

Public Document Pack



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

Date: Thursday, 10th February, 2022

Time: 10.00 am

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

**Contact: S. Tautz (Principal Democratic Services Officer - Southend-on-Sea Borough
Council)**

Email: committeesection@southend.gov.uk

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 1 - 8)

To agree the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 28 October 2021.

- 4. Lower Thames Crossing**

(10.10am (40 Minutes)) To receive a presentation from Matt Palmer (Executive Director - Lower Thames Crossing) of Highways England, with regard to the current proposals for the Lower Thames Crossing.

- 5. Association of South Essex Local Authorities - Finance Report** (Pages 9 - 12)

(10.50am (10 Minutes)) To consider the attached report of the lead Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) for ASELA.

- 6. Thames Freeport Programme - Highlight Report** (Pages 13 - 16)

(11.00am (10 Minutes)) To consider the attached report and receive a presentation from the respective lead Chief Executive/Senior Responsible Officer on the progress of the Thames Freeport programme.

- 7. Infrastructure & Housing Programme - Highlight Report**

(11.10am (10 Minutes)) To consider a report and receive a presentation from

the respective lead Chief Executive/Senior Responsible Officer providing on the progress of the Infrastructure and Housing programme (to follow).

8. South Essex Estuary Park (SEEPark) Programme - Highlight Report
(Pages 17 - 20)

(11.20am (10 Minutes)) To consider the attached report and receive a presentation from the respective lead Chief Executive/Senior Responsible Officer on the progress of the South Essex Estuary Park (SEE Park) programme.

9. Full Fibre Digital Programme - Highlight Report (Pages 21 - 24)

(11.30am (10 Minutes)) To consider the attached report and receive a presentation from the respective lead Chief Executive/Senior Responsible Officer on the progress of the Full Fibre Digital programme.

10. South Essex Technical University Programme - Highlight Report (Pages 25 - 28)

(11.40am (10 Minutes)) To consider the attached report and receive a presentation from the respective lead Chief Executive/Senior Responsible Officer on the progress of the of the Technical University programme.

11. Association of South Essex Local Authorities - Communications Report
(Pages 29 - 32)

(11.50am (10 Minutes)) To consider the attached report of the lead Communications Officer for ASELA.

12. South Essex No Use Empty Scheme (Pages 33 - 38)

(12.00) (10 Minutes)) To consider the attached report with regard to the current level of impact arising from the 'South Essex No Use Empty' Scheme.

Members:

Cllr C Hossack (Chair), Cllr S Wootton (Vice-Chair), Cllr A Baggott, Cllr K Bentley, Cllr M Coxshall, Cllr I Gilbert, Cllr A Sheldon and P Glading (Chairman – Opportunity South Essex) (Co-opted Member)



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

3

Date: Thursday, 28th October, 2021

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

Present: Councillor C Hossack (Chair) (Leader - Brentwood Borough Council) Councillors S Wootton (Vice-Chair) (Leader - Rochford District Council), A Baggott (Leader - Basildon Borough Council), G Butland (Cabinet Member - Essex County Council), M Coxshall (Cabinet Member - Thurrock Borough Council), I Gilbert (Leader - Southend-on-Sea Borough Council) and A Sheldon (Leader - Castle Point Borough Council)

In Attendance: P Glading (Chairman - Opportunity South Essex) (Co-Opted Member), L Carpenter (ASELA Lead Chief Executive - Thurrock Borough Council), A Horgan (Head of Governance - Castle Point Borough Council), A Hutchings (Strategic Director - Rochford District Council), A Lewis (Interim Chief Executive - Southend-on-Sea Borough Council), C Mills (ASELA Lead Chief Financial Officer - Castle Point Borough Council), S Logan (Chief Executive - Basildon Borough Council), S Summers (Chief Operating Officer - Brentwood Borough Council), S Tautz (ASELA Secretariat), A Wardle (ASELA Communications Lead) and M Whiteley (Programme Director)

Start/End Time: 10.00 am - 11.40 am

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

On the nomination of Councillor S Wootton, seconded by Councillor A Sheldon, and with the unanimous support of the Joint Committee:

Resolved:

- (1) That Councillor C Hossack be elected as Chair of the Joint Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

On the nomination of Councillor A Sheldon, seconded by Councillor A Baggott, and with the unanimous support of the Joint Committee:

Resolved:

- (2) That Councillor S Wootton be elected as Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Bentley (Leader - Essex County Council) (Substitute: Councillor G Butland), A Grant (Interim Chief Executive – Castle Point Borough Council), G Jones (Chief Executive - Essex County Council) and J Stephenson (Joint Chief Executive - Brentwood Borough Council and Rochford District Council).

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

4 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair paid tribute to the valuable contribution made to the success of the work of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) by David Marchant, the former Chief Executive of Castle Point Borough Council who had sadly passed away earlier in the year.

The Chair welcomed Leaders, councillors and officers to the first public meeting of the Joint Committee, which was also being live streamed to the internet. The Chair outlined the purpose of ASELA as a partnership of local authorities that had first come together in 2016 to collaborate on the delivery of growth and prosperity in the South Essex region.

The Chair reported that the ASELA authorities had been working together across existing local government boundaries to help deliver improved infrastructure and economic growth, through arrangements agreed as part of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2018 that had culminated in the submission of a Growth and Recovery Prospectus to the Government in July 2020, that set out a vision and proposition for South Essex. The Chair indicated that as the activities of ASELA had matured and moved forward, it had been necessary to establish the Joint Committee as a formal, accountable, and transparent governance arrangement for the delivery of relevant priorities.

The Chair emphasised that as part of the ASELA governance arrangements, there would be no transfer of powers currently held by any constituent local authority to the Joint Committee, in order to maintain the sovereignty of partners. Members were reminded that no decision could be taken by the Joint Committee which related to any matter in the preserve of a specific constituent authority unless that authority indicated its agreement to the proposal.

5 ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH ESSEX LOCAL AUTHORITIES (ASELA) - PRIORITIES & PROGRAMMES

The Joint Committee considered a report and received a presentation from the lead Chief Executive for ASELA, with regard to the current interrelated key 'anchor' programmes that had arisen from the development of the Growth and Recovery Prospectus for South Essex in July 2020, the delivery of each of which were intended to have a positive impact for residents and business.

