and the 2022/23 forecast income and expenditure for ASELA is summarised in Table 1 below:

Income and Expenditure Summary	2021/22 £000's	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's
<b>Income</b>			
Partnership Investment (ASELA authorities)	(420)	(420)	(420)
Other partners			
Homes England	180	(227)	(144)
SEE Park - Highways England	(65)	(750)	(215)
Digital - National Highways	0	(506)	(394)
SE Tech Uni - private sector investment	(30)	0	0
SE Tech Uni - Opportunity South Essex	(20)		
Digital - SELEP Getting Building Fund	(1,869)	(631)	
Additional funding ASELA authorities			
SEE Park - Thurrock	(200)	0	0
SE Tech Uni - Essex CC	(60)	(75)	0
Cost Reimbursement (Thurrock/Freeport)	(30)	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(2,514)</b>	<b>(2,608)</b>	<b>(1,173)</b>
<b>Programme Expenditure</b>			
SEE Park	387	865	240
South Essex Technical University	161	155	0
Full Fibre Digital	1,918	1,212	419
Thames Freeport	60	0	0
Infrastructure and Housing	118	227	144
Operating and Other Costs	121	55	55
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,765</b>	<b>2,514</b>	<b>858</b>
<b>In year (surplus) / deficit</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>(95)</b>	<b>(315)</b>

ASELA Reserve	2021/22 £000's	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's
Balance brought forward	(77)	174	79
Non-ringfenced in year (surplus) / deficit	271	(115)	(315)
Ringfenced income: SE Tech Uni	(20)	20	0
Net in year (surplus) / deficit	251	(95)	(315)
Balance carried forward	174	79	(236)

3.2 Following Southend taking over the accountable body responsibility for ASELA, a review of where all funding currently sits and the commitments

against the various funding streams has been undertaken. Arrangements to transfer funding received this financial year, where possible depending on the terms, to Southend are underway.

- 3.3 Based on these revised financial forecasts, a revised surplus of £95,000 is anticipated in 2022/23. This has changed since the previous meeting following the detailed review of commitments and the terms and conditions of various grants awarded. This will bring the reserve deficit to £79,000 by the end of this financial year. One option to mitigate this remaining deficit this year is by reducing the amount of partnership investment to programmes where that resource could be funded through alternate funding secured, subject to grant terms and conditions. Alternatively, the deficit could be carried forward to 2023/24 and funded as first call on the partnership investment.

#### 3.4 **SEE Park**

Phase 1a delivery should be completed this financial year, whilst the Phase 2 design is forecast to occur in 2022/23.

Funding is from the partnership (£115,000 this year) and Highways England - £750,000 for Phase 1a delivery and £215,000 for Phase 2 Design. The Highways England agreement sits with Thurrock, with the funding being received in arrears once expenditure has been incurred for work completed.

Additional commitments in this programme are programme support and £40,000 for creative industry resource, of which £30,000 has been incurred to date.

#### 3.5 **South Essex Technical University**

Planned spend is progressing on track, with Pinsent and Masons engaged to provide the legal expertise required and Essex providing the HE advisor.

Funding this year has come from three sources: £60,000 from the partnership, £75,000 from Essex County Council and £20,000 from Opportunity South Essex – which was received in 2021/22.

#### 3.6 **Full Fire Digital**

There is a £631,000 remaining of the original £2.5m of funding from MHCLG received through the LEP for this financial year for Digital Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) Phase 2. This is currently held by Thurrock council; however, the unspent balance will be transferred to Southend and is forecast to be spent in full this year.



A funding agreement with National Highways was recently signed for £900,000 for the Internet of Things and Phase 2a of LFFN. As work is complete, invoices will be raised for the funding which is anticipated to be spent over 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Additionally, this programme also receives £75,000 of partnership investment for programme support.

There is a bid in train for LFFN Phase 3 which is anticipated to be confirmed shortly.

### **3.7 Infrastructure and Housing**

A project director is being recruited to assist in the implement of the ASELA Housing delivery programme. A funding agreement for £250,000 of has been signed with Homes England and an agreement for a further £120,000 is also in the process of being signed and sealed. Spend is planned across 2022/23 and 2023/24 in line with the grant agreements.

### **3.8 Operating and other costs**

The £420,000 partnership contribution has been received. This funding is utilised to facilitate a resource to support programmes as necessary to enable funding to be secured and a communications resource.

#### **Report Author:**

NAME Elizabeth Helm  
TITLE Senior Finance Business Partner, Southend-on-Sea City Council



<b>DATE 15 December 2022</b>	<b>ITEM: 7</b>
<b>ASELA Joint Committee</b>	
<b>Communications update</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Adrian Wardle	
<b>Programme Implementation Director:</b> Karen Wheeler	
<b>Accountable Programme SRO:</b> Scott Logan	
<b>This report is public</b>	

## Executive Summary

This paper provides an update on the communications work done in support of ASELA since the committee last met in September.

### 1. Recommendation(s)

**That the Joint Committee:**

**1.1 notes the update provided in this report.**

### 2. Introduction and background

2.1 The review of ASELA priorities and programmes has given members the opportunity to reaffirm its vision.

2.2 The ASELA website has been revised and now reflects the key themes members have agreed and the progress being made on the programmes currently being enacted within these themes.

2.3 ASELA has had some real successes in the period since the last meeting of its Joint Committee, which has led to positive publicity. Notably, the funding agreement with National Highways Lower Thames Crossing to support the extension of the digital infrastructure and to work on an Internet of Things, on which ASELA and National Highways collaborated to produce effective PR.

2.3 This report identifies the upcoming opportunities for further PR in section 6.

### 3. Content update

3.1 Content updates we have produced and shared in this period are set out below:

- World Architecture Festival award win for Green and Blue Infrastructure Study
- [Lower Thames Crossing and South Essex councils to boost economy by connecting Brentwood to South Essex superfast broadband network](#)
- [ASELA partnership remains strong](#)

#### 4. Channels update

4.1 The following metrics help understand interest and engagement in our work. Please be aware that we were in pre-election period for much of this time.

<i>Channel</i>	<i>Last 3 months</i>	<i>+/-</i>
LinkedIn	29 new followers	
	437 followers	+7%
Website	1,200 users	+36%
	1,700 sessions	+39%
Twitter	58 followers	+4%

#### 5. Forthcoming events

5.1 The following events and project milestones provide proactive communication opportunities:

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Event/milestone</i>	<i>Date</i>
South Essex Technical University	Operating company formation	Dec 2022
	HE provider procurement	January 2023
	HE partner(s) appointed	March 2023
	Business engagement	Spring 2023
Digital Connectivity	Taking of service procurement result	January 2023
	Award of £500,000 Getting Building Fund for full fibre network Phase 3	January 2023
	Sheltered accommodation pilot update.	Spring 2023
	MoU with fibre installation partner	January 2023
SEEPARK	Phase 1a delivery progress updates, including planning applications, contract awards and work on site	Dec 2022 – March 2023