The Committee received an overview of the progress that had so far been achieved against each key programme and it was reported that a fuller update on current progress against each of the programmes would be made later in the meeting.

The Joint Committee was advised that South Essex was one of only two areas in the country where partnership arrangements with Homes England had been agreed to facilitate the 'unlocking' of stalled housing developments and that a report would be made to the next meeting with regard to the agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding with Homes England. The lead Chief Executive emphasised that, notwithstanding the partnership with Homes England, the planning process remained a sovereign issue for each local authority through the existing local plan processes, but that the partnership arrangement would generate resources to progress schemes where planning permission had already been agreed, but where significant infrastructure requirements had been identified.

It was reported that, alongside the key programmes, the development of interconnected strategies and delivery proposals for other aspects of the Growth and Recovery Prospectus would be considered by the Committee going forward, including future transport and mobility requirements, a joined-up active travel network and sustainable energy systems, all of which would underpin the achievement of the key programmes whilst also complementing similar work undertaken across Essex. The Committee was also advised that a Joint Strategic Plan was also to be developed to give oversight of the delivery of the ASELA key programmes.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report and presentation be noted.
- (2) That the appreciation of the Joint Committee for the work of Thurrock Borough Council on the delivery of the Thames Freeport Programme so far, be noted.

6 ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH ESSEX LOCAL AUTHORITIES (ASELA) - JOINT COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Joint Committee considered a report of the lead Monitoring Officer for ASELA, with regard to matters set out within the governing documents for the Committee. Members noted that the governing documents provided for them to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the governance arrangements remained fit to support the ambitions of ASELA, and that the first review would be undertaken in February/March 2022.

It was reported that confirmation had been received from Essex County Council of its membership of the Joint Committee going forward.

Following the appointment of Opportunity South Essex as a non-voting co-opted member of the Joint Committee, the Chair formally welcomed the Chairman of Opportunity South Essex to the meeting.

Resolved:

- (1) That the arrangements contained in the Governing Documents for the Joint Committee as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

- (2) That Southend-on-Sea Borough Council provide secretariat to the Joint Committee until further notice.
- (3) That Castle Point Borough Council act as the Accountable Body in relation to the functions and resources of ASELA until further notice.
- (4) That Opportunity South Essex be appointed to the Joint Committee as a co-opted Member (without voting rights).
- (5) That the Joint Committee consider the possible co-option of additional member(s) (without voting rights) to membership of the Committee, to bring appropriate expertise around the Climate Change/Carbon Zero agenda.

7 ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH ESSEX LOCAL AUTHORITIES - FINANCE REPORT (OCTOBER 2021)

The lead Chief Financial Officer for ASELA presented the Finance Report for October 2021, which set out the current financial position for ASELA and the key work programmes, including the budgeted income and expenditure, and provided assurance in relation to the arrangements for financial management and reporting in respect of the budget.

Members were advised that the Finance Report would be presented to each meeting of the Joint Committee, and, at the present time, there were no financial issues or concerns to be brought to the attention of the Committee.

It was reported that a reserve was maintained to manage fluctuations in spending plans between years and that, at the end of the current financial year, the balance on the reserve was forecast to be a surplus of £202,000.

The Joint Committee was advised that the current financial position of ASELA did not yet reflect its ambition that going forward, work programmes would become fully self-funded, although it was noted that programme and finance leads would seek to identify and pursue appropriate opportunities to achieve this.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That further information be circulated to the Joint Committee to provide detail of the additional funding provided by the ASELA authorities and the income received from other partners in 2021/22, as set out within the Income and Expenditure Summary of the Finance Report.
- (3) That a report be made to the next meeting of the Joint Committee with regard to the current level of impact arising from the 'South Essex No Use Empty Scheme.'

8 THAMES FREEPORT PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT REPORT

The Joint Committee received a report setting out the progress of the Thames Freeport programme.

It was reported that, as part of the budget announcement on 27 October 2021, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had confirmed that the Thames Freeport, with tax sites at London Gateway, the Port of Tilbury and Ford in Dagenham, would be amongst the first designated freeport areas in the country, alongside Humber and Teesside, and would be able to commence initial operations from 19 November 2021.

The Joint Committee was advised that it was anticipated that an appointment as chair of the private sector board for Thames Freeport would be announced on 1 November 2021. It was also reported that the final Business Case for Thames Freeport was required to be submitted to the Government by 3 February 2022 and that it was anticipated that the completion of the business case within this timescale would be achievable with the support and resources currently provided by ASELA.

It was requested that an update on the current status of the proposed Freeport East, covering Harwich and Felixstowe, be provided to all members of the Joint Committee.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Thames Freeport programme highlight report be noted.
- (2) That the appreciation of the Joint Committee for the work of the private sector partners leading the delivery of the Thames Freeport programme, and Thurrock Borough Council (as the lead Accountable Authority), the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and the London Borough of Havering, be noted.

9 INFRASTRUCTURE & HOUSING PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT REPORT

With the agreement of the Joint Committee, consideration of this report was deferred until the meeting to be held in February 2022, to enable full consideration to be given to the implications of relevant announcements made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as part of the budget presentation for 2022/23 and the opportunities that these presented.

10 SOUTH ESSEX ESTUARY PARK PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT REPORT

The Joint Committee received a report setting out the progress of the South Essex Estuary Park (SEE Park) programme.

It was reported that work was progressing well on Phase 1 of the programme around the delivery of the Central Thames Marshland path in view of its relationship to the proposed Thames Freeport, which would be part of the focus of the formal launch of the SEE Park in March 2022.

The Joint Committee was advised that all partners were working collaboratively to deliver the ambitions for the SEE Park and that specific local government and private sector expertise would be called upon by the Project Team when considered necessary to support and challenge the delivery of the programme. It was reported that the SEE Park programme also had regard to the priorities of the Climate Commission to tackle the climate challenge across Essex and the 'Green

Bonds' initiative to raise funding for projects that would deliver environmental benefits.

Members were advised that branding and marketing opportunities for the SEE Park were being developed alongside a communications plan, which would be brought to the Joint Committee for consideration and requested that details of relevant actions to progress the delivery of elements of the SEE Park be reported to the next meeting.

Resolved:

That the SEE Park programme highlight report be noted.

11 FULL FIBRE DIGITAL PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT REPORT

The Joint Committee received a report setting out the progress of the Full Fibre Digital programme.

It was reported that the rollout of a local full fibre network to public service premises (including GP Surgeries and fire stations) using Government grant funding was nearing completion and would be delivered on-time and within budget. The Joint Committee was advised that the rollout of full fibre to village halls and community centres had also commenced and was anticipated to be completed by the end of 2021/22

The Joint Committee was informed that significant investment interest had been expressed in the programme by private sector fibre operators/carriers and infrastructure providers, as a result of the success of the rollout of the local full fibre network. Members were advised that work was also being undertaken to identify coverage "Not Spots" across the South Essex region and to identify sources of funding to ensure that services could be delivered from the new fibre infrastructure.

It was requested that information around some of the local impacts arising from the delivery of the Full Fibre Digital programme, be provided to all members of the Joint Committee to demonstrate the success of the programme so far.

Resolved:

That the Full Fibre Digital programme highlight report be noted.

12 SOUTH ESSEX TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT REPORT

The Joint Committee received a report setting out the progress of the South Essex Technical University programme.

It was reported that the Technical University was intended to go-live on a virtual basis for the first cohort of students from September 2023, although the development of a relevant curriculum was likely to present a challenge in the meantime, given that the programme was business lead, and that degree opportunities and apprenticeships would need to meet the business requirements

of the key private sector partners that were leading the programme and local employers, whilst also providing a future pipeline of relevant skills.

The Joint Committee was advised that the financial business case and procurement arrangements for the University were being developed by the Partnership Board for consideration at the next meeting. It was reported that challenges had also been identified around ensuring that schools and education providers in the most deprived wards in South Essex and the wider area, both supported and were fully engaged with the development of the Technical University and the opportunities that it presented for apprenticeship programmes for local young people and the future skills pipeline for local businesses.

Resolved:

That the South Essex Technical University programme highlight report be noted.

13 LOWER THAMES CROSSING

With the agreement of the Committee, the Chair requested that a presentation be made to a future meeting with regard to the current proposals for the Lower Thames Crossing, to ensure that this was complemented by the work of ASELA and could help to support its key programmes, particularly around the Thames Freeport.

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Association of South Essex Local Authorities		5
Joint Committee – 10 February 2022	Agenda Item 5	
ASELA Financial Report	Contact Officer Lance Wosko lwosko@castlepoint.gov.uk 01268 882223	

Introduction

This report is intended to:

- Present the current financial position and the 2022/23 for ASELA to the Joint Committee for information.

Report

1. Background

- 1.1 The budget for ASELA is set at the start of the financial year based on fully funded expenditure plans. Provisional budgets for future years are also compiled to aid longer term financial planning.
- 1.2 Castle Point Borough Council maintain a separate accounting structure for ASELA and produce monthly financial monitoring reports which are shared with Programme Implementation Directors, ASELA Chief Executives and Finance leads.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.

2. Investment projects enabled by ASELA

- 2.1 The table on the following page provides a breakdown of the **£10.8m** of external investment / funding which has been enabled by ASELA since July 2017.

Investment Projects Enabled by ASELA	£000's
Income	
Local Full Fibre Network - Phase 1	(4,492)
Local Full Fibre Network - Phase 2	(2,500)
South Essex No Use Empty Scheme	(1,200)
Planning Delivery Fund	(871)
Highways England - SEE Park	(815)
Homes England Accelerated Housing Delivery	(520)
Homes England New Settlements	(250)
Technical University Public and Private Sector Investment	(110)
East of England Local Government Association Investment	(50)
Total Income	(10,808)

3. 2021/22 Current Financial Position and 2022/23 Budget

3.1 The 2021/22 forecast and 2022/23 budgeted income and expenditure for ASELA, as well as an early indication of 2023/24, is summarised in the table below:

Income and Expenditure Summary	2021/22 £000's	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's
Income			
Homes England	(340)	0	0
Partnership Investment	(420)	(420)	(420)
Additional funding ASELA authorities	(260)	0	0
Highways England	(65)	(750)	0
Other partners	(50)	0	0
Cost Reimbursement (Thurrock/Freeport)	(30)	0	0
Total Income	(1,165)	(1,170)	(420)
Programme Expenditure			
SEE Park	425	828	25
South Essex Technical University	138	0	0
Full Fibre Digital	50	75	25
Thames Freeport	60	0	0
Infrastructure and Housing	340	0	0
Operating and Other Costs	207	211	55
Total Expenditure	1,220	958	105
In year (surplus) / deficit	55	(56)	(315)
ASELA Reserve			
Balance brought forward	(77)	(22)	(78)
In year (surplus) / deficit	55	(56)	(315)
Balance carried forward	(22)	(78)	(393)


- 3.2 A reserve is maintained to manage fluctuations in expenditure plans between years. At the end of the current financial year the balance on the reserve is forecast to be **£22k** surplus.
- 3.3 The statement does not yet reflect the ambition of ASELA that going forward work programmes become fully self-funded.
- 3.4 For 2022/23, the programmes are being progressed but there remains some imprecision on the certainty and/or timing of the various income streams. As the programmes progress and clarity is gained, the budgets will be adjusted with the income and associated expenditure being reflected appropriately.

4. Recommendations:

That the Joint Committee note the content of the report.

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Report Date:		Decisions Required:	<i>To note the progress of the Thames Freeport and to endorse the continued support to deliver the programme.</i>
Programme Name:	Thames Freeport		
ASELA Chief SRO:	Lyn Carpenter		
Programme Implementation Director:	N/A		
Lead Officer/Programme Manager:	Gerard McCleave		

Programme Summary	
Overall Programme Summary	
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21,000 + new <i>additional</i> jobs, £4.56 billion total investment, significant increase in GVA across the region (c.£2.6 billion pa with a total increase in GVA of £65 billion over 25 years), supply chain opportunities, strong innovation and R&D potential; • Alignment to delivery of other ASELA projects, particularly the SE Technical University, Gigabit broadband roll-out and SEE Park as well as potential to integrate with wider economic development ambitions e.g. inward investment; • Step change opportunity to deliver whole-system and holistic regeneration and levelling up, tackling the economic and social inequalities in our most deprived and disadvantaged communities; • Skills Fund of up to £6m and part of an holistic Skills and Workforce Development Strategy (including SE Technical University) • 1,700 acres of development land at the heart of Europe's largest consumer market, Thames Freeport connects Ford's Dagenham facility to the ports at London Gateway and Tilbury across a 34km wide economic corridor; • First-class onward road, rail and marine connections, alongside well-honed investment promotion, trade facilitation, skills development and automation services; and • Targeting green-tech growth, including future mobility solutions and the hydrogen economy, supported by an Innovation Hub and local authorities committed to economic growth
Programme Resources	
Resources direct from ASELA has included OBC, public sector engagement and Interim Chair support provided by Martin Whiteley. Other public sector resources include significant officer time from Thurrock to support the delivery of the OBC/FBC and the wider public policy objectives of Freeports.	
	

Unplanned Requests/Activities

OBC approved by government at Autumn Statement and Spending Review. Rt Hon Ruth Kelly appointed as Thames Freeport Governing Board Chair. Freeport became operational on 15 December 2021. FBC submitted to DLUHC on 28 January 2022. Quality assurance of FBC by government underway, led by DLUHC. Approval expected within 6 weeks.

Project Status (What is going well/not going well):	Description of RAG Status and Key Project Decisions/Direction/Action:	
<p>Governance</p> <p>The Interim Board overseeing the Outline and Full Business Case (FBC) for Thames Freeport and ongoing liaison with Government particularly DLUHC and HMT. The membership comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ruth Kelly (Chair) · Martin Whiteley (interim Executive Director) · Forth Ports · DP World · Ford · Thurrock Council (Lead Authority) · LBBB · DLUHC (Observer) <p>Following the completion and approval of the FBC from government, the Board will expand to include other stakeholders as outlined in the bid.</p> <p>The Interim Board is responsible for agreeing the overall Freeport strategy; oversight and management of work streams included scope and outputs; assessing any requirements received for funding to deliver the OBC/FBC or Freeport; arranging and ensuring an orderly transition to the permanent governance model; and accountability to Government.</p> <p>Thurrock Council is the lead authority and accountable body, and has an overarching responsibility to ensure strategic fit, provide leadership within the public sector and deliver the OBC and FBC in line with government expectations.</p>	Scope	GREEN
	Risk	GREEN
	Issue	GREEN
	Cost	GREEN
	Time	GREEN
	<p>Explanation of any Amber or Red RAG Statuses (including any decisions, direction or actions required):</p>	

Project Status (What is going well/not going well):	Description of RAG Status and Key Project Decisions/Direction/Action:
<p>OBC/FBC</p> <p>Thames Freeport partners have developed a compelling Outline Business Case which was submitted to Government on 30th July. This was approved by Government at the Autumn Statement and Spending Review. Further work commenced to refine into a Full Business Case including the development of a number of associated strategies in areas such as innovation and skills. The FBC was submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 28 January and it will now be assessed by a number of government departments.</p> <p>Regeneration and Levelling-up</p> <p>Harnessing the Freeport policy and investment to tackle inequalities and drive levelling up and place making / shaping. Representations have been made to DLUHC to request additional capacity funding to directly support the regeneration and levelling-up initiatives and path-finder projects to be delivered through the Thames Freeport.</p>	

PROJECT / MILESTONE RAG STATUS KEY	
Will not be met	Project / milestone is definitely off track and does not yet have an effective recovery plan (recovery plan may involve re-planning milestones, scope, etc.). Significantly outside tolerances. One or more RED Risks/Issues. Sponsor action required.
Under Threat	Project / milestone is already off track, but has a recovery plan in place OR is in danger of going off track if current trends continue, therefore needs a remediation plan OR was on red and is still in recovery mode. Marginally outside project tolerances. No RED Risks/Issues. Sponsor oversight required.
On Track	Project being managed effectively. On track and confident of staying on track. Within project tolerances (budget, timescale, functionality).
Blue	Complete

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Report Date:	January 2022	Decisions Required:	1. To note the progress of the programme and to endorse the continued support to deliver the programme
Programme Name:	ASELA SEEPARK (South Essex Estuary) Park		
ASELA Chief SRO:	Lyn Carpenter		
Programme Implementation Director:	Sharon Bayliss		
Lead Officer/Programme Manager:	Scott Dolling & Steve Plumb		

Programme Summary

Overall Programme Summary

SEEPARK is a critical element of the South Essex infrastructure and will play a critical role in establishing an enhanced environment, more attractive business location, skills retention, tourism and place making. It will link and nurture five varied large-scale landscapes covering 23,000 hectares – including woodland, parkland, wetland and marshland – across South Essex bringing the benefits of ecological diversity and carbon capture as well as opportunities for leisure, tourism and business. Our vision is for:

- a high quality green space within 300 metres of every front door or workplace in South Essex – starting with new developments and redevelopments with strengthened links into existing communities and existing green and blue spaces
- cycleways to connect every doorstep to the countryside and to work
- a continuous 70km coastal path from Tilbury Fort to Shoeburyness
- 16,000 hectares of new green space
- 9,200 hectares of newly planted woodlands
- 13,800 hectares of restored marshlands
- 12,500 hectares naturally addressing flood management protecting homes, businesses and infrastructure.

This SEEPARK vision was conceived in the now multiple award-winning *South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Study*, commissioned by ASELA in 2019.

Programme Resources

For this project development phase, the programme is adequately resourced and within budget spend, there are no resource implications that are impacting programme delivery

This is a long term multi-phased project, and each element will be subject to a business plan and consideration of a variety of funding resources.

Unplanned Requests/Activities

There are no unplanned requests that impact the delivery of the programme



Project Status (What is going well/not going well):	Description of RAG Status and Key Project Decisions/Direction/Action:	
<p>The SEEPARK Programme key items that have progressed are highlighted below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Design for the first phase of the demonstrator project at Central Thames Marshland now complete. • A Draft Business Case for each of the 5 landscape spaces is in development. This will provide a high-level overview of the SEEPARK Delivery Programme, a review and summary of potential project partners and funding streams. • The appointment of a resource to support the Creative Workstream is in progress to work within the SEEPARK programme supporting the development of the creative and cultural offer of SEEPARK and the other anchor programmes. ➔ Funding applications in progress in order to commence the concept and design work to commence for the second phase of the demonstrator project at Central Thames Marshland (Fobbing Marsh to Benfleet.) • SEEPARK enshrined within the emerging Joint Strategic Framework as a central theme to place making and critical infrastructure for housing and employment growth. Shared resources on respective working groups 	Scope	GREEN
	Risk	GREEN
	Issue	GREEN
	Cost	GREEN
	Time	GREEN
	<p>Explanation of any Amber or Red RAG Statuses (including any decisions, direction or actions required):</p>	

PROJECT / MILESTONE RAG STATUS KEY	
Will not be met	Project / milestone is definitely off track and does not yet have an effective recovery plan (recovery plan may involve re-planning milestones, scope, etc.). Significantly outside tolerances. One or more RED Risks/Issues. Sponsor action required.
Under Threat	Project / milestone is already off track, but has a recovery plan in place OR is in danger of going off track if current trends continue, therefore needs a remediation plan OR was on red and is still in recovery mode. Marginally outside project tolerances. No RED Risks/Issues. Sponsor oversight required.
On Track	Project being managed effectively. On track and confident of staying on track. Within project tolerances (budget, timescale, functionality).
Blue	Complete

Report Date:	January 2022	Decisions Required:	Request the joint committee: 1. To note the progress of the programme and to endorse the continued support to deliver the programme
Programme Name:	ASELA Digital Programme		
ASELA Chief SRO:	Jonathan Stephenson		
Programme Implementation Director:	Sharon Bayliss		
Lead Officer/Programme Manager:	Graham Brace		

Programme Summary

Overall Programme Summary

The ASELA Digital Programme aim is to provide an excellent & contemporary digital infrastructure including 5G, improved mobile coverage & capacity it is made up of seven discrete work streams which are focussed to drive forward ASELA's digital aspirations. The key themes are:

- 1) To drive forward an agenda for full fibre coverage across all ASELA residences and businesses by 2025. This is planned to be achieved through market stimulation and investment and where required seeking funding to make focused interventions.
- 2) To address mobile coverage and capacity issues across the ASELA region by proactive engagement with Mobile Network Operators and by making ASELA an attractive place for them to invest.
- 3) In Q1 2022 to progress a Taking of Service Strategy which will enable the ASELA full fibre infrastructure rollout to be leveraged for the maximum benefit of the public sector in ASELA. Driving down costs through shared infrastructure and shared digital services.
- 4) To address digital exclusion across ASELA from a perspective of 1) Availability of a "Decent Broadband Connection", 2) Affordability of a "Decent Broadband Connection, 3) Digital Literacy across the ASELA population to ensure no-one is deprived of the benefits of digital through a lack of skills.

LFFN Full Fibre Rollout

Over the last 18 months significant work has been undertaken to contribute to ASELA's digital ambition, the £4.4m funding from DCMS (LFFN Phase 1) has allowed for the installation of the first phase of full fibre connectivity across 129 public sector sites across the South Essex Region.

A further £2.5m received via the (MHCLG) 'Getting Building Fund' allowed for LFFN Phase 2 providing the ability to install a further 80 sites and an overall total of 200Km of fibre across the region. This will be completed by April 2022.

The ASELA digital programme has been recognised by DCMS, as a shining example of how local authorities and other public sector bodies can by working together successfully deliver an outcome much greater than could have been achieved individually.

The digital approach has already stimulated the market and attracted funding to areas which were not due to benefit from commercial to date circa £100m private sector investment in South Essex thus far.



Programme Resources

There are no resource implications that are impacting the programme

Unplanned Requests/Activities

There are no resource implications that are impacting the programme

Project Status (What is going well/not going well):	Description of RAG Status and Key Project Decisions/Direction/Action:	
<p>A Summary of recent focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LFFN Digital Infrastructure Phase 1: Now completed. • LFFN Digital Infrastructure Phase 2: Delivered first tranche of sites and fibre backhaul November 2022. On target to complete project rollout April 2022, by this date 200 Public Sector and Community Sites will be connected to full fibre. All of which will be available for use across the public sector at no ongoing cost for 15 years whatever the bandwidth consumption. • LFFN Phase 2 Village Halls and Community Centres: Engagement with Village Halls and Community Centres progressing well, surveys have been completed and the first site has been delivered with further sites planned for deployment in the first quarter 2022. • Taking of Service: With 200 public sector sites installed by April 2022, work will commence in Q1 '22 to ensure how each connected site can derive best value by taking service from the infrastructure. • Market Engagement: Ongoing engagement with fibre carriers and infrastructure providers who have expressed an interest in investing in the region. • Digital Inclusion Sheltered Housing: Funding of 85K has been secured within Thurrock Council to leverage the full fibre deployment for residents Health and Wellbeing. This Scheme which cover all the 29 Thurrock Sheltered Accommodation Sites will be delivered by April 2022. The intention of this funded scheme is to develop a model which can be replicated across ASELA given further funding. • Preliminary work has been commenced with other anchor programmes to explore digital opportunities that make use of the LFFN infrastructure 	Scope	GREEN
	Risk	GREEN
	Issue	GREEN
	Cost	GREEN
	Time	GREEN
	<p>Explanation of any Amber or Red RAG Statuses (including any decisions, direction or actions required):</p>	

PROJECT / MILESTONE RAG STATUS KEY	
Will not be met	Project / milestone is definitely off track and does not yet have an effective recovery plan (recovery plan may involve re-planning milestones, scope, etc.). Significantly outside tolerances. One or more RED Risks/Issues. Sponsor action required.
Under Threat	Project / milestone is already off track, but has a recovery plan in place OR is in danger of going off track if current trends continue, therefore needs a remediation plan OR was on red and is still in recovery mode. Marginally outside project tolerances. No RED Risks/Issues. Sponsor oversight required.
On Track	Project being managed effectively. On track and confident of staying on track. Within project tolerances (budget, timescale, functionality).
Blue	Complete

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Report Date:	February 2022	Decisions Required:	To recognise and support the progress on the development of the Full Business Case for the South Essex Technical University, in advance of it's presentation to ASELA JC on 23 rd June 2022.
Programme Name:	South Essex Technical University		
ASELA Chief SRO:	Scott Logan		
Programme Implementation Director:	Jim Sims		
Lead Officer/Programme Manager:	Jim Sims/Martin Whiteley		

Programme Summary

Programme Purpose: The South Essex Technical University (SETU) intends to create degree apprenticeships with local employers, providing opportunities for local people, leading to high skill local jobs. This is a business led venture, with a number of the leading businesses in the area identifying requirements for both young people and reskilling of existing employees. A Partnership Board has now been established, which includes senior representation from DP World, Leonardo's, Olympus, Ford, and Southend Airport. The programme will reach into the school system to encourage students from communities that would not historically have considered higher skills as attainable.

Hatch Regeneris has been appointed to develop the Full Business Case for SETU, using funding secured from ASELA, Essex County Council and three of the private sector sponsors (Leonard, DP World and Ford). Discussions continue with the other private sector board members about the appropriate time for them to contribute to the programme. The Project Initiation Document (PID) to develop the Full Business Case has been approved by the Partnership Board (a Board comprising a mix of the public and private sector partners) and a smaller, focused Executive Group has been formed to act as the Contract Manager during delivery. The Executive Group meets on fortnightly basis and is made up of representatives from ASELA (Basildon Council and Thurrock Council), ECC, Blue Marble and Hatch Regeneris.

The Partnership Board have also approved the following vision statement for the South Essex Technical University: ***South Essex Technical University will be the exceptional, business-led, higher education provider. Focusing on STEM learning, we will drive innovation with leading edge technology. Through on-the-job learning, tutored by experts from leading businesses, together we will create solutions for future global challenges.***

A presentation was made to the ASELA Chiefs on 16/12/21, summarising progress on the development of the project and highlighting next steps. The First Draft of the Full Business Case for SETU was circulated to the Partnership Board on the 09/12/22, with the Executive Group providing feedback on the first draft on the 22/12/22. Hatch Regeneris presented the Full Business Case to the SETU Partnership Board on the 12/01/22 as part of the consultation process. Further work is needed on the Full Business Case, with the timetable for the production of the final version being:

- Wednesday 16th February 2022 - Presentation of the FBC to the Executive Group
- Wednesday 2nd March – Presentation of the FBC to the Partnership Board, for sign-off
- Thursday 23rd June – Presentation of the FBC to the ASELA Joint Committee

Key messages contained in the Full Business Case are that ***there is strong market demand, there remains strong business interest, an incremental model is the right approach, there is interest from HE providers and there is a sustainable financial model.***

A presentation will be made to the ASELA Formal Committee on 10/02/2022, seeking members endorsement of the broad direction of travel set out in the current Draft Full Business Case.

The Executive Group continue to work on a mobilisation plan, to develop a plan of action for implementing the next phases of the project, should the Partnership Board and the ASELA Joint Committee approve the broad direction of travel set out in the First Draft of the Full Business Case in January / February.

Programme Resources

One element of the mobilisation plan that is currently being developed is the resource plan for the next phase of the project (i.e., after the production of the Final Business Case is complete) including the expected level of resources required to deliver both financial and staffing.

We are currently seeking capacity funding to bring in an interim resource to keep the project moving to the next stage, with funds being sought from a variety of sources. Essex County Council has agreed to provide a further £75k of funding provide immediate capacity funding and ensure momentum is maintained.

In addition, circa £450,000 of funding is forecast to be required in the first two years of the life of the operating company to capitalise its start-up costs and potential sources of this funding are being explored (for example, through strengthened links with the Thames Freeport). It should be noted that this is just a cashflow issue, as the potential exists to recoup this funding from delivery income in later years.

No further financial commitment is envisaged from ASELA at this stage, over and above the forecast annual 'allocation' of £60k to take forward the project in 2022/23.

Unplanned Requests/Activities

None.

Workstream/ Programme: South Essex Technical University		
Programme / Project Lead: Hatch Regeneris/Jim Sims		
Project Status (What is going well/not going well):	Description of RAG Status and Key Project Decisions/Direction/Action:	
<p>The eighth South Essex Technical University Partnership Board is planned to take place on 2 March 2022, with Board approval being sought at this meeting for the Final Business Case.</p> <p>A presentation is being made to the ASELA Formal Committee on 10/02/2022, seeking members endorsement of the broad direction of travel set out in the current Draft Full Business Case.</p> <p>The Executive Group are working with Hatch to develop the future timetable for phase 3 and beyond. This will highlight the key decisions required by the Partnership, the ASELA JC and member authorities and seek to identify the resources required at each phase, both staffing and financial.</p> <p>These elements will form the key gateways within the Business Case to develop the University from a virtual institution to a fully operating university.</p>	Scope	GREEN
	Risk	GREEN
	Issue	GREEN
	Cost	GREEN
	Time	AMBER
<p>Explanation of any Amber or Red RAG Statuses (including any decisions, direction or actions required):</p> <p>Amber Time – The timeline for approval of the Full Business Case has slipped from November 2021 to March 2022. This is a complex project, and we feel it is important to ensure the FBC is in a solid state, to be able to secure the funding needed to progress to the next phase. Endorsement required from ASELA Joint Committee on the broad direction of travel set out in the First Draft of the Full Business Case at the meeting scheduled for 10 February 2022.</p>		

PROJECT / MILESTONE RAG STATUS KEY	
Will not be met	<i>Project / milestone is definitely off track and does not yet have an effective recovery plan (recovery plan may involve re-planning milestones, scope, etc.). Significantly outside tolerances. One or more RED Risks/Issues. Sponsor action required.</i>
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On Track	<i>Project being managed effectively. On track and confident of staying on track. Within project tolerances (budget, timescale, functionality).</i>
Blue	<i>Complete</i>

DATE 10 February 2022	ITEM: 11
ASELA Informal Leaders and Chiefs Committee	
Communications update	
Report of: Adrian Wardle	
Programme Implementation Director: Karen Wheeler	
Accountable Programme SRO: Lyn Carpenter	
This report is draft	

Executive Summary

This paper provides an update on the communications work done in support of ASELA and in particular the five key programmes. It shows that considerable progress has been made to update the ASELA communications channels and to increase engagement with the programmes by key stakeholders.

1. Recommendation(s)

That the Joint Committee:

- 1.1 notes the update provided in this report
- 1.2 endorses the communications approach outlined in section 3.

2. Introduction and background

- 2.1 Since mid-October, ASELA has had dedicated communications resource for the first time. Adrian Wardle started, working three days a week, providing support to the ASELA leadership team and to each of the five programmes.
- 2.2 During the last three months, the communication channels have been refreshed, with a major content update of the website, a refocusing of the newsletter and a more proactive approach taken to social media and specialist media.

3. Developing the communications and engagement strategy

- 3.1 The Work Advance SE Futures Survey 2020 insight into local perspectives on South Essex suggested that...
- 3.1 South Essex as a place to live is known for:
 - its proximity to London, green and open spaces, good housing, coastline
- 3.2 South Essex as a place to work is known for:
 - its proximity to London, availability of jobs, traffic, commuting
- 3.3 South Essex as a place to visit is known for:
 - Southend, seaside, green spaces, shopping.
- 3.4 While proximity to London is clearly a strength that is recognised, it can also be a weakness. It can lead to a lack of distinct identity and pride, leading to lower levels of investment and belonging in communities. It can also mean that it is expected that the economic fortunes of South Essex are a 'by-product' of the fortunes of the capital and not an area seen as a priority for investment of itself.
- 3.5 It can also paper over the challenges faced to level up within South Essex – whilst there are clearly areas of wealth and prosperity in South Essex, it also contains some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the county. South Essex is a clear case in point that levelling-up is not an exclusively North of England issue.
- 3.6 The communications challenge is to move people to a position that they recognise and value South Essex as a distinct and coherent area, to value the natural and economic assets that South Essex already has and to see and feel invested in its potential to be so much more.
- 3.7 At its core, the communications task is to establish and support a place brand for South Essex.
- 3.8 We are promoting South Essex first, creative ideas and programmes for growth and prosperity for the region second, and the council partnership – ASELA – as the group that drives change, third. This also helps us position this strategy as something to be owned by all key stakeholders and not just the ASELA councils.
- 3.9 In summary, our core narrative is built around the following three points:
 - South Essex is great (because of its natural resources, its people, its location)
 - South Essex can be even greater (opportunities to make more of all the above, making it one of the great engine rooms of the UK economy.

Capitalise on our proximity to London and our location by the Thames through which we are connected to the trading world.)

- South Essex councils are working together, and with our partners, to make sure this happens (we have plans, we are doing things. Combining forces to improve prospects for the region and the who live, work and learn here)

3.10 We should build brand South Essex by putting it into everything we do and say.

Communication channels

3.11 These are the channels we use:

- **enewsletter** – aimed at members, businesses and key stakeholders. Containing news about ASELA and progress on programmes as well as highlighting successes across the region that businesses and stakeholders can relate to – business success, innovation and personal achievements.
- **Social media** – Twitter to reach influencers and Linked In to reach businesses and stakeholders
- **Website** – the definitive hub for information about ASELA and offering accountability and transparency for the partnership.
- **Proactive media relations** – local, regional, national and specialist media

4. Content update

4.1 In the past three months content updates we have produced and shared digitally in this period are set out below:

[Joint Committee ushers in new era of transparency and accountability](#)
[Remembrance Sunday events across South Essex](#)
[Creative partner sought for SEEPARK](#)

We have also supplied supportive quotes to Thames Freeport that have appeared on their website and social media following the Chancellor's green-light for the Freeport, on the occasion of the appointment of Ruth Kelly as Chair Thames Freeport and to welcome the news of the customs site go-live.

4.2 We have issued three enewsletters, two to members across all authorities and MPs, before and after the first Joint Committee, and one of the new style newsletter, which has gone additionally to businesses and wider stakeholders.

4.3 We secured the opportunity to contribute a feature article to the MJ on the success of the ASELA partnership, from Chair Cllr Chris Hossack, which was [published on 9 December](#).

5. Channels update

5.1 The following metrics help understand interest and engagement in our work. This information provides baselines to monitor more carefully now that these channels have been refreshed. There is work to be done to extend the reach of social media channels, including improving how our councils engage with them and share content as well as individual members and officers.

<i>Channel</i>	<i>October – December ‘21</i>	<i>July – September ‘21</i>	<i>+/-</i>
LinkedIn	54 new followers 275 followers	24 new followers	+125%
Twitter	29 impressions a day 41 followers	9 impressions a day	+222%
Website	1,100 users 1,600 sessions	1,361 visitors 1,834 sessions	-19% -13%

6. Forthcoming events

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

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Event/milestone</i>	<i>Date</i>
Digital Connectivity	Public and community sites online (develop testimony stories) Completion of cable laying under phase 2	Feb/March 2022 March 2022
SEEPARK	Submission of tenders for creative resource Exec business case, branding and Green Finance strategy outline to Joint Committee Creative industries report and future plans to Joint Committee Event around first phase	14/01/22 10/02/22 22/03/22
South Essex Technical University	Full business case approval by Joint Cttee Market engagement	10/02/22 Spring 2022
Thames Freeport	Final business case submission Approval of final business case with release of £30m new cash from Government for seedcorn funding	31/01/22 March 2022
Infrastructure and Housing	Homes England visit Affordable housing partnership discussions Engagement on JSF begins ASELA and Homes England agree on basis for ongoing Strategic Partnership. Innovative new delivery model with housing associations developed.	17/01/22 Tbc 07/03/22 tbc March 2022
Programme-wide opportunities	Thurrock Enterprise Week	7-11 March

DATE 10 February 2022	ITEM: 10	12
ASELA Joint Committee		
Report Title: South Essex No Use Empty Scheme		
Report of: Tim Rignall, Capital Programme Manager, Southend on Sea BC		
Programme Implementation Director: N/A		
Accountable Programme SRO: N/A		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

No Use Empty is a project that has achieved significant results across Kent in terms of bringing long term empty properties back into use as either alternative commercial or mixed-use commercial /residential. Successful bids to the Growing Places Fund (GPF) and Getting Building Fund (GBF) have provided £2.2m to introduce this successful initiative to South Essex.

In implementing No Use Empty South Essex (NUESE) the role of the South Essex authorities will be to publicise and market the scheme locally to ensure that there is a strong pipeline of potential projects. This will be incredibly important in ensuring that return on this investment is maximised. In implementing the project ASELA will benefit from the experience and expertise of the NUE team at Kent County Council who will assess applications and complete all appropriate checks.

The launch of NUESE is scheduled for 7 February 2022. In advance of this there will be an awareness raising session for economic development, regeneration and property colleagues on 31 January 2022.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the report be noted.
- 1.2 That authorities ensure that their teams are involved in promoting the opportunity for their areas and ASELA as a whole.
- 1.3 That the Joint Committee determine what if any publicity it would like to issue in the 'ASELA name' as part of the project launch.

2. Introduction and Background



No Use Empty is a project that has been run successfully by Kent County Council for a number of years. It has won a number of awards and is recognised as good practice by Government departments. They run two versions of the project one for empty residential property and one for empty commercial property. It is the 'commercial property' scheme that we are aiming to replicate in South Essex.

The link to the KCC projects and case studies is –

[No Use Empty – The Kent Empty Property Initiative \(no-use-empty.org.uk\)](http://no-use-empty.org.uk)

The aim of the No Use Empty South Essex (SENUE) is to return empty commercial properties to use either as alternative commercial or as a mixed use of commercial/residential. So, for example, if you take Southend High Street as an example an empty property could be returned to use with a commercial use on the ground floor and residential use on the upper floors. The focus will be on town centres where secondary retail and other commercial areas have been significantly impacted by changing consumer demand and/or COVID.

This will be achieved by offering 0% secured loans to owners/developers. Loans are available in multiples of £25k up to a maximum value of £175k. The maximum loan term is three years. Loans can be provided as 'top up' funding – so if a developer can't secure all the funding that they need from a bank they can 'top up' their bank funding with a loan from NUE.

Through work led by Southend on Sea Borough Council £2.2m has been secured for the SENUE project. £1m has been secured from the Growing Places Fund (GPF) and £1.2m from the Getting Building Fund (GBF). With a maximum loan value of £175k probably looking at 10 to 15 projects across South Essex - this will be on a first come first served basis. It is worth noting that SELEP's Accountability Board has approved an extension to the funding availability period for the GBF element of funding to September 2022. There are no time restrictions on GPF so the GBF funding will be used first.

NUE is a KCC brand and we have secured permission to use it for this project.

Project resourcing

Council Economic Development, Regeneration and Property Teams will be responsible for doing the local 'legwork' and finding potential projects or leads. They will also ensure that the applicant completes all necessary paperwork and identify any bids which might be contrary to any local policy objectives. For example, it is possible that not all authorities support the change from commercial to residential. Applications will be assessed and determined by KCC as they have established back-office systems and processes. KCC will make a recommendation on the application and the local authority in which



the project is based will have the final say on whether the application should be approved.

The relationship with KCC is formalised through a Service Level Agreement. KCC will charge a fee of between £2,500 - £4,000 for processing and determining applications as well as preparing legal docs. This fee will be added to the loan amount to be repaid by the applicant. The fee of £4,000 will still be payable if an authority decides to reject an application which once it has been assessed by KCC.

Southend is the 'accountable body' for funding and will ensure that all monitoring and reporting is completed.

No Use Empty South Essex – project implementation

A number of launch dates for NUE have, unfortunately, been cancelled due to COVID restrictions and resourcing issues at both KCC and SoSBC. KCC have now appointed additional resource to their NUE team and we are confident that the project can now proceed.

The intention is that the project will now be launched on Monday 7 February 2022. Draft press releases are being prepared and will be shared with local colleagues so that they can be tailored with local quotes. In addition to the local releases there is an opportunity for ASELA to issue its own publicity. The intention is to arrange events for estate agents and developers to publicise availability of the product and encourage take up.

In advance of the launch a briefing for all South Essex local authorities has been arranged for 31 January 2022. This has been co-ordinated through the Economic Development Managers Group but invites have also been issued to property and regeneration colleagues. Southend will be available on an ongoing basis to provide advice and support to south Essex colleagues. A very positive briefing was arranged for colleagues at Basildon on 10 December and similar events can be arranged for other Councils.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Issues and options were considered as part of the business cases submitted to SELEP as bids to the Growing Places Fund and Getting Building Fund. Business cases can be viewed at [No Use Empty South Essex - The South East Local Enterprise Partnership \(southeastlep.com\)](https://southeastlep.com)

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The support of all local authorities within ASELA will be crucial to successful implementation and delivery of the project.

5. Consultation (if applicable)

5.1 As part of the preparation of the business case (funding bid) all local authorities were consulted and a number of conversations were held with S151 Officers.

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

6.1 No Use Empty supports the delivery of a number of South Essex priorities:

- SELEP Recovery and Renewal Strategy - The strategy recognises that support is needed to help regenerate towns across the South East. The NUE initiative will bring underused and empty buildings back into productive use.
- SELEP Coastal Prospectus - The prospectus highlights the need to create a programme that targets empty property for redevelopment. Bringing premises, both commercial and residential, back into use will be key to place making. The prospectus also highlights the need to create small and flexible workspace.
- South Essex Productivity Strategy – within SEPS there is a programme of work to create vibrant places. We recognise that the right space, for a range of uses (commercial, residential, retail, leisure) underpins our ability to reanimate our towns. Bringing underused and redundant premises back into productive use is an essential part of this.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

The project has secured £2.2m of funding from Getting Building Fund and Growing Places Fund. Projects will not be able to borrow 100% of development costs so will make a 'match funding' contribution to projects. The costs of assessing the loan application (by KCC) will be added to the loan amount so there should be no cost for local authorities. If, however, a local authority decided not to proceed with an application which had been assessed and recommended for approval by KCC then the authority would be liable to fund the £4000 fee. This risk will be mitigated by ensuring that local authorities work with applicants to ensure that any controversial applications are weeded out before the formal application is made. This might include, for example, a proposal that is contrary to a local policy objective.

There is also a risk that an applicant might default on a loan repayment. To mitigate this all loans will be secured. In addition, KCC have a very low default rate on previous iterations of NUE and by buying in their expertise we will benefit from the relationships that they have developed with financial institutions and from the robust checks that they have built into the assessment process.

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